

Profile of the Legal Profession of the Republic of Maldives

December 2020



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



AMERICAN **BAR** ASSOCIATION

Rule of Law Initiative

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Findings	6
Demographics	6
Gender	6
Age	7
Location	8
Licensing	10
General Education	11
Undergraduate education	11
Post-graduate legal education	14
Local Education	18
Modules	18
Language of education	20
Level of preparedness	21
Foreign Education	22
Modules	22
Language of education	24
Level of preparedness	24
Supplemental Studies	26
Practical studies	26
Training	29
Participation in training programs	29
Qualification	32
High Court licensing	32
Supreme Court licensing	34
Duration to licensing	35
Foreign jurisdiction licensing	36
Employment	37
Employment rate	37
Multiple jobs	38
Nature of employment	39
Practice area	41
Time spent in legal industry	42
Time with current employer	43
Position held	44
Income	45
Discrimination	46
Continuing Professional Development/Continuing Legal Education (CPD/CLE)	47
Participation in CPD/CLE	47
Employer coverage of training	48
Usefulness of trainings	49
Necessity of CPD/CLE training	49
Pro Bono	51
Providing pro bono assistance	51
Time dedicated to pro bono	52

Framework of pro bono	52
Pro bono challenges	53
Importance of pro bono	55
Lifestyle and Wellness.....	55
Marital status	56
Children	56
Undergraduate law degree delays	57
Motivation for becoming a lawyer.....	59
Stress	60
Student debt.....	62
Depression and anxiety.....	63
Disability	63

Executive Summary

Overview

The Profile of the Legal Profession in the Maldives is based on a 93-question survey answered by 230 legal professionals in the Maldives. This report begins with a detailed background of the legal climate in the Maldives, continuing with disaggregation of respondent demographics along the strata of gender, age, location of origin, and location of operation. General demographic trends of respondents showed they were split along gender lines, relatively young, largely operating in the Male' Atoll, and primarily recently licensed.

To better assess the educational context of lawyers and legal systems in the Maldives, the study approaches the question of education through five sections: general education, local education, foreign education, supplemental studies, and training. Following demographic disaggregation, the second section of the report outlines the general elements of respondents' education through undergraduate degrees, post-graduate degrees, and certificates other than CLE/CPD, which are each disaggregated by locations of national and independently-aggregated international educational institutions, type of post-graduate degree obtained, year of completion, and specialization of degree.

The third and fourth sections delve more deeply into local and foreign education respectively to explain modules offered in subject areas such as Maldivian law, common law, international law, and Shariah law; primary language of instruction, exams, and textbooks; and preparedness for working in the Maldivian legal field. The fifth section, supplemental studies, explains participants' experiences with practical studies in the course of their legal education. The education portion of the report concludes with respondent participation in training--externship, work placement, or trainee program programs--and an assessment of their usefulness.

Following on the information attained through the educational information segment of the study comes five additional sections aimed at better understanding the legal profession in practice in the Maldives: qualification, employment, CPD/CLE, pro-bono work, and lifestyle and wellness. The qualification portion reports on licensure and year of licensure data for the High Court, Supreme Court, and foreign jurisdictions, and provides information about the duration between graduation and licensing. The employment section data captures employment rate, respondents working multiple jobs, the nature of respondent employment and practice area, time spent in the legal industry and with their current employer as well as position held, income, and discrimination in seeking and engaging in employment.

Data pertaining to Continuing Professional Development/Continuing Legal Education (CPD/CLE) includes participation in development, employer coverage of training, assessed usefulness of trainings, and perceived necessity of CPD/CLE trainings. The pro-bono work section describes respondents' provision of pro-bono services, including time dedicated to pro-bono work, the framework of pro-bono work, pro-bono challenges, and its importance. Finally, the report concludes with an assessment of lawyers' lifestyle and wellness, which includes marital status, children, undergraduate law degree delays, motivation for becoming a lawyer, stress, student debt, depression and anxiety, and disability as important factors for evaluation.

Background

After the creation of the Bar Council of the Maldives (BCM) in July 2019, the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) reached out to the newly-elected Executive Committee to offer support and assistance with developing the BCM's organizational infrastructure. After conducting a needs assessment, it became apparent that a first priority would be identifying the demographics, educational and professional background, and priorities of Maldivian lawyers. As such, ABA ROLI and BCM set out to design a survey of the Maldivian legal profession, with the goal of producing a public report similar to the annual Profile of the (American) Legal Profession produced by the ABA. The survey was designed using Qualtrics by ABA ROLI's Research, Evaluation, and Learning Office, working with staff of the BCM, and was open for responses for three months from 26 May – 25 August 2020. Data was analyzed and this report was drafted in September and October 2020.

Limitations

The data collected by the survey has several limitations. It was distributed via electronic means for voluntary responses, so survey respondents do not constitute a random sample of Maldivian lawyers. The survey was taken by 230 respondents, including 143 currently licensed and practicing lawyers, 58 law graduates who were not licensed, and 8 current students (the remaining 21 respondents did not indicate their current licensing status). The 143 responses from currently licensed and practicing lawyers represent approximately 10% of practicing lawyers. The survey was designed and conducted in-house by ABA ROLI with the goal of quickly collecting data that could help inform the BCM's strategic plan and activities, and funding limitations prevented ABA ROLI from hiring independent evaluators to conduct analysis and reporting on the data. In future years, ABA ROLI plans to repeat the survey with independent analysis and reporting.

Major Conclusions

Despite these limitations, ABA ROLI and BCM believe that some important conclusions can be drawn. The Maldivian bar is overwhelmingly young, with respondents having a median age of 31.6 and a large majority of respondent lawyers having received their license in the past 10 years. Slightly more than half of lawyers received their license within a year of graduating, while nearly 40% waited between one and two years after graduating. Although lawyers come from around the country, with only 41.1% of respondents originally being from Male', the vast majority (88.6%) of respondents are currently based in Male'.

Among respondents who are not current students, 96% completed an undergraduate degree in law, of whom 68% completed their degree at a Maldivian university. 37% of respondents completed a graduate degree in law, of whom 63% studied at a Maldivian university. Of Maldives-educated lawyers, only 62% said their law school offered modules in Maldivian law, while 73% responded that the primary language of instruction was English and 90% responded that their textbooks were in English. 40% of Maldives-educated respondents believed that their law school education did not prepare them to practice law in the Maldives, with 58% citing lack of practical experience, 46% citing lack of knowledge of the Maldivian legal system, and 36% citing lack of knowledge of legal Dhivehi as the reasons they felt unprepared. Interestingly, only 41% of foreign-educated respondents felt

unprepared to practice law in the Maldives, with 36% citing lack of practical experience, 22% citing lack of knowledge of the Maldivian legal system, and only 2% citing lack of knowledge of legal Dhivehi.

Seventy percent of respondent lawyers were currently employed in a legal capacity, with 14% working non-legal jobs and 15% being unemployed. A majority of lawyers earn MVR 15,000 to MVR 30,000 per month. A plurality (33%) of respondents reported being employed at a law firm, with the next most common employment being as a solo practitioner (9%) or in government (7%). While many lawyers have multiple areas of practice, the most common are civil law, employment law, and commercial law. Slightly more than half (51%) of lawyers had participated in professional development or continuing legal education (CPD/CLE), but 96% of lawyers indicated that they believed that CPD/CLE is necessary in the Maldivian legal profession and 67% believed licensing should be contingent on completion of CPD/CLE.

The most common reasons why respondents chose career in law because they are passionate about legal work, they wanted to be helpful to others, a law degree would prepare them for many types of jobs, or to advocate for human rights and equality. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, Maldivian lawyers also demonstrated a commitment to providing pro bono legal services. Ninety-eight percent stated that they believe lawyers should provide pro bono legal services, although only 63% have actually done so. The most common forms of pro bono services were providing consultation and advice, form filing, and legal drafting. Lawyers who reported that lack of time and lack of resources were the most common obstacles to providing pro bono services.

A majority of respondent lawyers (94%) reported experiencing stress at work, with about 30% experiencing stress always or most of the time. Approximately 37% of respondent lawyers experience depression or anxiety, of whom 51% said their symptoms were exacerbated by work. Despite this, less than 1% reported seeking counseling or medication to manage stress at work. A large workload, the work environment, and financial concerns were the most common causes of stress. Most manage stress through work-life balance, exercise, support of family and friends, or hobbies.

Acknowledgments

ABA ROLI Senior Technical Advisor Jessie Tannenbaum, BCM Secretary General Dr. Marium Jabyn, and BCM Member Yasmeen Shamaal led the development and implementation of the survey. The BCM and ABA ROLI are grateful to ABA ROLI Pro Bono Research Specialists Anna Burke and Haley Coleman, who generously volunteered their time to conduct survey design and analysis. The Profile of the Legal Profession in the Maldives was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Award No. AID-OAA-L-15-00007. Any conclusions stated herein are the work of the authors and not necessarily the opinions of the United States Government or the American Bar Association.

Findings

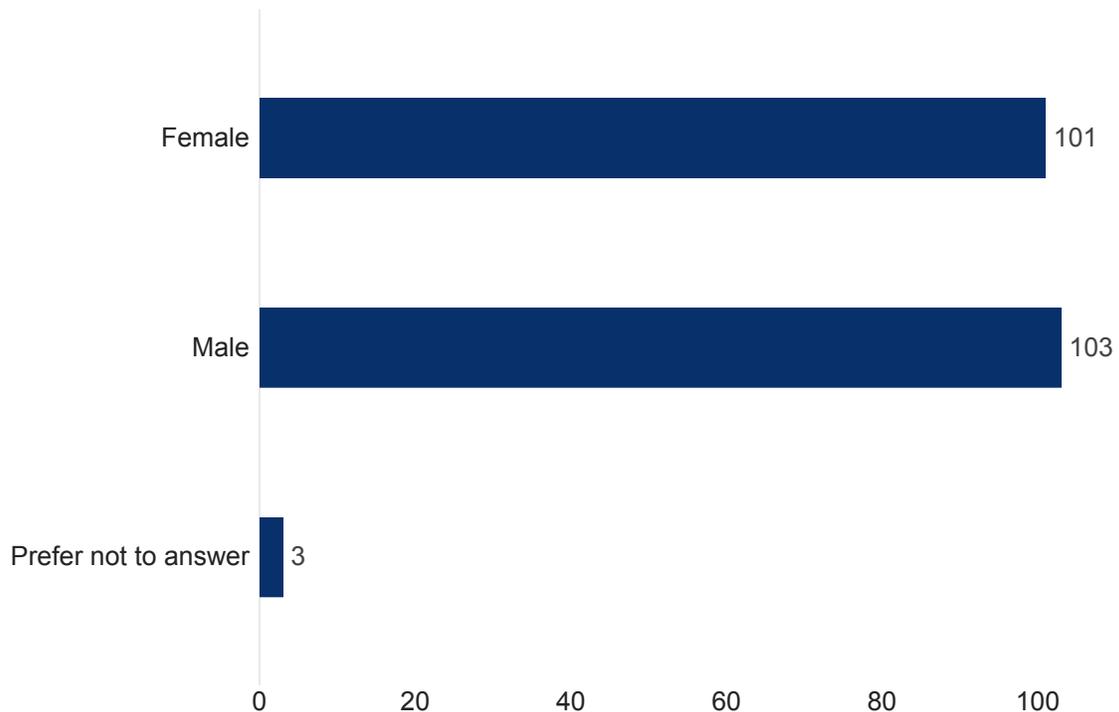
Demographics

Roughly the same amount of men took this survey as women. There is a clear age bias in this survey, as most of the respondents are in their 20s and 30s, with the average age being 31.5. Unsurprisingly, densely populated Male' Atoll was by far the most popular location that lawyers both came from and that they work in. The majority of the lawyers who took this survey were licensed. A large percentage receiving their license in the last two years, speaking to the young age of the lawyers who responded to this survey.

Gender

Of the 207 survey participants who answered this question, 101 (48.8%) were female, 103 (49.8%) were male, and 3 (1.44%) preferred not to answer.

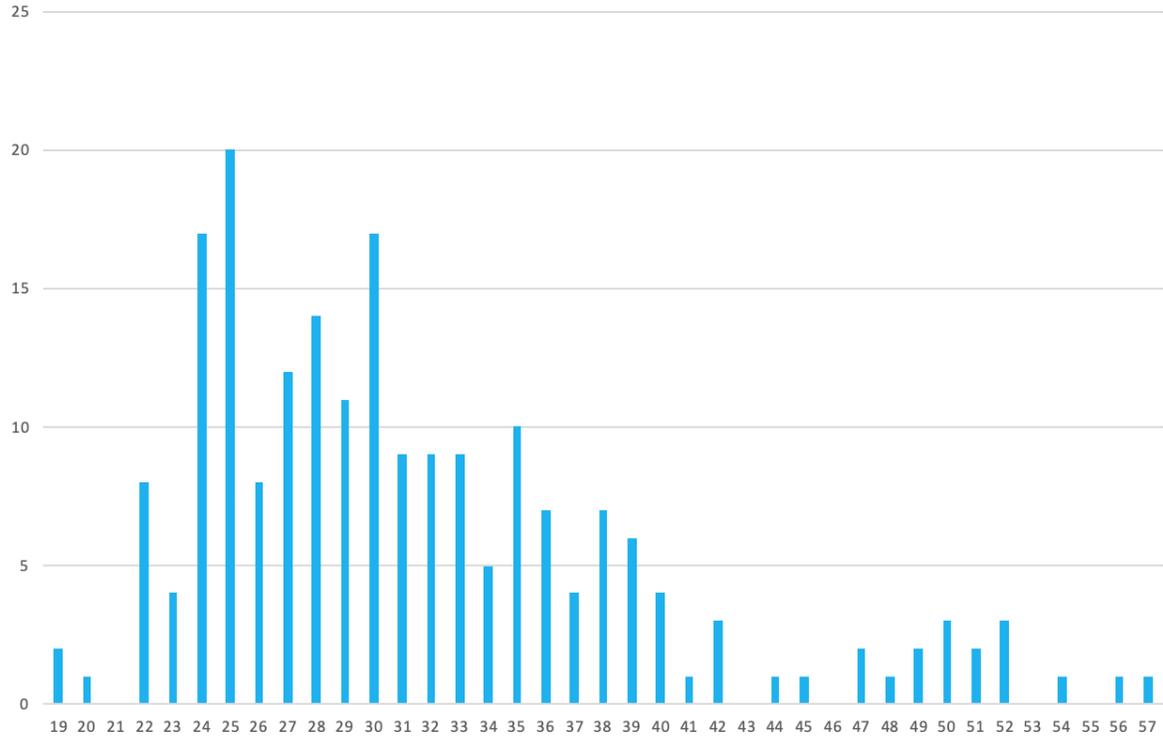
Gender Breakdown



Age

Most of the Maldivian lawyers surveyed are quite young, and fall between the ages of 19 and 39. The average age of a lawyer in the Maldives who took this survey is 31.5.

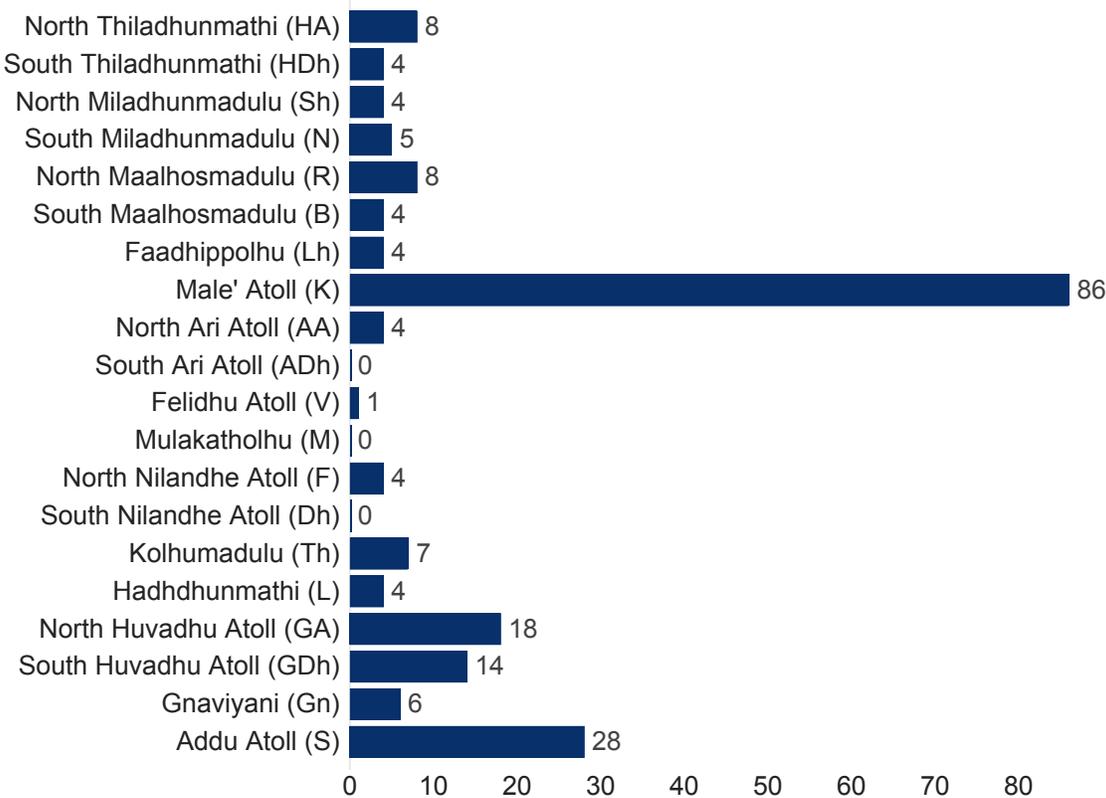
Age of Lawyers in the Maldives



Location

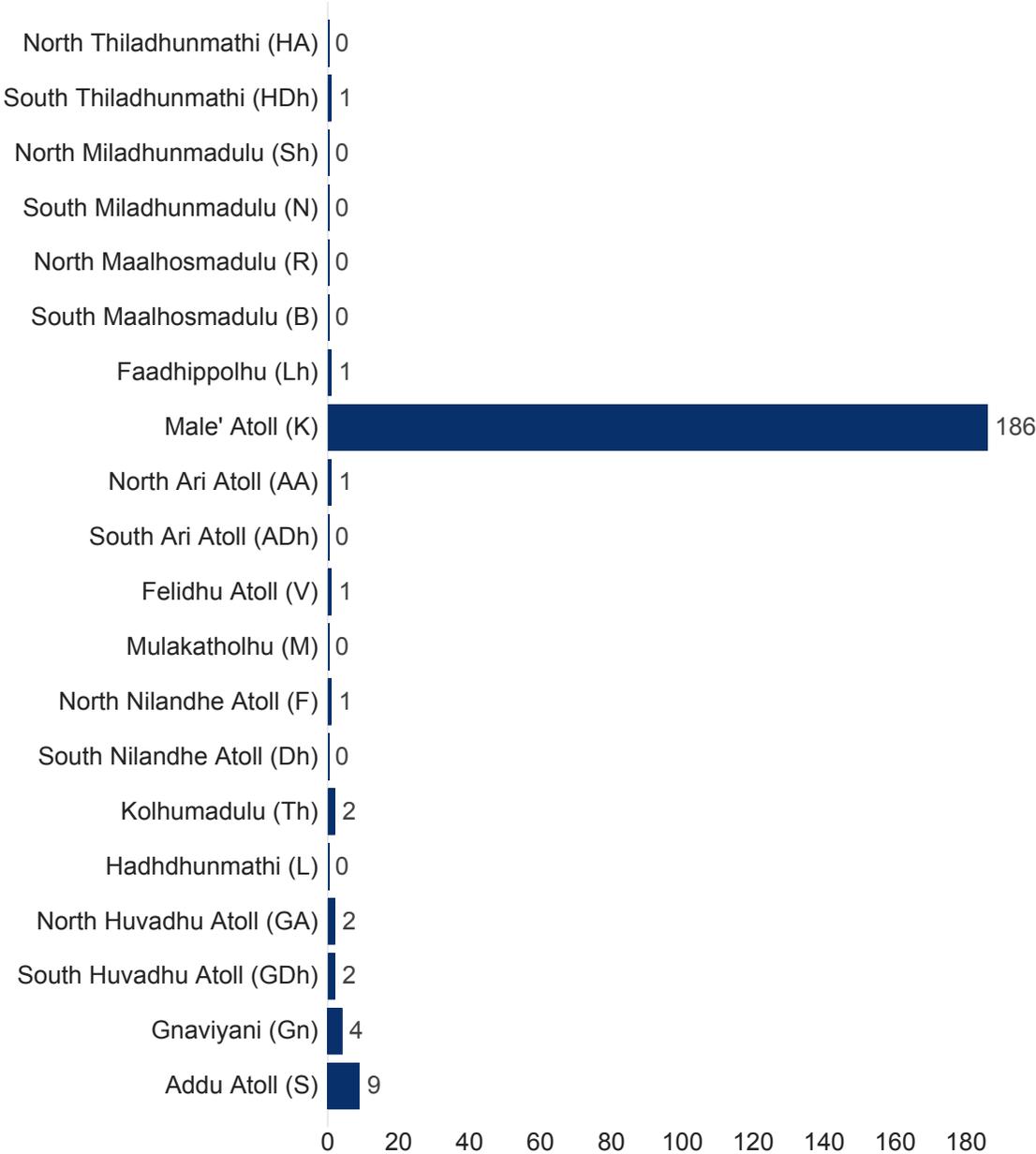
Most of the lawyers are from Male' Atoll (41.1%), Addu Atoll (13.4%), North Huvadhu Atoll (8.6%) and South Huvadhu Atoll (6.7%). The other regions each represent less than 5% of the survey population.

Where Lawyers Come From



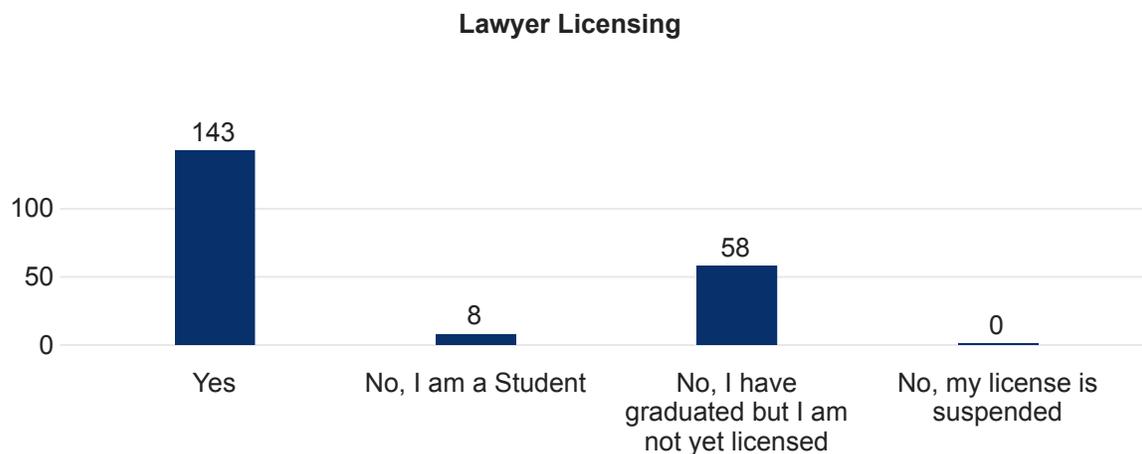
While there are a small number of lawyers scattered across regions, the vast majority (88.6%) are primarily based in Male' Atoll.

Where Lawyers are Based

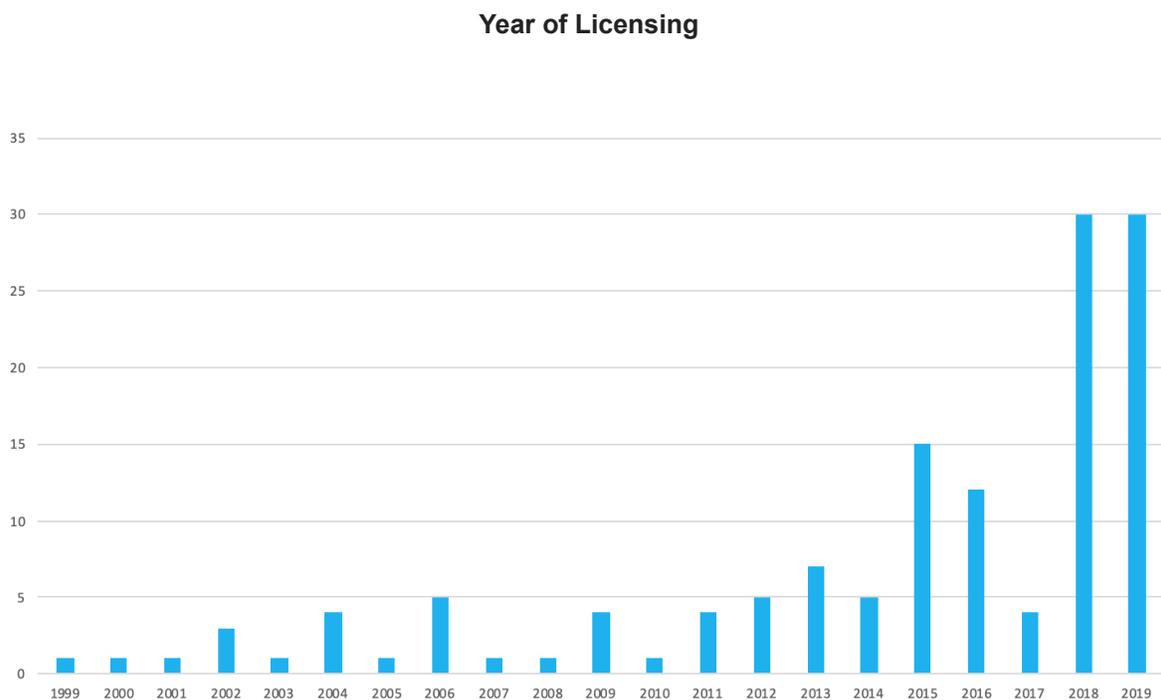


Licensing

When asked if they were licensed, most of the survey participants (68.4%) responded that they are. 27.8% of the lawyers are graduated but do not yet have a license and 3.8% are still students. None answered that they currently have their license suspended.



The vast majority of the licensed lawyers who took this survey were licensed in the last 10 years. Almost half received their license in the last three years.



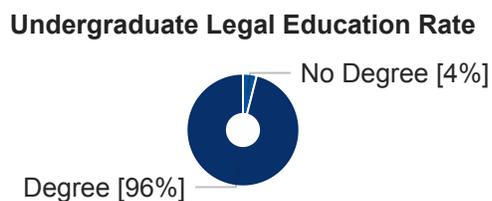
General Education

Almost all of the lawyers who took this survey have completed an undergraduate legal education. About two thirds of these lawyers completed this undergraduate education in the Maldives, with Maldives National University being the most popular local university. Of the lawyers who completed their undergraduate legal education abroad, the most popular location was the United Kingdom. The young age of the lawyers who took this survey was highlighted by the data showing the year in which they completed their undergraduate education, with many answering that they did so in the last 5 years.

While the vast majority of Maldivian lawyers have an undergraduate law degree, only about a third have a post-graduate legal education. The breakdown of where these lawyers got post-graduate degrees was similar to that of undergraduate degrees; the most popular local university was Maldives National University and the most popular foreign country was the United Kingdom. Most of these lawyers had received their post-graduate degrees in the last five years. Of these lawyers with a post-graduate education, less than a quarter have certificates other than CLE/ CPD.

Undergraduate Legal Education Rate

Almost all (96%) survey participants have completed an undergraduate law degree.



Certificates

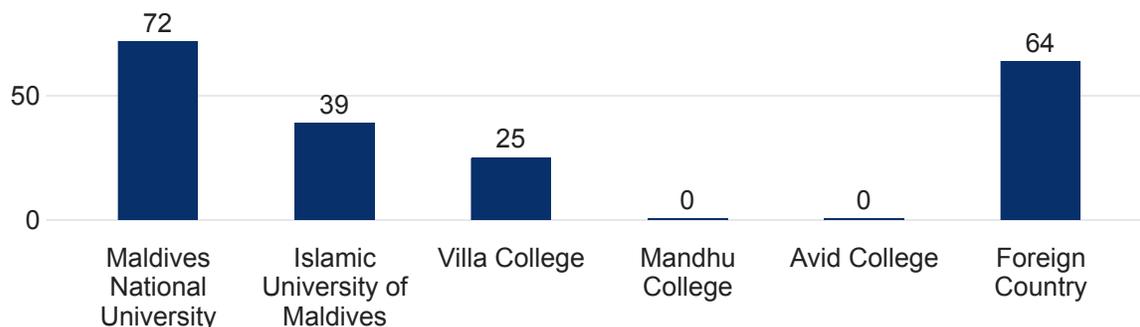
The 4% who responded they did not complete an undergraduate law degree were asked about certificates that they hold. This resulted in 2 people responding they received a diploma, one responding they received an advanced diploma in law, one responding they received a Bachelor of Shariah, and another responding they received an introduction to international arbitration certificate.

Location of Undergraduate Education

68% of the survey participants completed their undergraduate education in the Maldives, with 36% attending Maldives National University, 19.5% attending Islamic University of Maldives, and 12.5% attending Villa College. None of the participants completed their undergraduate education at

Mandhu. The other 32% completed their undergraduate education in foreign countries.

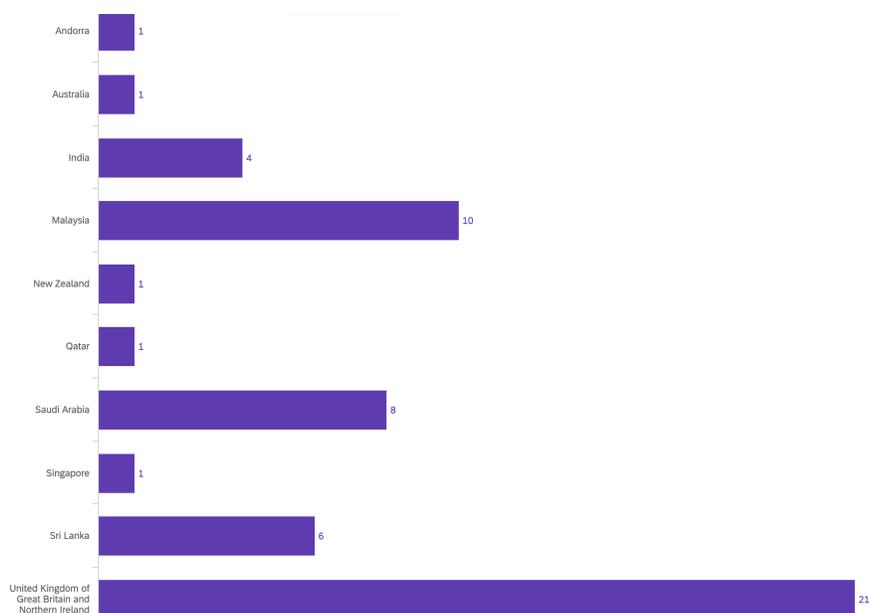
Where Lawyers in the Maldives Completed Their Undergraduate Legal Education



International Undergraduate Education

The lawyers who reported completing their undergraduate legal education in a foreign country went to universities in Andorra, Australia, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom.

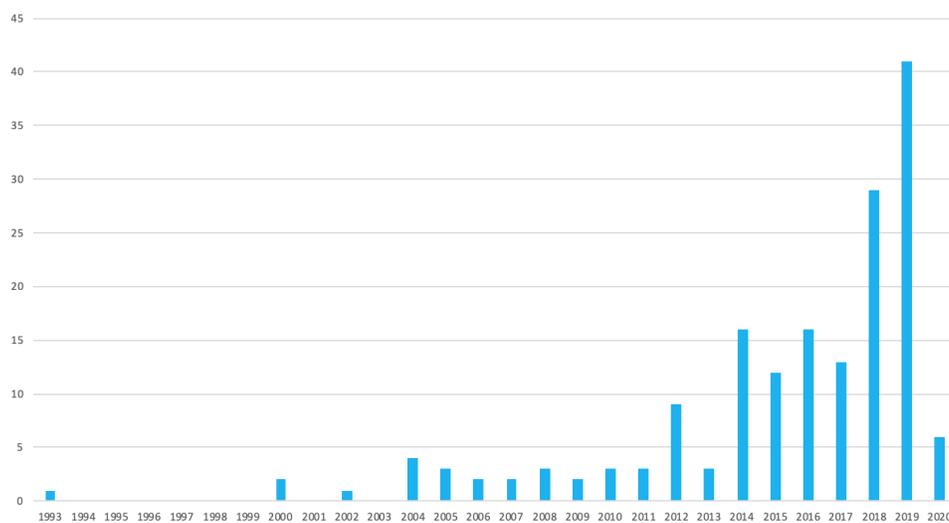
Foreign Countries Where Maldivian Lawyers Completed Undergraduate Degrees



Year of Completion of Undergraduate Education

Most (84.8%) of the lawyers who took this survey that completed their undergraduate education, either locally or abroad, did so in the last 10 years.

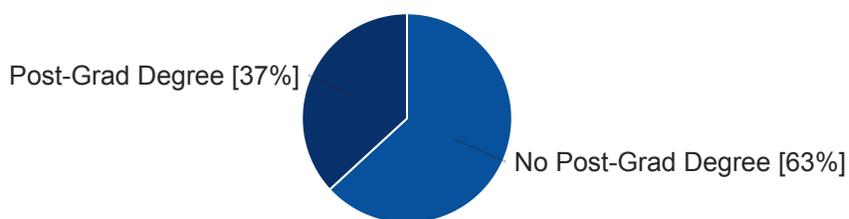
Year of Completion of Undergraduate Degree



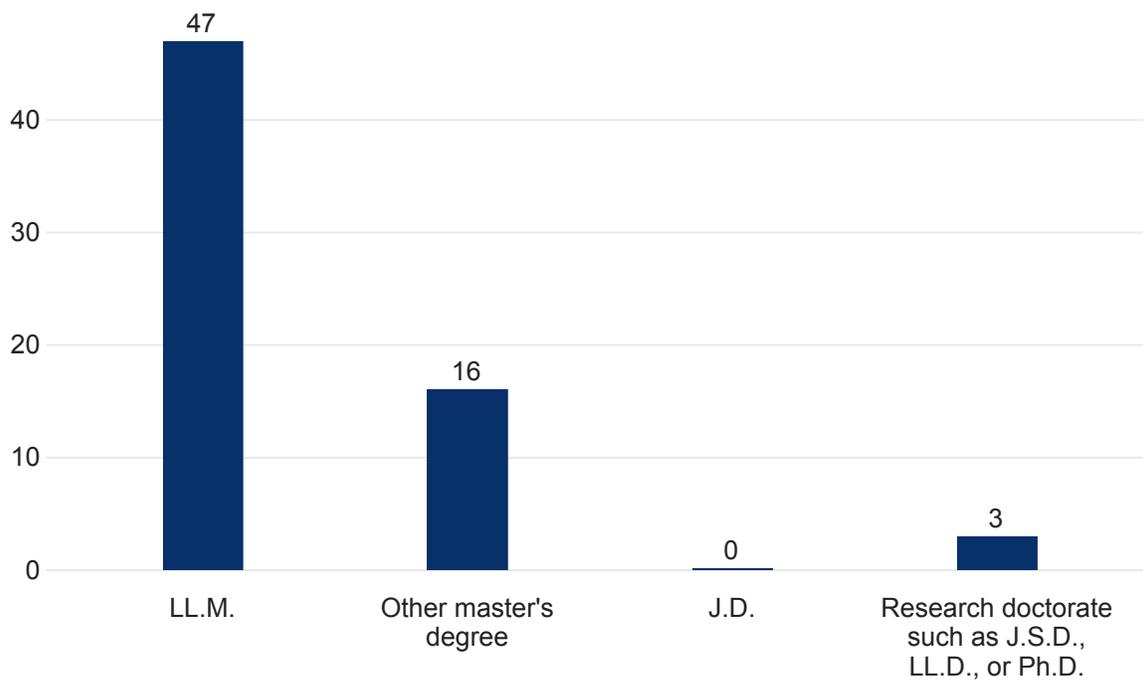
Post-Graduate Legal Education

Of the lawyers surveyed, more have not received a post-graduate legal education than those who have. 120 lawyers (63%) have not completed a post graduate law degree and 70 lawyers (37%) have. Of the lawyers who have completed a post-graduate legal education, most reported having an L.L.M. Others completed masters degrees or research doctorates, but none had completed a J.D.

Post-Graduate Legal Education Rate

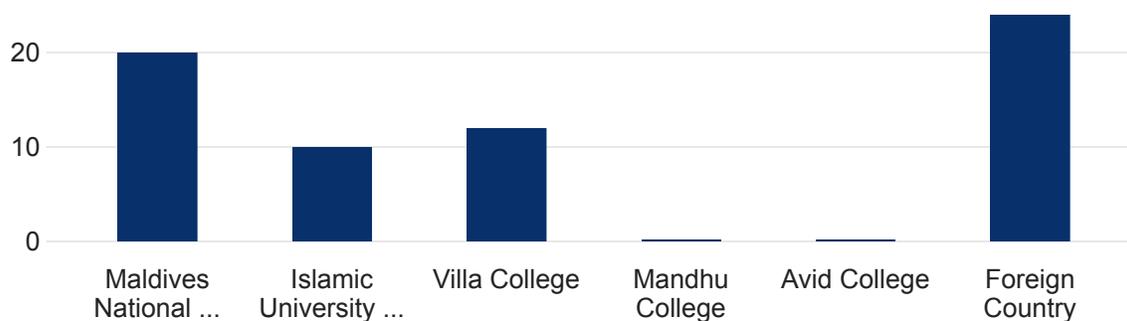


Breakdown of Post-Graduate Legal Education Obtained

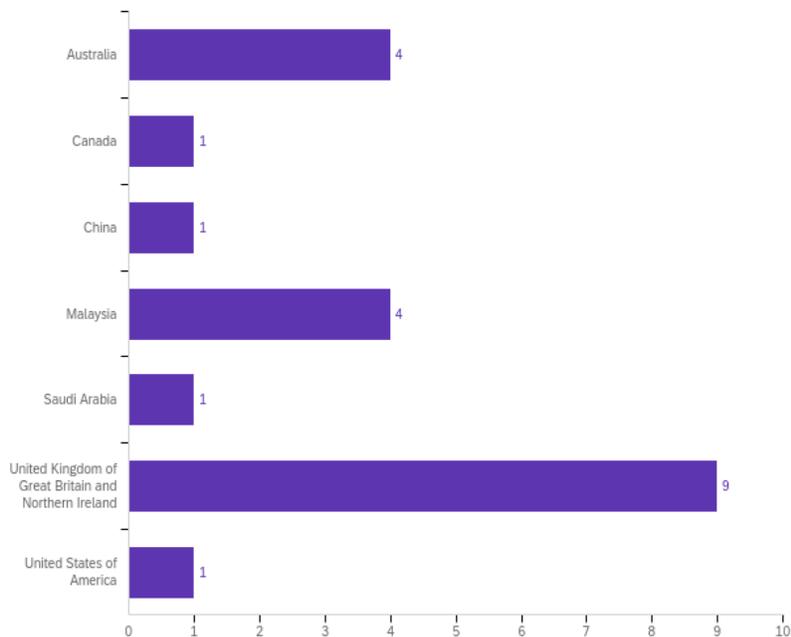


Where Maldivian Lawyers Completed Post-Graduate Legal Education

Of the lawyers who completed post-graduate legal education, more than half (63%) stayed in the Maldives to study. The remaining 37% who left the Maldives to pursue a post-graduate legal education went to study in Australia, Canada, China, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

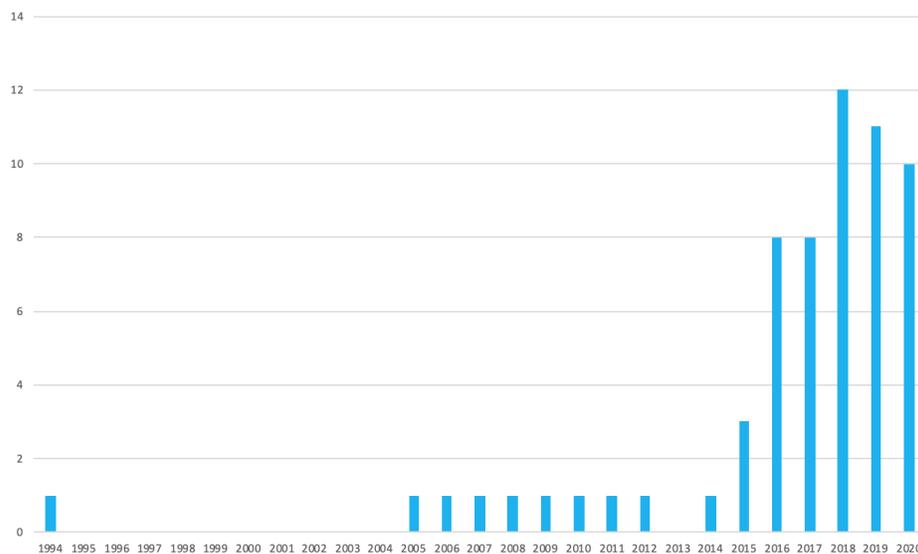


Breakdown of Foreign Post-Graduate Education by Country

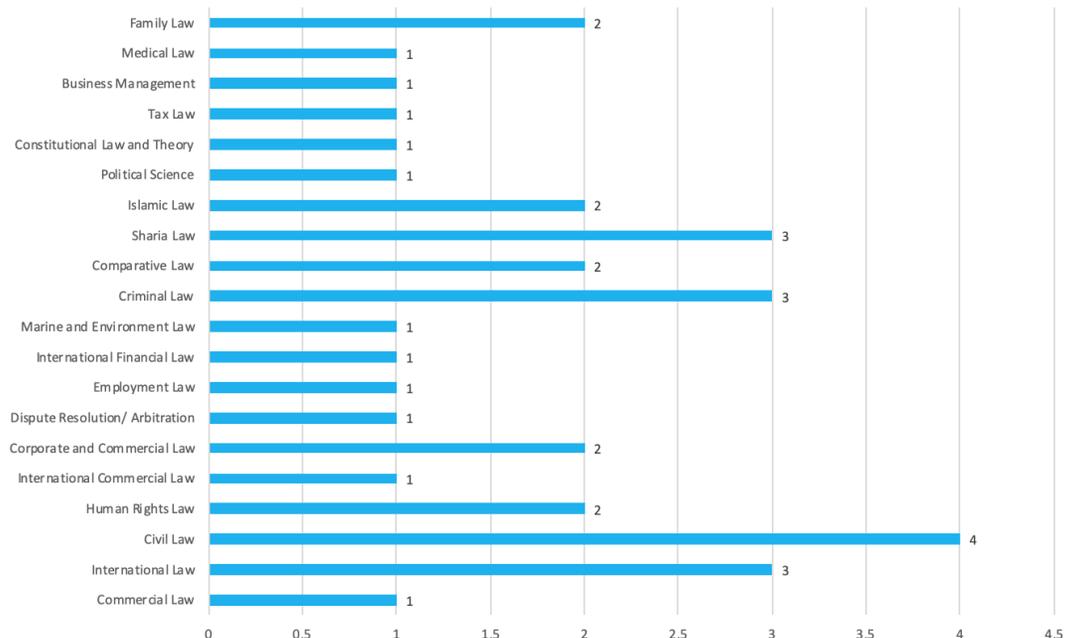


Of the lawyers who had reported completing a post-graduate law degree, whether that was an L.L.M., research doctorate, or other type of degree, most (83.7%) had completed the degree in the last 6 years.

Year of Completion of Post-Graduate Legal Degree



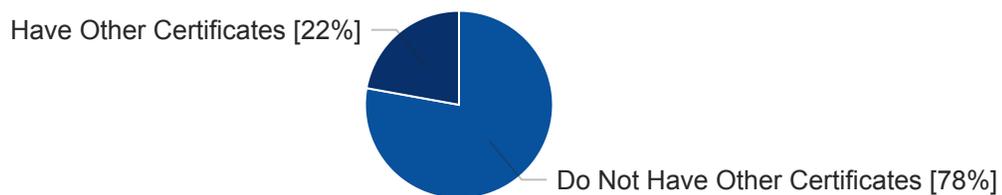
Specialization of Degree



Certificates Other Than CLE/CPD

Less than a quarter of the lawyers who have completed post-graduate legal education hold certificates in law other than continuing legal education or continuing professional development.

Percentage of Post-Graduate Degree Holders Who Have Certificates Other Than CLE/CPD



Local Education

Lawyers who completed their legal education in the Maldives were asked about the modules that their schools offered. Almost all had been offered modules in common law and international law and most had been offered modules in Maldivian law and Shariah law.

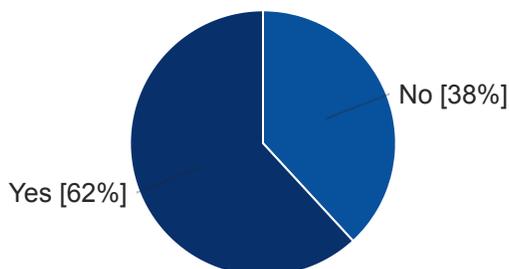
Three-quarters of lawyers responded that the primary language of instruction and exams was English, not Dhivehi. Significantly more, almost 90%, answered that their textbooks were primarily in English.

60% of lawyers who completed their legal education in the Maldives felt that their law schools prepared them for working in the legal profession in the Maldives. The most common reasons given by those who did not feel prepared were having a lack of practical experience, a lack of knowledge of the Maldivian legal system, and a lack of knowledge of legal Dhivehi.

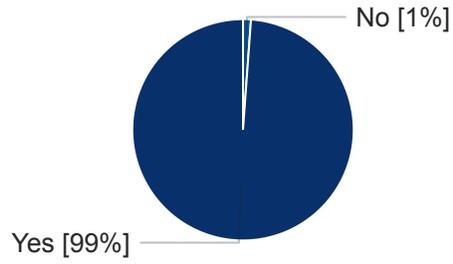
Modules

Survey respondents who attended law school in the Maldives indicated the modules they were offered at the law schools they attended. More than half (62%) of the lawyers attended law schools that offered modules in Maldivian law. Almost all (99%) attended law schools that offered modules in common law and 92% attended law schools that offered modules in international law. Over three quarters (78%) attended law schools that offered modules in Shariah law.

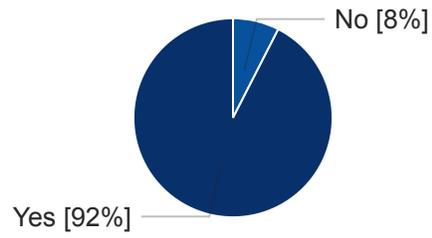
Lawyers Who Attended Maldivian Law Schools That Offered Modules in Maldivian Law



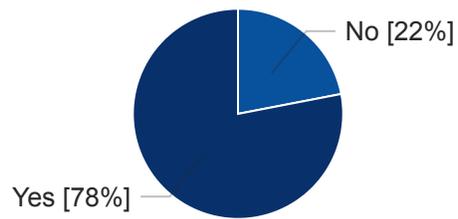
Lawyers Who Attended Maldivian Law Schools That Offered Modules in Common Law



Lawyers Who Attended Law Schools That Offered Modules in International Law



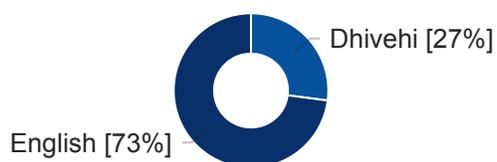
Lawyers Who Attended Law Schools That Offered Modules in Shariah Law



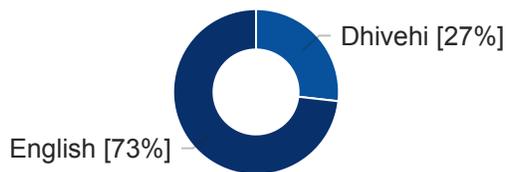
Language of Education

When lawyers who attended law school in the Maldives were asked about the primary language in which the classes were taught at their law schools, roughly three-quarters of them said that English was the primary language in which their classes were taught and also in which their exams were conducted. The vast majority (89%) of textbooks were written in English, not Dhivehi.

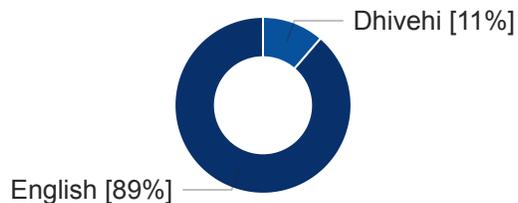
Primary Language of Instruction



Primary Language of Exams



Primary Language of Textbooks



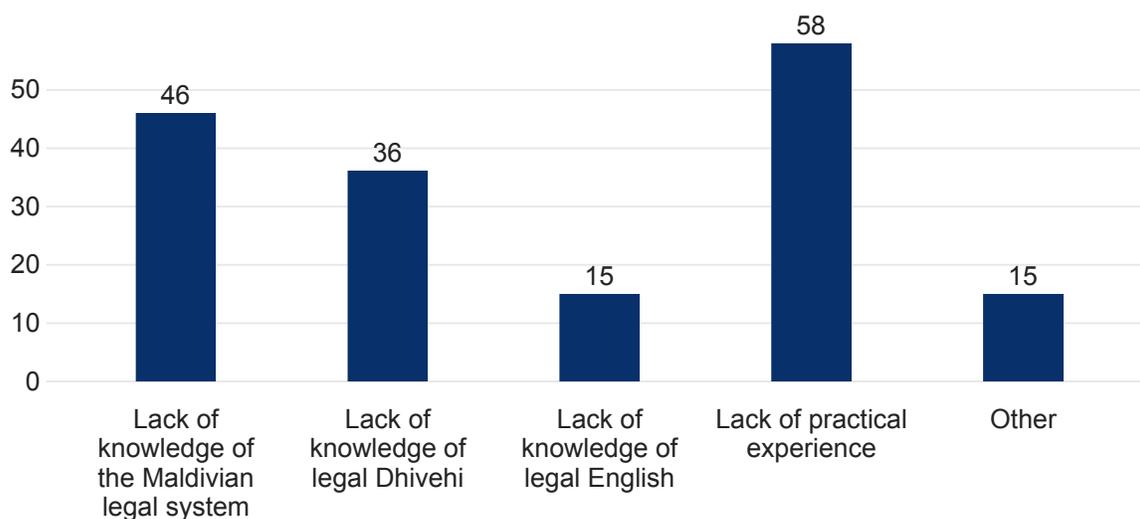
Level of Preparedness

Of lawyers who attended universities in the Maldives, 60% feel that their law school adequately prepared them for the realities of working in the legal profession in the Maldives. Those who felt that their law school did not adequately prepare were asked why they felt that way. 27% of respondents felt they had a lack of knowledge of the Maldivian legal system, 21% of respondents felt they had a lack of knowledge of legal Dhivehi, 9% of respondents felt they had a lack of knowledge of legal English, 34% felt they had a lack of practical experience, and 9% answered that they felt unprepared for other reasons.

Do Lawyers Feel Their Maldivian Law Schools Prepared Them for Working in the Legal Profession in the Maldives?



Reasons Why Maldivian Lawyers Feel That Their Local Law Schools Did Not Prepare Them for Working in the Legal Profession in the Maldives



Foreign Education

Lawyers who completed their legal education outside of the Maldives were asked similar questions to those who had completed their legal education in the Maldives. Most of the modules were offered widely, but significantly fewer lawyers were offered modules on lawyers ethics.

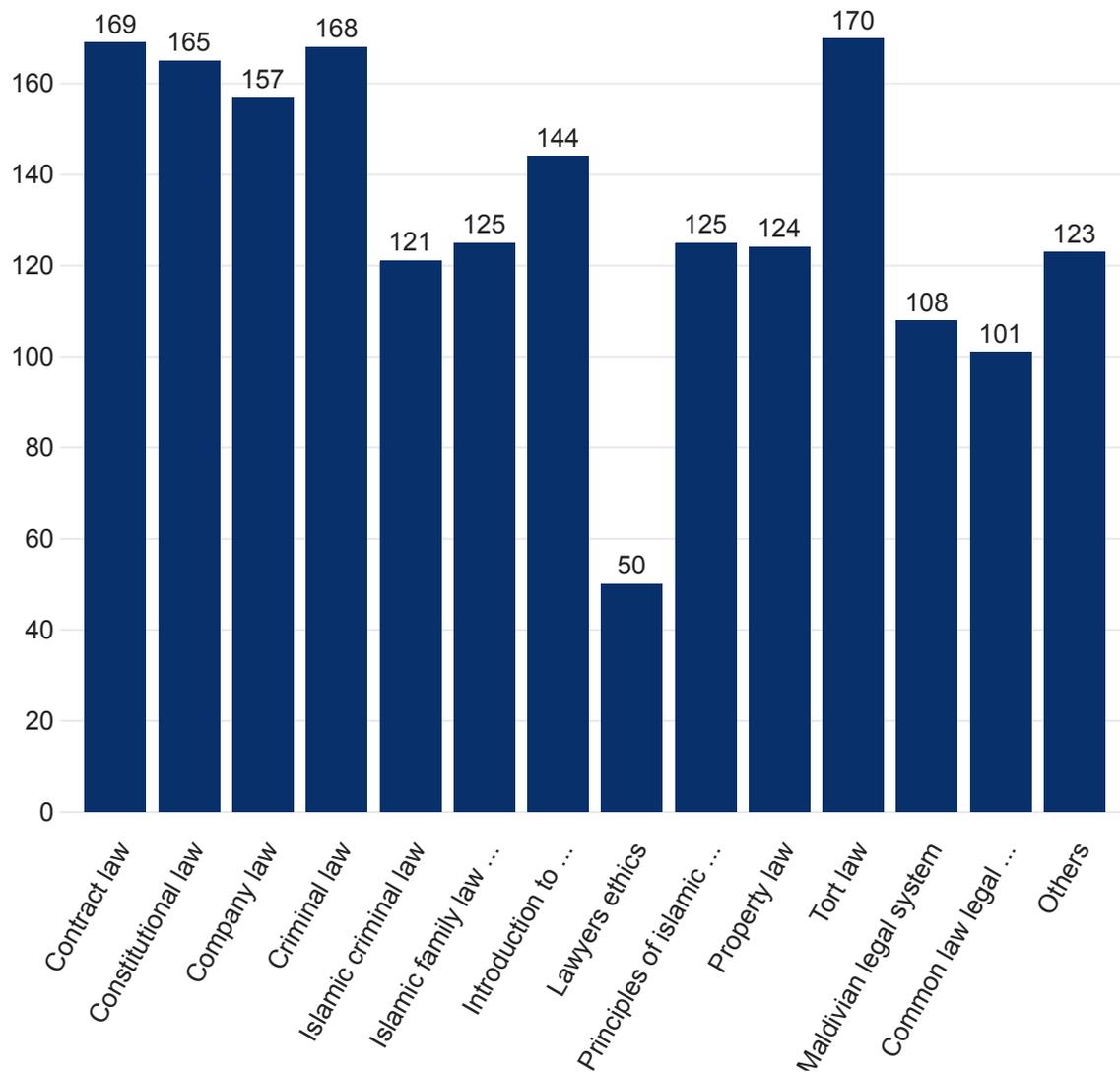
59% of lawyers who completed their legal education abroad responded that they felt prepared to work in the legal profession in the Maldives. Interestingly, this is almost the exact same percentage as those who studied in the Maldives. The reasons for those who did not feel prepared were most commonly a lack of practical experience and a lack of knowledge of the Maldivian legal system, which were the two most popular answers for those who studied in the Maldives as well.

Lawyers who completed their education in a foreign country did not seem to have a hard time adjusting to the Maldivian legal profession. When asked, most responded that they found it neither easy nor difficult.

Core Modules

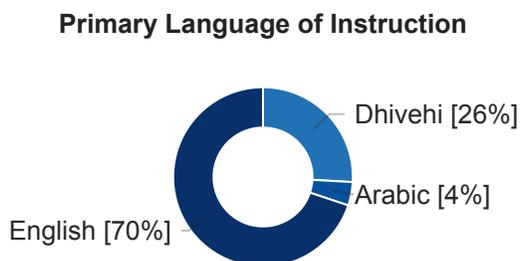
Maldivian lawyers who attended foreign universities to complete their legal education were asked about the core modules offered at their universities. These lawyers selected all the modules that applied. The most commonly offered modules were tort law, contract law, criminal law, and constitutional law. The least commonly offered module was lawyers ethics, which was offered notably less often than other module categories.

Modules Offered at Foreign Law Schools



Language of Education

At universities abroad where Maldivian lawyers completed their legal education, classes were taught primarily in English 70% of the time and primarily taught in Arabic 4% of the time.



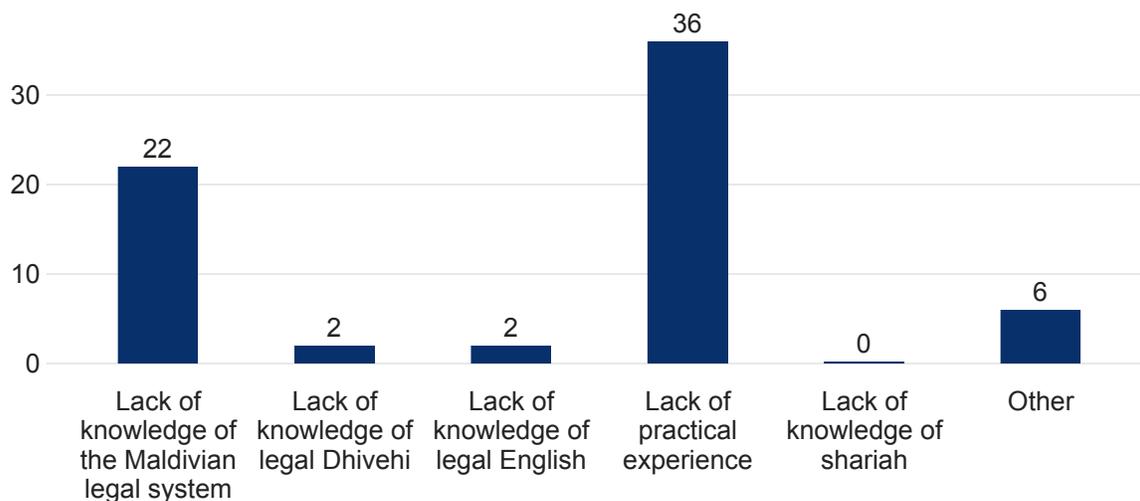
Level of Preparedness

Of lawyers in the Maldives who completed their legal education abroad, 59% answered that they believed their law school adequately prepared them for the realities of working in the legal profession in the Maldives. Those who felt that their law school did not adequately prepare them were asked why they felt that way. 53% felt they had a lack of practical experience, 33% felt that they had a lack of knowledge of the Maldivian legal system, 3% felt that they had a lack of knowledge of legal English, 3% felt they had a lack of knowledge of legal Dhivehi, and 8% answered that they felt unprepared for other reasons.

Do Lawyers Feel Their Foreign Law Schools Prepared Them for Working in the Legal Profession in the Maldives?

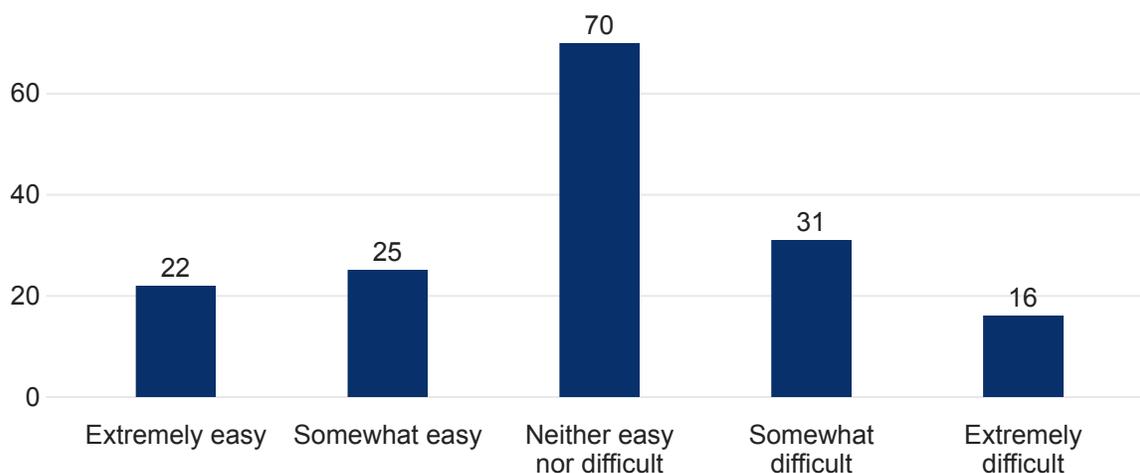


Reasons Why Maldivian Lawyers Feel That Their Foreign Law Schools Did Not Prepare Them for Working in the Legal Profession in the Maldives



Maldivian lawyers who attended law school in other countries were asked how difficult they found it to adjust to the Maldivian legal profession. The largest group (43%) answered that they found it neither easy nor difficult. The same amount of lawyers felt it was either extremely easy or somewhat easy (28.5%) as those who felt it was either extremely difficult or somewhat difficult (28.5%).

Level of Difficulty Adjusting to the Maldivian Legal Profession



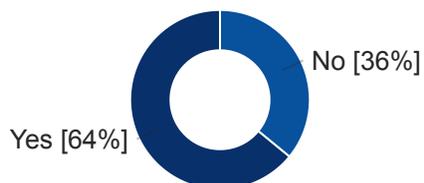
Supplemental Studies

Almost two-thirds of lawyers interviewed had participated in practical studies during their undergraduate education, with the most common being mooting, and the least common being client interviewing. Of the 36% who did not participate in practical studies, almost all cited a lack of availability in law school as their reason for not participating. Most lawyers feel that the avenues for practical studies are not sufficient as they are now, but that the inclusion of them is important. Mooting was viewed as the most important practical skill.

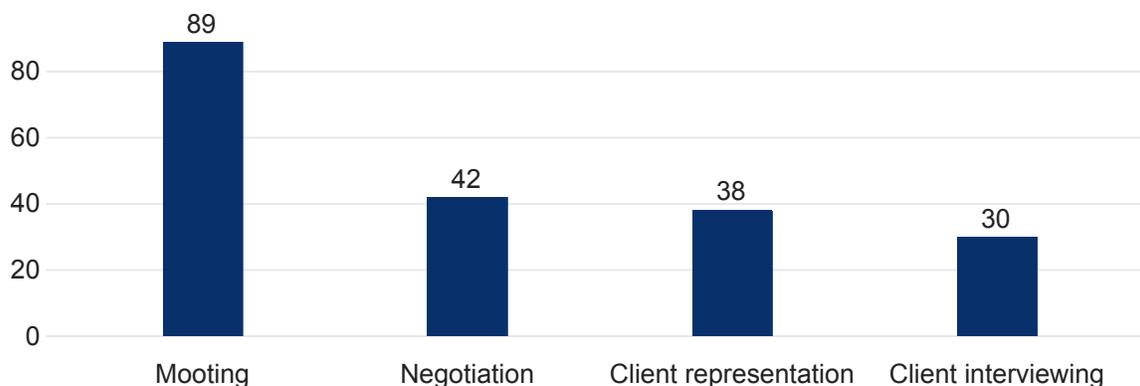
Practical Studies

Lawyers in the Maldives were asked about their participation in practical studies during their undergraduate studies. The majority (64%) answered that they had participated in practical studies. Mooting was the practical study that had been participated in most widely, followed by negotiation, client representation, and then client interviewing.

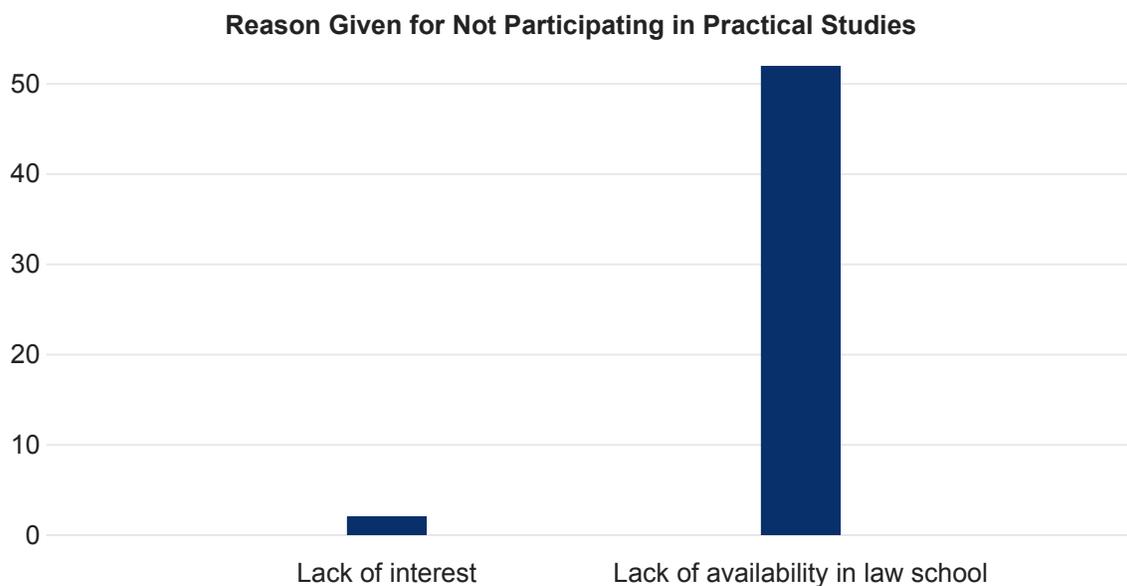
Did Lawyers Participate in Practical Studies?



Breakdown of Participation in Practical Studies

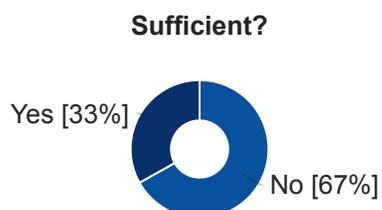


Those who had not participated in practical studies during their undergraduate legal education were asked why they did not participate. An overwhelming majority answered that there was a lack of availability at their law school, with only 3.7% responding that they chose not to participate in practical studies due to lack of interest.

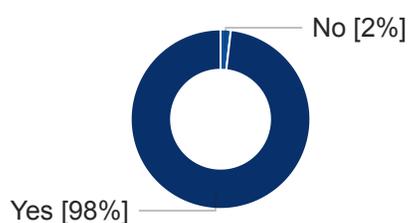


Lawyers were asked whether they felt the avenues for the practice of the practical skills mentioned above are sufficient or not. Most of them felt that these avenues are not sufficient. The lawyers were subsequently asked whether they felt that these practical skills are important to include in an undergraduate degree. Almost all answered yes.

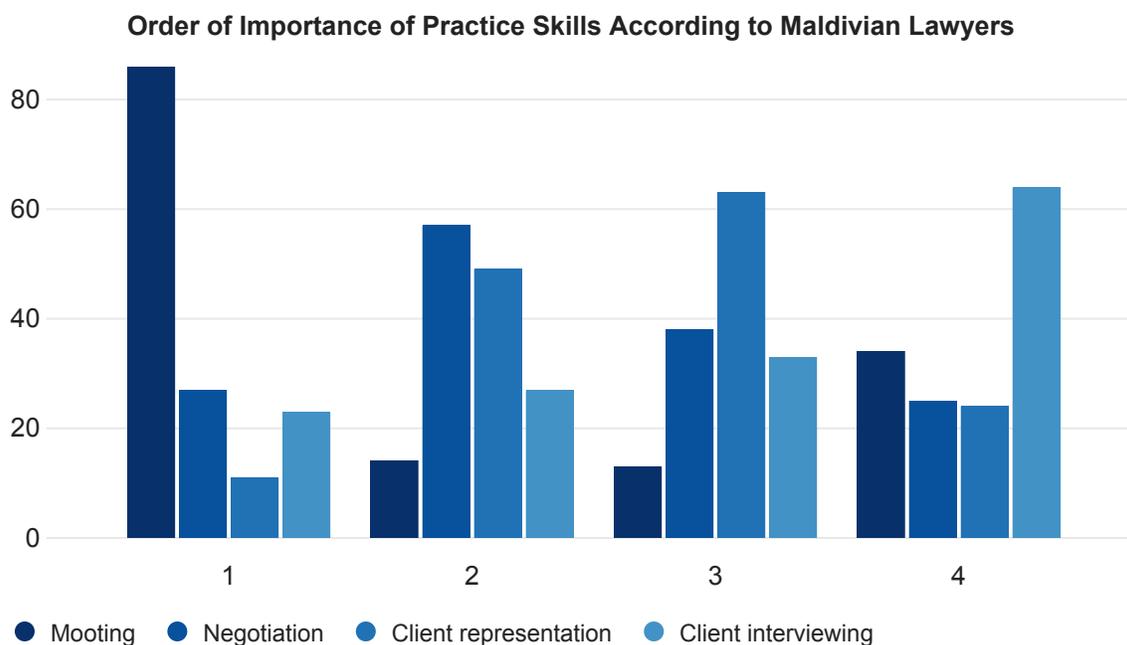
Are the Avenues for Practical Skills



Is Inclusion of Practical Skills Important?



Lawyers were asked to rank the aforementioned practical skills in order of importance. Mooting was the most commonly picked option for the most important skill, negotiation was the most commonly picked option for the second most important skill, client representation was the most commonly picked option for the third most important skill, and client interviewing was the most commonly picked option for the least important skill.



Training

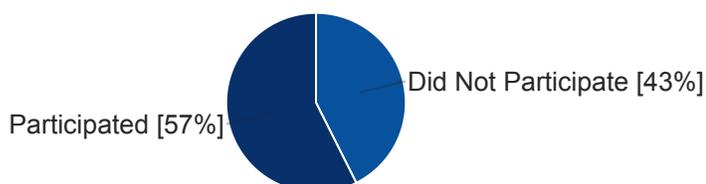
Slightly more than half of the lawyers who took this survey participated in some kind of externship, work placement, or trainee program during their legal education. Of those who did, about half responded that their program was mandatory. Shorter training programs that lasted less than 3 months were the most commonly participated in. Most training programs were part of a formal structure through either a university or employer.

More than half of the lawyers who participated in some sort of training found that it was extremely useful for practicing in the Maldivian legal profession.

Participation in Training Programs

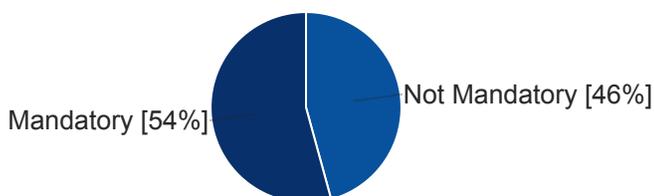
Over half (57%) of the lawyers surveyed participated in an externship, work placement, or trainee program during their legal education.

Lawyers Who Participated in an Externship/ Work Placement/ Trainee Program



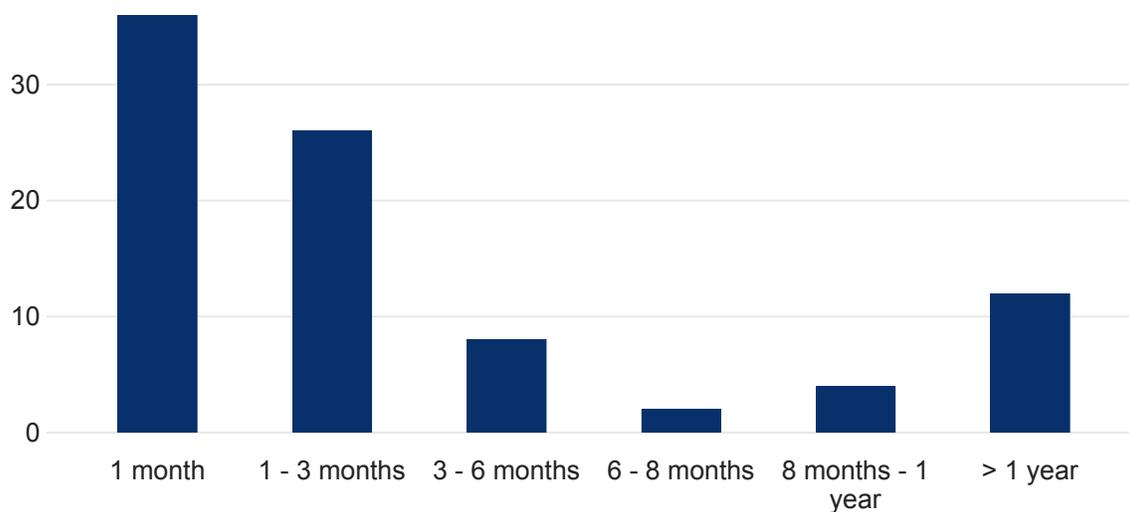
Of those who participated in a program, slightly more than half (54%) responded that their program was mandatory.

Whether or Not Training Program Was Mandatory



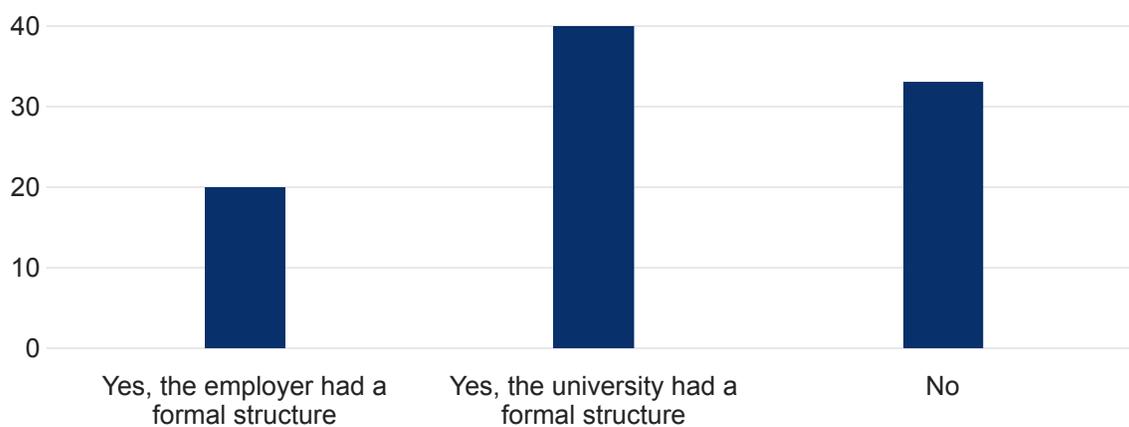
The lawyers participated in training programs of varying lengths, most commonly programs that lasted one month or somewhere between one and three months.

Length of Training Program



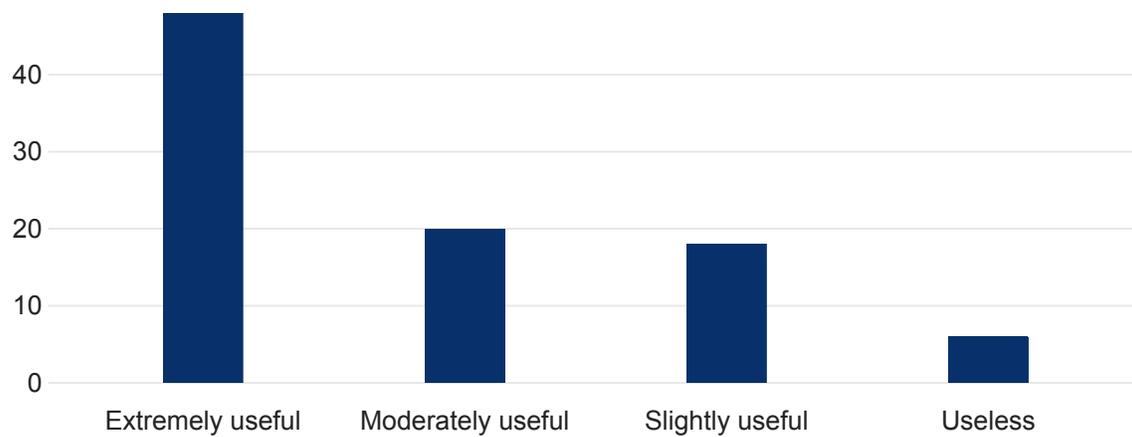
When asked about the structure of their programs, 43% of lawyers responded that the university had a formal structure, 22% responded that the employer had a formal structure, and 35% responded that there was no formal structure.

Presence of Formal Structure in Training Programs



Many lawyers reported that they found their training programs to be useful for practicing in the Maldivian legal profession. 52% of the lawyers found the programs to be extremely useful and only 6.5% found their programs to be useless.

Usefulness of Training Programs



Qualification

26% of lawyers who took this survey are licensed to practice in the High Court. 13% are licensed to practice in the Supreme Court. Most of these lawyers received their licenses to practice in these courts in the last 10 years.

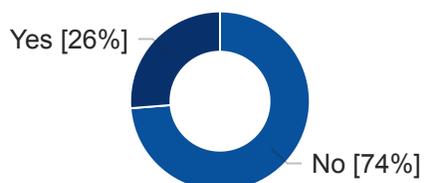
Lawyers were asked how long they waited between graduation and when they received their license. Most reported waiting between 1 and 2 years for their license.

Only 1% of the lawyers who took this survey reported being licensed to practice in a foreign jurisdiction.

High Court Licensing

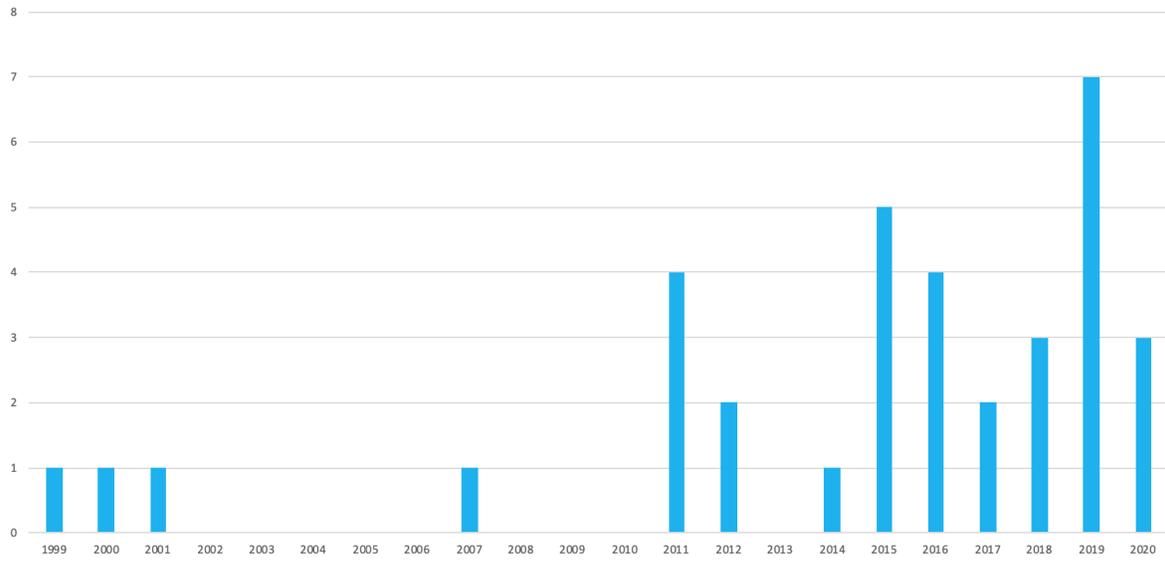
Approximately 26% of the lawyers surveyed are licensed to practice in the High Court.

Are you licensed to practice in the High Court?



Of the lawyers who responded that they are licensed to practice in the High Court, most received their license in the last ten years.

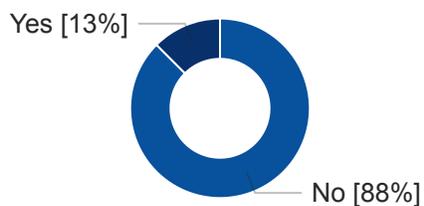
Year of Licensing for Practice in the High Court



Supreme Court Licensing

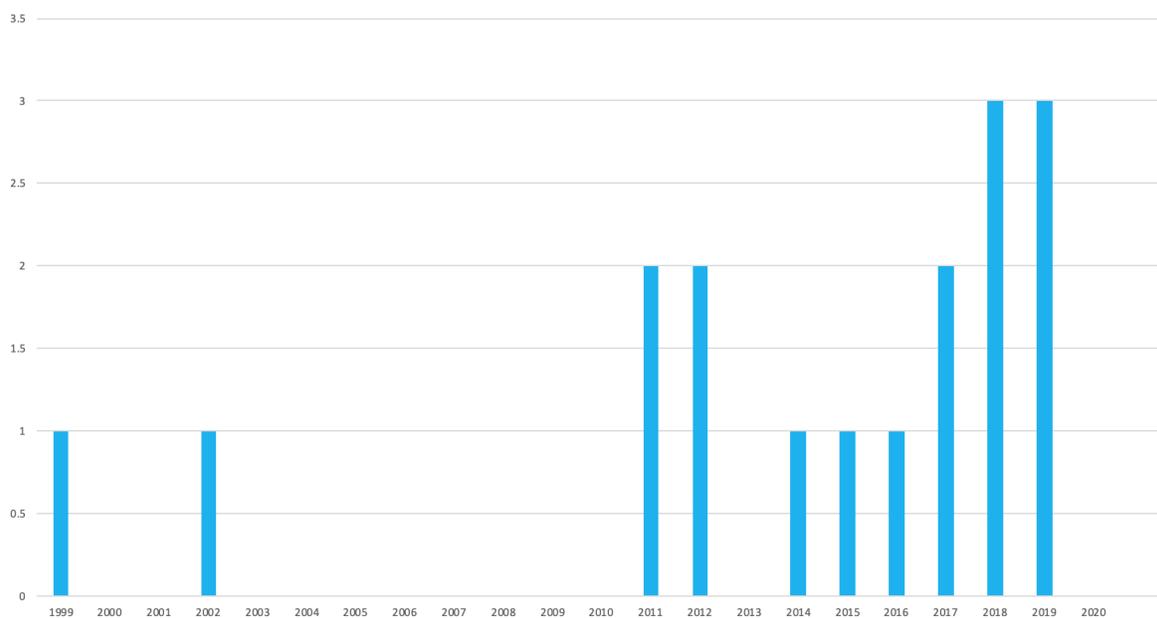
Approximately 13% of the lawyers surveyed are licensed to practice in the Supreme Court.

Are you licensed to practice in the Supreme Court?



Of the lawyers who responded that they are licensed to practice in the Supreme Court, most received their license in the last ten years.

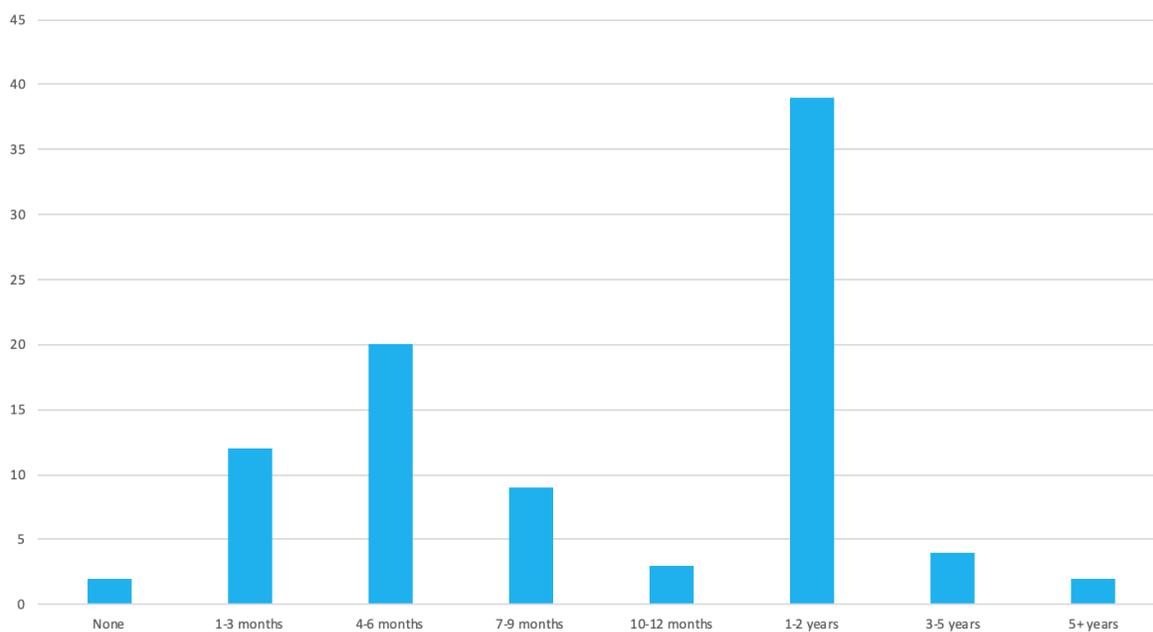
Year of Licensing for Practice in the Supreme Court



Duration Between Graduation and Licensing

Many lawyers reported waiting 1-2 years for their license after they completed their legal education. Most received it immediately or within a few months, but more than 40% waited at least one year.

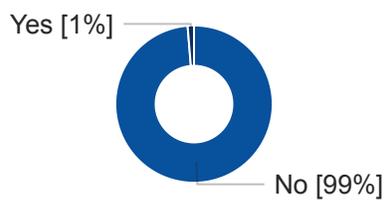
Duration Between Graduation and Licensing



Foreign Jurisdiction Licensing

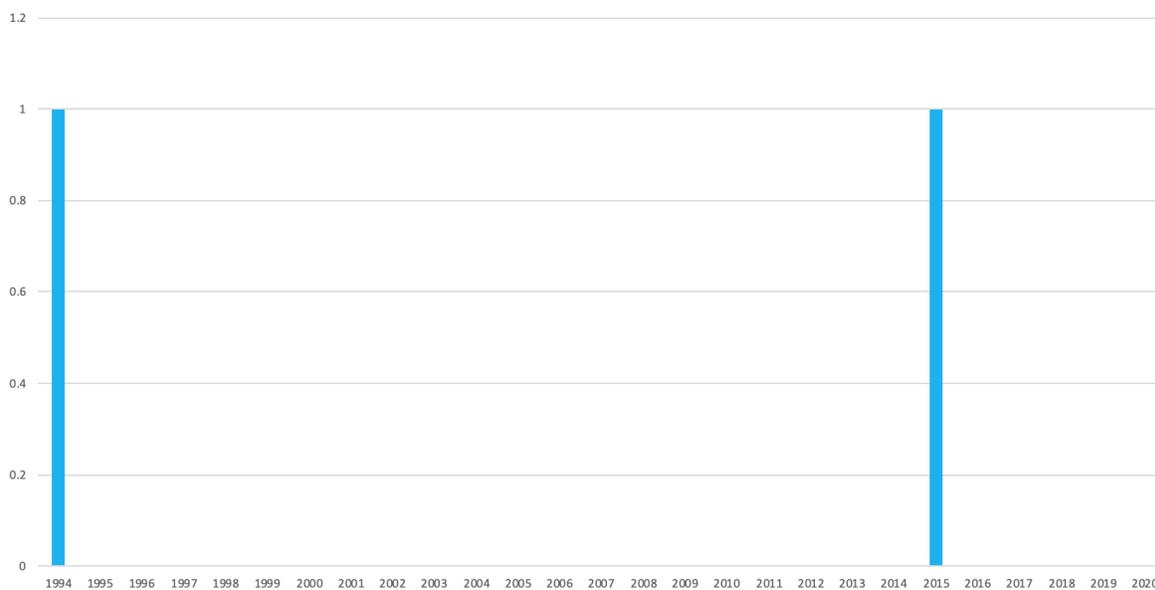
Approximately 1% of the lawyers surveyed are licensed to practice in a foreign jurisdiction. These two lawyers are licensed to practice in India and the United Kingdom.

Are you licensed in a foreign jurisdiction?



The two lawyers who reported being licensed in foreign jurisdictions received their licenses in 1994 and 2015.

Year of Licensing for Practice in Foreign Jurisdictions



Employment

85% of lawyers who took this survey were employed, mostly in a legal capacity, at the time of questioning. The majority of lawyers only work one job, but some reported working as many as 3 or 4 jobs. Of these lawyers who work multiple jobs, more than a third reported working some jobs in a legal capacity and some jobs in a non-legal capacity.

The most common area of employment was in a law firm. The most common practice areas that these lawyers practice in were civil law, employment law and commercial law. Unsurprisingly, due to the young age of the lawyers who took this survey, most lawyers reported starting their legal employment within the last 10 years. This also helps explain the high volume of lawyers who reported having spent a few years or less at their current place of employment. Lawyers who took this survey were more heavily concentrated in beginning and mid-level positions than high-level positions.

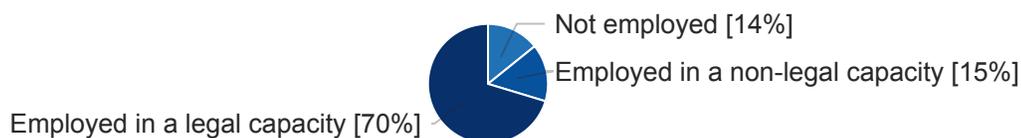
The most common monthly income reported by lawyers in the Maldives is between 15,001 MVR and 20,000 MVR. Very few made less than 5,000 MVR or more than 50,000 MVR per month.

42% of lawyers reported that they felt they had been discriminated against in seeking employment. 30% of lawyers felt that they had been discriminated against in employment.

Employment Rate

When asked about their current employment status, 70% of the lawyers responded that they are currently employed in a legal capacity, 15% responded that they are currently employed in a non-legal capacity, and 14% responded that they are currently not employed.

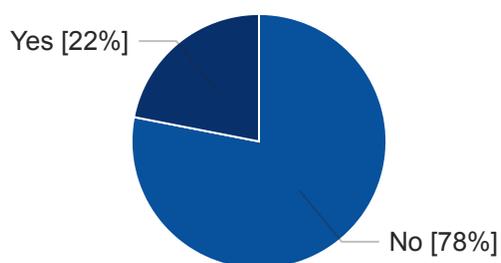
Employment Status



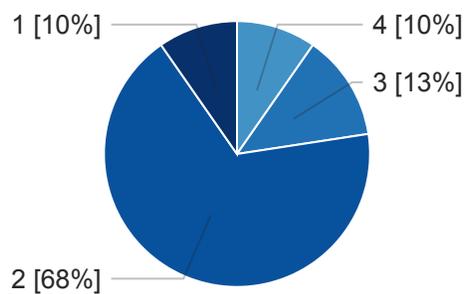
Multiple Jobs

Almost a quarter of lawyers in the Maldives work more than one job. Most of these lawyers work two additional jobs, but some work as many as 3 or 4 additional jobs.

Do you have more than one job?

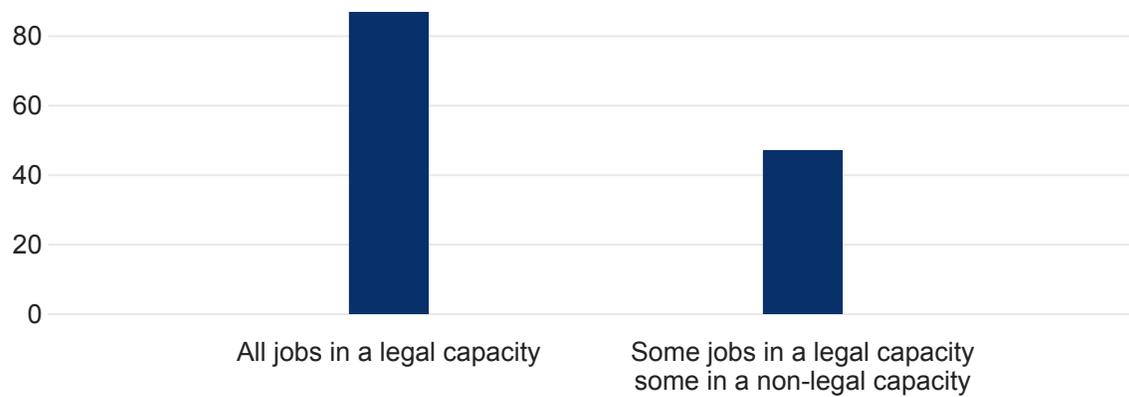


Number of Additional Jobs



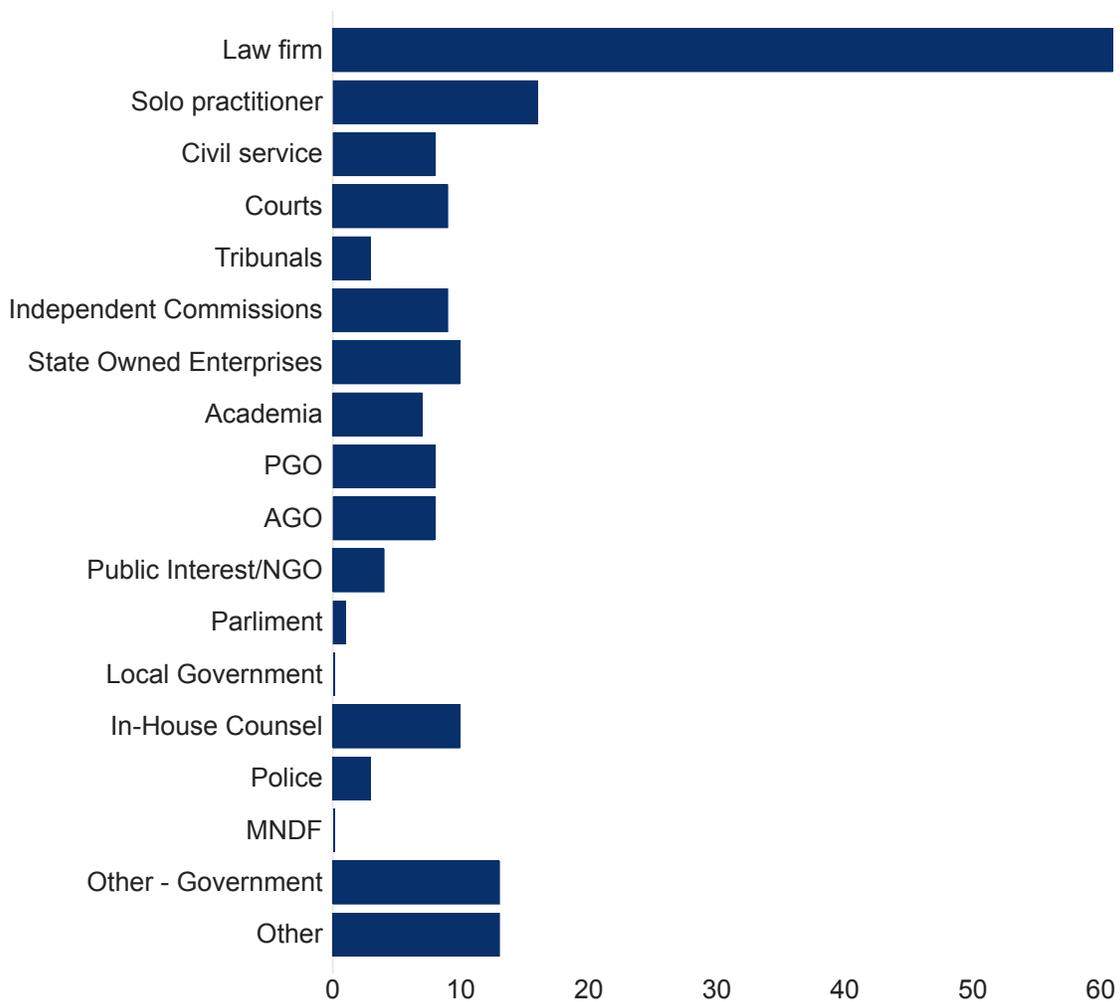
Nature of Employment

Many of the lawyers reported all of their jobs being in a legal capacity, but more than a third responded that at least some of the jobs they work are in a non-legal capacity.



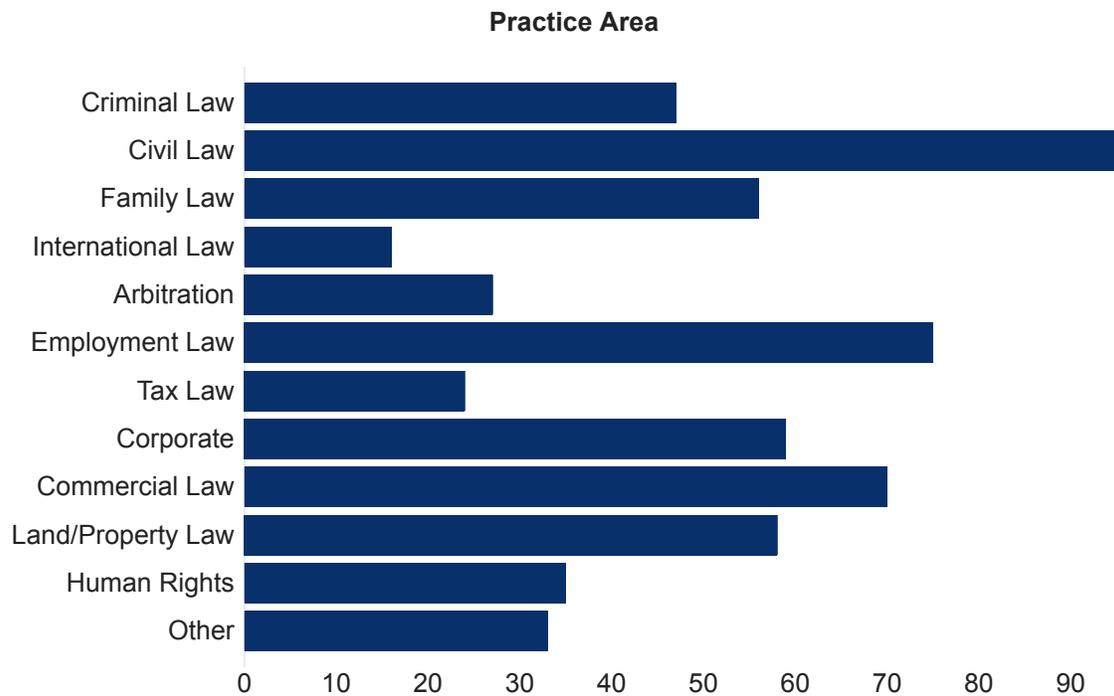
Area of Employment

Of the following areas of employment that the lawyers responded to working in, the most commonly worked in was a law firm. Other popular areas were as a solo practitioner and government work.



Practice Area

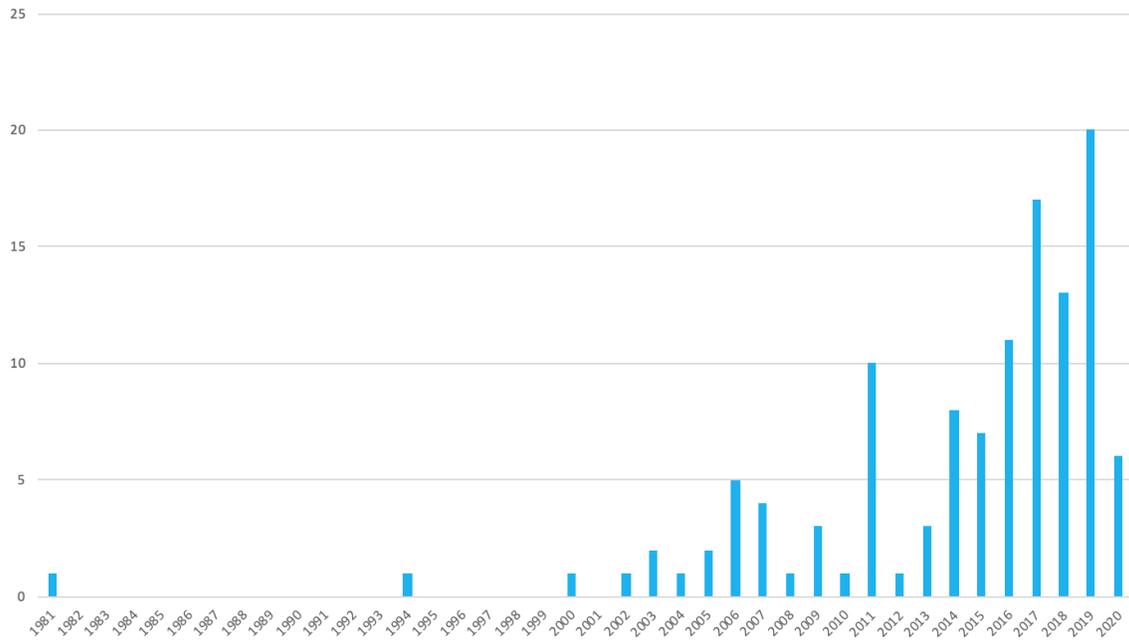
The most common practice area for lawyers who took this survey is civil law, followed by employment law and commercial law. The least common is international law.



Time Spent Working in the Legal Industry

In general, the lawyers who responded to this survey started their legal employment fairly recently. Only two lawyers started their legal employment before 2000.

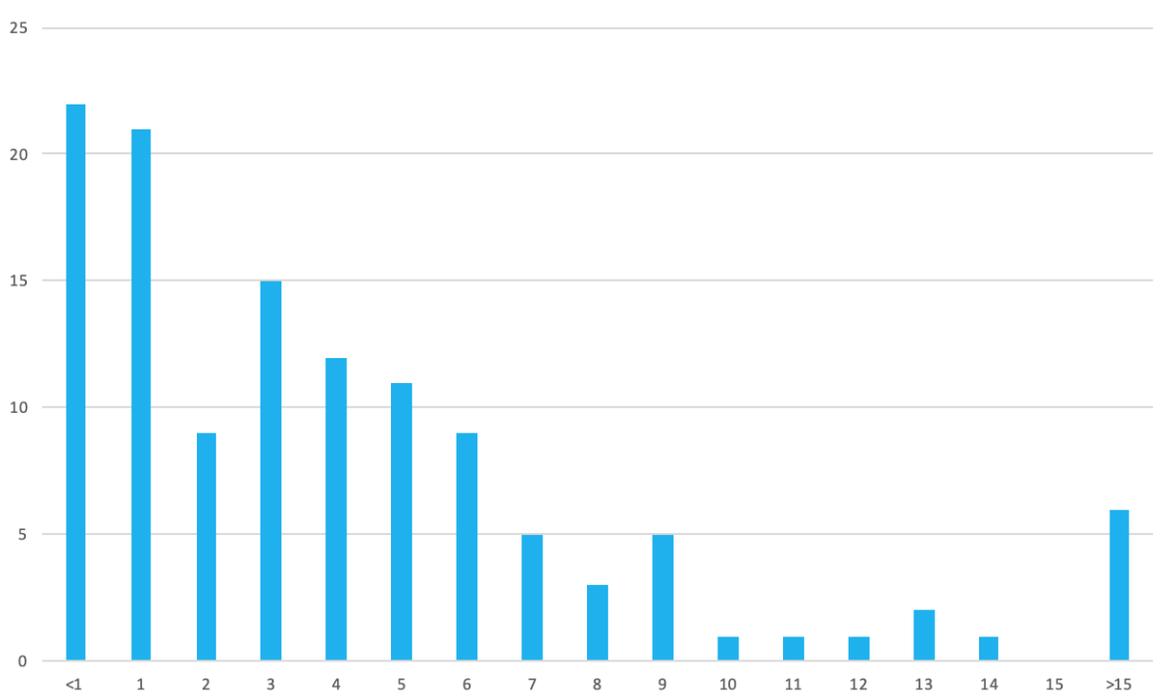
Year of Commencement of Legal Employment



Length of Time with Current Employer

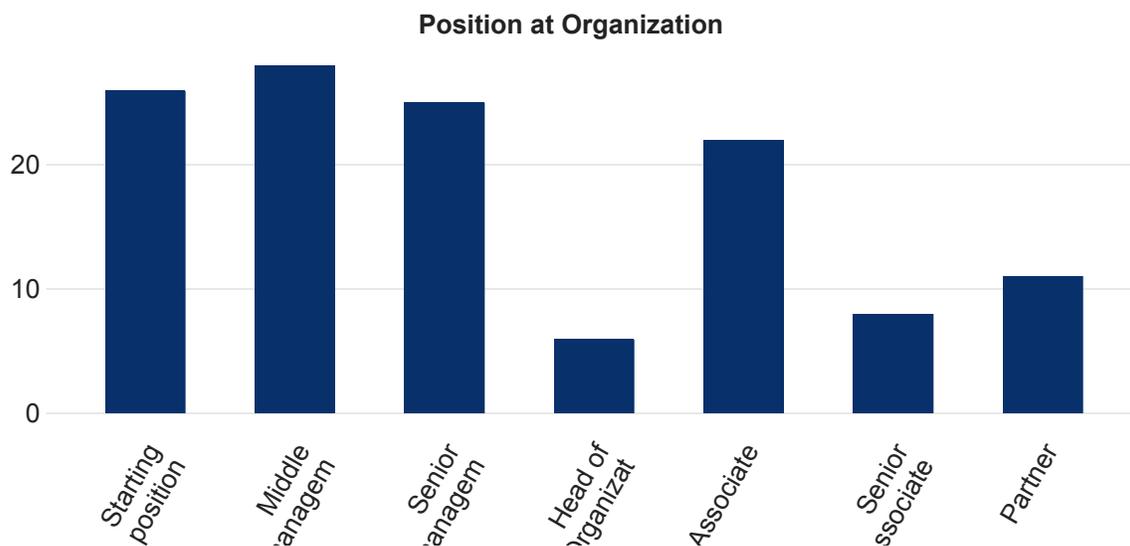
Given the high proportion of lawyers who have entered the legal industry in the past several years, it is not surprising that a large number of lawyers responded having worked at their current employer for less than a year or only a few years.

Years Spent at Current Place of Employment



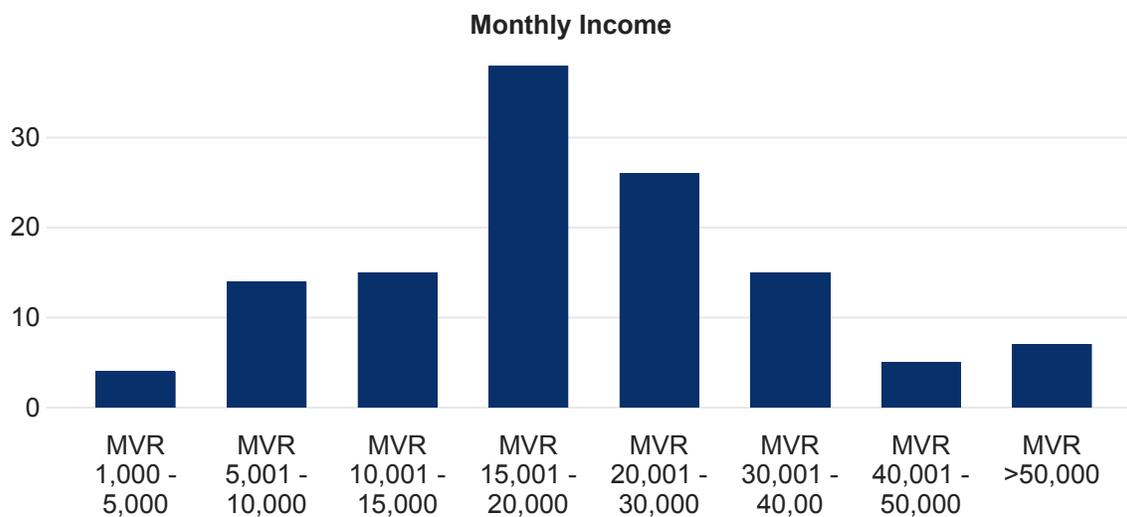
Position Held

The breakdown of positions held by lawyers in the Maldives is spread across a variety of roles: starting positions, middle management, senior management, head of organizations, associates, senior associates, and partners. The survey population was more heavily concentrated in beginning and middle level positions than upper level positions.



Income

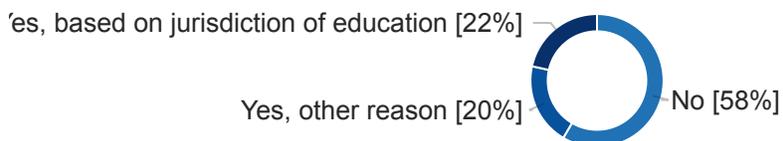
The most common monthly income reported by lawyers in the Maldives is between 15,001 and 20,000 MVR. The majority of lawyers fell somewhere around that range of monthly income, with very few making less than 5,000 MVR per month or more than 50,000 MVR per month.



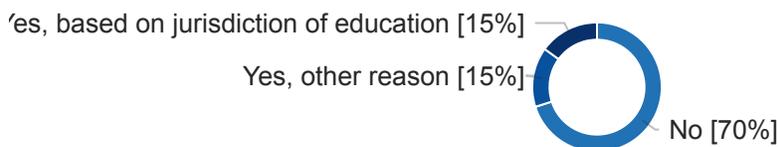
Discrimination

Lawyers were asked whether they had been discriminated against when seeking employment and in employment. They were asked to answer if they believe they had been discriminated against based on the jurisdiction of their education or if they believe it was for another reason. More lawyers responded that they believed they were discriminated against during their search for employment than during the employment itself.

Discrimination in Seeking Employment



Discrimination in Employment



CPD/CLE

Half of the lawyers surveyed have participated in continuing professional development opportunities. Overall, trainings that lasted several days were the most commonly participated in. Approximately half of the lawyers reported that the expense of their trainings was covered by their employer. Lawyers overwhelmingly found these trainings useful and necessary. Two-thirds felt that licensing should be contingent on the completion of set hours of continuing professional development every year.

When lawyers were asked to rank the importance of different continuing professional development areas, ethics and professional responsibility was ranked most important and practice management and business skills were ranked last.

Participation in Continuing Professional Development

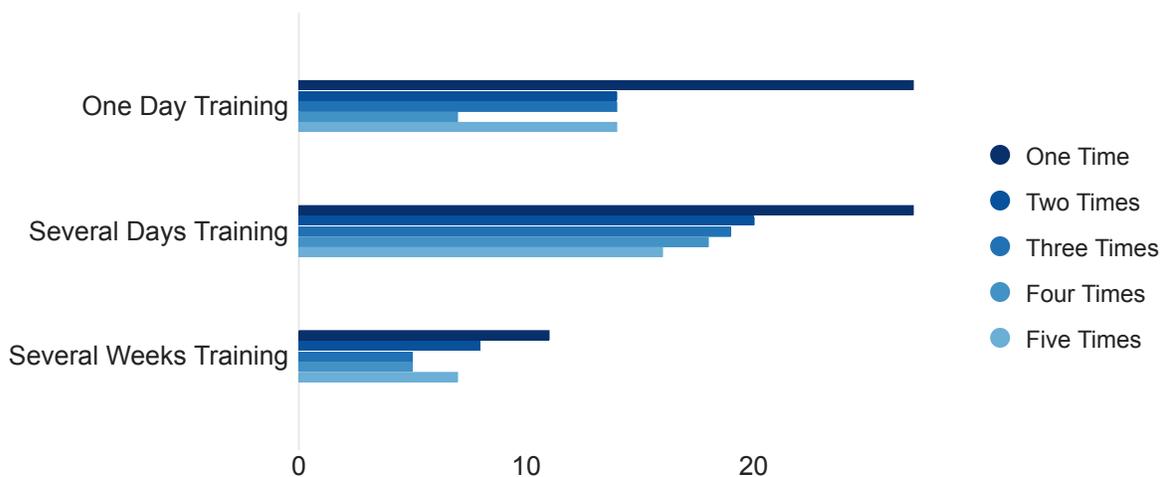
Approximately half of the lawyers surveyed reported participating in continuing professional development opportunities after receiving their license.

Participation in CPD



Those who had reported participating in CPD/CLE were asked how many trainings they participated in. Most common answers were one-time completion of one day trainings and trainings that lasted several days. Completion of trainings that lasted several weeks were less common.

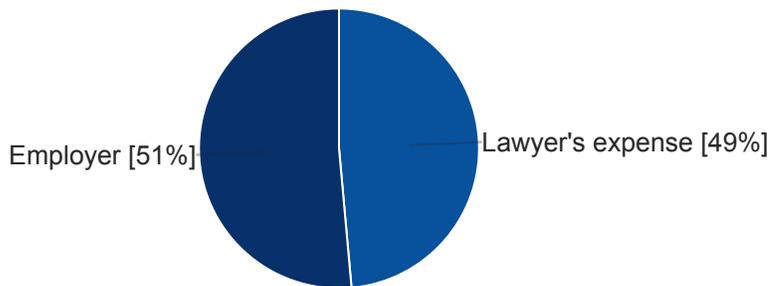
Number of Trainings Participated In



Coverage of Training by Employer

Slightly over half (51%) of the lawyers responded that their trainings were provided by their employer. The other 49% went for their trainings at their own expense.

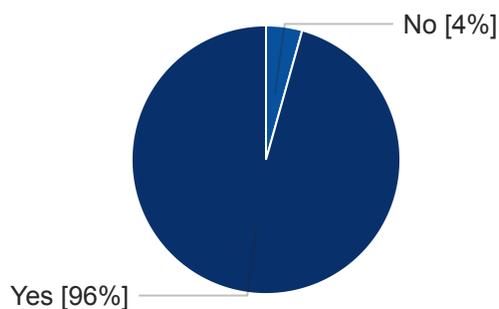
Expense of CPD/CLE Trainings



Usefulness of Trainings

Most lawyers who have participated in CPD/CLE trainings believe that these trainings are useful for their practice.

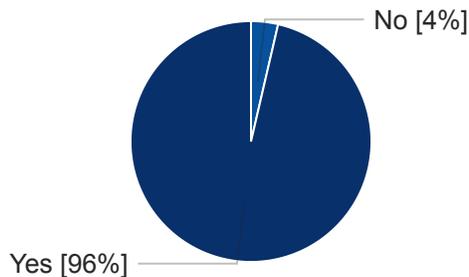
Were the Trainings Useful for Your Practice?



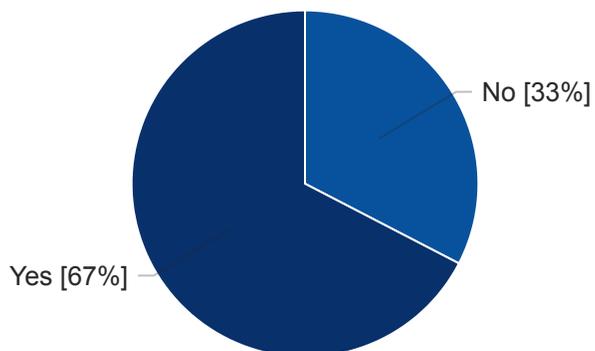
Necessity of CPD/CLE Trainings

When asked whether they believe continuing professional development is necessary in the Maldivian legal profession, almost all lawyers, including those who had not participated in trainings, responded yes. Two-thirds of the lawyers responded that they believe licensing should be contingent upon completion of set hours of continuing professional development every year.

Do You Believe CPD is Necessary in the Maldivian Legal Profession?

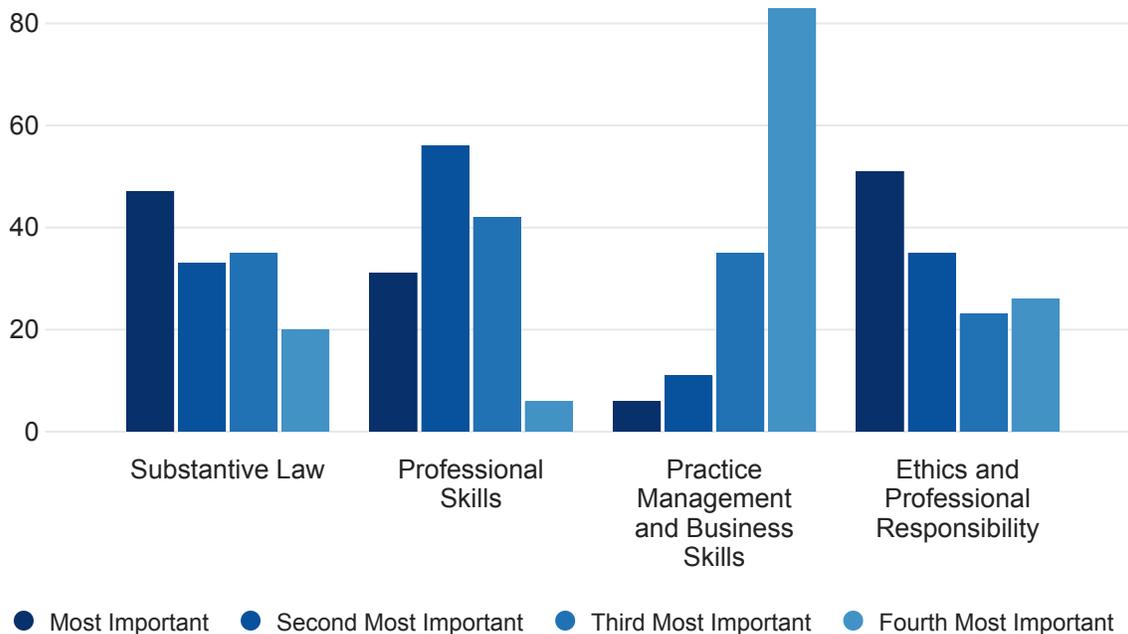


Should Licensing be Contingent on Completion of CPD?



When lawyers were asked to rank the importance of different continuing professional development areas, they ranked ethics and professional responsibility first the most, followed by substantive law and then professional skills. Practice management and business skills were ranked last by the majority of respondents.

Importance of Different CPD Areas



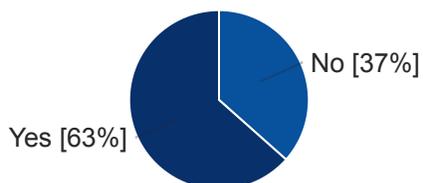
Pro Bono

Almost two-thirds of lawyers had provided pro-bono legal assistance at some point since they received their license. This most commonly took the form of litigation consultation and advice, drafting, and referrals. Although some lawyers provided pro-bono assistance with an NGO or third party or through their place of employment, most did so on their own. The most common challenge associated with pro-bono work that lawyers reported was a lack of time. Almost all lawyers who took this survey believe that lawyers should provide pro-bono legal services in the Maldives.

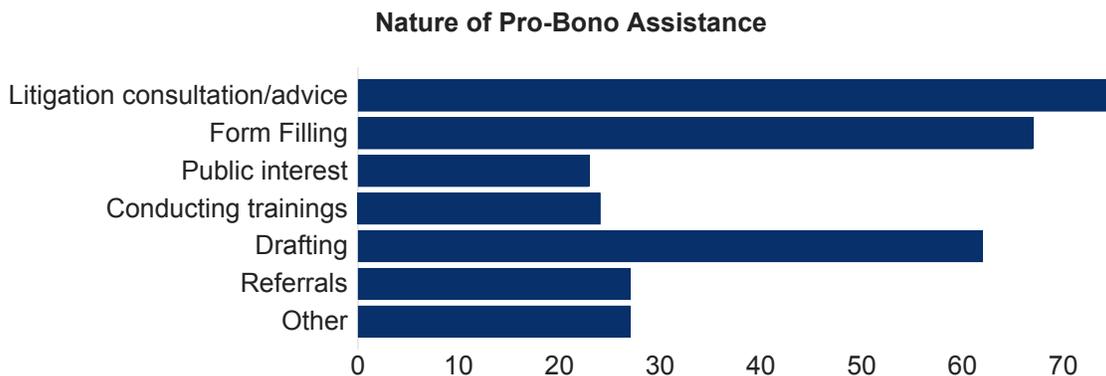
Providing Pro-Bono Legal Assistance

63% of the lawyers who took this survey have provided pro-bono legal assistance since receiving their license. This assistance took many forms, including litigation consultation/ advice, form filling, public interest, conducting trainings, drafting, and referrals.

Have you provided pro-bono legal assistance after you were licensed?

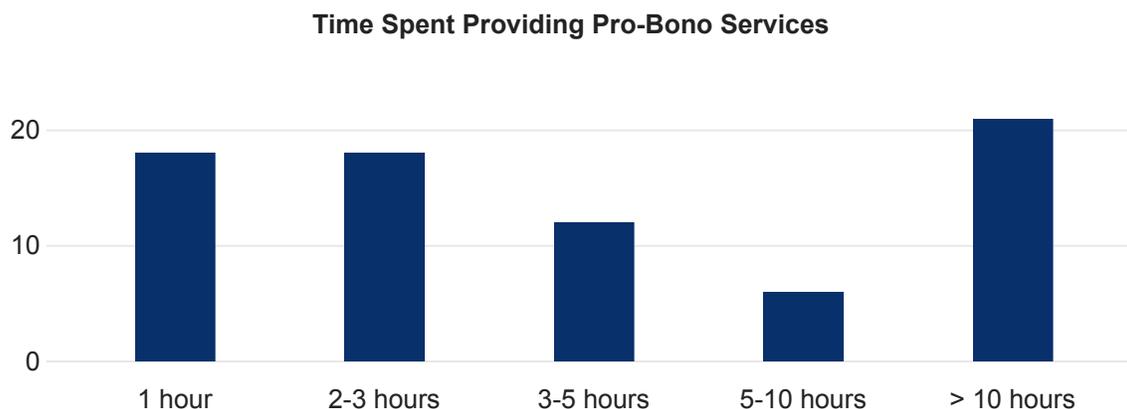


The most common pro-bono assistance provided by lawyers was litigation consulting/advice, form filling, and drafting.



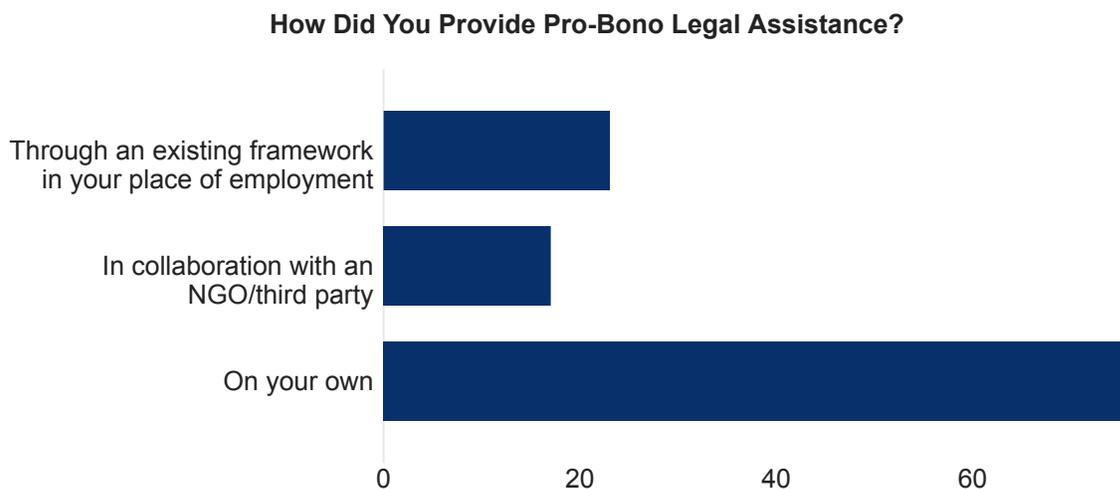
Time Dedicated to Pro-Bono Work

Lawyers were asked how often they provide pro-bono services. Responses were spread out, with a significant portion (28%) providing more than 10 hours per year.



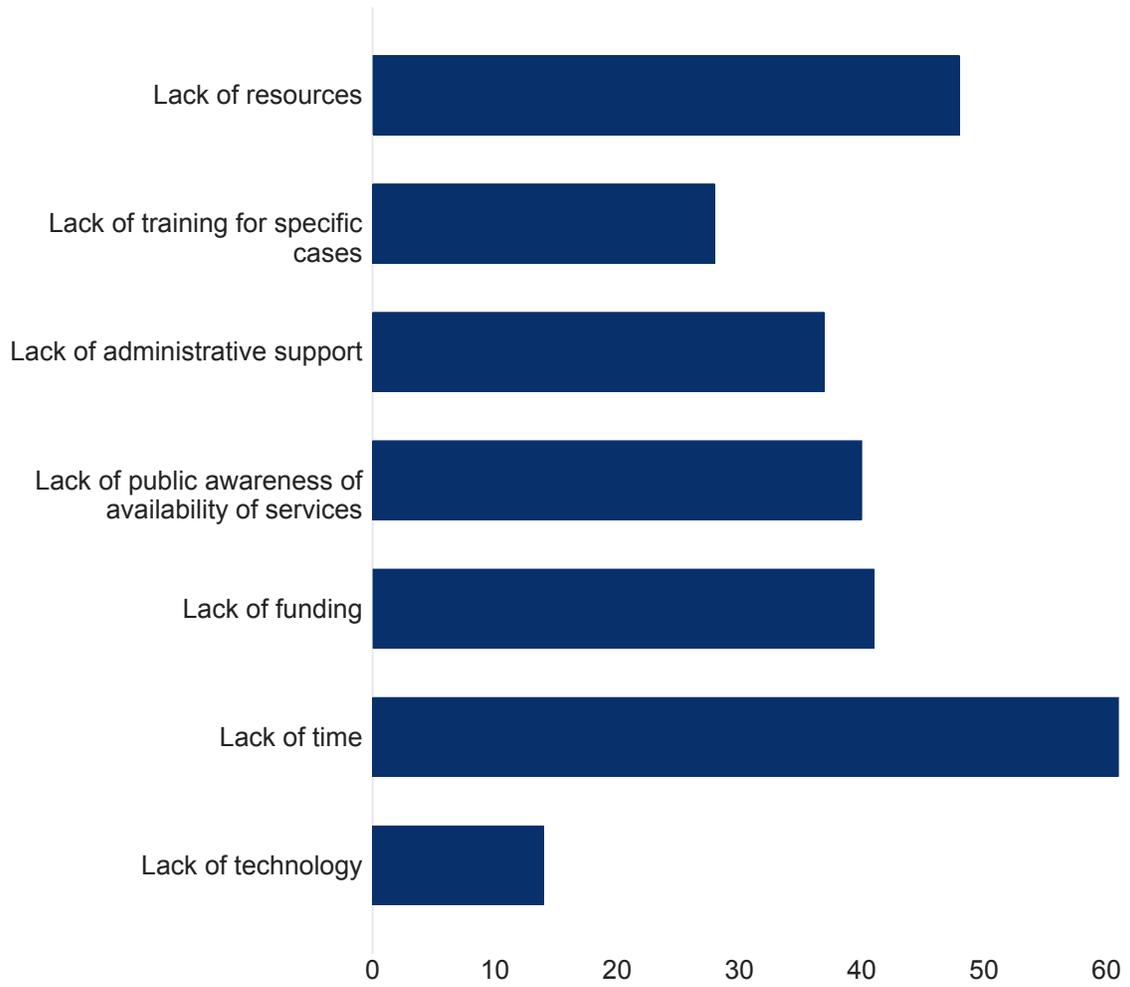
Framework of Providing Pro-Bono Services

Two-thirds of the lawyers who provided pro-bono legal services did so on their own. Some lawyers (15%) did so in collaboration with an NGO or a third party, and others (20%) did so through an existing framework at their place of employment.



Pro-Bono Challenges

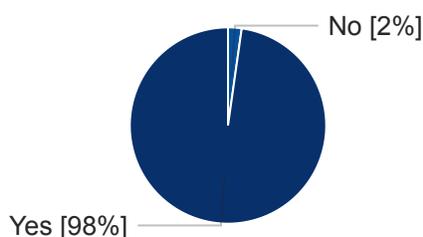
The lawyers reported facing a number of challenges when providing pro-bono legal services. These challenges included a lack of resources, lack of training for specific cases, lack of administrative support, lack of public awareness of availability of services, lack of funding, lack of time, and lack of technology. Lack of time and lack of resources were the most common grievances, but complaints were spread across all categories.



Importance of Pro-Bono Legal Assistance in the Maldives

Almost all of the lawyers who took this survey, including those who had not themselves provided pro-bono services, believe that lawyers should provide pro-bono legal assistance in the Maldives.

Should Lawyers Provide Pro-Bono Legal Services in the Maldives?



Lifestyle and Wellness

Two-thirds of the lawyers surveyed are married and most do not have children. Almost half of the lawyers delayed starting their undergraduate degree by a few years. Of those that delayed their legal education, more than half delayed by more than two years.

When asked for their motivation behind becoming a lawyer, respondents gave a wide range of answers. The most popular reasons were passion for the work and opportunities to help others or useful for society.

Lawyers were asked to rank how often they felt stress at work on a range from never to always. The most popular response was sometimes. The most common source of stress at work was a large workload. When asked how they manage their stress, the most popular responses were a work-life balance, exercise, and family support.

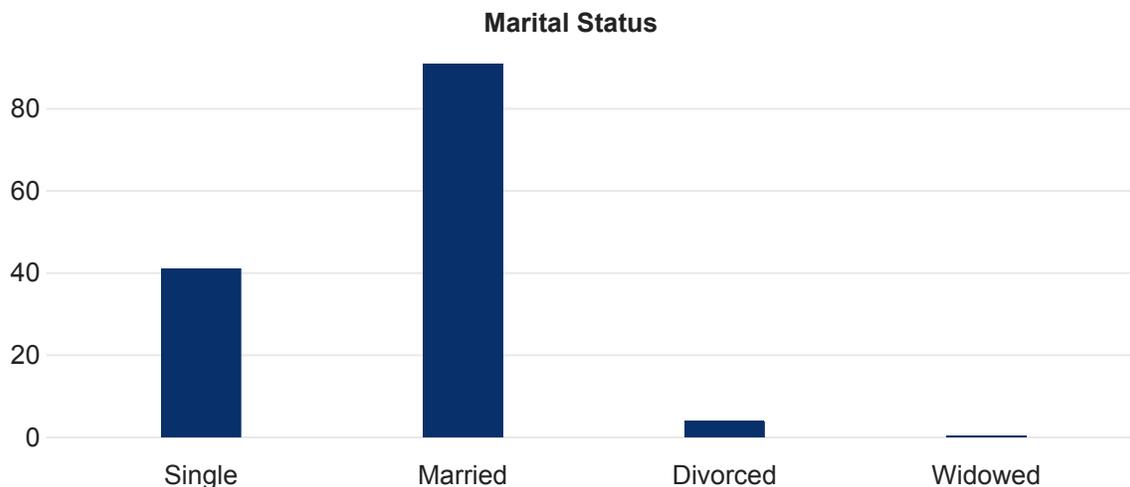
Less than a third of lawyers surveyed reported having student debt from their legal education. For those that did, most reported having less than 100,000 MVR in debt.

37% of lawyers reported experiencing depression or anxiety. More than half of those who experience depression or anxiety believe it is exacerbated by work.

3% of lawyers surveyed identified as having a disability.

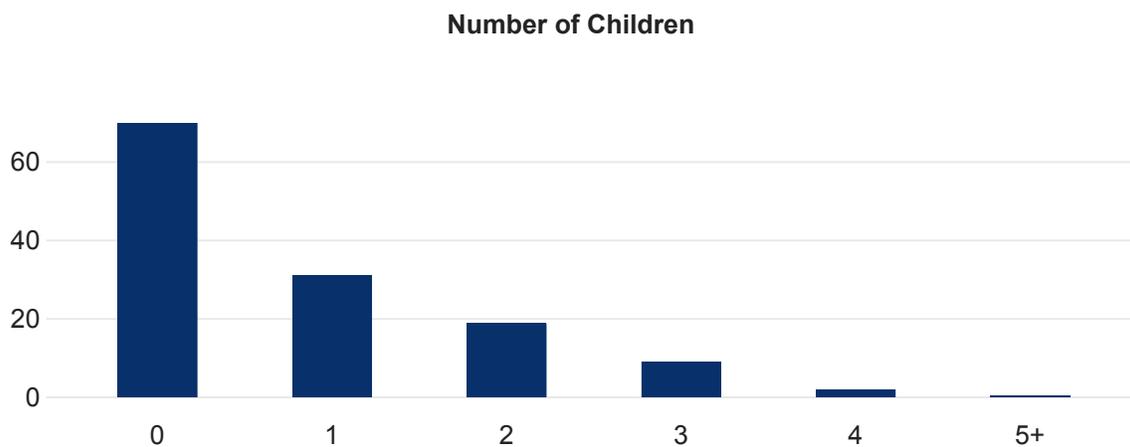
Marital Status

The majority (67%) of the lawyers who took this survey are married. Another 30% of the lawyers are single and 3% are divorced. None of the lawyers are widowed. The low number of divorced and widowed lawyers is likely related to the skew towards younger lawyers taking this survey.



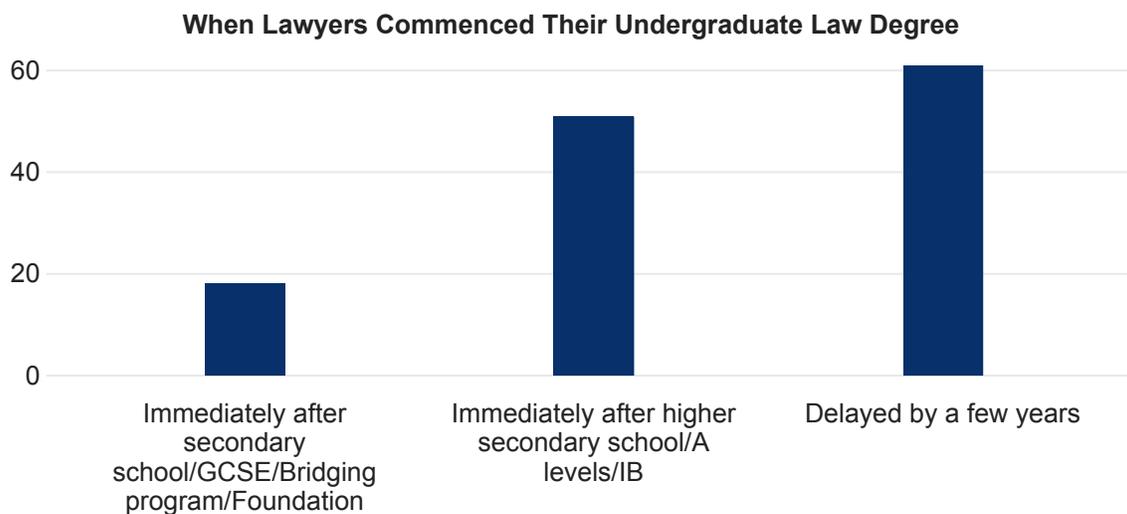
Children

More than half of the lawyers who took this survey do not have children. Of those that do have children, having fewer is more common. None of the respondents have 5 or more children.

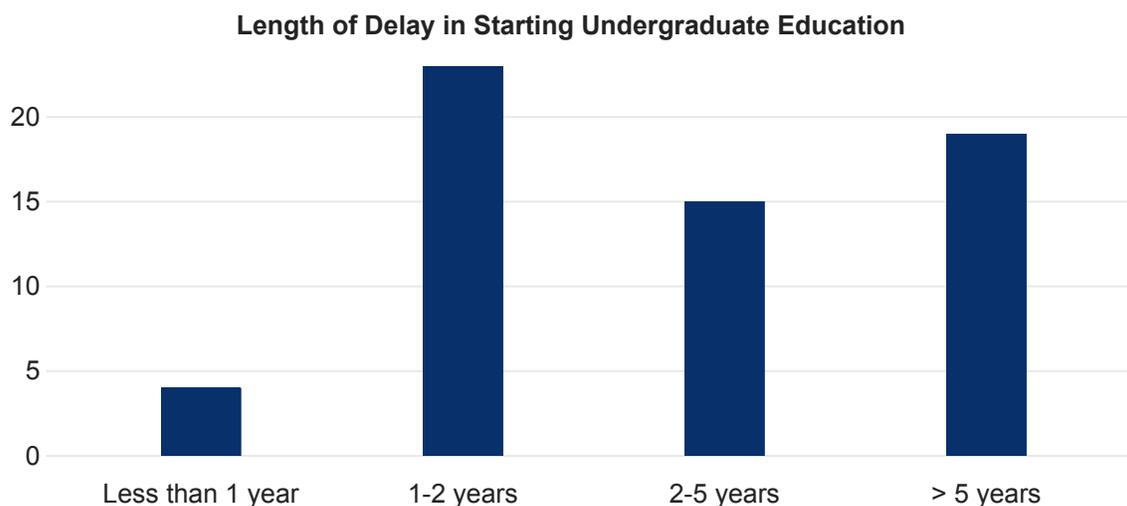


Delays in Commencing Undergraduate Law Degree

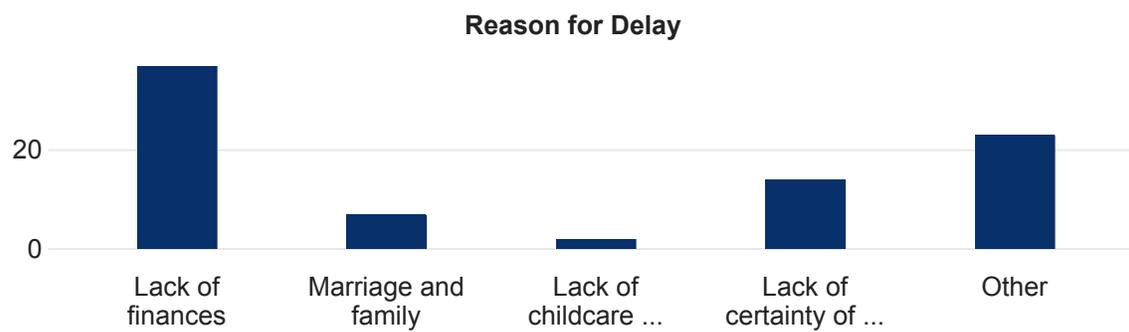
Almost half (47%) of the lawyers responded that they delayed starting their undergraduate law degree by a few years. 40% started immediately after higher secondary school/ A levels/ IB and 13% started immediately after secondary school/ GCSE/ Bridging program/ Foundation.



Of those who delayed starting their undergraduate education, 6% delayed it by less than one year, 38% delayed it by 1-2 years, 25% delayed it by 2-5 years, and 31% delayed it by 5 or more years.

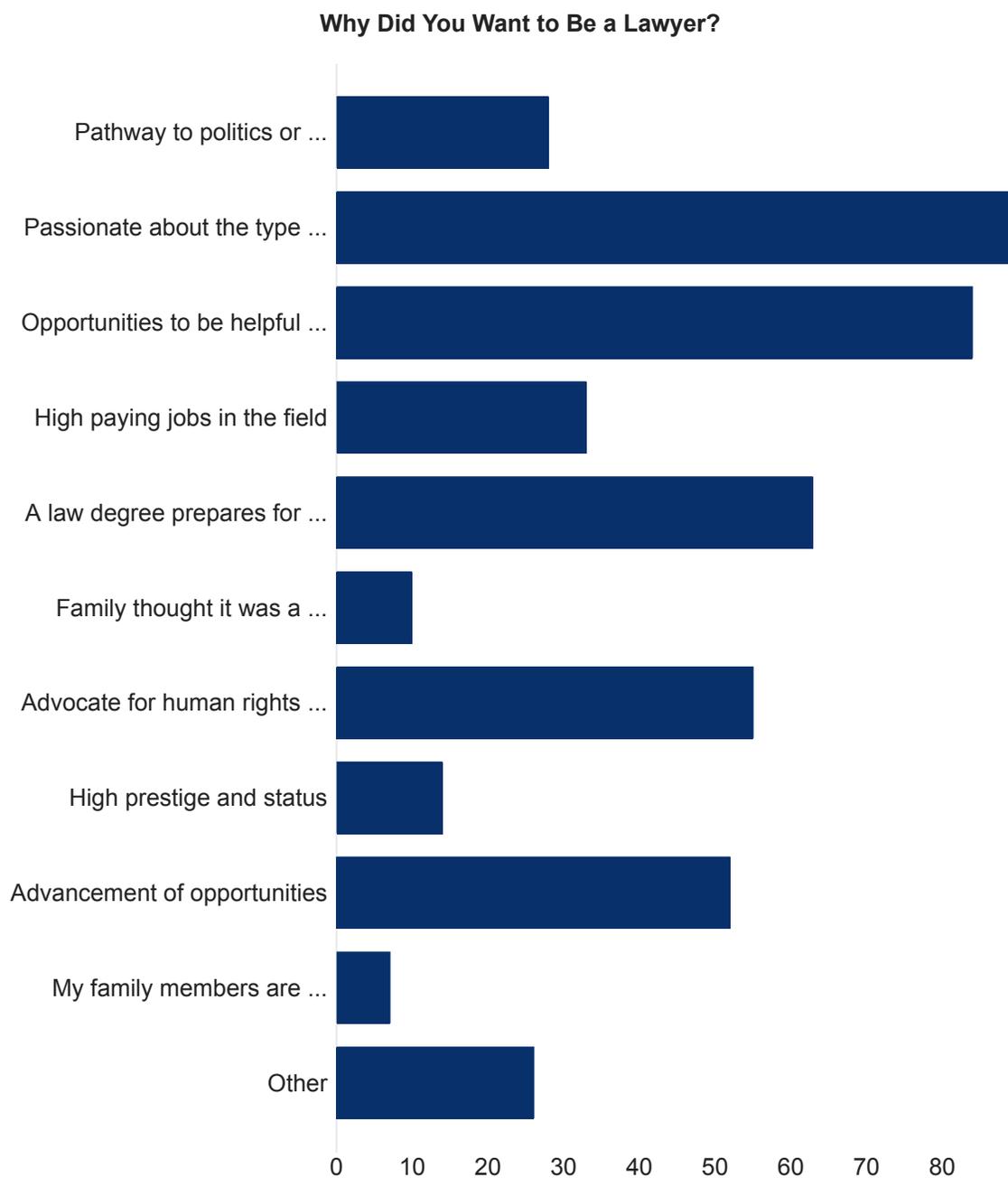


The most common reason for delaying the commencement of an undergraduate law degree was a lack of finances. Other reasons given were marriage and family, lack of childcare services, and a lack of certainty of a career choice. 28% listed having another reason for delaying their degree.



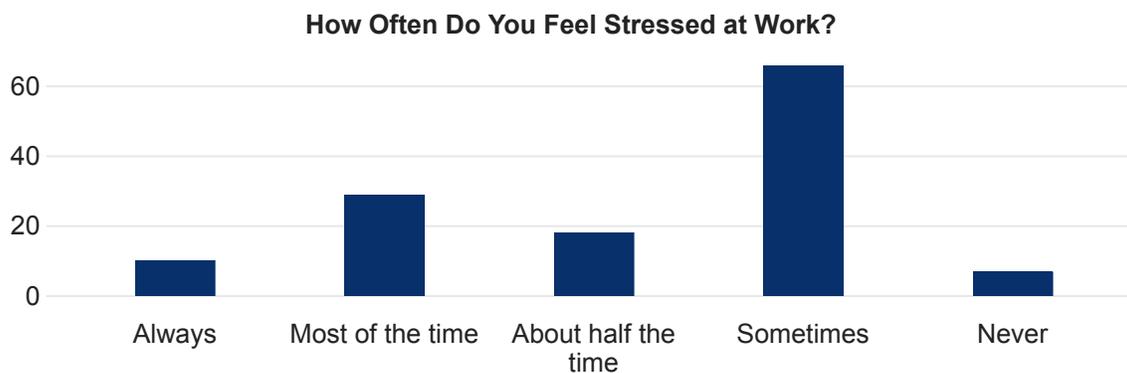
Motivation for Becoming a Lawyer

When asked why they wanted to become a lawyer, respondents gave many reasons. The most common were passion for the work and opportunities to be helpful to others or useful for society.

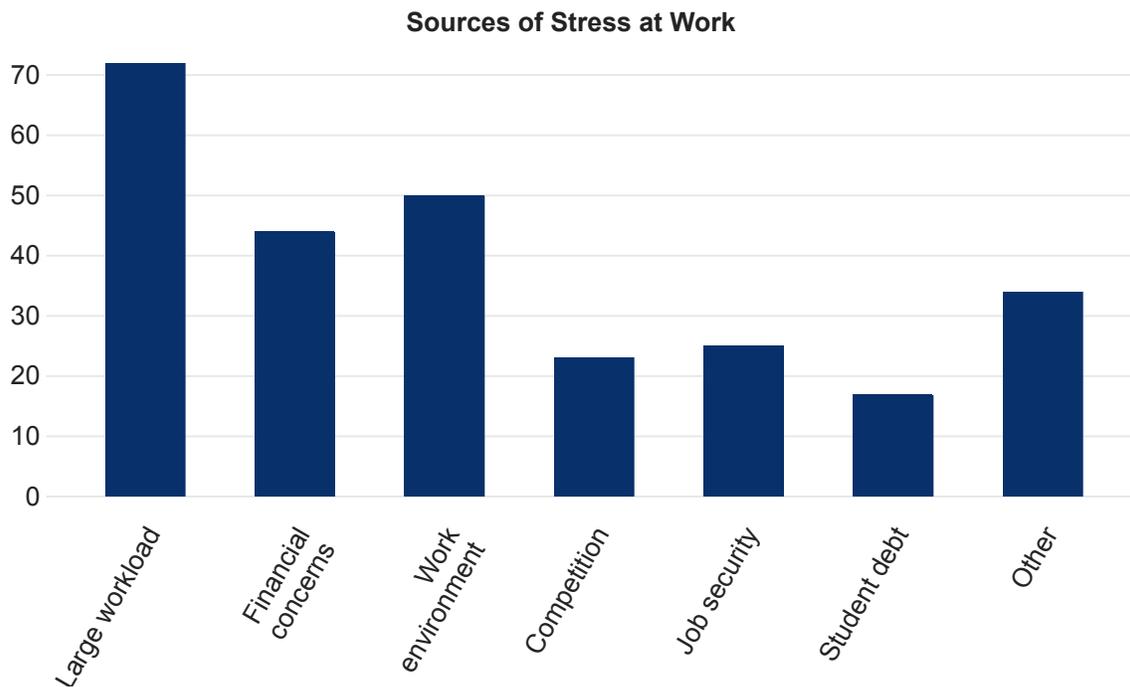


Stress

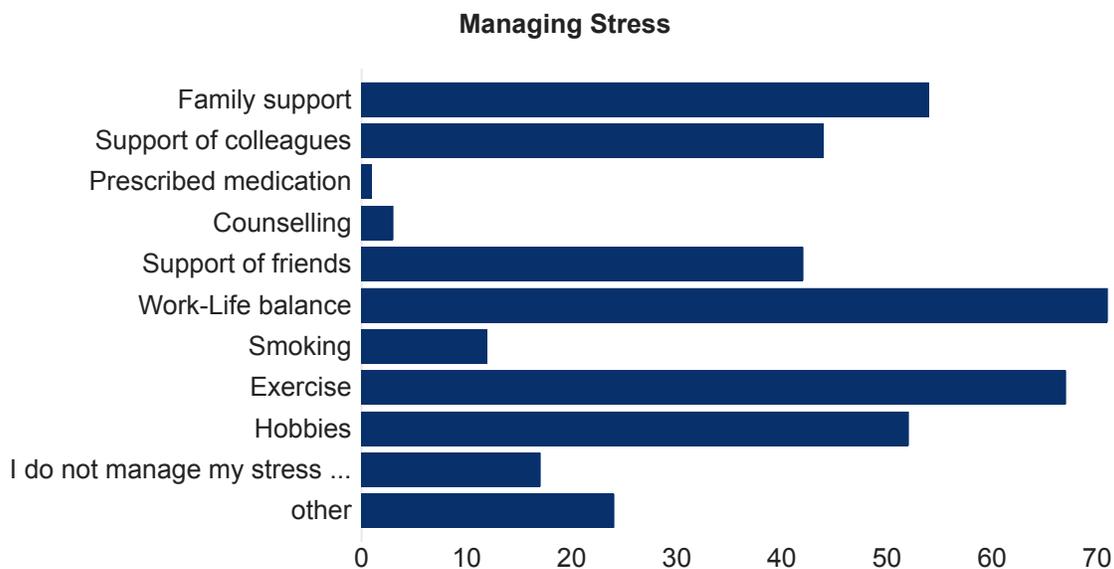
Lawyers were asked about their stress levels at work. The most common answer was that they sometimes felt stress at work. Most lawyers fell somewhere in the middle of the stress spectrum, with few claiming they always or never felt stressed at work.



The sources of stress at work that lawyers reported are a large workload, financial concerns, work environment, competition, job security, and student debt, among other concerns. The most common source of stress among these was large workload and the least common was student debt.



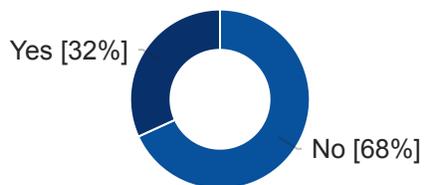
Lawyers respond to their stress in many different ways. Those who took this survey responded that they manage their stress most commonly through work-life balance, exercise, hobbies, and support from family, friends and colleagues.



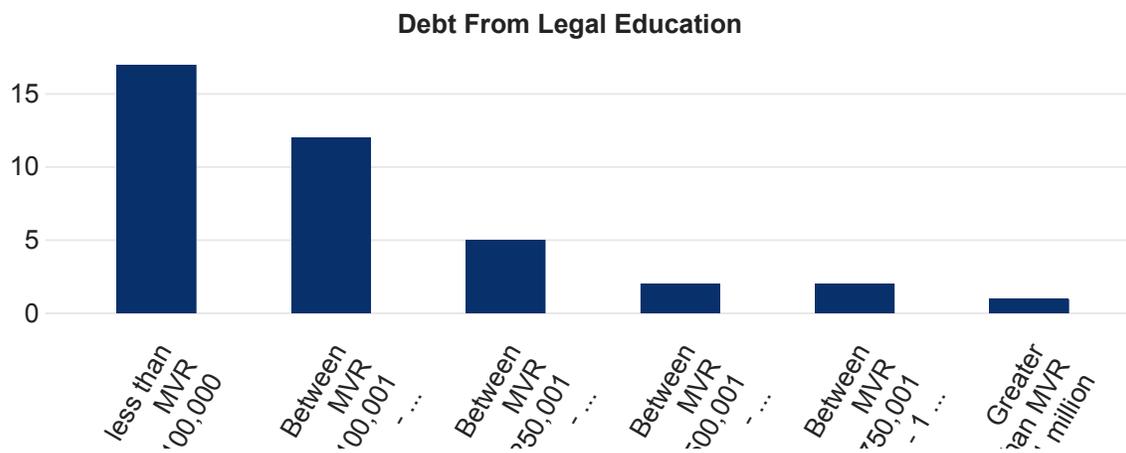
Student Debt

Of the lawyers surveyed, 32% reported having student debt arising from their legal education.

Do you have student debt arising from your legal education?



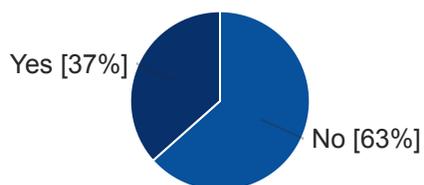
Those who did have student debt were asked how much debt they had. 44% reported having less than 100,000 MVR. Only 8% reported having more than 750,000 MVR in student debt.



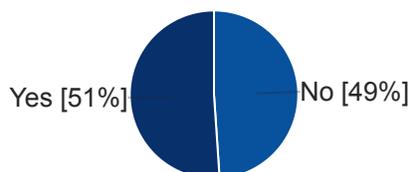
Depression and Anxiety

Over a third of the lawyers reported experiencing depression or anxiety. Of those who do, more than half believe their depression or anxiety is exacerbated by their work.

Do You Experience Depression or Anxiety?



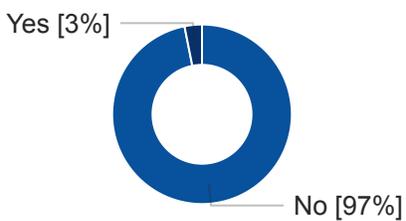
Is Your Depression or Anxiety Exacerbated by Work?



Disability

Approximately 3% of the lawyers who took this survey reported identifying as having a disability.

Do you identify as having a disability?



Profile of the Legal Profession of the Republic of Maldives
© 2020 Bar Council of the Maldives

The Bar Council of the Maldives hereby grants permission for copies of the materials herein to be made, in whole or in part, for classroom use in an institution of higher learning or for use by not-for-profit organizations, provided that the use is for informational, noncommercial purposes only and any copy of the materials or portion thereof acknowledges original publication by the Bar Council of the Maldives, including the title of the publication, the name of the author, and the legend "Reprinted by permission of the Bar Council of the Maldives. All rights reserved."