



# The State Bar *of California*

## **2023 California Accredited and Registered Unaccredited Law School Performance Report**

June 14, 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

This report contains key measures for California Accredited Law Schools and Registered Unaccredited Law Schools. These schools are referred to as “CALS” and “unaccredited,” respectively, throughout the report.

The State Bar published the first California Accredited and Registered Unaccredited Law School Performance Report in 2023, which analyzed data for 2022. This report is based on 2023 data and contains new analyses not included in last year’s report for a more nuanced and complete understanding of the California law school landscape. For example, in some instances, unaccredited law schools were further disaggregated into their teaching modalities (fixed-facility, correspondence, and distance-learning) to provide additional context about performance and outcomes. Also, intersectional demographic analysis was added to provide a more detailed picture of California’s law school student population.

This report’s primary data sources are the CALS 2023 Periodic Compliance Reports and the unaccredited schools’ 2023 Annual Compliance Reports. These reports are mandatory and gather administrative and programmatic information and data from schools annually. Historical data on the number of schools categorized by type and total enrollment figures was drawn from past annual reports. Information on exam statistics was sourced from publicly available reports published by the State Bar. See the methodology section for more details about these data sources and data definitions. See Appendix A for a set of tables containing data from 2022 and 2023.

Due to rounding, data points presented throughout this report may not add up precisely to subtotals and totals.

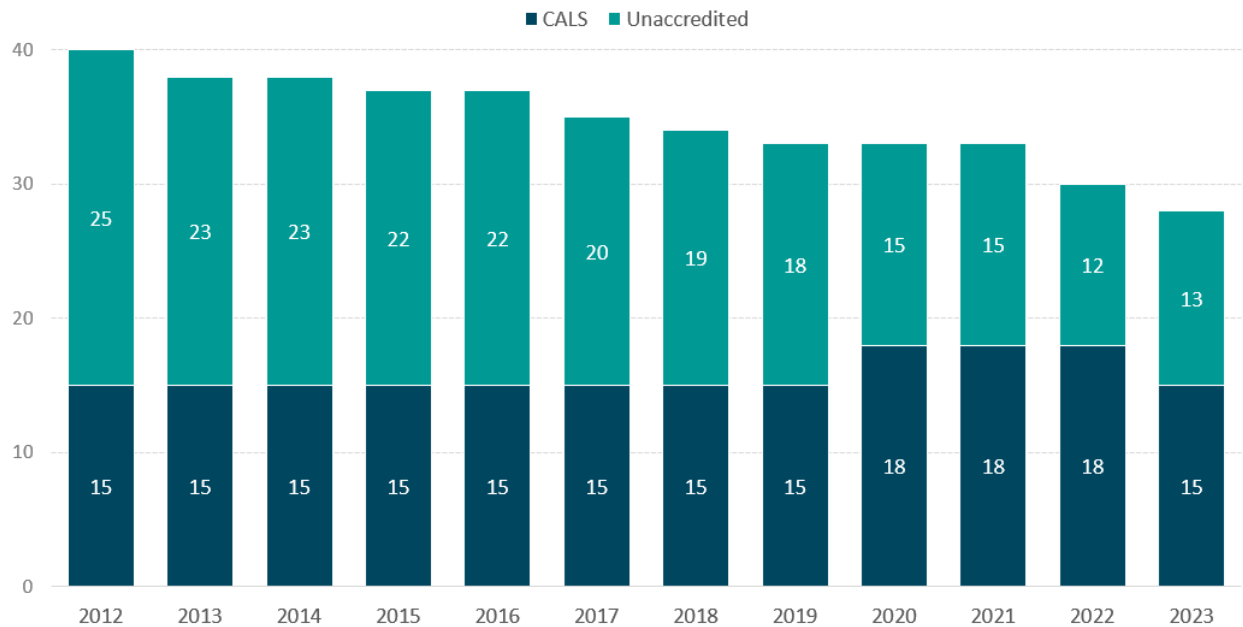
## LAW SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

### LAW SCHOOL TYPE

Figure 1 shows the annual number of CALS and unaccredited schools from 2012 through 2023.

- In 2012, there were 40 CALS and unaccredited schools; as of fall 2023, there were 28.
- Since 2012, the number of unaccredited schools has decreased from 25 to 13; CALS increased from 15 in 2012 to 18 in 2020 as three new schools were accredited, and then reduced to 15 in 2023 as three others transitioned to unaccredited status.
- The decrease in unaccredited law schools is almost entirely related to voluntary closures, including changes in school owners' business priorities or the passing of the school's founders. One unaccredited law school had its degree-granting authority terminated involuntarily for failure to meet its probation conditions.

**Figure 1. Number of 2023 CALS and Unaccredited Schools**



## TEACHING MODALITY

Table 1 shows the number of law schools by their 2023 teaching modality. There are three teaching modalities: correspondence, distance-learning, and fixed-facility. A correspondence law school conducts instruction primarily via self-paced independent learning using printed or taped materials sent through correspondence or the Internet. A distance-learning law school conducts instruction and interactive classes principally via technology and the Internet. A fixed-facility law school is a brick-and-mortar school that requires in-person classroom attendance. Unaccredited law schools must operate primarily under a single modality. Since 2018, CALS have been allowed to adopt a hybrid approach using both distance-learning and fixed-facility modalities.

- The number of unaccredited law schools using a distance-learning modality increased from four in 2022 to six in 2023. Most unaccredited law schools (nine out of 13) operate outside an in-person classroom.
- The number of CALS using a hybrid approach increased from six in 2022 to 10 in 2023, and the number using a fixed-facility-only modality decreased from eight in 2022 to one in 2023.

**Table 1. Number of 2023 CALS and Unaccredited Schools by Teaching Modality**

Teaching Modality	CALS	Unaccredited
Correspondence	0	3
Distance-learning	4	6
Fixed-facility	1	4
Hybrid	10	0
Total	15	13

## JURIS DOCTOR (JD) ENROLLMENT

Figure 2 displays JD enrollment at CALS and unaccredited law schools from 2012 through 2023.

- JD enrollment at CALS and unaccredited schools declined between 2012 and 2015, similar to a broader trend of declining JD enrollment nationwide during the same period.
- CALS JD enrollment reached its lowest point since 2012 in 2019. Enrollment increased significantly in 2020 as two schools previously approved by the American Bar Association (ABA) transitioned to CALS status, and three previously unaccredited law schools became accredited.
- Among the 25 unaccredited schools open in 2012, 14 closed their operations, and three converted to a CALS by 2023, contributing to a decline in JD enrollment at unaccredited schools.

**Figure 2. JD Enrollment by Law School Type: 2012 – 2023**

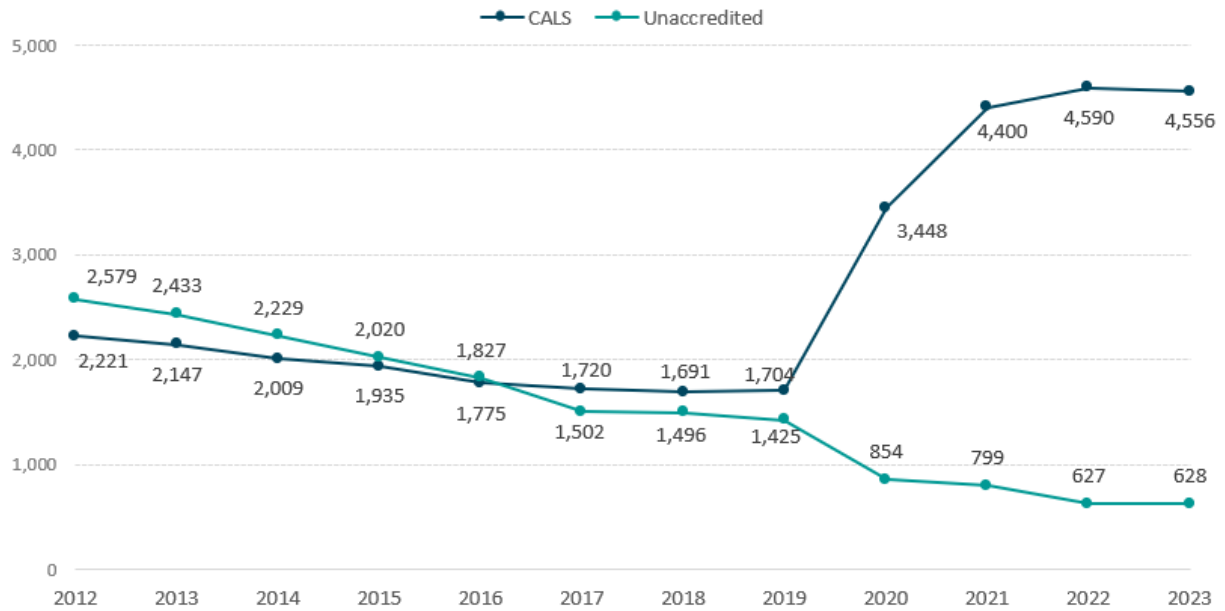


Figure 3 shows students' race/ethnicity distribution at CALS and unaccredited law schools.

- Over half of students enrolled at CALS (57 percent) and unaccredited (51 percent) schools are people of color.
- White students comprise 36 percent of students at CALS and 39 percent of students at unaccredited schools.
- Latinos comprise more than one-quarter (27 percent) of students enrolled at CALS and 19 percent at unaccredited schools.
- The student population at unaccredited law schools comprises a smaller proportion of people of color or Latino. Still, these schools have a slightly higher share of American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander students, as well as those who declined to state their race/ethnicity.

**Figure 3. 2023 JD Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

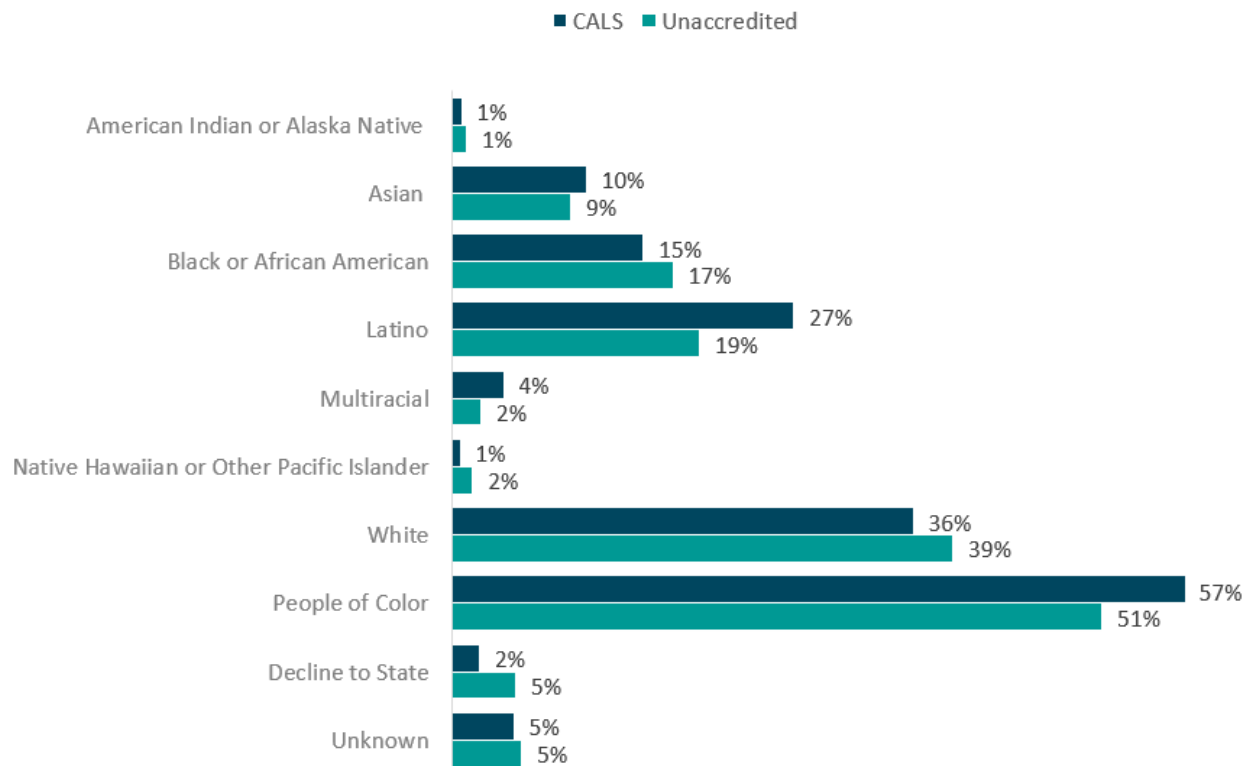


Figure 4 displays the gender identity of students enrolled at CALS and unaccredited schools.

- Women account for most students enrolled at CALS (57 percent) and unaccredited law schools (52 percent).

**Figure 4. 2023 JD Enrollment by Gender Identity**

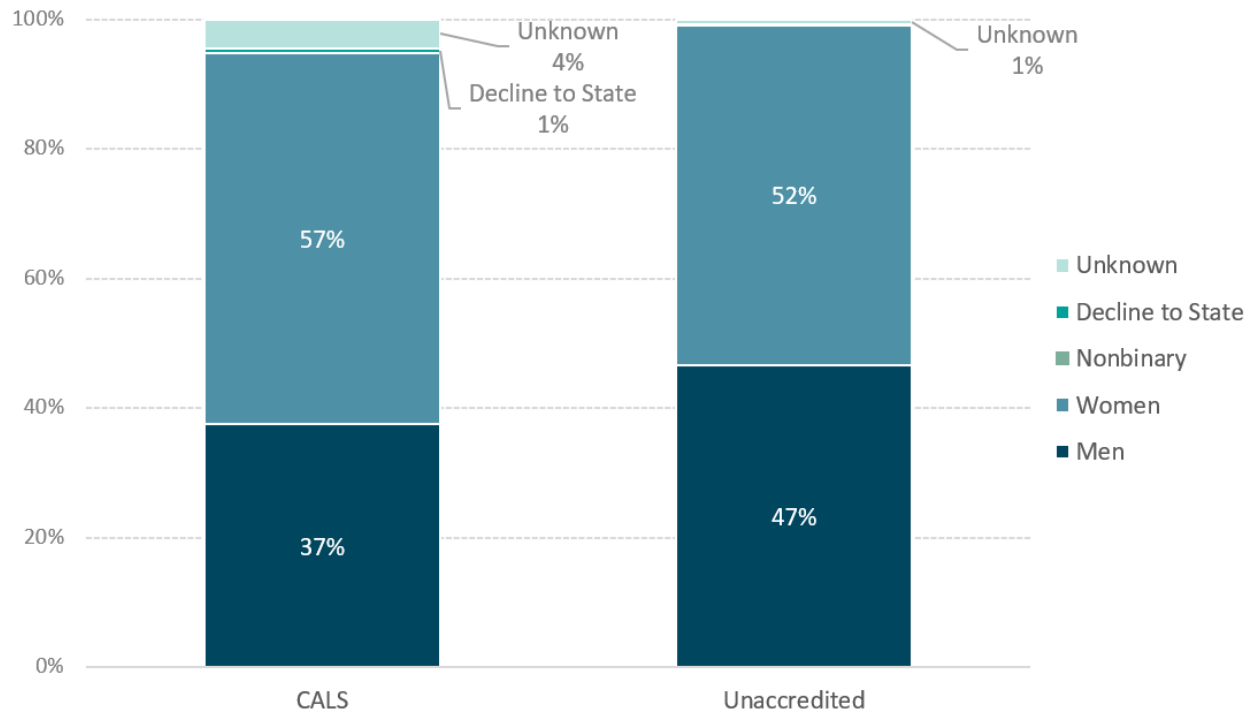
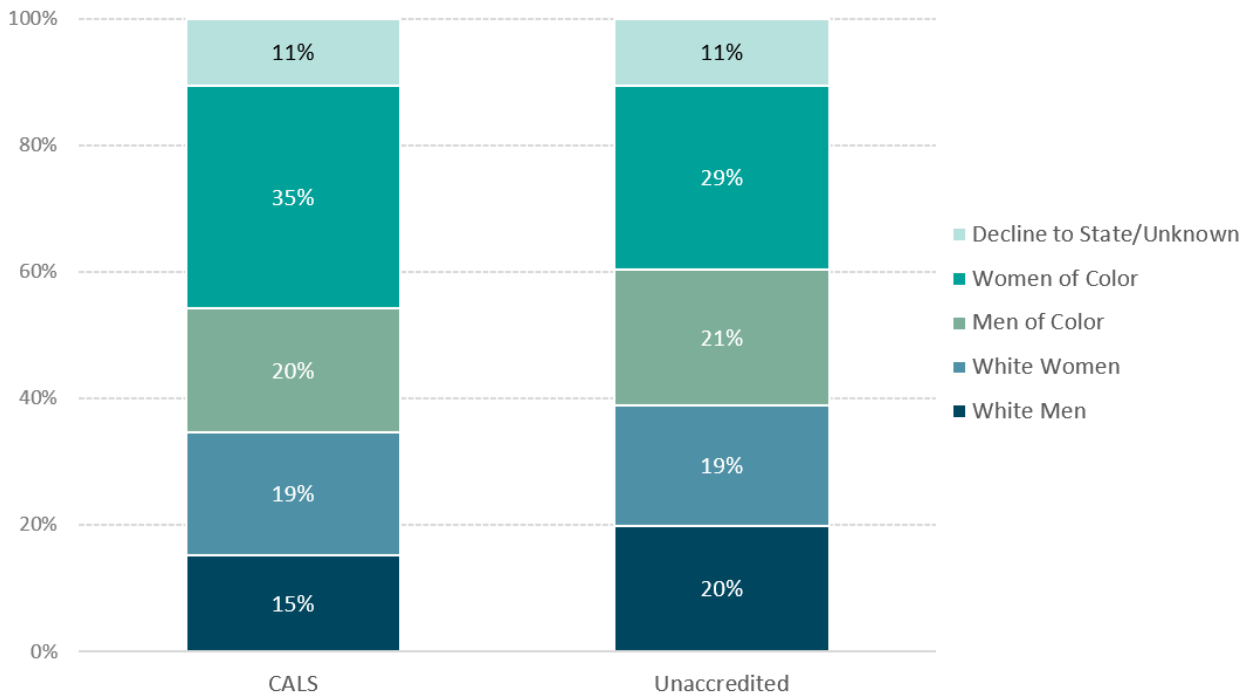


Figure 5 displays JD enrollment by the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender identity.

- Women of color comprise the largest group of students (35 percent) at CALS. The next largest group is men of color (20 percent), followed by white women (19 percent), and white men (15 percent).
- At unaccredited law schools, the largest group of students is also women of color (29 percent), followed by men of color (21 percent), white men (20 percent), and white women (19 percent).



**Figure 5. 2023 JD Enrollment by Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity**



*Note:* The category “Decline to state/Unknown” reflects students for which data on race/ethnicity *or* gender identity is unavailable due to declining to state or for unknown reasons. There were no nonbinary people of color enrolled at either CALS or unaccredited law schools. White nonbinary students comprised 0.02 percent of students enrolled at CALS.

Table 2 explores the intersection of detailed race/ethnicity and gender identity at CALS and unaccredited law schools.

- White women (19 percent), Latino women (16 percent), and white men (15 percent) comprise the three largest groups of students at CALS.
- White women (19 percent), white men (20 percent), Latino women (11 percent), and Black women (10 percent) comprise the largest groups of students at unaccredited law schools.

**Table 2. 2023 JD Enrollment by Intersection of Detailed Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity**

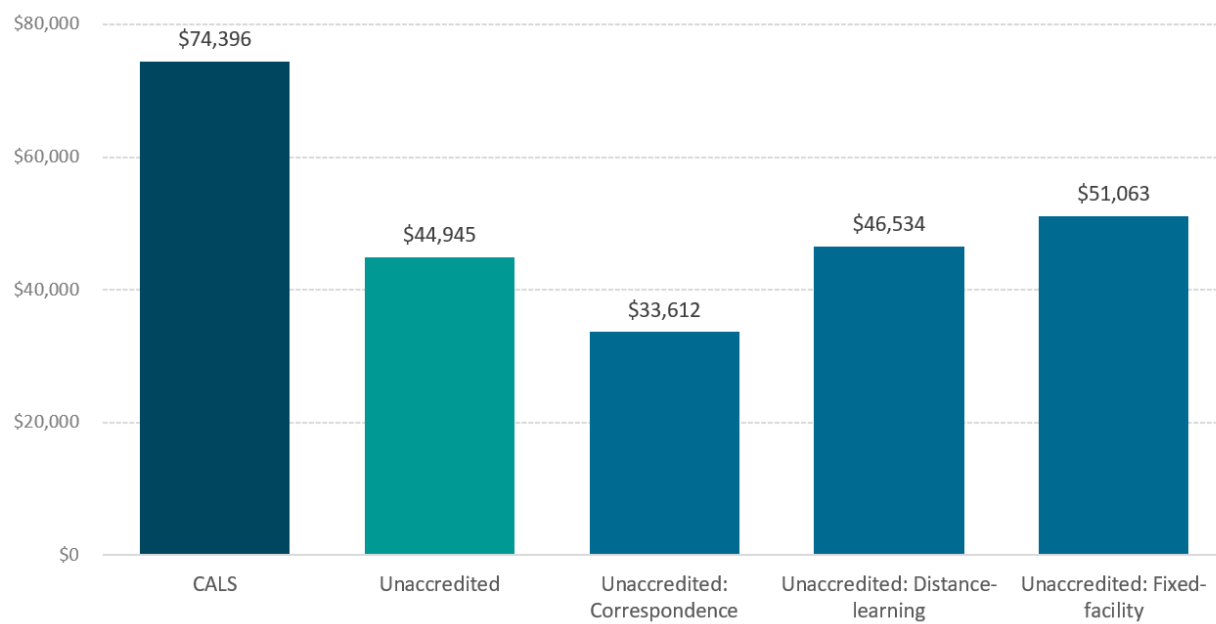
Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity	CALS	Unaccredited
American Indian or Alaska Native Men	0.2%	0.5%
Asian Men	4%	4%
Black or African American Men	5%	8%
Latino Men	9%	8%
Multiracial Men	1%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Men	0.2%	0.5%
White Men	15%	20%
American Indian or Alaska Native Women	1%	1%
Asian Women	6%	6%
Black or African American Women	9%	10%
Latino Women	16%	11%
Multiracial Women	3%	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Women	0%	1%
White Women	19%	19%

## LAW SCHOOL COSTS

Figure 6 shows the average total tuition and fees charged at CALS and unaccredited law schools in 2023 to complete a JD. Both CALS and unaccredited law schools offer JD programs that generally cost less than those provided by law schools approved by the ABA.

- Of the three types of unaccredited law schools, correspondence schools cost less than distance-learning and fixed-facility schools partly due to their modality of having less interaction with students.
- Accredited law schools charged an average total cost of \$74,396 to complete a JD program in 2023, down from \$75,348 in 2022, while unaccredited schools charged an average total cost of \$44,945, up from \$33,115. See table A4 in appendix A.
- The change in average cost at CALS and unaccredited schools from 2022 to 2023 is partly attributed to previously accredited schools moving to unaccredited status. However, 11 out of 15 CALS and six out of 13 unaccredited law schools increased costs from 2022 to 2023.
- CALS total tuition and fees range from \$16,580 to \$101,066 and unaccredited total tuition and fees range from \$13,300 to \$97,364 (see table 3).

**Figure 6. Average 2023 Total Tuition and Fees to Complete a JD by Law School Type**



**Table 3. Total 2023 Tuition and Fees to Complete a JD by Law School**

Law School Name	Total Tuition and Fees to Complete a JD
<b>CALS</b>	
Northwestern California University School of Law	\$16,580
St. Francis School of Law	\$52,100
Purdue Global Law School	\$53,220
JFK School of Law at National University	\$66,502
Cal Northern School of Law	\$66,885
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento	\$68,880
Humphreys University, Drivon School of Law	\$71,400
Empire College School of Law	\$72,369
The Colleges of Law	\$76,797
Monterey College of Law	\$86,050
San Joaquin College of Law	\$89,175
Thomas Jefferson School of Law	\$97,364
Trinity Law School	\$98,475
University of West Los Angeles School of Law	\$99,075
University of La Verne College of Law and Public Service	\$101,066
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$74,396</b>
<b>Unaccredited</b>	
Southern California Institute of Law	\$13,300
Peoples College of Law	\$22,400
American Institute of Law	\$23,360
Taft Law School	\$36,275
California School of Law	\$37,800
Pacific Coast University, School of Law	\$39,050
Oak Brook College of Law & Government Policy	\$41,200
Irvine College of Law	\$44,400
Western Sierra Law School	\$45,250
Abraham Lincoln University School of Law	\$47,290
California Desert Trial Academy College of Law	\$48,100
Lincoln Law School of San Jose	\$88,500
San Francisco Law School	\$97,364
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$44,945</b>

## PERFORMANCE

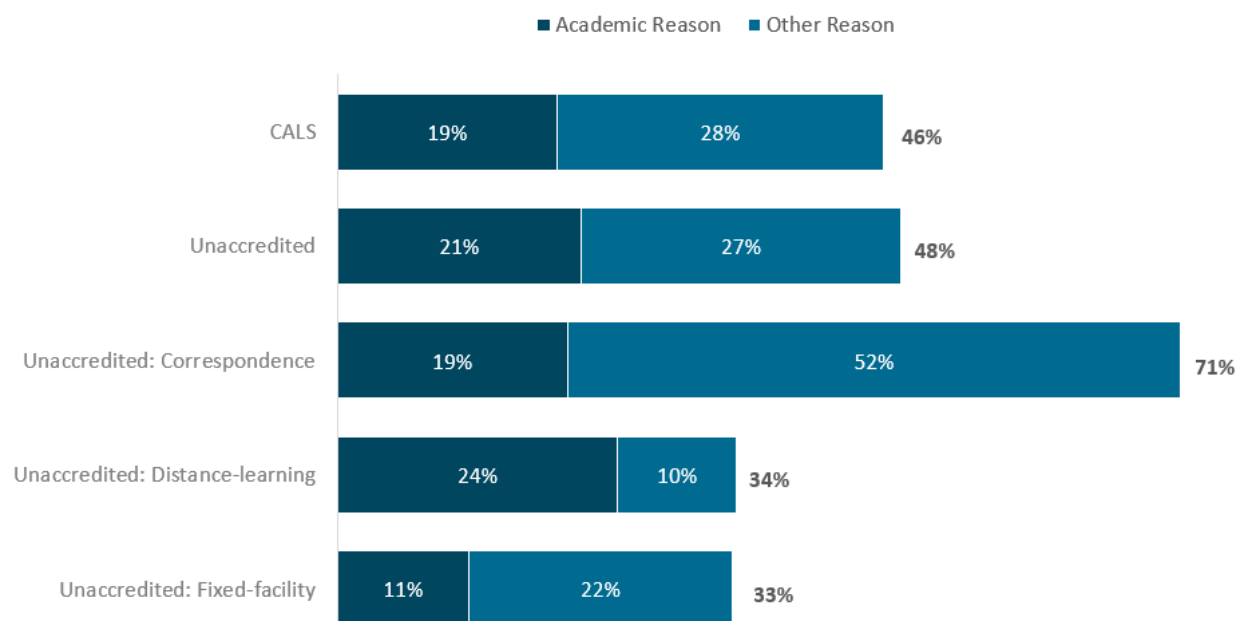
### ATTRITION

Attrition rates measure the percentage of first-year and second-year cohorts that discontinue their enrollment prior to beginning their next year for reasons other than transferring to another school. Attrition rates are further disaggregated by reason (academic and other). See methodology for more details.

Figure 7 presents attrition rates for students in the 2022 first-year JD cohort and measures the percentage who discontinued their legal education before beginning their second year. Students on leave awaiting passage of the First-Year Law Students' Exam (FYLTX) were excluded from attrition counts.

- Approximately 46 percent of students who began study at a CALS did not enroll in a second year. In comparison, 48 percent of those students enrolled at unaccredited law schools did not enroll as second-year law students.
- Students enrolled in unaccredited correspondence schools had the highest attrition rate at 71 percent.
- Attrition was more likely to occur for nonacademic reasons than academic ones at CALS and unaccredited schools. However, students from unaccredited distance-learning schools who experienced attrition were more likely to do so for academic reasons.

**Figure 7. First-Year Attrition Rates by Reason and Law School Type**

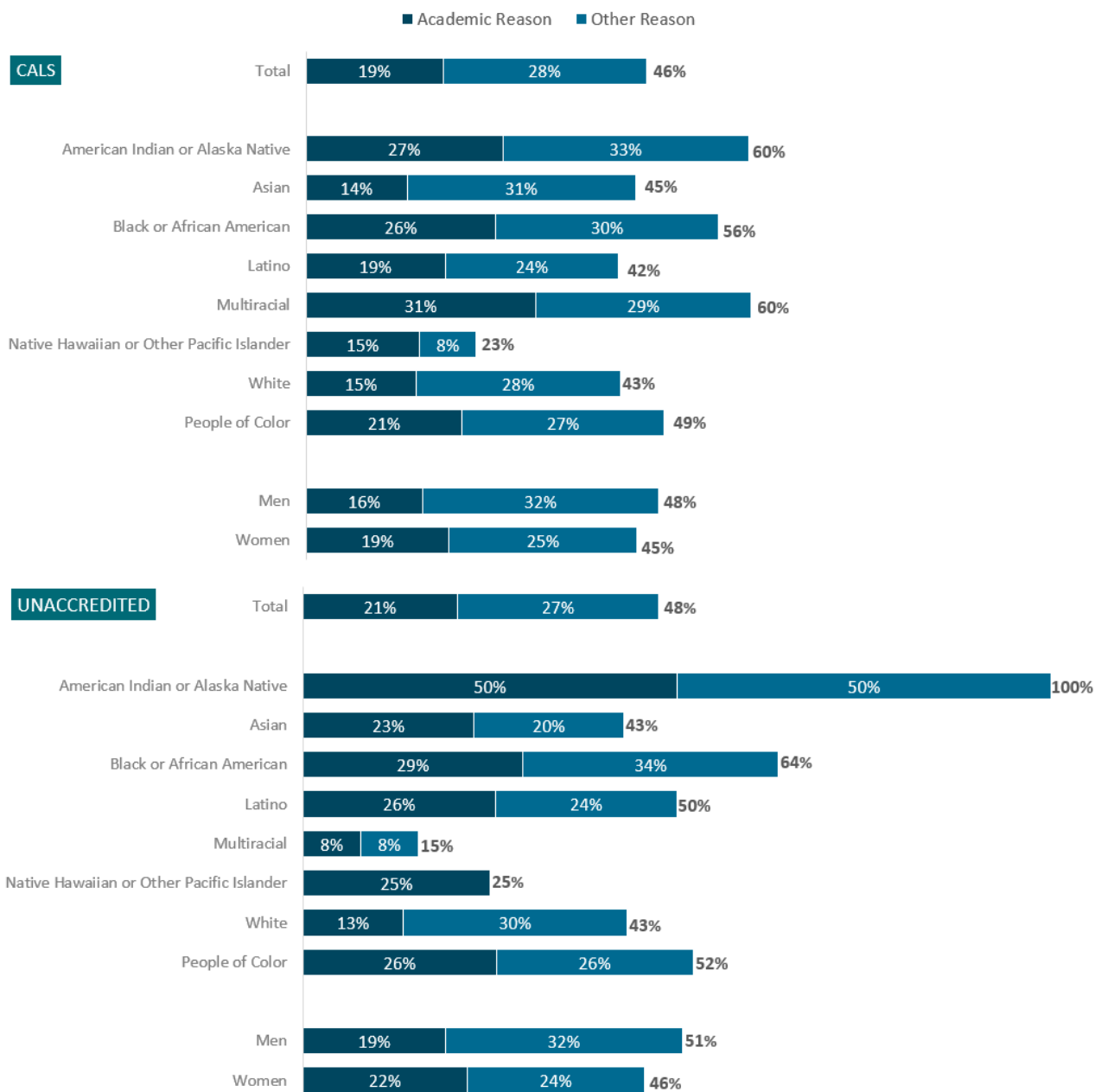


*Note:* Analyses of first-year attrition are based on 2022 first-year law students who discontinued their legal education before beginning their second year. Students who transferred were studying at another school temporarily or those on a leave of absence of one year or less were excluded from these analyses. Students on leave awaiting passage of the FYLTX before studying beyond the first year were also excluded from attrition counts.

Figure 8 displays first-year attrition rates by reason, race/ethnicity, and gender identity.

- First-year American Indian and Multiracial students from CALS had the highest attrition rates (60 percent) and were followed by Black (56 percent) and Asian (45 percent) students.
- At unaccredited schools, all first-year American Indian students experienced attrition and were followed by Black (64 percent) and Latino students (50 percent).
- First-year students of color at CALS and unaccredited schools have higher attrition rates than white students.
- First-year men experienced higher attrition rates than women at CALS and unaccredited law schools.

**Figure 8. First-Year Attrition Rates by Reason and Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity**



Tables 4 and 5 further explore first-year attrition rates by reason and the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender identity.

- American Indian men from CALS and unaccredited law schools have the highest attrition rates. Following this group are Black men from unaccredited law schools and multiracial men from CALS.
- Black and multiracial women from CALS have the highest attrition rates, followed by American Indian women. Black and Latino women from unaccredited schools had the highest attrition rates.

**Table 4. First-Year Attrition Rates by Reason and Intersection of Detailed Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity: Men**

Race/Ethnicity	Academic Reason	Other Reason	Total Attrition Rate
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native Men</b>			
CALS	50%	25%	75%
Unaccredited	50%	50%	100%
<b>Asian Men</b>			
CALS	10%	41%	50%
Unaccredited	14%	14%	29%
<b>Black or African American Men</b>			
CALS	23%	33%	56%
Unaccredited	41%	24%	65%
<b>Latino Men</b>			
CALS	21%	27%	48%
Unaccredited	39%	22%	61%
<b>Multiracial Men</b>			
CALS	25%	38%	63%
Unaccredited	14%	14%	29%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Men</b>			
CALS	17%	17%	33%
Unaccredited	25%	0%	25%
<b>White Men</b>			
CALS	11%	31%	42%
Unaccredited	5%	46%	51%



**Table 5. First-Year Attrition Rates by Reason and Intersection of Detailed Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity: Women**

Race/Ethnicity	Academic Reason	Other Reason	Total Attrition Rate
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native Women</b>			
CALS	10%	40%	50%
Unaccredited	NA	NA	NA
<b>Asian Women</b>			
CALS	14%	23%	38%
Unaccredited	19%	19%	38%
<b>Black or African American Women</b>			
CALS	27%	28%	55%
Unaccredited	25%	35%	61%
<b>Latino Women</b>			
CALS	18%	23%	41%
Unaccredited	22%	25%	47%
<b>Multiracial Women</b>			
CALS	30%	26%	55%
Unaccredited	0%	0%	0%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Women</b>			
CALS	20%	0%	20%
Unaccredited	NA	NA	NA
<b>White Women</b>			
CALS	16%	26%	42%
Unaccredited	21%	21%	42%

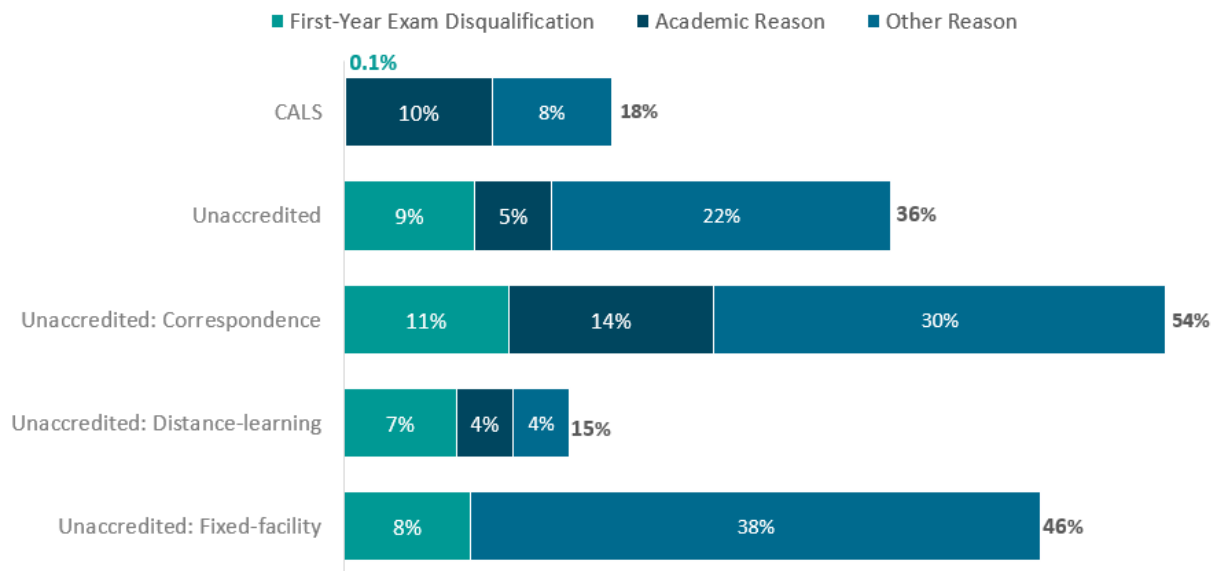
Figures 9 and 10 present attrition rates for second-year students in 2022. Second-year attrition rates measure the percentage of this cohort that discontinued their enrollment before enrolling as a third-year student for any reason other than transfer.

In addition to the academic and other reasons, this cohort's attrition rates are further disaggregated by first-year exam disqualification, which represents students who did not pass the FYLSX within the first three opportunities to do so. Note that some students wait to enroll in their second year until after they pass the FYLSX; those who do not pass the exam and ultimately do not enroll in their second year are not included in this analysis.

- Attrition rates among second-year students from unaccredited law schools were twice as high as those at the CALS (18 percent and 36 percent), a much larger gap than in first-year attrition data (46 percent and 48 percent).

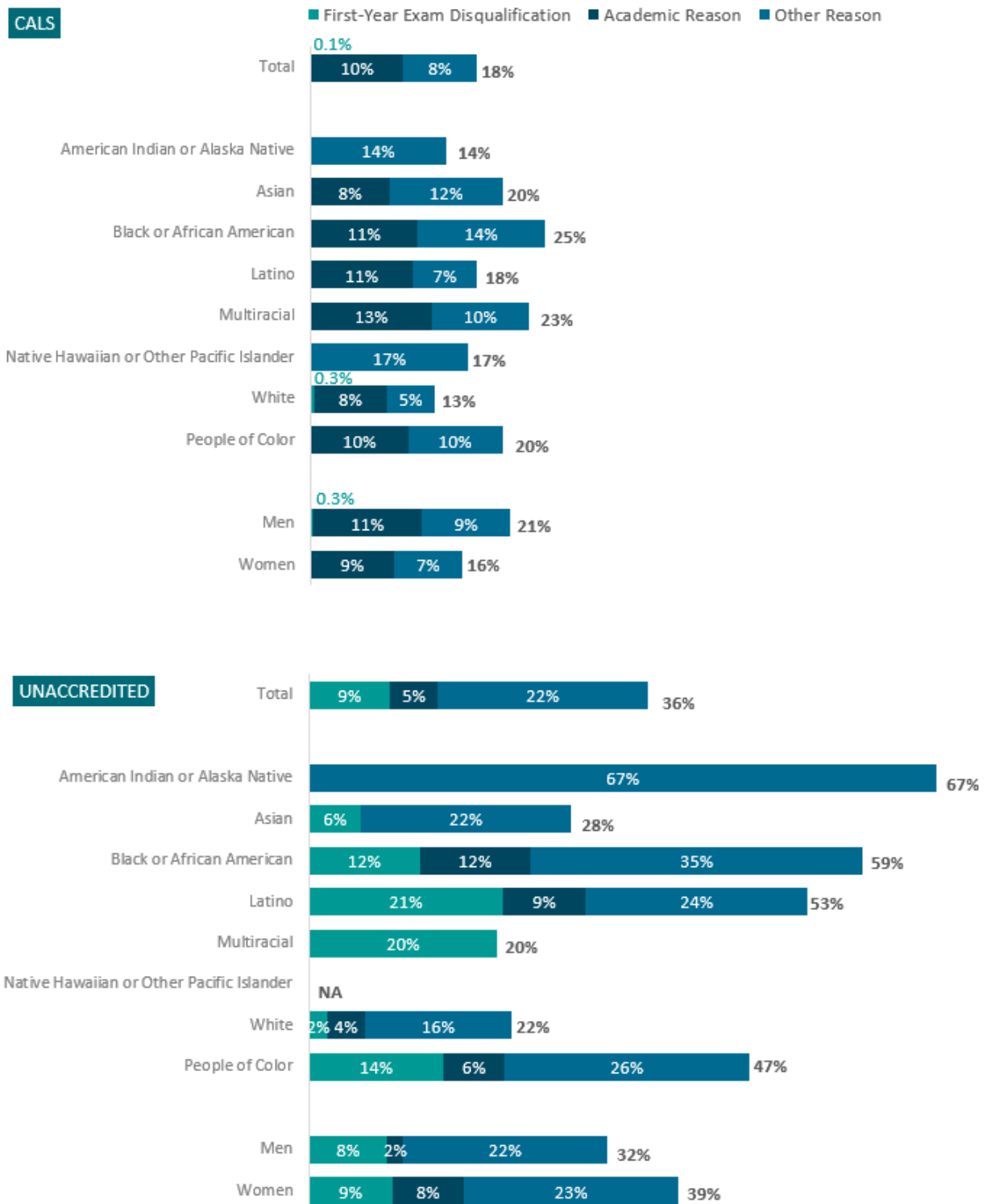
- Most of the second-year attrition experienced by students from CALS is for academic reasons. In contrast, most second-year attrition experienced by students from unaccredited law schools was for nonacademic reasons.
- Second-year attrition rates at both CALS and unaccredited schools are lower than first-year attrition rates, with the difference at the CALS being larger than that observed at the unaccredited schools.

**Figure 9. Second-Year Attrition Rates by Reason and Law School Type**



- A majority of American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, and Latino students from unaccredited law schools experienced second-year attrition.
- People of color had higher second-year attrition than white students at CALS and unaccredited schools. However, people of color experience attrition more than twice as much as white students at unaccredited schools (47 percent and 22 percent).
- People of color from unaccredited schools experienced first-year exam disqualification at a rate seven times higher than white students (14 percent and 2 percent).
- Nearly all racial/ethnic groups and all gender identity groups from CALS and unaccredited schools experienced less second-year attrition than first-year attrition; Latino and multiracial students from unaccredited schools experienced higher second-year attrition partly attributed to those groups having the highest level of first-year exam disqualification.
- Women from unaccredited schools experienced higher second-year attrition than men; men from CALS experienced higher second-year attrition, and men from both CALS and unaccredited schools experienced higher first-year attrition.

**Figure 10. Second-Year Attrition Rates by Reason, Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity**



*Note:* Analyses of attrition focus on 2022 second-year law students who discontinue their legal education prior to beginning their third year. Students who transferred or were studying at another school temporarily, or those who are on a leave of absence of one year or less were excluded from these analyses.

## FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS' EXAM (FYLSX)

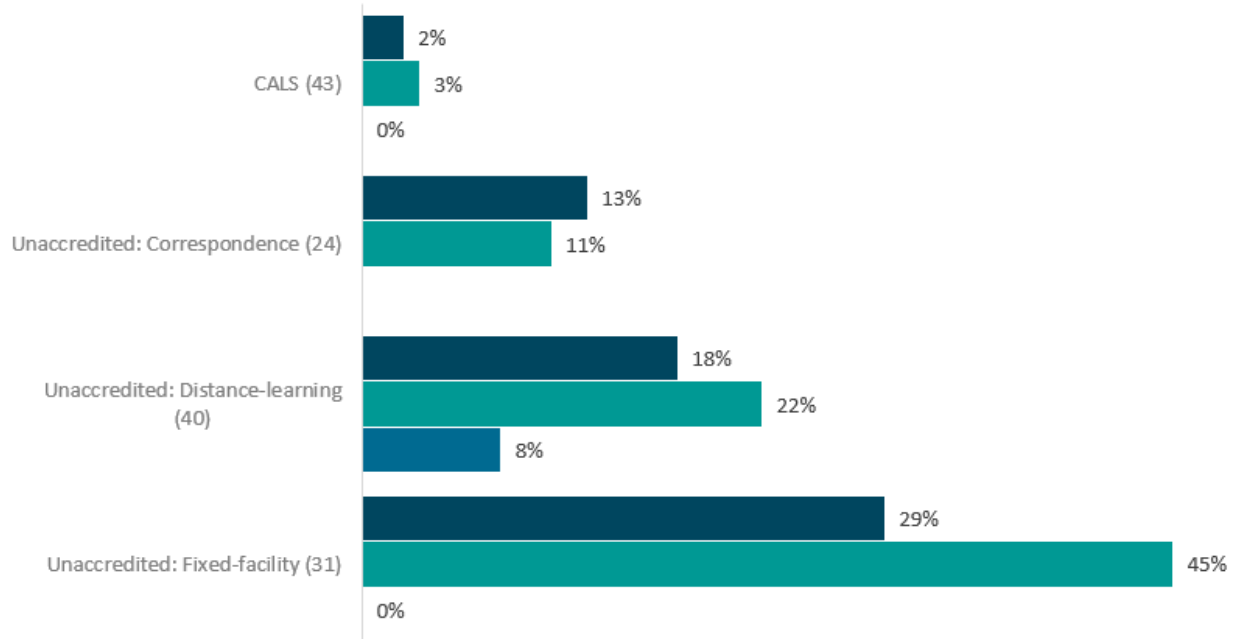
Figure 11 explores the pass rates for the FYLSX by test-taker status and law school type. Due to the relatively small number of test-takers, pass rates can increase significantly by just a few additional individuals passing from one exam to the next.

- Students from unaccredited fixed-facility schools taking the exam for the first time had the highest pass rates (45 percent) for the June 2023 exam.
- For the October 2023 exam, students from unaccredited distance-learning schools taking the exam for the first time had the highest pass rates (19 percent).

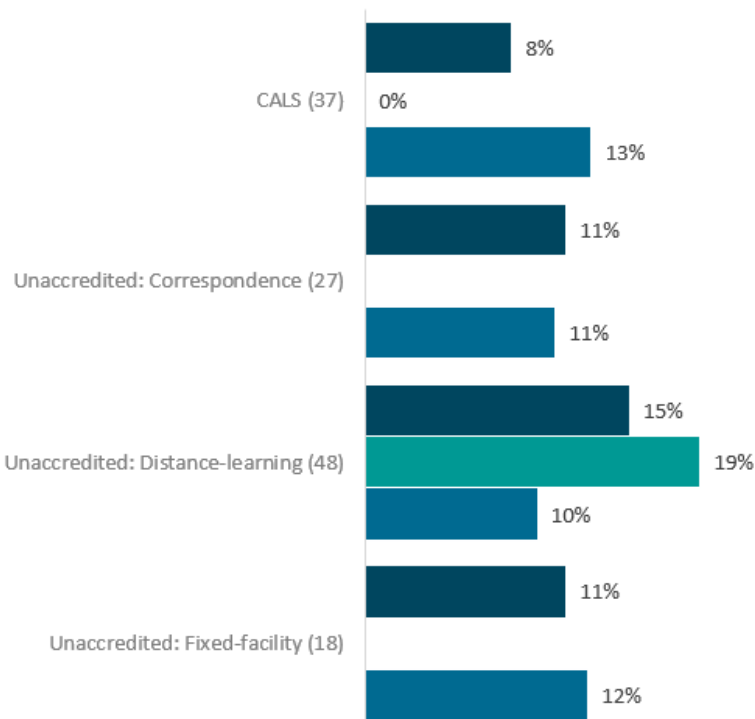
**Figure 11. 2023 First-Year Law Students' Exam Pass Rates by Test-Taker Status and Law School Type**

**June 2023**

■ Total Test-Takers ■ First-Timers ■ Repeaters



**October 2023**

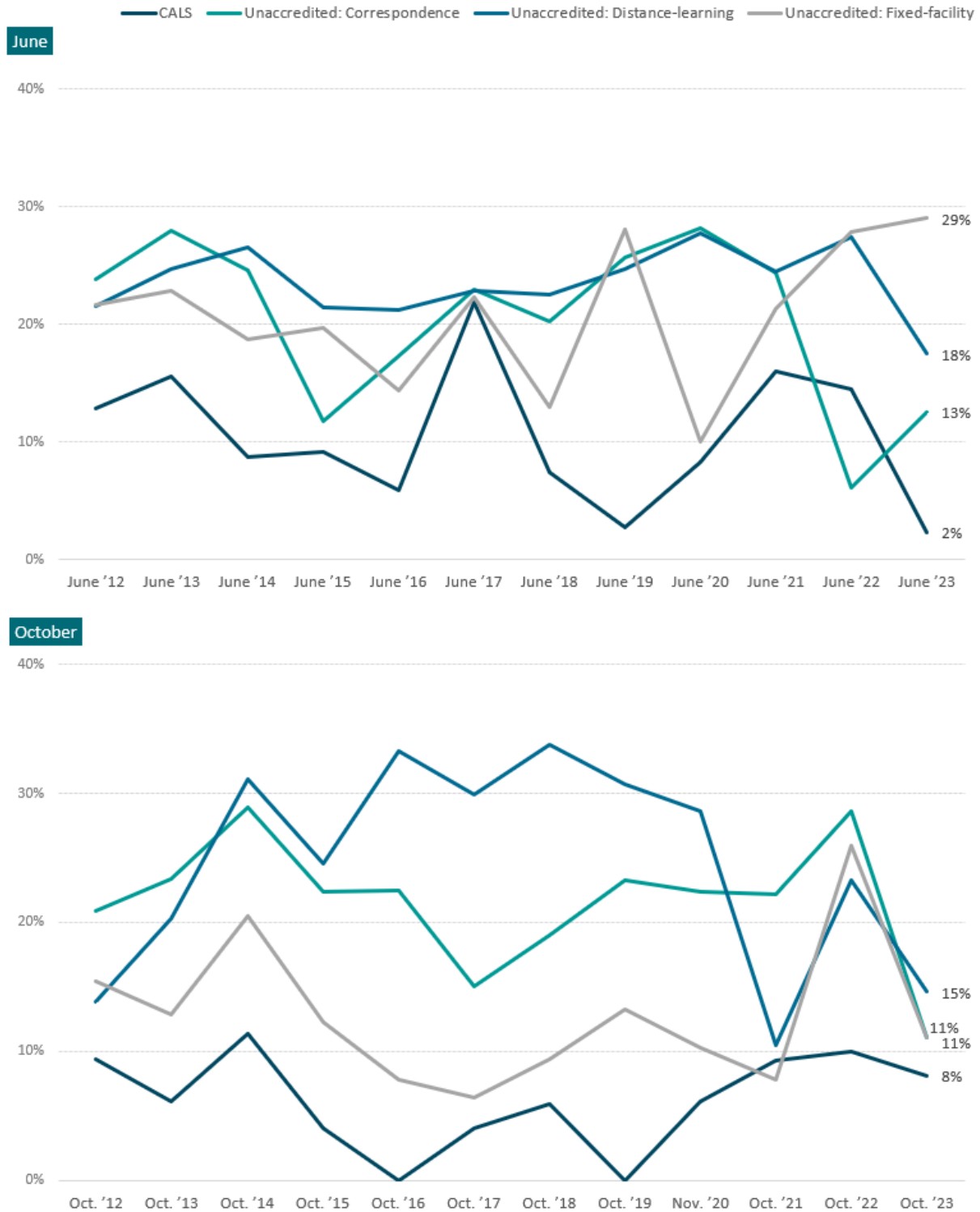


*Note:* Number of test-takers is in parentheses. Data is displayed only for groups with 11 or more test-takers. In general, most students who take the FYLSX are enrolled in unaccredited schools. Most students enrolled at CALS establish an exemption from the exam by successfully completing the first-year course of instruction and becoming eligible to advance to the second year.

Figure 12 explores the total pass rates for the FYLSX by law school type from 2012 through 2023 for the June and October exams.

- Unaccredited fixed-facility schools had the highest pass rate in June 2023, at 29 percent. This is the highest June exam pass rate for this category of schools since 2012 and has continued an upward trend since 2020; all other categories had below-average June exam pass rates in 2023 compared to prior years since 2012.
- Unaccredited distance-learning schools had the highest pass rate in October 2023 at 15 percent, although all categories had a decrease in pass rates compared to 2022.
- CALS have the lowest pass rate, although only their students without two years of prior college experience are required to take the exam, while all unaccredited law school students completing their first year of law study must take the exam.

**Figure 12. First-Year Law Students' Exam Pass Rates for All Test-Takers by Law School Type: 2012–2023**



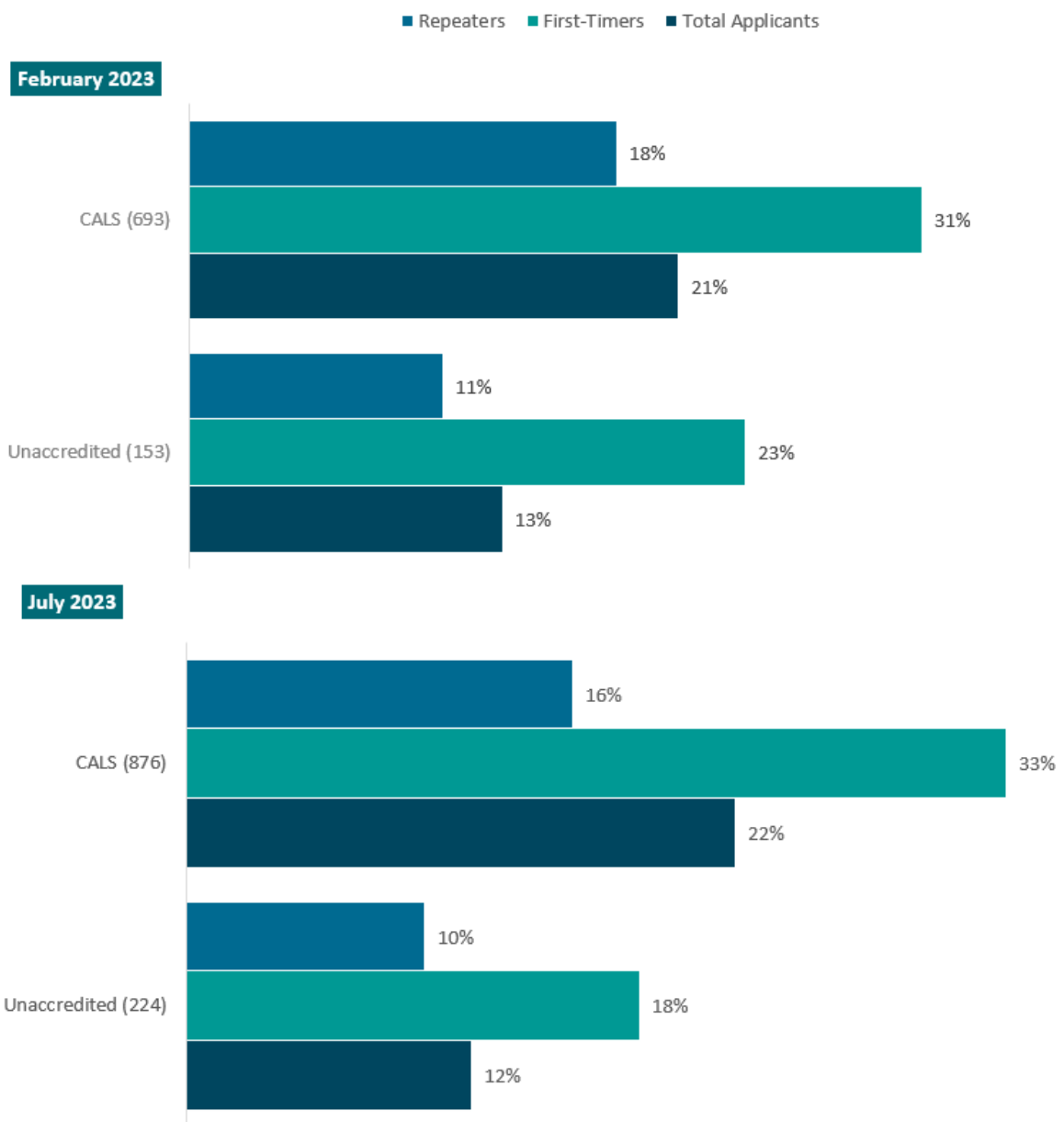
*Note:* Data is displayed only for groups with 11 or more test-takers.

## CALIFORNIA BAR EXAM

Figure 13 lays out February and July 2023 California Bar Exam (bar exam) pass rates by type of law school for individuals seeking licensure in California (applicants).

- Applicants from CALS have higher pass rates than students from unaccredited law schools. This pattern continues across the three test-takers' categories for the February and July bar exams. First-time test-takers also have higher pass rates than repeat test-takers.

**Figure 13. 2023 California Bar Exam Pass Rates by Test-Taker Status and Type of Law Schools**



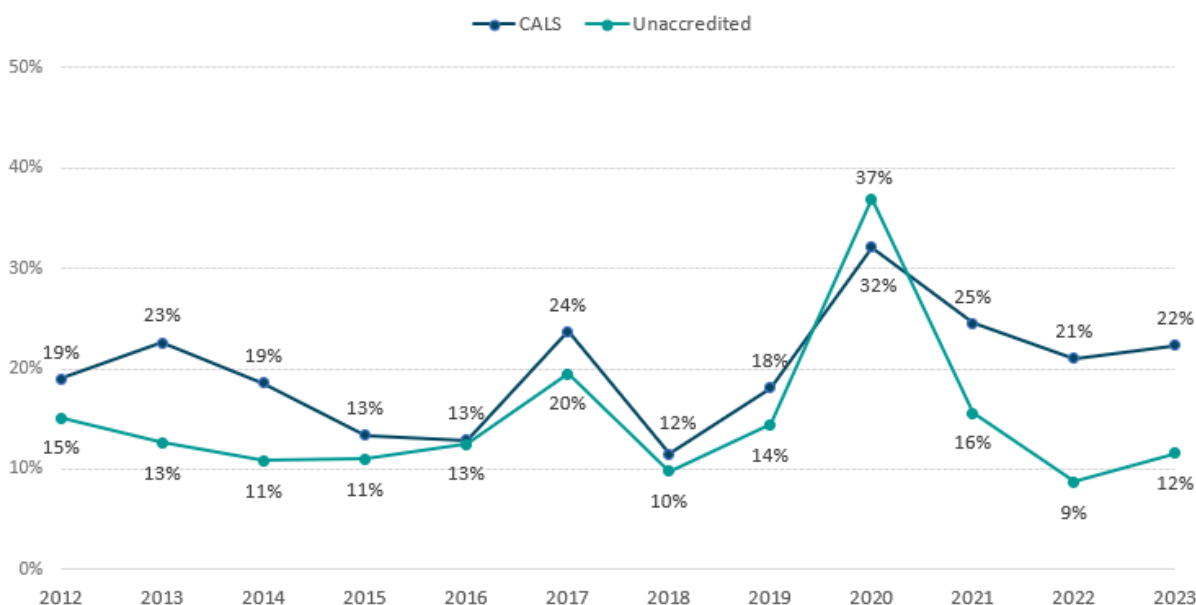
*Note:* Number of test-takers is in parentheses. Data by law school modality is not publicly available.



Figure 14 explores bar exam pass rates for all applicants who took the July exam from 2012 through 2023. The July exam typically has more test-takers than the February exam and includes fewer repeat test-takers.

- Nearly one-quarter (22 percent) of applicants from CALS passed the July 2023 bar exam compared with 12 percent from unaccredited law schools. For that same exam, 51 percent of the entire testing population passed.
- In most years analyzed, applicants from CALS had higher exam-passage rates than applicants from unaccredited schools. In 2020, applicants from unaccredited schools had higher pass rates than those from CALS. Pass rates across both types increased that year and have decreased since.

**Figure 14. California Bar Exam Pass Rates for All Test-Takers, July 2012–2023**



*Note:* The July 2020 California Bar Exam was postponed to October 2020. Beginning with that exam, the pass score was permanently lowered from 1440 to 1390.

Figure 15 displays bar exam pass rates by race/ethnicity and gender identity for the February 2023 exam.

- Asian, Black, Latino, and “Other” applicants had lower pass rates compared to white applicants from CALS taking the exam for the first time.
- Men from CALS and unaccredited schools had higher pass rates than women taking the exam for the first time.
- Black applicants from CALS and unaccredited law schools repeating the exam had the lowest pass rates. “Other” applicants from CALS repeating the exam had the highest pass rates, while white applicants from unaccredited schools had the highest pass rates.
- Women from CALS repeating the exam had higher pass rates than men, while there was a minimal difference in pass rates between men and women repeaters from unaccredited schools.

**Figure 15. California Bar Exam Pass Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity, February 2023**



*Note:* Number of test-takers is in parentheses. Data is displayed only when data is publicly available. Data is not publicly available for Asian, Black, Latino, and “Other” applicants from unaccredited law schools for first-time test-takers and “Other” repeaters from unaccredited law schools. “Other” includes the racial/ethnic groups American Indian, Native Hawaiian, other, and more than one racial/ethnic group.

Figures 16 displays bar exam pass rates by race/ethnicity and gender identity for the July 2023 exam.

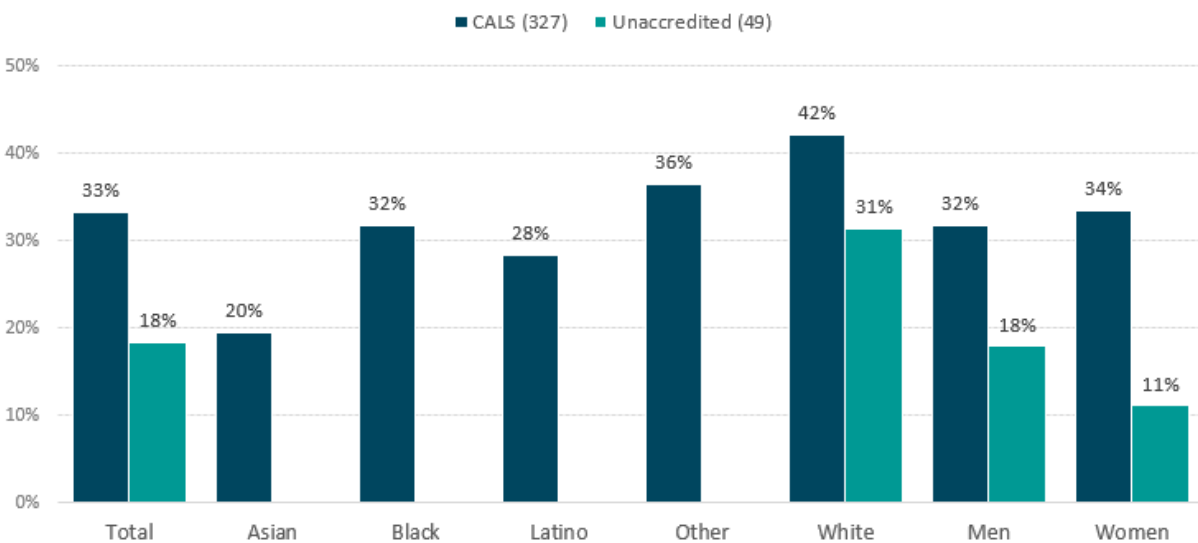
- Consistent with the results from February, on the July 2023 exam, Asian, Black, Latino, and “Other” applicants had lower pass rates than white students taking the exam for the first time from CALS.
- Deviating from the February results, women from CALS had slightly higher pass rates than men taking the exam for the first time. Like the February exam, men who attended

unaccredited schools had higher pass rates than women when taking the exam for the first time.

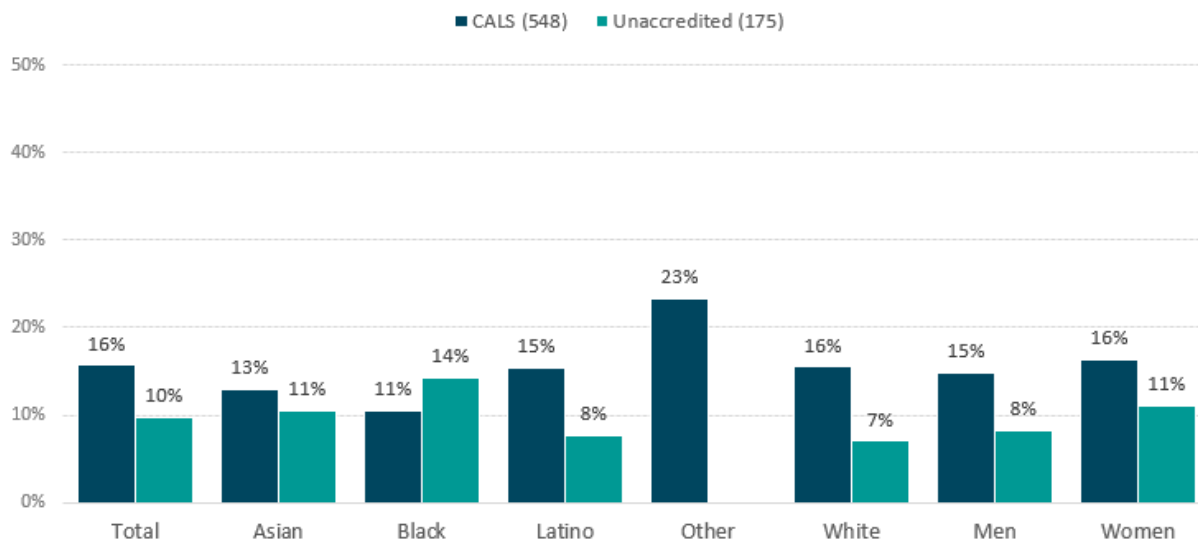
- Black applicants who attended a CALS and repeated the exam had the lowest pass rates, while white applicants who attended unaccredited law schools had the lowest pass rates. Latino and “Other” applicants repeating the exam had the highest pass rates from CALS. Black applicants from unaccredited schools had the highest pass rates. Women repeating the exam had higher pass rates than men from CALS and unaccredited schools.

**Figure 16. California Bar Exam Pass Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity, July 2023**

**First-Time Takers**



**Repeaters**



*Note:* Number of test-takers is in parentheses. Data is displayed only when data is publicly available. Data is not publicly available for Asian, Black, Latino, and “Other” applicants from unaccredited law schools for first-time test-

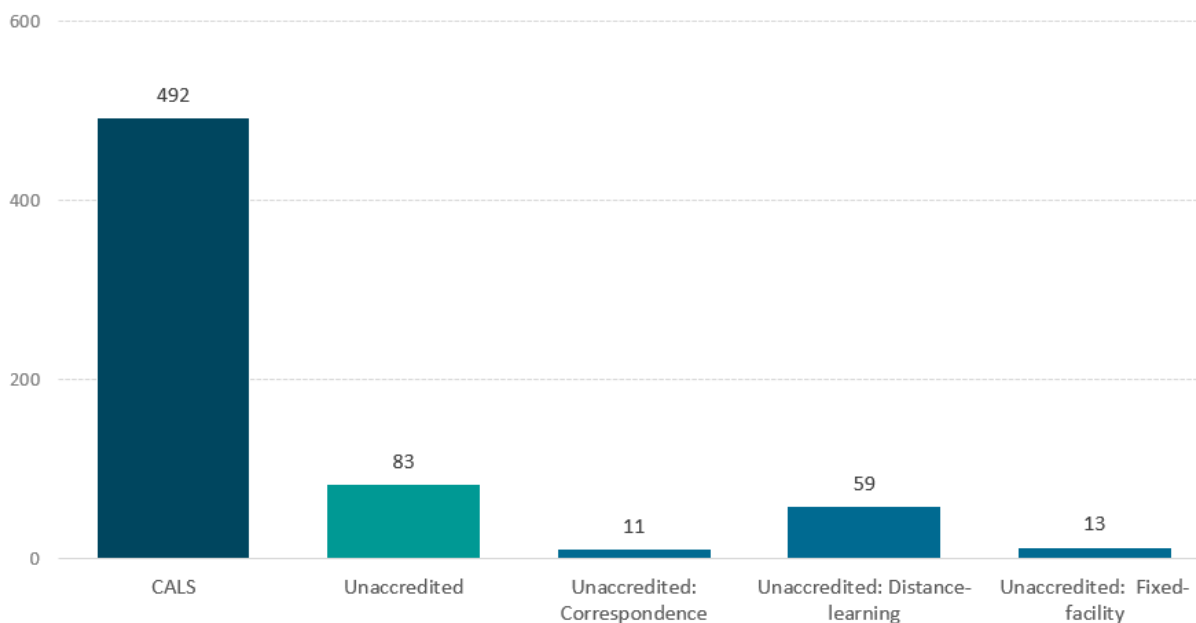
takers and “Other” repeaters from unaccredited law schools. “Other” includes the racial/ethnic groups American Indian, Native Hawaiian, other, and more than one racial/ethnic group.

## JD DEGREES AWARDED

Figure 17 displays the total number of JD degrees awarded by type of law school.

- The 15 CALS schools collectively awarded 492 JD degrees in 2023, while the 13 unaccredited schools awarded 83 JD degrees during the same period.
- This constitutes 575 JDs awarded, 86 percent of which were awarded by the CALS.

**Figure 17. Number of 2023 JDs Awarded by Type of Law School**



- Students of color received 49 percent of JDs conferred from CALS and 51 percent from unaccredited law schools (see table 6).
- Most JDs awarded from unaccredited law schools were conferred to men despite most enrolled students being women. In contrast, only 39 percent of JD degrees were conferred to men from CALS, which aligns more with the enrolled student population.
- White men, white women, and Latino women received the highest JDs awarded at CALS and unaccredited law schools (see table 7).

**Table 6. 2023 JDs Awarded by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity**

	CALS		Unaccredited	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	1%	0	0%
Asian	51	10%	14	17%
Black or African American	39	8%	11	13%
Latino	129	26%	15	18%
Multiracial	15	3%	2	2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	1%	0	0%
White	194	39%	33	40%
Decline to state	9	2%	5	6%
Unknown	48	10%	3	4%
<b>Gender Identity</b>				
Men	192	39%	43	52%
Women	254	52%	39	47%
Other	0	0%	0	0%
Decline to state	0	0%	0	0%
Unknown	46	9%	1	1%

**Table 7. 2023 CALS and Unaccredited JDs Awarded by Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity**

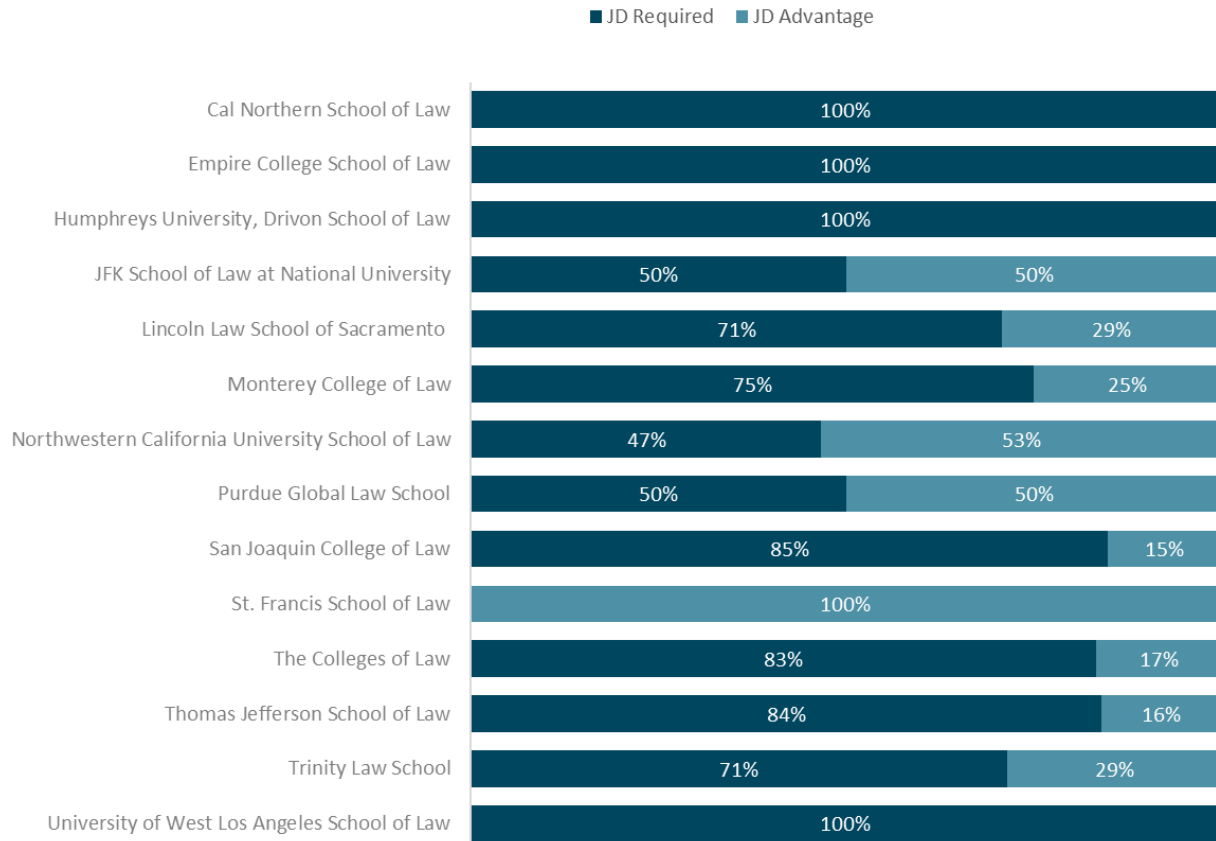
	CALS		Unaccredited	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native Men	1	0.2%	0	0%
Asian Men	21	4%	7	8%
Black or African American Men	15	3%	6	7%
Latino Men	44	9%	3	4%
Multiracial Men	7	1%	1	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Men	1	0.2%	0	0%
White Men	86	17%	21	25%
Decline to state Men	6	1%	4	5%
Unknown Men	11	2%	1	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native Women	3	1%	0	0%
Asian Women	25	5%	7	8%
Black or African American Women	23	5%	5	6%
Latino Women	69	14%	12	14%
Multiracial Women	8	2%	1	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Women	1	0.2%	0	0%
White Women	97	20%	12	14%
Decline to state Women	3	1%	1	1%
Unknown Women	25	5%	1	1%

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

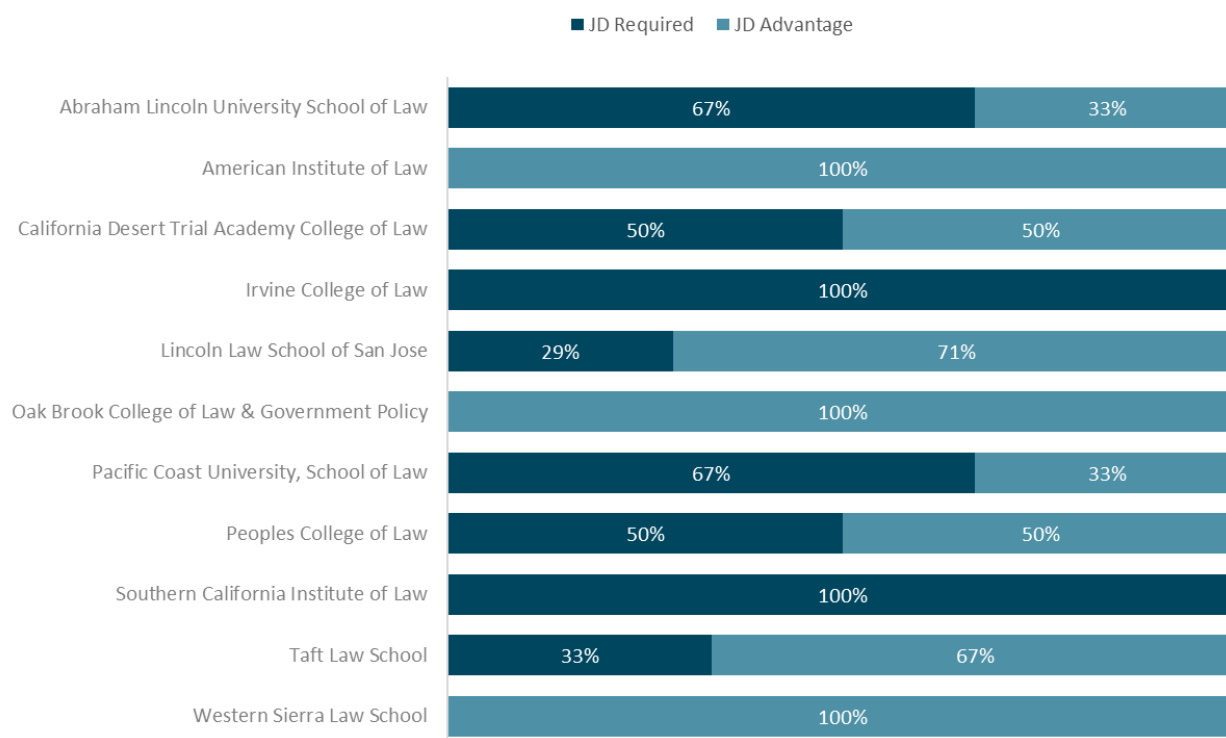
Figures 18 and 19 display the employment outcomes as of 2023 for 2020 JD graduates from both CALS and unaccredited law schools. These figures report the percentage of graduates employed in roles that require a JD or where having a JD is an advantage. This information is collected through a voluntary survey issued by the law schools and represents only those who responded. Table 8 provides information on the number of individuals surveyed by each school and the survey response rate.

- Ten out of 14 CALS that reported employment outcome data reported that most of their 2020 graduates held jobs in 2023 that required a JD; four reported that all their students who graduated in 2020 had jobs that required a JD in 2023.
- In contrast, four out of 11 unaccredited schools reported that most of their 2020 graduates held jobs in 2023 requiring a JD. Two unaccredited schools reported that all students who graduated in 2020 had a job in 2023 that required a JD, and three reported that all students who graduated in 2020 had a job in 2023 where having a JD was an advantage.

**Figure 18. 2023 Employment Status of 2020 CALS JD Graduates**



**Figure 19. 2023 Employment Status of 2020 Unaccredited JD Graduates**





**Table 8. Employment Outcomes for 2020 JD Graduates**

Law School Name	2020 JD Graduates	2020 JD Graduates Surveyed	2023 Survey Response Rate	2021 Employment Status		2022 Employment Status		2023 Employment Status	
				JD Degree Required	JD Degree Advantage	JD Degree Required	JD Degree Advantage	JD Degree Required	JD Degree Advantage
CALS									
Thomas Jefferson School of Law	98	98	47%	81%	19%	81%	19%	84%	16%
University of West Los Angeles School of Law	42	42	10%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
The Colleges of Law	41	41	46%	83%	17%	89%	11%	83%	17%
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento	40	40	60%	63%	38%	67%	33%	71%	29%
Monterey College of Law	40	40	95%	50%	50%	69%	31%	75%	25%
San Joaquin College of Law	37	37	89%	84%	16%	85%	15%	85%	15%
Northwestern California University School of Law	35	35	40%	64%	36%	36%	64%	47%	53%
Trinity Law School	33	33	30%	67%	33%	67%	33%	71%	29%
JFK School of Law at National University	31	31	26%	50%	50%	38%	63%	50%	50%
Purdue Global Law School	15	15	47%	67%	33%	75%	25%	50%	50%
Empire College School of Law	12	12	42%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
St. Francis School of Law	10	10	70%	0%	100%	40%	60%	0%	100%
Humphreys University, Drivon School of Law	9	9	11%	38%	63%	80%	20%	100%	0%
Cal Northern School of Law	3	3	100%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%

Law School Name	2020 JD Graduates	2020 JD Graduates Surveyed	2023 Survey Response Rate	2021 Employment Status		2022 Employment Status		2023 Employment Status	
				JD Degree Required	JD Degree Advantage	JD Degree Required	JD Degree Advantage	JD Degree Required	JD Degree Advantage
Unaccredited									
Abraham Lincoln University School of Law	15	15	20%	67%	33%	67%	33%	67%	33%
Pacific Coast University, School of Law	14	14	29%	50%	50%	50%	50%	67%	33%
Lincoln Law School of San Jose	13	13	77%	57%	43%	57%	43%	29%	71%
Southern California Institute of Law	7	7	43%	67%	33%	67%	33%	100%	0%
Taft Law School	5	5	60%	33%	67%	33%	67%	33%	67%
American Institute of Law	3	3	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Oak Brook College of Law & Government Policy	3	3	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
California Desert Trial Academy College of Law	2	2	100%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Peoples College of Law	2	2	100%	0%	100%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Irvine College of Law	1	1	100%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%
Western Sierra Law School	1	1	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%

*Note:* Employment data is not available for the following schools: University of La Verne College of Law and Public Service (CALs), California School of Law (Unaccredited), and San Francisco Law School (Unaccredited).

## METHODOLOGY

### DATA SOURCES

#### **CALS Periodic and Unaccredited Annual Compliance Reports**

The data presented in this report describes enrollment, attrition, JD degrees awarded, and costs of attendance for CALS and unaccredited law schools. Data was drawn from these schools' Periodic and Annual Compliance Reports (compliance reports). The compliance reports collect administrative and programmatic information and data following rules adopted by the State Bar's Board of Trustees for CALS and unaccredited law schools. Submission of the report is mandatory. Another data source was the disclosures all CALS and unaccredited schools must provide to the State Bar as required by California Business and Professions Code section 6061.7(a). Examples of such information include law school tuition and fees.

In 2020, the State Bar modified the demographic reporting requirements for CALS and unaccredited law schools to get more nuanced information regarding enrollment, attrition rates, and the conferral of JD degrees among students from diverse demographic backgrounds. The revised reporting requirements sought a deeper understanding of students' educational experiences and outcomes across various demographic groups. Racial/ethnic categories were modified to align more closely with those collected by the ABA. New demographic characteristics were also added to align with the demographic information the State Bar collects and reports about attorneys in California, including sexual orientation, disability status, and veteran status.

Analyses in this report reflect 15 CALS and 13 unaccredited law schools operating in fall 2023.

#### **State Bar Reports on Exam Performance**

Data on California Bar Exam passage rates was drawn from reports made available to the public on the State Bar's website.

### DEFINITIONS

This report analyzes several topics related to the law school experience. The section below provides definitions and notes how the CALS and unaccredited law schools report data on each.

#### **JD Enrollment**

"JD enrollment" refers to the number of students enrolled in a JD degree-granting program designed to satisfy the legal education requirement for eligibility to sit for the California Bar Exam. It does not include Master of Laws (LLM) programs, Executive JD Programs, or other non-JD law study degrees.

The 2023 compliance reports required CALS and unaccredited schools to report enrollment data for law school students enrolled in a JD degree program during the 52 weeks between September 16, 2022, and September 15, 2023.

#### **Attrition**

First-year attrition analyses focus on first-year law students who discontinue their legal education before beginning their second year. Students who transferred, were studying at

another school temporarily, or were on a leave of absence of one year or less were excluded from these analyses.

The 2023 compliance report required schools to report attrition for the 2022 cohort of first-year law students who began law school any time between September 16, 2021, and September 15, 2022, by race/ethnicity and gender identity. Nontransfer attrition is defined as students who discontinued their enrollment before enrolling as second-year JD students for any reason other than graduation with a JD and who did not re-enroll as of September 15, 2023, without earning a JD for one of the following reasons other than transfers:

- Academic Dismissal. Students who were dismissed for academic reasons; or
- Voluntary Nonacademic Attrition. Students who left for reasons other than “Academic Dismissal,” excluding transfers.

Law schools were instructed to record students who discontinued enrollment for unknown reasons, such as “Voluntary Nonacademic Attrition.” Students on leave awaiting passage of the FYLSX were excluded from attrition counts. (For more information about this exam, see below.) Attrition rates analyzed in this report were calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of students in 2022 First-Year JD Cohort who experienced attrition}}{\text{Number of students enrolled in 2022 First-Year JD Cohort}} = \text{Attrition Rate for 2022 First-Year JD Cohort}$$

Second-year attrition analyses focus on first-year law students who discontinue their legal education before beginning their third year. Students who transferred, were studying at another school temporarily, or were on a leave of absence of one year or less were excluded from these analyses.

The 2023 annual compliance report required schools to report attrition for the 2022 cohort of second-year law students who began law school at any time between September 16, 2021, and September 15, 2022, by race/ethnicity and gender identity. Nontransfer attrition is defined as students who discontinued their enrollment before enrolling as second-year JD students for any reason other than graduation with a JD and who did not re-enroll as of September 15, 2023, without earning a JD for one of the following reasons other than transfers:

- First-year exam disqualification: Students dismissed by a law school for failure to pass the FYLSX within three administrations of completing their first year of law study for a JD granting degree and does not include students on leave awaiting passage of the FYLSX during their first three opportunities to do so;
- Academic dismissal: Students who were dismissed for academic reasons; or
- Voluntary nonacademic attrition: Students who left for reasons other than “Academic Dismissal,” excluding transfers.

Attrition rates analyzed in this report were calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of students in 2022 Second-Year JD Cohort who experienced attrition}}{\text{Number of students enrolled in 2022 Second-Year JD Cohort}} = \text{Attrition Rate for 2022 Second-Year JD Cohort}$$

## JD Degrees Awarded

In general, JDs awarded describe the number of students who earned a JD. The reported data reflects the JDs awarded from September 16, 2022, to September 15, 2023.

## California Bar Exam Data

The California Bar Exam is the exam required for admission to practice law in California. Drawing from the State Bar's General Statistics Reports on bar exam results, July and October general bar exam statistics for all and first-time test-takers are reported for each school type from 2012 to 2022. Where fewer than 11 applicants are in any category, the data has been suppressed to protect applicant privacy. Exam statistics are also provided for each school. Results for Monterey College of Law's four campuses are reported separately. Trend data aggregated by type reflect the school's category during that year.

## First-Year Law Students' Exam (FYLSX)

The FYLSX is a mandatory exam required of students enrolled in unaccredited law schools, some students who attend CALS and ABA-approved schools, and all participants in the Law Office Study (LOS) Program, an alternative to law school that requires study under the supervision of an attorney or judge for four years. The report analyzes data from June and October 2023 from publicly available reports on the State Bar's website. Exam statistics are made available to the public only for categories with 11 or more applicants to protect applicant privacy. Trend data aggregated by law school type reflects the school's teaching modality during that given year.

## Costs to Complete JD

CALS and unaccredited law schools reported estimated total tuition and fees required to complete a JD degree as of September 15, 2023. The total cost to complete a JD degree analyzed in this report includes tuition and fees. The total cost to complete a JD is reported for each school, and the average is reported by school type.

## Employment Outcomes

CALS and unaccredited law schools report employment outcomes for students who graduated in 2020 who were employed in 2021, 2022, and 2023 in (a) jobs that require a JD degree, or (b) jobs in which holding a JD degree is an advantage.

## Student Demographic Characteristics

### *Race/Ethnicity*

The 2023 compliance reports instructed schools to report enrollment, attrition, and JDs awarded data disaggregated by race/ethnicity using the following categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic/Latino of any race
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races (non-Hispanic):
- White
- Decline to state
- Unknown

The race/ethnicity and gender identity categories are similar to those the ABA requires, except for one key area. The ABA instructs law schools to exclude nonresident aliens from race/ethnicity counts and report them as a distinct category. In contrast, the State Bar instructs CALS and unaccredited law schools to report the race/ethnicity of all students regardless of United States status.

Where necessary to have sufficient data to make meaningful comparisons with white law students, students who identified as Hispanic/Latino of any race, American Indian, or Alaska Native, Asian, Black, or African American, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander, or multiracial were combined into a single “People of Color” category.

The State Bar currently collects and reports information on race/ethnicity differently among licensees than it does for students. For example, licensees report Hispanic/Latino as a race *or* an ethnicity; race/ethnicity categories for licensees include Middle Eastern/North African. For more information, see the State Bar’s most recent diversity report card on California’s attorney population.

### ***Gender Identity***

The 2023 compliance reports instructed schools to report gender identity using the following five categories: Female, Male, Other, Decline to state, and Unknown. For this report, people reported by schools as identifying as “Other” are described as “Nonbinary.”

### ***Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity***

Analyses that explore the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender identity are provided in this report wherever data was available. The six categories used are:

- White Men
- White Women
- White Nonbinary People
- Men of Color
- Women of Color
- Nonbinary People of Color
- Decline to state/Unknown

### ***Note on Demographic Reporting***

The analyses of law school enrollment, attrition, and JDs awarded in this report are limited to race/ethnicity and gender identity and the intersection of both categories. The State Bar requires CALS and unaccredited law schools to report enrollment and JDs awarded data disaggregated by sexual orientation, disability, and veteran status. Law schools are required to report the number for which information was unavailable due to opting to “Decline to state” or “Unknown” for other reasons. Significant amounts of unavailable data for 2023 prevent reporting these student demographics in this report. The State Bar will work with CALS and unaccredited law schools to encourage the collection of more detailed student demographics.

## APPENDIX A

**Table A1. Number of Schools by Teaching Modality: 2022–2023**

Teaching Modality	CALS		Unaccredited	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Correspondence	0	0	4	3
Distance-learning	4	4	4	6
Fixed-facility	8	1	4	4
Hybrid	6	10	0	0

**Table A2. JD Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity: 2022–2023**

	CALS		Unaccredited	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	0.8%	1%
Asian	11%	10%	9%	9%
Black or African American	15%	15%	19%	17%
Latino	25%	27%	18%	19%
Multiracial	4%	4%	2%	2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.5%	1%	1%	2%
White	34%	36%	36%	39%
People of Color	56%	57%	50%	51%
Decline to state	...	2%	...	5%
Unknown	...	5%	...	5%
Decline to state/Unknown	10%	NA	14%	NA
<b>Gender identity</b>				
Men	39%	37%	46%	47%
Women	58%	57%	51%	52%
Nonbinary	0.10%	0.04%	0%	0%
Decline to state	...	1%	...	0.2%
Unknown	...	4%	...	1%
Decline to state/Unknown	3%	...	4%	...



**Table A3. Total 2023 Tuition and Fees to Complete a JD by Law School: 2022–2023**

Law School	CALS	Unaccredited		
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Average	\$75,348	\$74,396	\$33,115	\$44,945
Northwestern California University School of Law	\$16,395	\$16,580	...	...
St. Francis School of Law	\$52,100	\$52,100	...	...
Purdue Global Law School	\$53,220	\$53,220	...	...
Cal Northern School of Law	\$61,005	\$66,885	...	...
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento	\$66,300	\$68,880	...	...
JFK School of Law at National University	\$66,502	\$66,502	...	...
Humphreys University, Drivon School of Law	\$69,000	\$71,400	...	...
Empire College School of Law	\$72,369	\$72,369	...	...
The Colleges of Law	\$72,765	\$76,797	...	...
Monterey College of Law	\$85,450	\$86,050	...	...
San Joaquin College of Law	\$87,350	\$89,175	...	...
Lincoln Law School of San Jose	\$88,500	...	...	\$88,500
University of West Los Angeles	\$92,615	\$99,075	...	...
San Francisco Law School	\$94,232	...	...	\$97,364
Thomas Jefferson School of Law	\$94,696	\$97,364	...	...
Trinity Law School	\$96,675	\$98,475	...	...
University of School of La Verne Law and Public Service	\$97,235	\$101,066	...	...
Southern California Institute of Law	...	...	\$13,300	\$13,300
Peoples College of Law	...	...	\$22,400	\$22,400
American Institute of Law	...	...	\$23,060	\$23,360
Taft Law School	...	...	\$35,515	\$36,275
California School of Law	...	...	\$37,800	\$37,800
Pacific Coast University, School of Law	...	...	\$38,500	\$39,050
Irvine College of Law	...	...	\$39,400	\$44,400
Oak Brook College of Law and Government Policy	...	...	\$41,200	\$41,200
Abraham Lincoln University	...	...	\$42,300	\$47,290
Western Sierra Law School	...	...	\$45,250	\$45,250
California Desert Trial Academy	...	...	\$48,100	\$48,100

**Table A4. Average Total 2023 Tuition and Fees to Complete a JD by Law School: 2022–2023<sup>1</sup>**

Law school type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CALS	\$67,296	\$69,257	\$74,621	\$72,699	\$75,348	\$74,396
Unaccredited	\$33,090	\$34,774	\$34,012	\$34,167	\$33,115	\$44,945

**Table A5. First-Year Attrition Rates by Reason, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender Identity: 2022–2023**

	CALS	Unaccredited			
	2022	2023	2022	2023	
<b>Total Attrition</b>	42%	46%	51%	48%	
American Indian or Alaska Native	50%	60%	100%	100%	
Asian	36%	45%	48%	43%	
Black or African American	44%	56%	68%	64%	
Latino	41%	42%	45%	50%	
Multiracial	49%	60%	73%	15%	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	31%	23%	100%	25%	
People of Color	42%	49%	58%	52%	
White	40%	43%	50%	43%	
Men	45%	48%	56%	51%	
Women	40%	45%	53%	46%	
<b>Academic Attrition</b>					
Total	14%	19%	15%	21%	
American Indian or Alaska Native	14%	27%	0%	50%	
Asian	11%	14%	19%	23%	
Black or African American	16%	26%	17%	29%	
Latino	16%	19%	11%	26%	
Multiracial	17%	31%	45%	8%	
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8%	15%	100%	25%	
People of Color	15%	21%	17%	26%	
White	12%	15%	19%	13%	
Men	14%	16%	17%	19%	
Women	14%	19%	14%	22%	
<b>Other Attrition</b>					
Total	28%	28%	36%	27%	

<sup>1</sup> Analyses exclude data for California Southern Law School and Lady Justice Law School for 2018 and 2019.

	CALS	Unaccredited		
	2022	2023	2022	2023
American Indian or Alaska Native	36%	33%	100%	50%
Asian	25%	31%	30%	20%
Black or African American	29%	30%	51%	34%
Latino	25%	24%	34%	24%
Multiracial	32%	29%	27%	8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	23%	8%	0%	0%
People of Color	27%	27%	41%	26%
White	28%	28%	31%	30%
Men	31%	32%	39%	32%
Women	26%	25%	39%	24%

**Table A6. Number of JDs Awarded by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Identity: 2022–2023**

	CALS	Unaccredited		
	2022	2023	2022	2023
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	4	0	0
Asian	53	51	9	14
Black or African American	43	39	8	11
Latino	161	129	14	15
Multiracial	10	15	4	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	3	2	0
People of Color	280	241	37	42
White	199	194	16	33
Decline to state	...	9	...	5
Unknown	...	48	...	3
Decline to state/Unknown	51	...	19	...
<b>Gender Identity</b>				
Men	208	192	31	43
Women	308	254	24	39
Nonbinary	0	0	0	0
Decline to state	...	0	...	0
Unknown	...	46	...	1
Decline to state/Unknown	14	...	17	...