



the global voice of
the legal profession*

International Bar Association

Raising the Bar: Women in Law Project

In March 2021, the International Bar Association (IBA) launched Raising the Bar: Women in Law, a global, multi-year initiative examining women's representation across the legal profession. Implemented in two phases, the project first gathered data on representation and workplace initiatives (**Phase 1**), before moving to a deeper exploration of women's lived experiences in the profession (**Phase 2**).

This report focuses on Phase 2, which involved a global survey of women currently working in the legal profession and those who had left the profession in the past five years. Open to women across all legal sectors and jurisdictions, the survey aimed to capture women's subjective experiences and to identify what is – and is not – working for women pursuing legal careers.

With nearly **5,000 responses** from more than **100 jurisdictions**, the survey offers a comprehensive global perspective.

This flyer highlights key findings and recommendations arising from the survey, developed with guidance from an Advisory Panel comprised of members of multiple IBA committees and the IBA Bar Issues Commission.

To read the
full report
scan here:



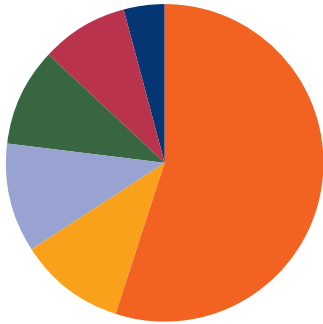
Key findings



4,933
responses



Conducted in four languages:
English, French, Spanish and Portuguese



Those responding to the survey came from:

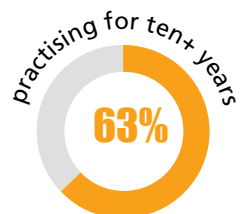
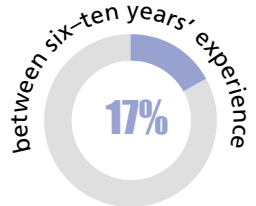
- 55 per cent private practice
- 11 per cent government/public sector
- 11 per cent barrister/advocate
- 10 per cent in-house counsel
- 9 per cent judicial officers
- 4 per cent others

Responsibilities outside of work

- 52 per cent of survey respondents had dependent children
- 38 per cent of respondents had caring responsibilities as well as, or other than, children



Length of time in profession



Top future career plans among respondents

Staying in my current workplace without plans to leave

62 per cent

Leaving my current workplace to join another legal workplace

25 per cent

Staying in the legal profession but in a different role
(eg, academia, consulting)

19 per cent



Main reasons for leaving the profession:

1. unhappy with workplace culture
2. seeking better support for mental or physical health elsewhere
3. experienced bias or discrimination in current role

Availability of workplace initiatives



60 per cent

of respondents indicated their workplace has greater availability of flexible working arrangements post Covid-19



40 per cent

have access to coaching and mentoring programmes



20 per cent

have access to leadership training



Initiatives with greatest impact on career:

33 per cent: flexible working

20 per cent: coaching and mentoring

Respondents called for access to workplace initiatives not already available to them, including:

- parental and carer support
- mental health support, stress management and recognition of vicarious trauma
- unconscious bias training
- pay equity and transparency
- support for life stages
- professional development and training



Survey recommendations

The full report sets out recommendations to advance women's progression, inclusion and wellbeing within the legal profession, grouped around six key themes:



1. Striving for structural and cultural change around workplace initiatives –

ensuring the visibility and accessibility of workplace initiatives and changing culture and stigma around access.



2. Embedding flexible work practices –

normalising flexible work to reduce stigma, promote equitable application of flexible work policies and support retention.



3. Building sustainable career pathways for women –

addressing barriers to women's advancement through formalised coaching and mentoring programmes, targeted training and transparency.



4. Supporting women's wellbeing –

promoting and supporting women's wellbeing in the profession.



5. Recognising and supporting life stages and caring responsibilities –

recognising and supporting those experiencing different life stages such as menopause, fertility treatment and caring for relatives.



6. Support for solo practitioners, smaller workplaces and women in chambers –

recommendations to ensure women working as solo practitioners, in smaller workplaces and in barristers' chambers are better supported.



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See the full report, available at www.ibanet.org/gender-equality-in-the-legal-profession for the full set of recommendations arising from the survey findings.