

## *I've Heard that [X Law Firm] Only Accepts Top 10 Law Schools/Laterals from AmLaw100 Firms/Top GPAs. Should I Still Submit My Materials?*

**Question:** I've heard that [X law firm] only accepts Top 10 law schools/laterals from AmLaw100 firms/top GPAs. Should I still submit my materials?

**Answer:**

Whether you are a law student applying for a summer position or a seasoned associate looking to make a lateral move, the job search and application process can be difficult, confusing, and intimidating. Most law students and attorneys understand on some level that they will be well-served to obtain the largest amount of information possible on law firms, practice types, and opportunities when conducting their search, picking which firms to apply to, and preparing for their interviews.

Unfortunately, even the most aggressive researcher may find the process rather opaque at times, and given that law students and lawyers can often have a penchant for opining on nearly everything to their colleagues, misinformation can be quickly and widely spread, and not easily corrected. Thus, when discussing job listings and law firms with candidates, I am often asked whether it's "true" that such-and-such law firm only looks at resumes from top 10 law schools, or won't accept candidates who are trying to lateral from a smaller firm or market, etc.

Certain law firms do in fact have such criteria, and a good recruiter or an established recruiting firm ought to be familiar with those requirements to avoid non-starter submissions or at the very least to temper a candidate's expectations for any given job. That being said, my colleagues and I have been consistently, and often pleasantly, surprised by interview requests and offers for candidates who did not necessarily fit the exact criteria of a particular job listing, but whose background and experience provided comparable ability and exceptional value to a particular firm or practice group. In other words, if you have strong substantive experience that might fit a particular listing, you should err on the side of submitting your materials while explaining exactly how you believe your credentials and experience will allow you to perform the work the firm's practice group will require.

The closer you come to meeting the specifics of a given job listing, the better your chances will be, for obvious reasons, especially at prestigious firms where hundreds of candidates are likely to apply for any given job. However, with a given job listing, you never know who else is going to apply, and if a firm has a strong and immediate need to add another attorney, it may end up being a matter of which applicant comes close enough to meeting what the partners are looking for and otherwise has the strongest credentials. It is better to let the firm eliminate you from consideration rather than prematurely eliminating yourself, and to let those factors you cannot control be determinative rather than admit defeat at the outset.

## *Learn the 10 Factors That Matter to Big Firms More Than Where*

# *You Went to Law School*

It is an extremely competitive market right now, so if you are looking for a new opportunity, you are going to have the best chance of success if you can recognize not only the opportunities for which you are a perfect fit, but also those where you can plausibly convince a firm you are capable of doing the work and will add value to a particular practice group in the long-term.

Best of luck in your search!never hurts!

**See the following article to learn how much the law school you attended matters when moving to a [new firm](#):**

**[How Much Does the Law School You Went to Matter When You Lateral Firms?](#)**

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