

Although I've taught environmental law for a long time, my knowledge of the programs at U.S. law schools is pretty hit or miss. In the hope of finding out more, I did a quick survey of U.S. schools. The results make it clear that environmental law has a foothold at law schools of all kinds.

Here are the details about my "quick and dirty" survey. My sample was drawn from the membership list of the American Association of Law Schools, which includes 93% of ABA accredited schools. I randomly selected 22 schools, which is about 15% of the total AALS membership. The list included one "top ten" school, two others in the top 20, and others that pretty much span the rankings. I then extracted as much information as possible from their websites about environmental centers, clinics, courses, and faculty.

The full results are at the end of this post, along with some explanations about uncertainties. But here are the highlights:

Five schools (about a quarter of the schools) have environmental law centers. That's more than I would have guessed. If you extrapolate to the full list of ABA accredited schools, that would mean fifty environmental law centers, scattered across the country.

About the same number have clinics. These were not always the same schools as those with environmental law centers.

Eight schools (over a third) had *either* a center *or* a clinic. Again extrapolating to the full ABA list, this would mean sixty-five or so American law schools have an environmental law clinic, center, or both. I didn't include externship programs as clinics, although they can be especially valuable to students at schools that lack clinical programs.

There was wide variation in the number of non-clinical environment/energy courses, with the average being around 3-4. That isn't enough courses to allow deep expertise, but it's more than enough to cover all the basic areas of the field, from pollution law to endangered species.

There was also variation in the number of research faculty, with the average being around two. Note: This included only active, nonclinical tenure/tenure track positions. In terms of teaching, this group is augmented by lecturers, clinical faculty, and positions with other titles such as "professor in

residence” or “professor from practice.”

I was worried when I started that environmental law might only be supported at the schools with the most resources, which are basically those with the highest rankings. Fortunately, that didn’t turn out to be true.

Law school rankings did not seem to play a key factor. The weakest environmental law program was at a top-20 school. Some school that are commonly considered low in the pecking order had very good programs. It seems like a very good sign that such a broad range of schools are involved. Clearly, environmental law isn’t considered just a frill. It’s important enough that even schools which are short on resources make the effort.

A lot could be done to improve this survey. It would be great to include all 199 ABA schools in the survey, check on what schools have environmental law reviews, catalogue the activities of clinics and centers, etc. Hopefully, this post will inspire someone to undertake a more systematic look at environmental law programs nationally. Even better, a complete listing of law school programs might inspire some of the laggards to catch up.

	EL center	EL clinic	#courses	#faculty
1.	no	no	2	2
2.	no	no	7	3
3.	yes	yes	4	2
4.	No	no	0	1 (?)
5.	Yes	Yes	16	1
6.	no	no	5	??
7.	no	no	3	??
8.	no	no	3	3
9.	yes	yes?	??	1
10.	yes	yes	4	2
11.	no	no	6	1
12.	no	no	2	1

13.	no (?)	no	4	3
14.	yes	yes (?)	7+	3 (?)
15.	no	no	??	3
16.	no	no	3	1
17.	no	no	4	1
18.	no	yes	4	3 (?)
19.	yes	yes	6	5
20.	no	no	5	2
21.	Yes	no	5	1

- **Notes:**

- [1] In a few cases, I wasn't sure whether a program involved a clinic or externships.
- [2] Some schools didn't have any course listings at all, and a couple had catalogues, which included courses that might or might not be taught in a given year.
- [3] Many schools listed faculty by speciality or included descriptions on their faculty directory page. I had to make some judgment calls about whether environmentally related issues were a substantial interests or only an occasional sideline. When schools did not compile information about faculty interests on a single page, I would have had to look at all of the individual faculty pages. I did that only if the faculty was quite small. Otherwise, I just looked for names that I recognized. The cases where I was least certain of the count are indicated with question marks.