

Legal Labor Market Study 2022

YouConnect

partners for legal & hr talent



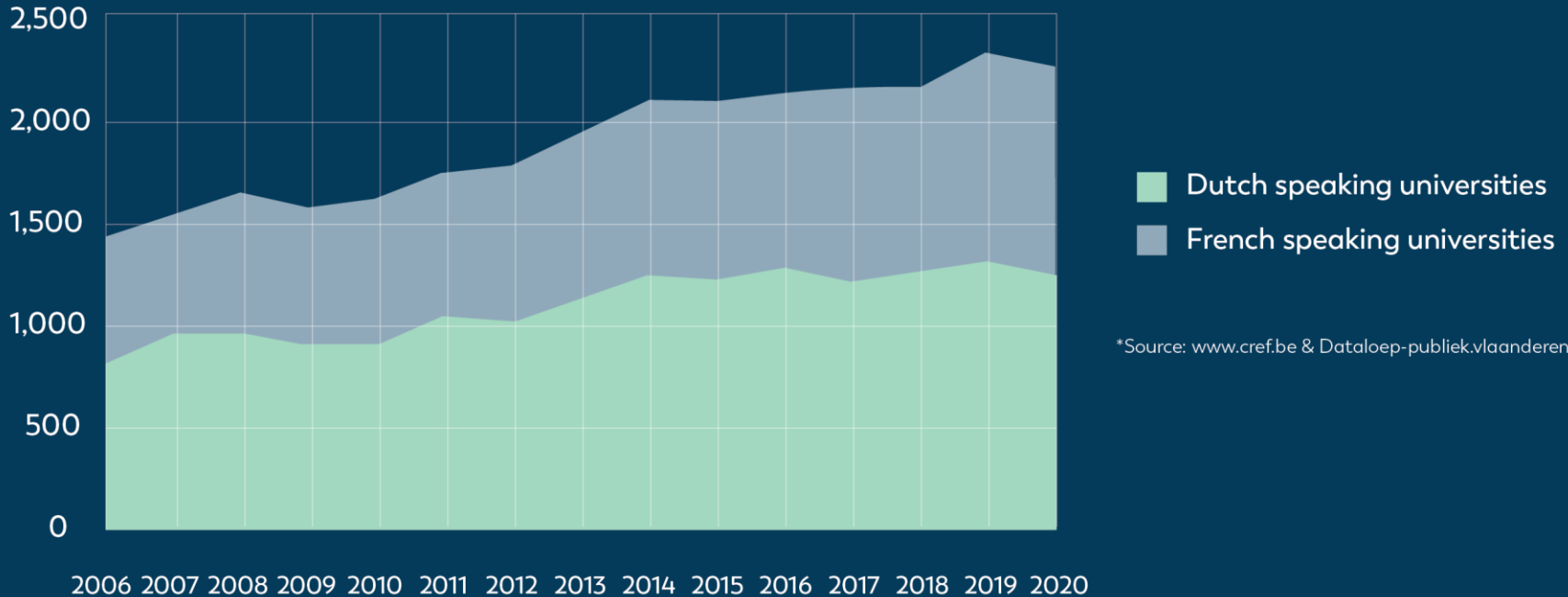
Background

In 2019 YouConnect conducted a study on the career path of law graduates in cooperation with Vlerick Business School.

The 2022 study dives deeper into some of the research questions regarding the legal career path and incorporates the 2019-2021 period, while applying a similar methodology as in the 2019 study.

[Link to the 2019 Study](#)

Number of law graduates from Belgian universities entering the labour market has increased by 56% over the last 15 years



2,250
new
graduates
per year



64%
female
graduates
since 2011



60,000*
active law
graduates
in Belgium



19,500
law graduates
registered as
lawyer at the bar



* estimate

“I can only applaud the rise in popularity of the law degree. The younger generation will play a pivotal role in our goal for a faster, more efficient and better justice system in Belgium.”

-

Vincent Van Quickenborne,
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Justice

“This study gives a unique insight into the career choices and opportunities for our law students and alumni. It is interesting to see how options taken by law graduates during and after their university track impact on the further career development”

-

Michel Tison,
Dean of the Faculty of
Law and Criminology, UGent.

Research questions



What is the professional occupation of law graduates?



How did their career evolve over time?



Did the career path of law graduates change over time?



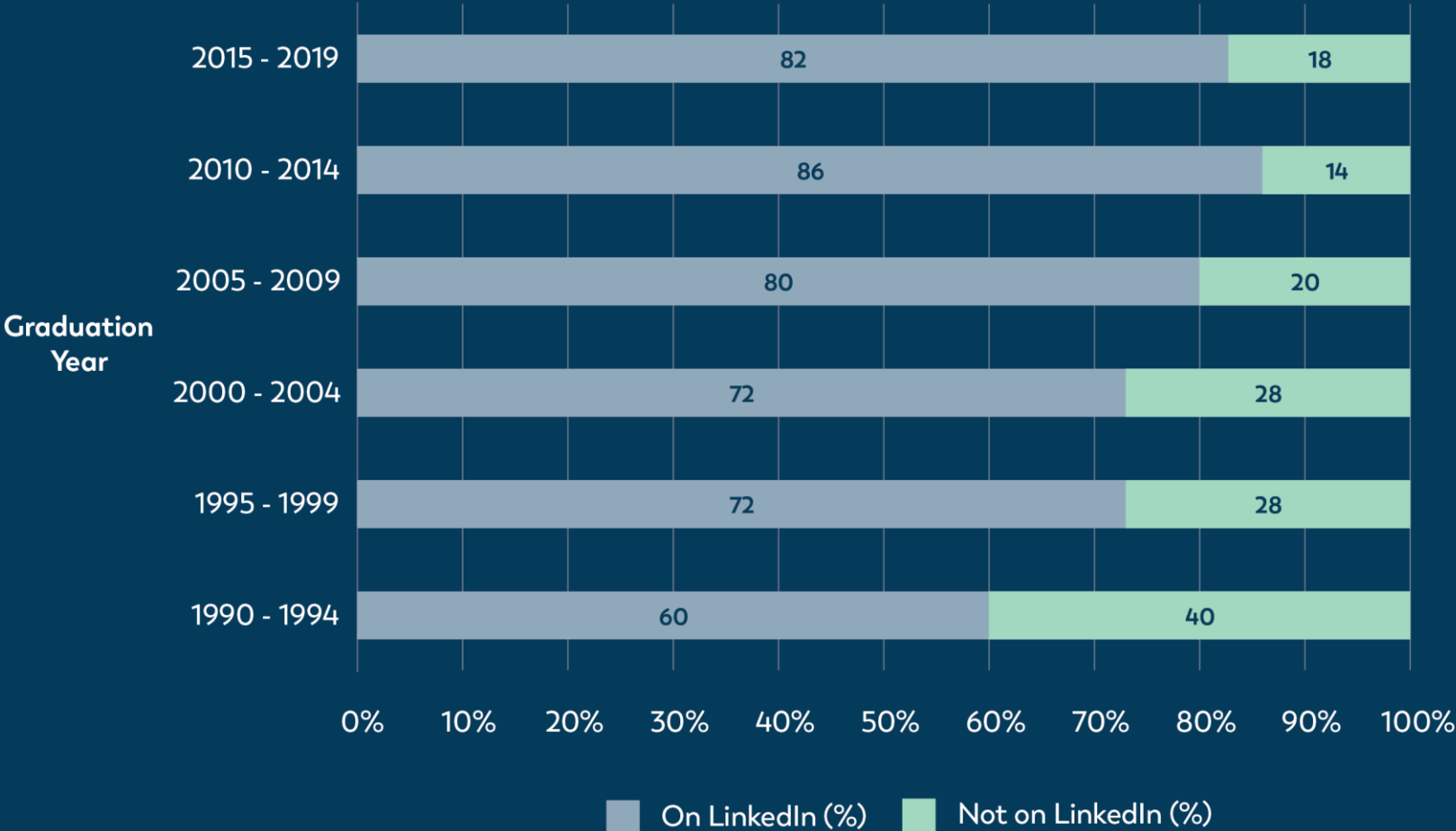
Are there differences noticeable between the career path of female and male law graduates?



Using LinkedIn to collect data

LinkedIn Use of Law Graduates

Law graduates (especially the younger generation) share their career path on LinkedIn



* Based on a random sample of 297 KUL Alumni

A representative sample of 1402 law graduates has been gathered in the summer of 2021 as a basis for further analysis

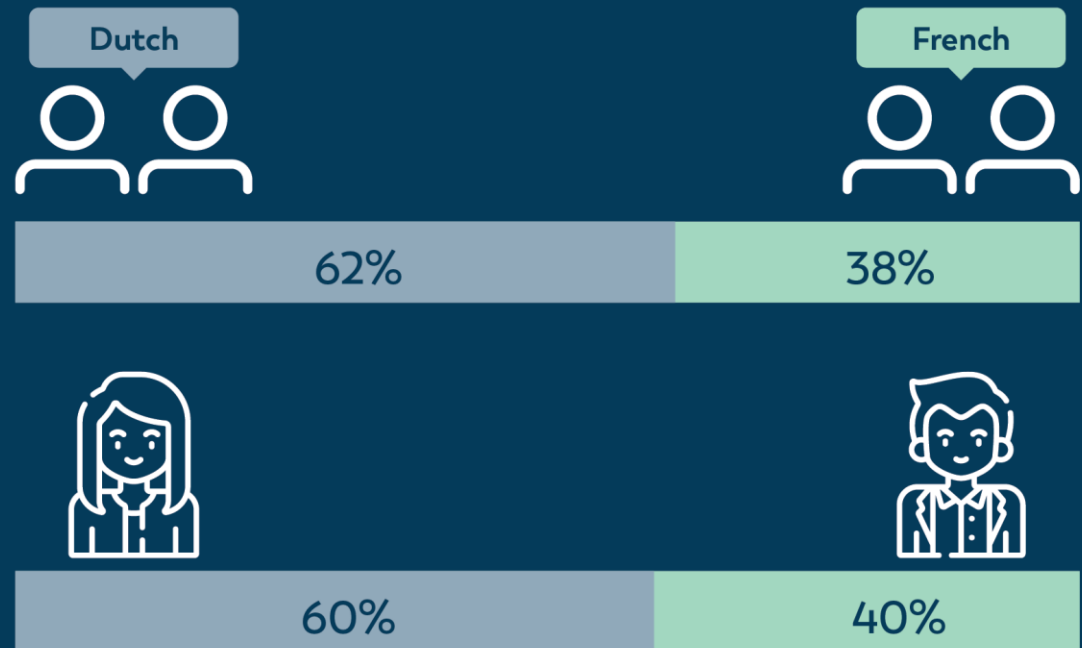
1,402

LinkedIn profiles
representative
sample

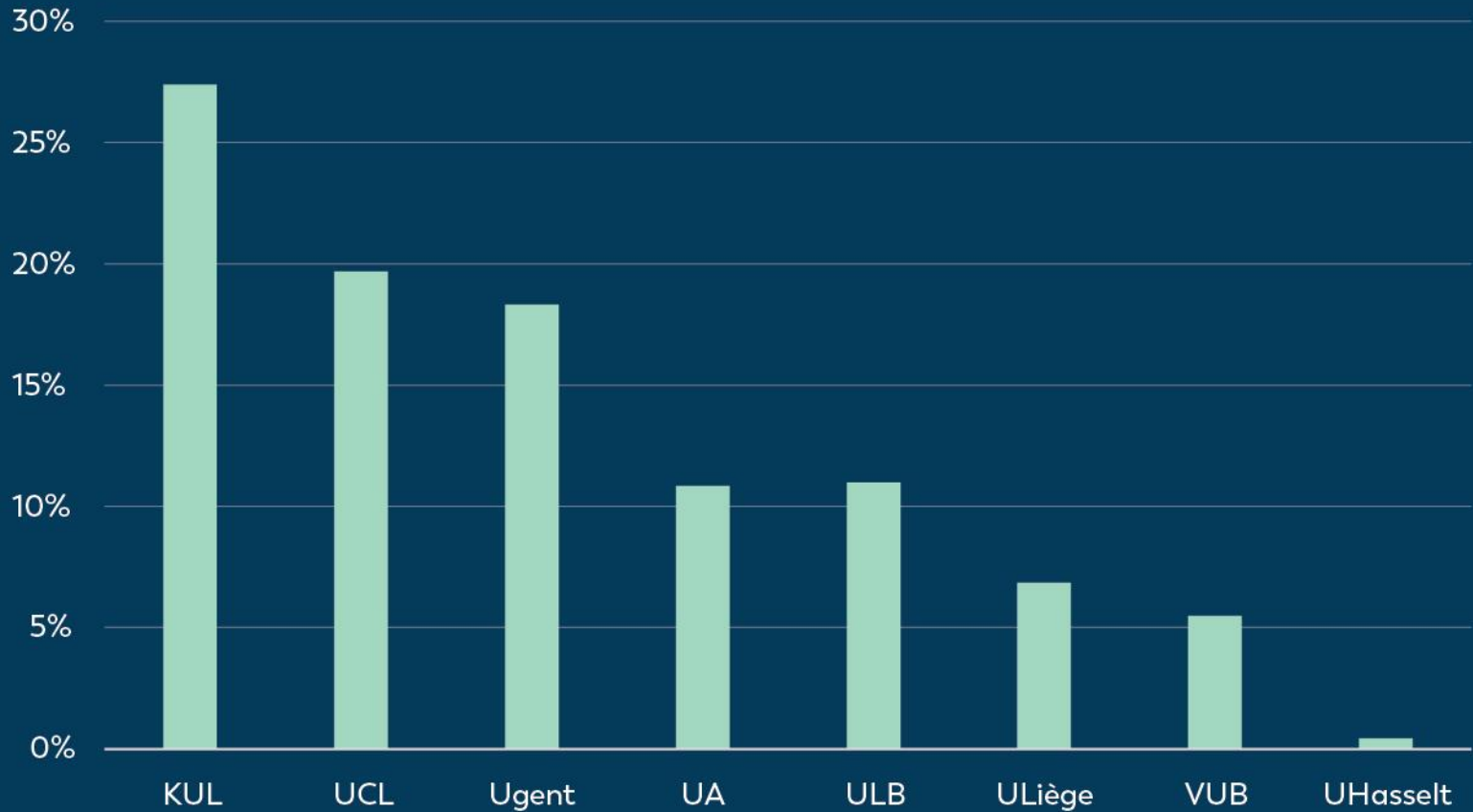
90%

graduated
after 1991

In the sample:



University of graduation in our sample

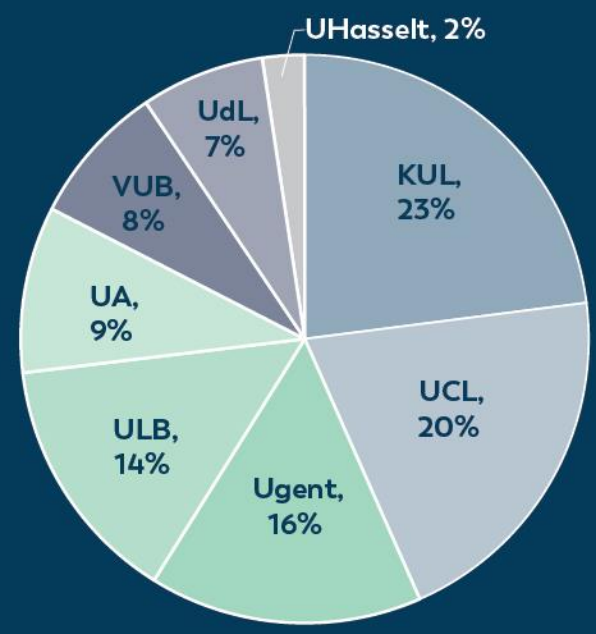
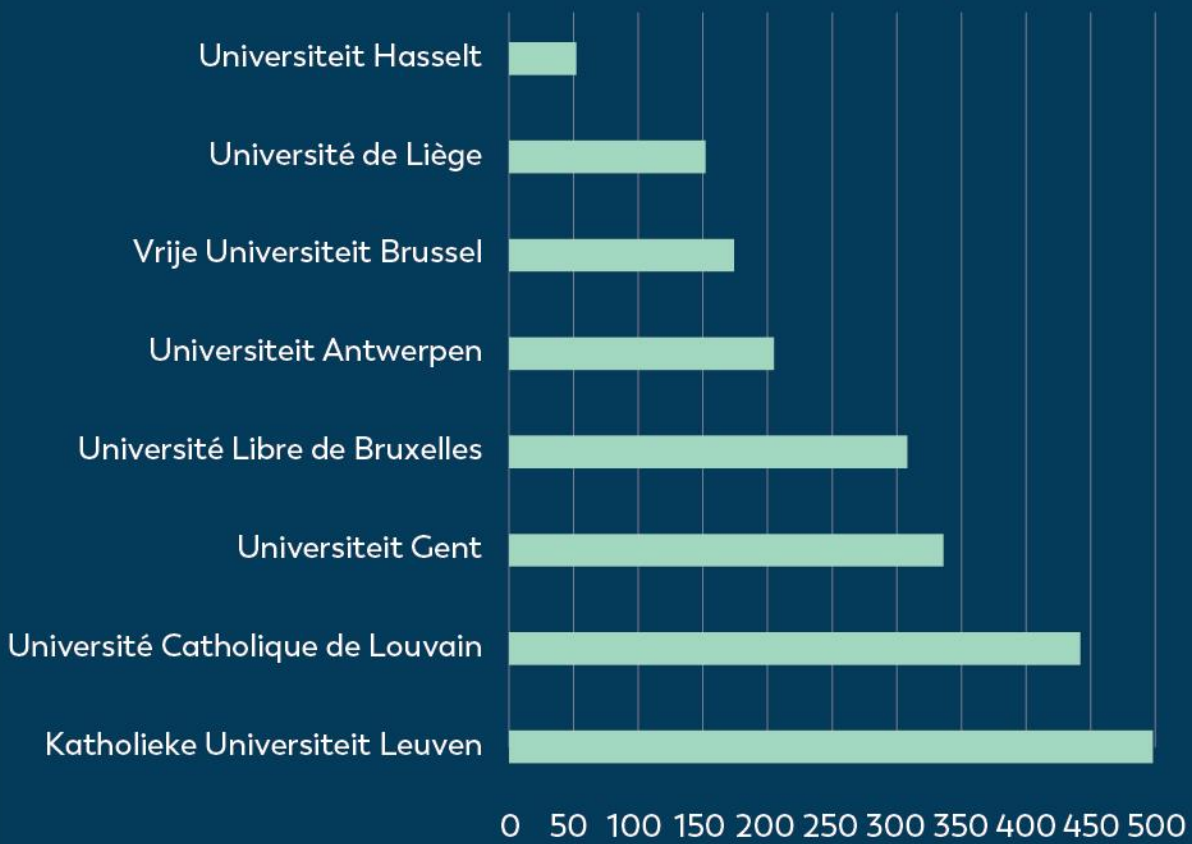


Note: Market share of universities evolves over time



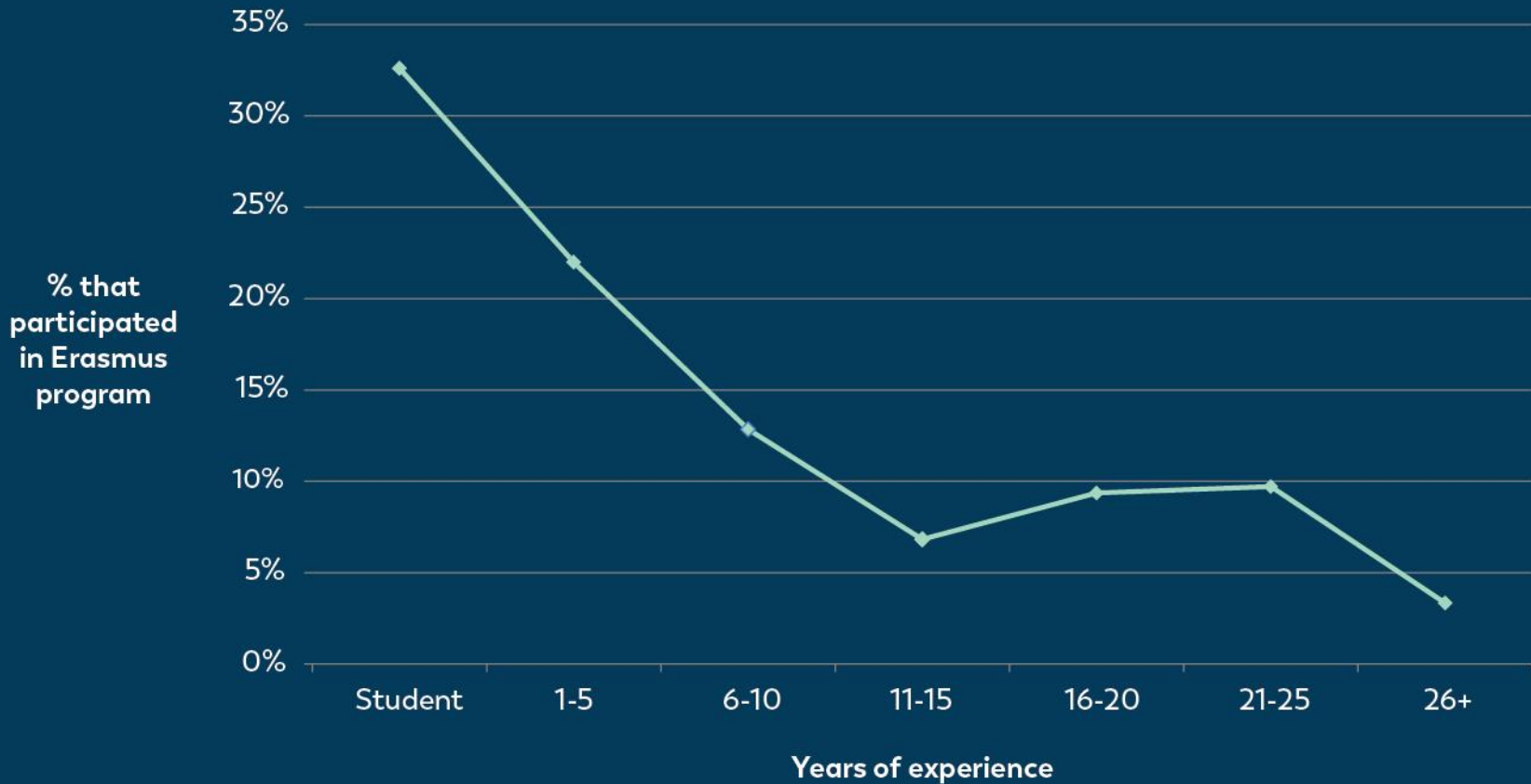
Academic background of law graduates

Belgian Law Graduates in 2017-2018



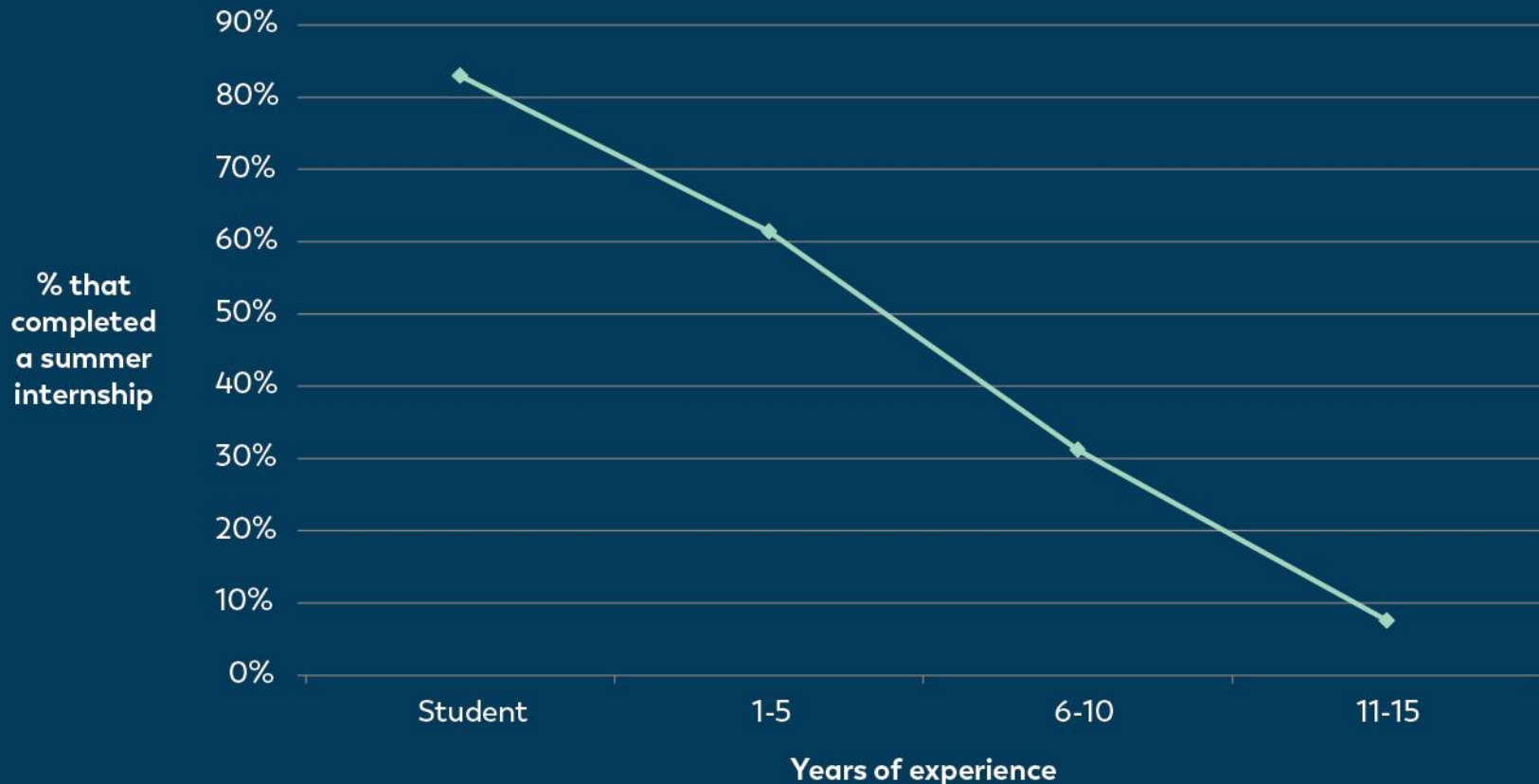
Source: www.cref.be & dataloop-publiek.vlaanderen.be

33% of recent law graduates participated in an Erasmus program



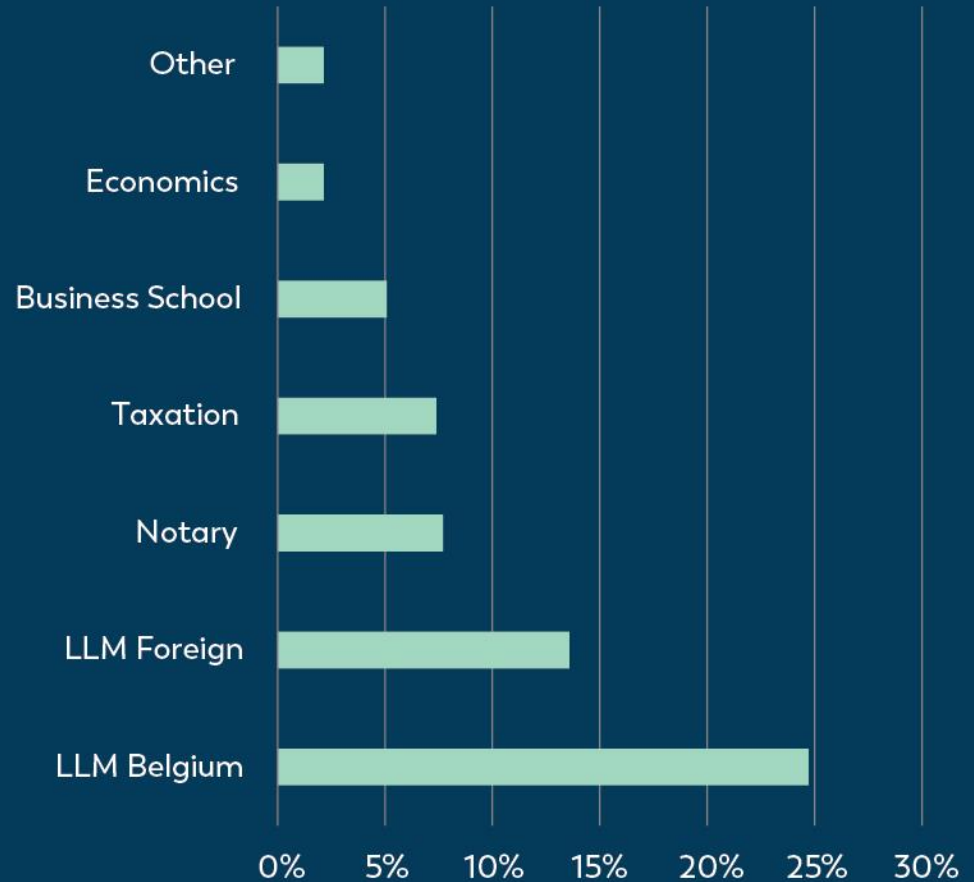
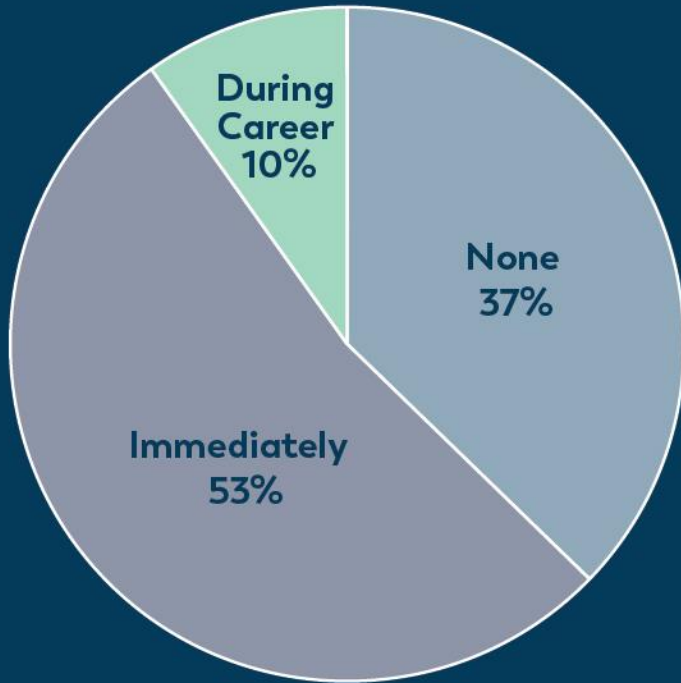
Source: 2019 Study

Voluntary legal summer internships have become common practice during the studies

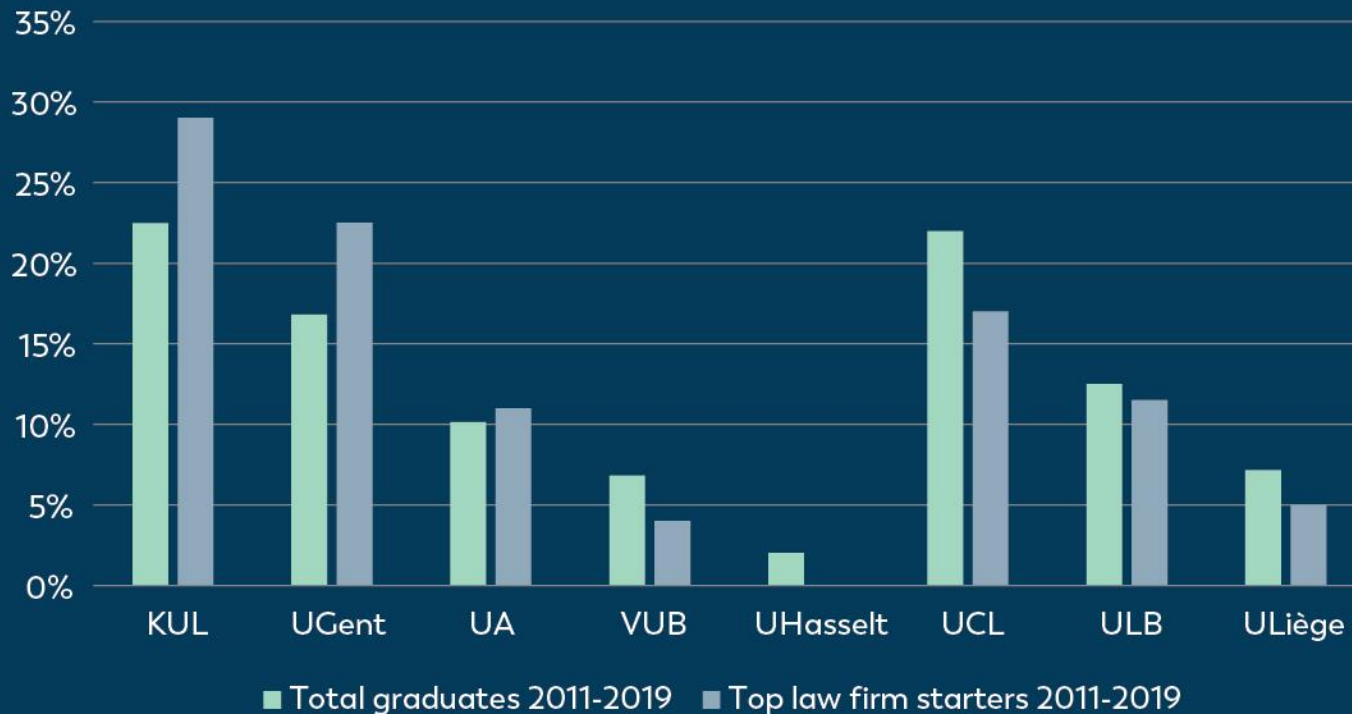


Source: 2019 Study

63% of law graduates obtained an additional degree, mainly focusing on a specific area of law



Choice of university has no significant impact on chances to start a career at a top ranked law firm*



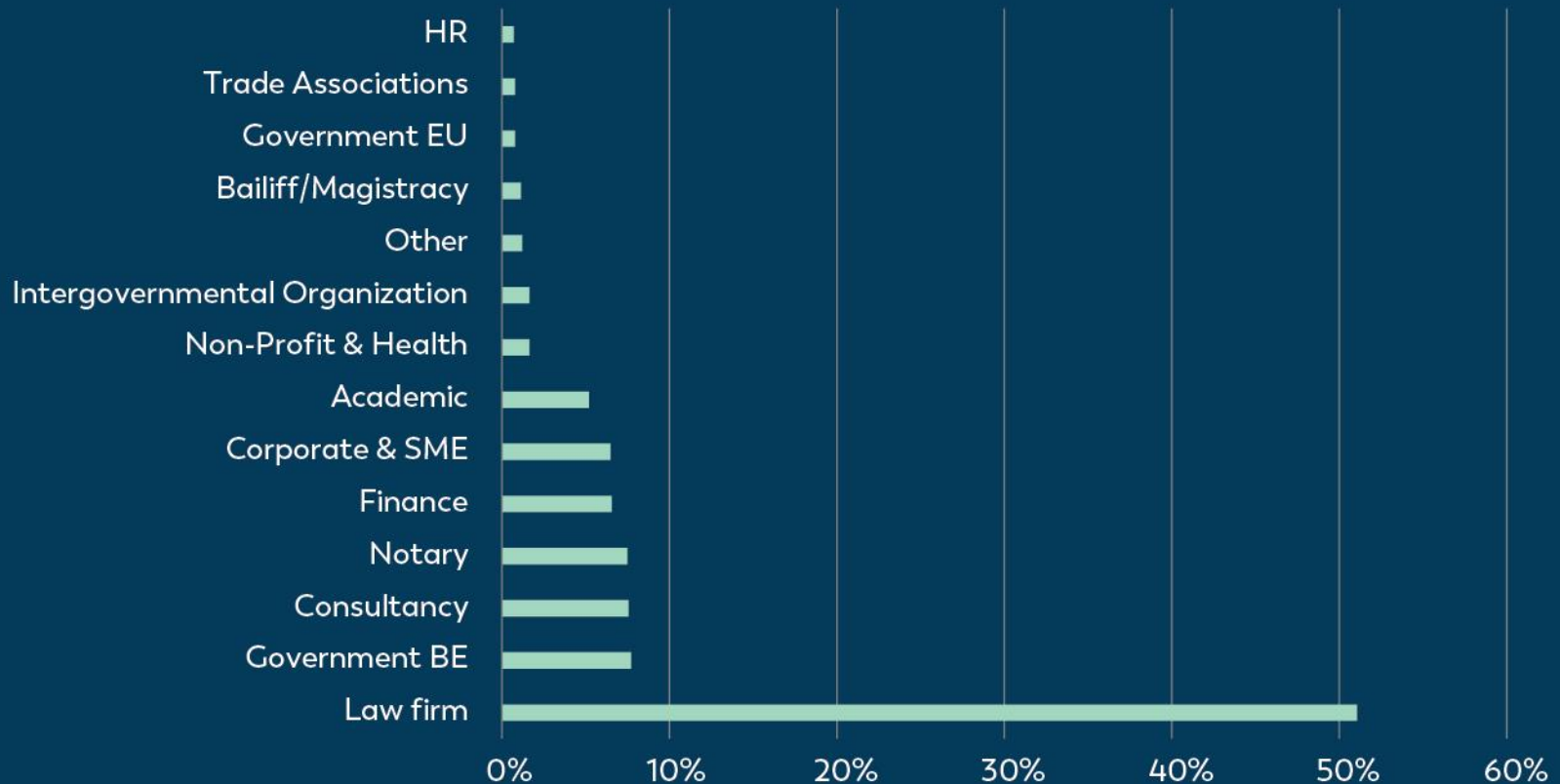
Based on a sample of 346 law graduates who started their career at a top ranked law firm between 2011 and 2019

* Based on Chambers rankings 2021

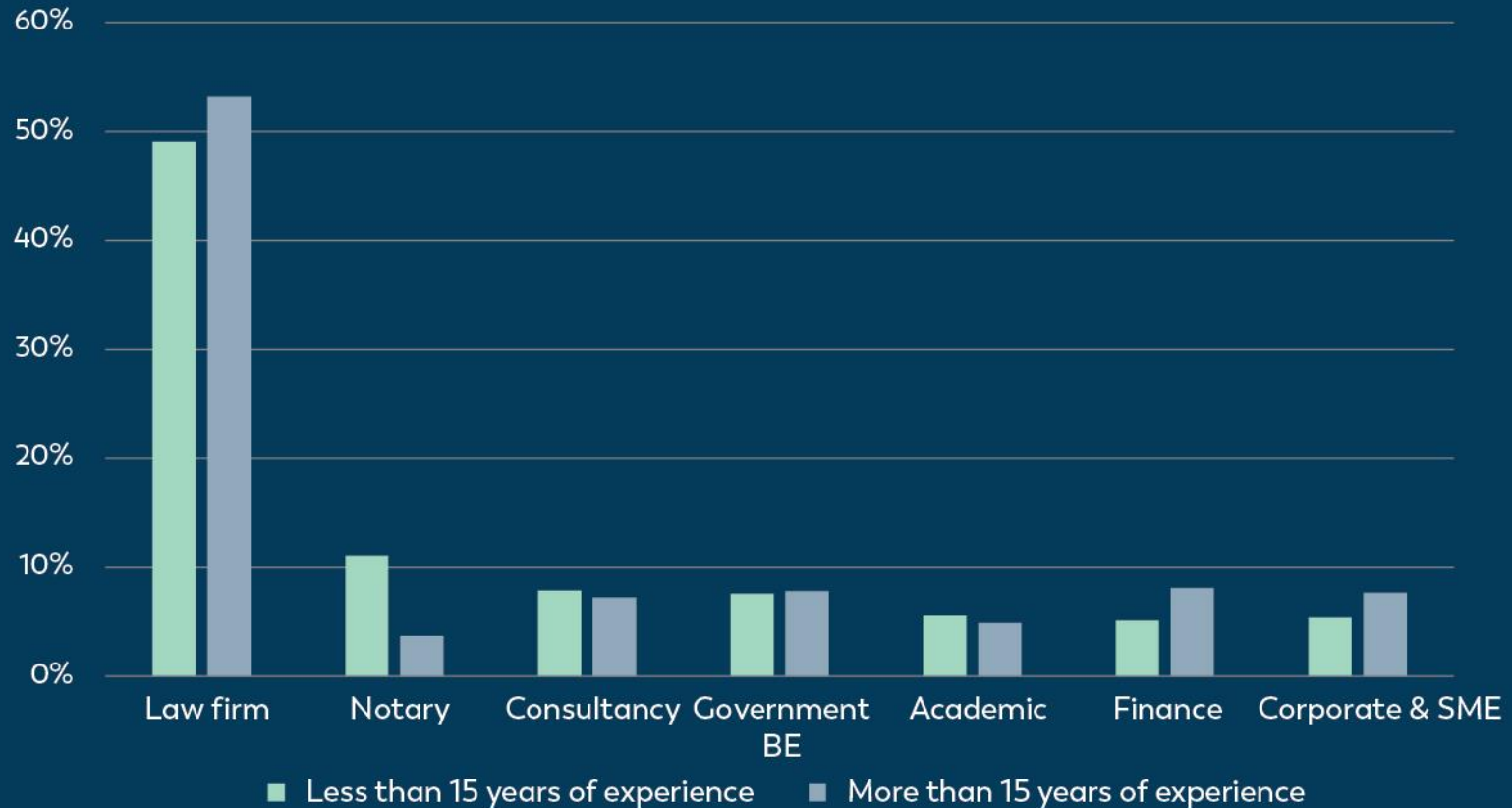


The legal career: the first employer

More than 50% of law graduates started their career in a law firm, making it by far the most popular choice



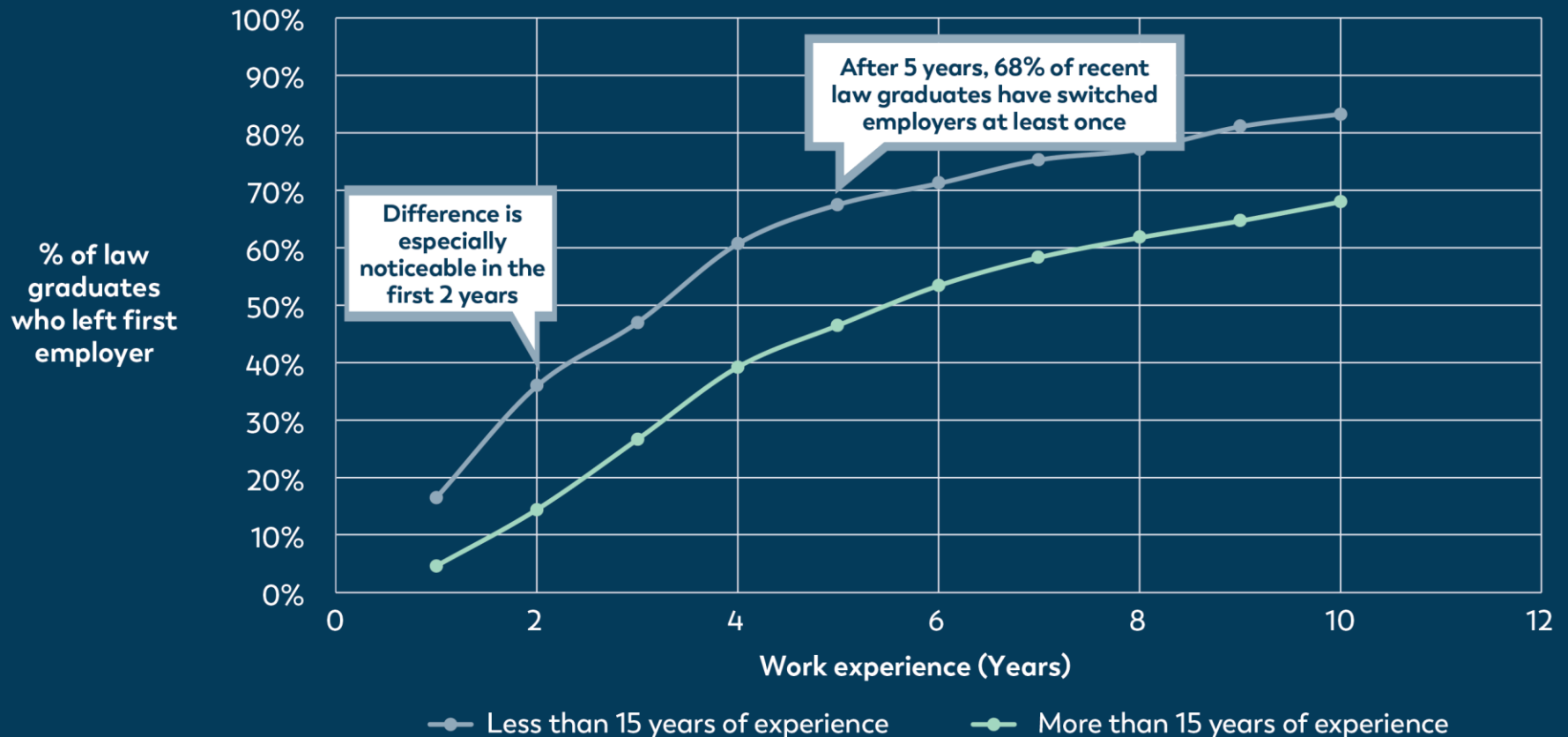
Where law graduates start their career hasn't evolved much over time



“Law firms attract most new law graduates as they offer plenty of opportunities for juniors and for many law graduates it is an obvious choice to start their career.

Law graduates consider law firms a good place to start their career as they learn or improve a lot of useful skills during the internship: drafting, negotiating, attention to detail, time management, ...”

Recent law graduates leave their first employer sooner than in the past



Unlike in the past recent female law graduates leave their first employer sooner than male law graduates





Legal career path analysis: a closer look at law firms

Law firm starters are more loyal to their first employer compared to starters in other sectors

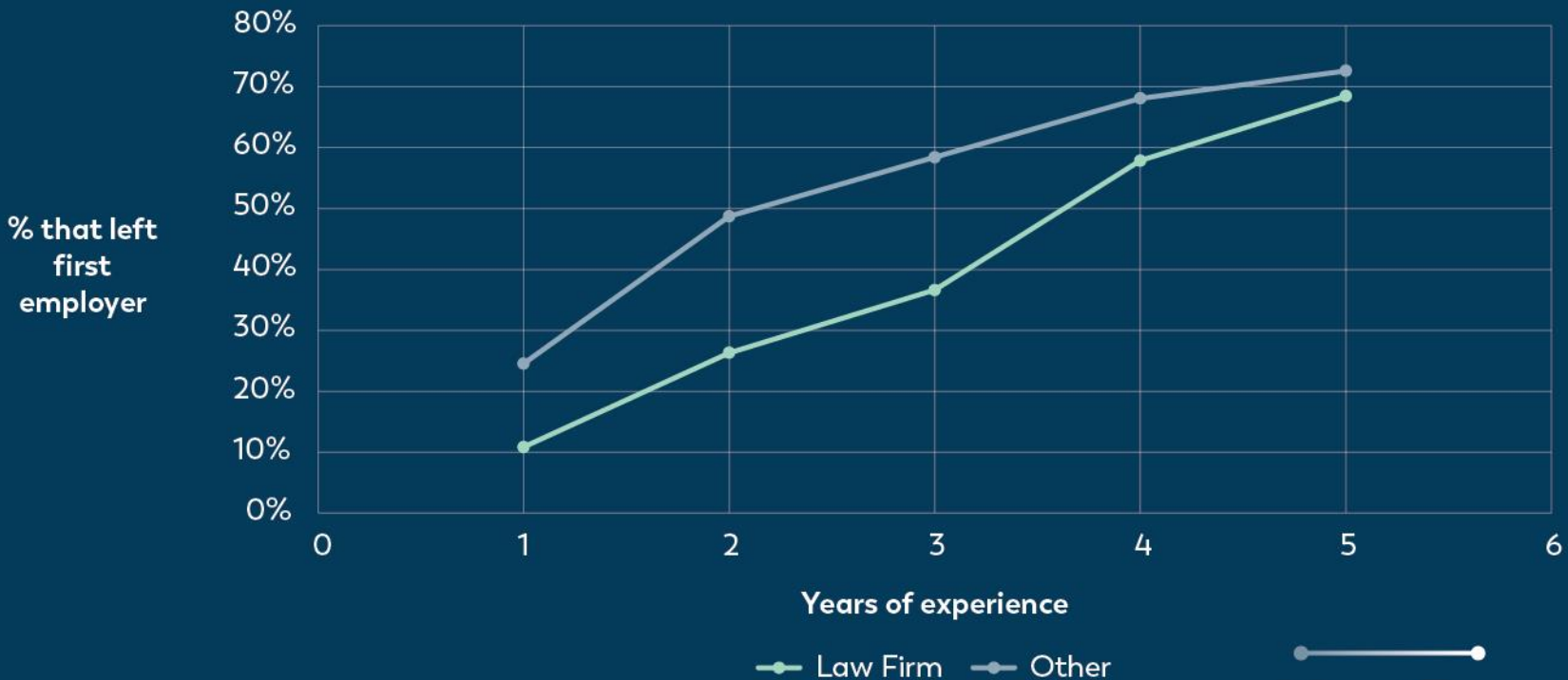
49%

of non-law firm starters changed employers during first 2 years

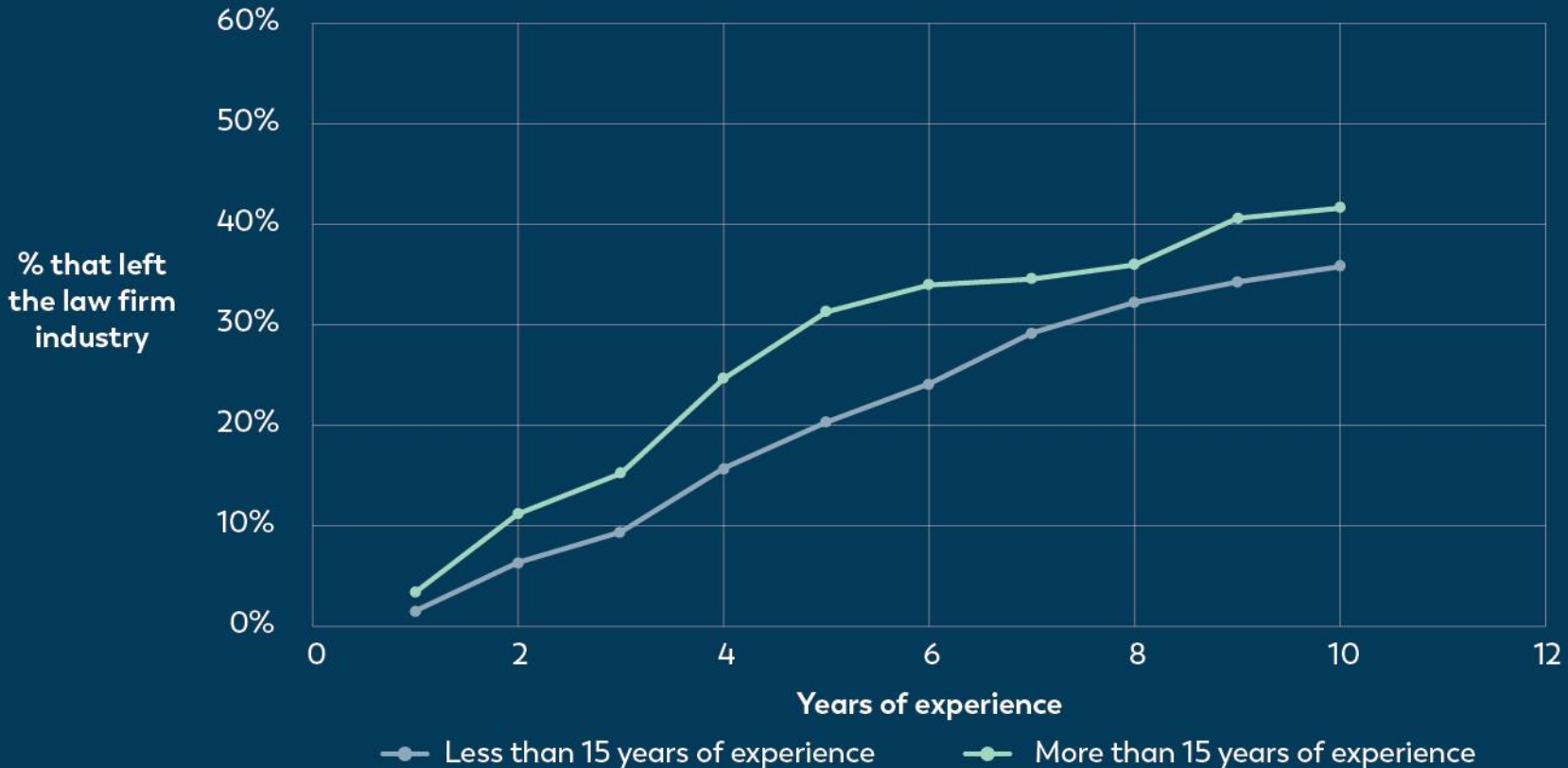
vs.

26%

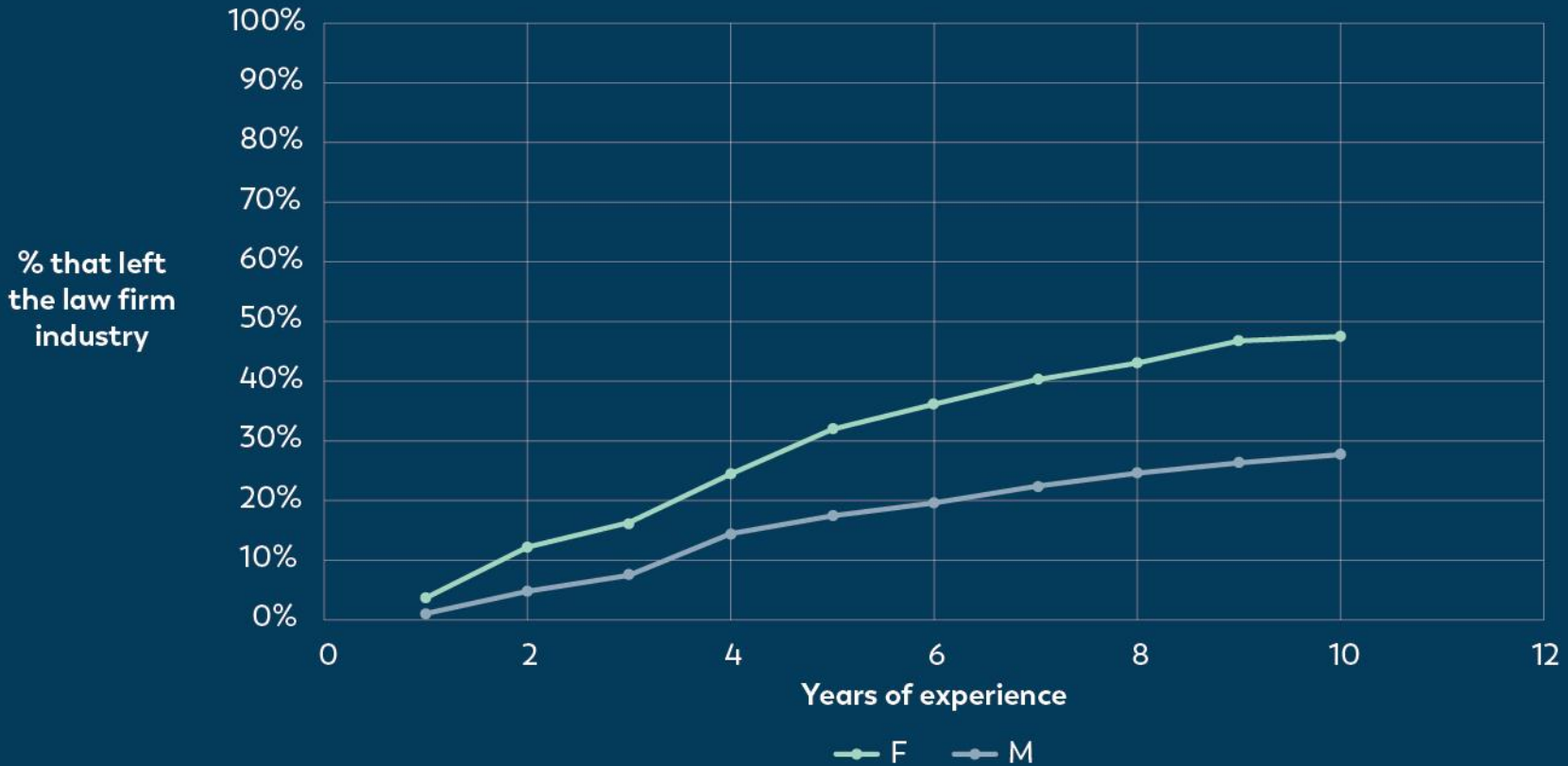
of law firm starters changed employers during first 2 years



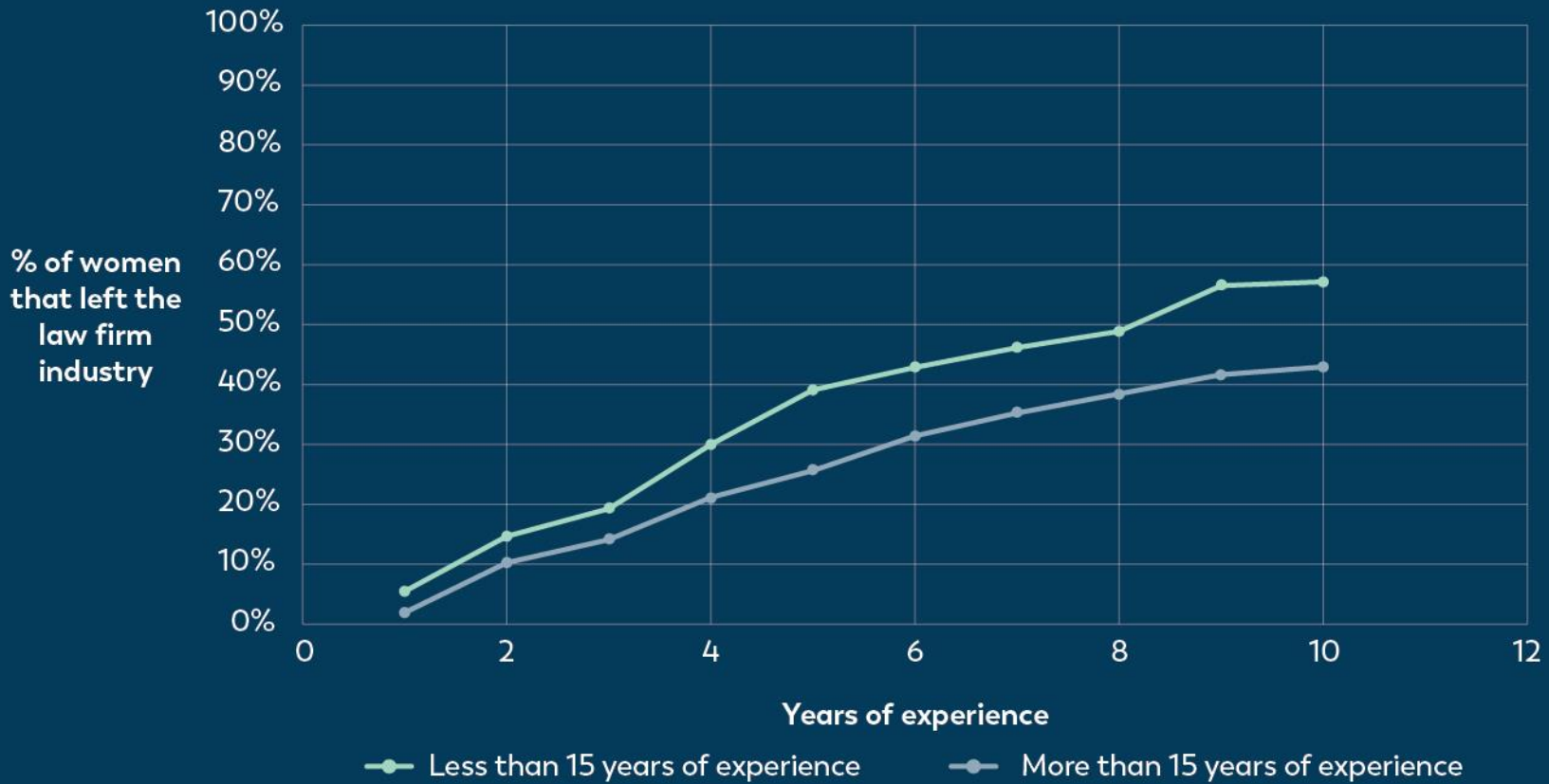
... however, law graduates are leaving the law firm industry sooner than they did in the past



Women leave the law firm industry sooner than men...



... and younger women leave even sooner than in the past





“After 10 years **almost 50% of the female starters in law firms have left the bar**, compared to only 28% of male starters.

Despite the recent rise in awareness and actions taken in this regard, **female lawyers are leaving the bar sooner than before”**

Some reasons why lawyers quit the bar*



Lack of involvement and impact



Limited career growth opportunities



Less control over workload and agenda



Self-employed status



Competitive work culture

* Based on information provided to YouConnect by former lawyers

“Half of the law graduates who started their career in a law firm **stayed a lawyer for the rest of their career.**

Law graduates who quit the bar usually do not return. Of all the law graduates who left the bar and with at least 15 years of work experience **only 14% came back”**

“This study shows many interesting things, but an ever recurring theme strikes me: after all the attention paid to women careers in law firms, women still grow considerably less into top positions in law firms. Representing roughly 60% of Belgian Masters in Law (percentage rising), women represent only 20% of the partners (percentage even decreasing). Moreover, the gap is created within the first 10 years of their careers: the number of women leaving the law firm industry in that period is twice that of the men leaving.

So law firms have two problems: not only promoting women with relevant seniority, but simply keeping them until they reach that seniority is an increasing challenge. It should encourage the law firms to consider their “way of life”, and it should encourage society to take gender (and for that matter, all diversity) matters seriously.”

-

Marieke Wyckaert

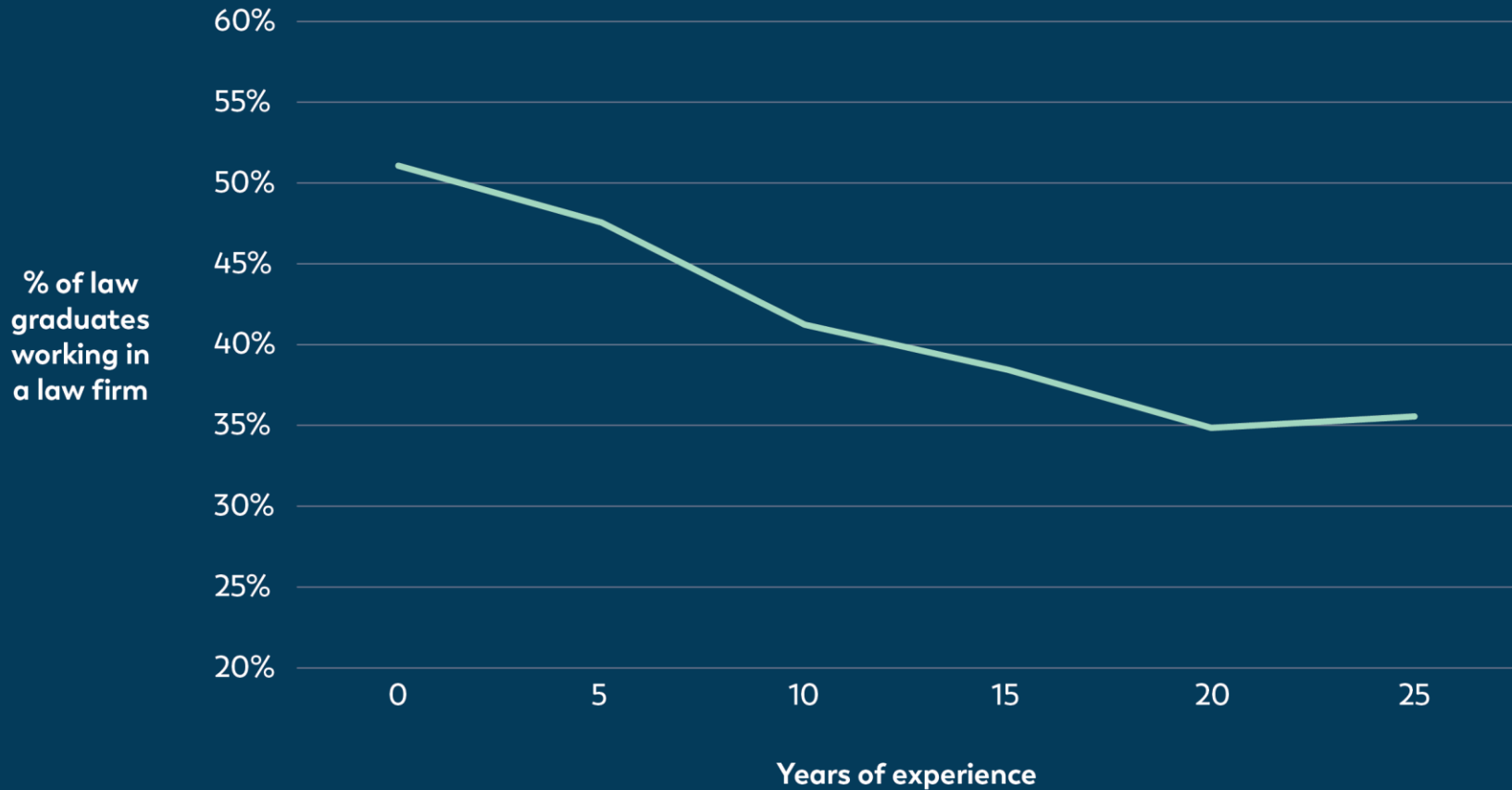
Former Partner Eubelius

Professor at the Law faculty, KULeuven

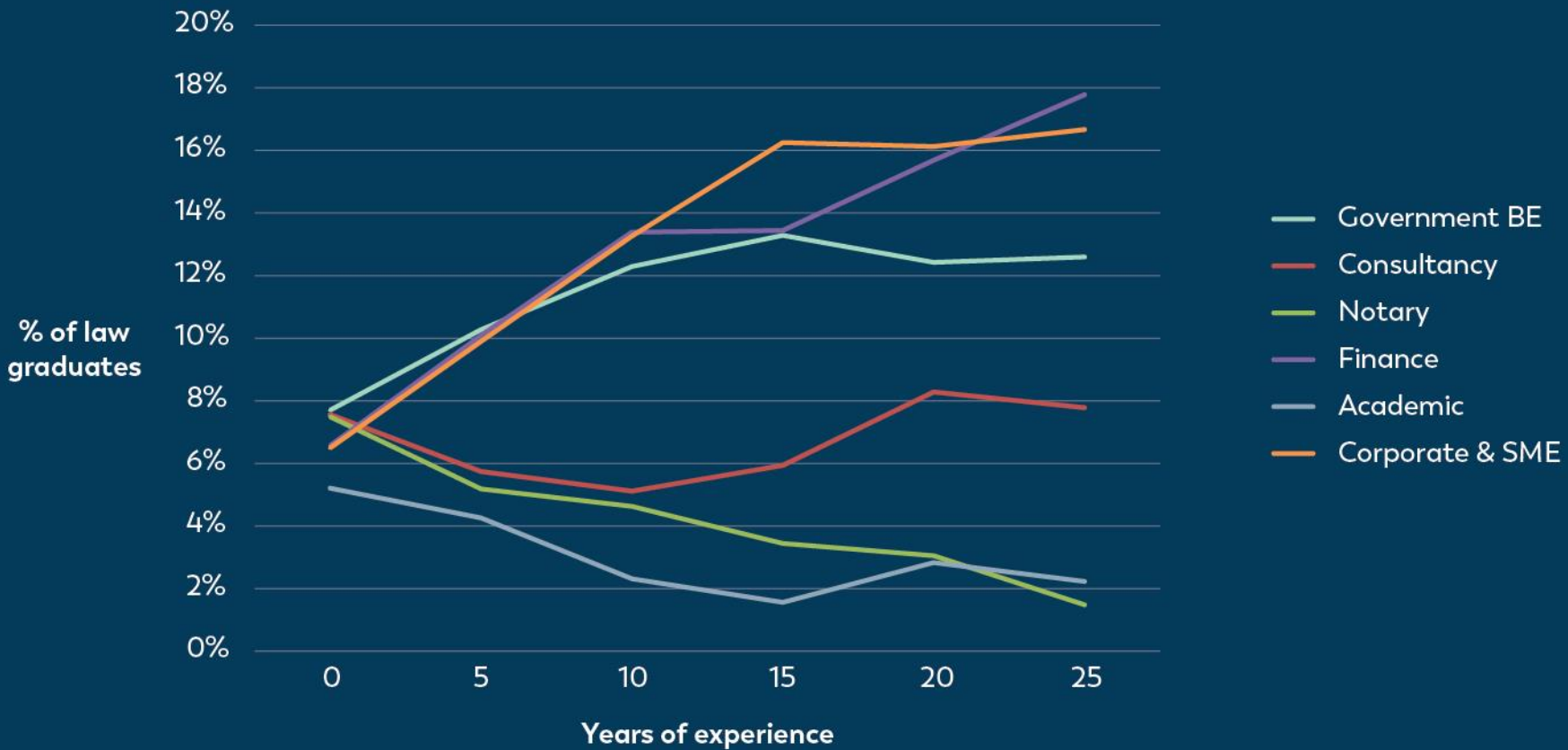


The legal career outside of law firms

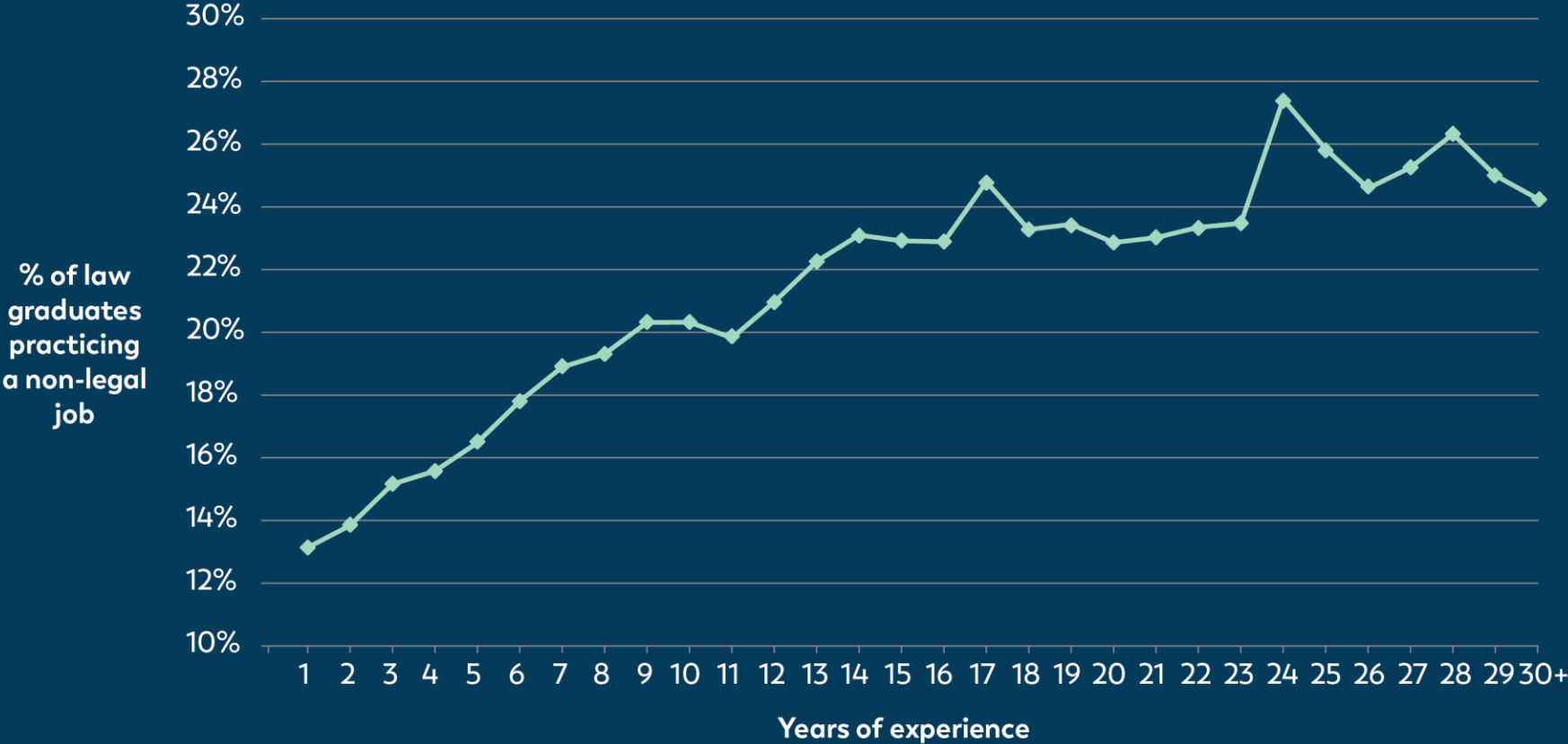
Law firms' market share declines over time as more experienced law graduates leave law firms



Other sectors prefer more experienced legal profiles and offer fewer junior legal jobs



13% of law graduates start their career outside the legal profession, increasing to 26% after 25 years



Source: 2019 Study



“Even though a law degree is considered to be versatile, opening the door to a variety of career opportunities, **the big majority of law graduates will choose a legal job at the start of their career.**”

At 25 years of experience, **3 out of 4 law graduates are still practising a legal profession.**”



Conclusions

Conclusions



Total number of active law graduates is estimated at 60 000



Every year, 2,250 new law graduates enter the labor market



64% of these law graduates is female



63% of law graduates obtained an additional degree



The choice of university has no significant impact on the career

Conclusions



Today, 50% of the law graduates start their career in a law firm



Certain sectors prefer more experienced legal professionals and offer little opportunities for junior law graduates



68% of law graduates switch jobs in the first 5 years of their career



Women leave the law firm industry sooner than men, and sooner than in the past



About YouConnect

YouConnect: a niche staffing firm

- Founded in 2013, grown to a team of 18 professionals
- Permanent recruitment, as well as interim recruitment for legal & HR profiles
- Largest independent recruitment firm for legal professionals in Belgium
- Value driven approach centralized around trust, empathy, sustainability and growth
- Passionate about people!





Diether Vandebussche

Recruitment Consultant

Diether has been a Recruitment Consultant at YouConnect since June 2020. He holds a Master's degree in Law and an additional degree in Intellectual Property Law. He started his career in the legal publishing business as an editor and publisher respectively, where he worked together with various legal professionals. With his experience in and knowledge of the legal landscape in Belgium he is eager to advise candidates in making the best career choice.

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Ilse Tack

Managing Partner

Ilse is our managing partner. She was a lawyer and employment law consultant for over twelve years, becoming a true pioneer in legal recruitment. Ilse founded YouConnect in 2013 in order to make her mark on the industry.

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