

By inviting you for an interview, the employer believes you are qualified (on paper) to do the job. The interview is a structured conversation that provides you with the opportunity to sell yourself for the position and demonstrate that you would be a capable and enjoyable colleague.

Prepare thoroughly.

Know everything on your resume, since anything on it is fair game for questions. The interviewer may even ask about things not on your resume, such as your Legal Writing memo (everyone writes one) and unpublished note topic for *Law Review*.

Know the employer. Research the employer's website. Look for its structure, key leaders, recurring themes demonstrating what the employer touts as important about the organization, and recent news. Take your research a step further and conduct a Lexis or Westlaw search for additional articles about the firm and recent cases.

Think about and practice your answers to the standard interview questions on the reverse side of this card. While you do not want to sound rehearsed, you want to be prepared so you are not thinking of your answers during the interview.

Develop questions to ask the interviewer that are thoughtful and could not be answered through your own research. Demonstrate an interest in and enthusiasm for that particular employer.

Use the "Rule of Threes."

Try to offer three examples or reasons for major questions, such as what your strengths are, why did you choose to go to law school, and what you did for a particular past employer. This provides multiple talking points and support for your answers. Each example or reason should be short; do not ramble.

Be prepared for behavioral or stress interviewing questions.

Employers that utilize behavioral interviewing techniques have identified four characters/behaviors that they find desirable in candidates: decision-making and problem solving; motivation; communication and interpersonal skills; and planning and organization. Behavioral questions examine whether interviewees possess those characteristics/ behaviors. See example #13 on the reverse. Stress interviews test applicants' ability to respond to high pressure work environments.

Control the interview.

An interviewer could easily focus on one aspect of your resume (e.g., an interest in photography) for the entire 15 – 30 minutes. At some point, try to redirect the conversation to why you would be a good fit for the employer. However, do this strategically so you do not appear to be avoiding the question or come across as rude to the interviewer.

Dress and act like a professional.

- Wear conservative clothes — dark suits, white shirts/blouses.
- Hair should be neat and away from the face.
- Shake hands confidently but not in an overbearing manner.
- Be friendly but professional at the same time.
- Be nice to everyone. You are making an impression with everyone you meet.

Do not:

- Ask questions about salary, benefits, hours, or vacation. These are appropriate only after an offer has been extended.
- Say anything negative about past employers or the Law School.
- Bring bags or notes to an interview. A briefcase or leather portfolio is appropriate.
- Have your cell phone on during an interview.

Interview Tip Sheet

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. This should not be a lengthy autobiography. Instead, develop an answer that sells yourself and shows why you would be an asset to the employer.
2. When and why did you decide to become a lawyer?
3. Why did you decide to go to St. John's?
4. What course have you enjoyed most (least) in law school? Don't just list the classes. Instead, offer reasons that demonstrate your skills, knowledge, and interests. E.g., "I really enjoyed Contracts because it led me to develop an interest in writing contracts that withstand challenges in court. After taking Contracts, I took a course in contract drafting, which confirmed that I really enjoy transactional work."
5. What courses/externships/internships/clinics are you taking this year? Again, the employer is very interested in the reasons behind your choices, so offer them.
6. What type of law do you want to practice? Be cognizant of the employer's practice areas (e.g., do not state that you have a strong interest in white collar crime if the employer is not involved with that area). For organizations with multiple practice areas, you should be able to state whether you are interested in transactions or litigation, at a minimum. Do not narrow yourself too much by stating that you would only practice in certain areas. Demonstrate flexibility.
7. What are you looking for in an employer? Demonstrate your preparation, by stating not only what criteria attracts you to an employer, but also that this particular employer meets that criteria.
8. What do you think your strengths and weaknesses will be as a lawyer? Your strengths should be beneficial to the employer and law practice. Again, aim for providing three strengths with support through examples. Try to identify a weakness that could be turned into a positive or which you have overcome recently.
9. What do you see yourself doing in 5/10 years? Do not indicate, in any way, that the employer you are interviewing with is a stepping stone to something else.
10. What did you do as an intern for ____? Be prepared to offer three concrete examples.
11. What do you like to do in your free time? Demonstrate that you are an interesting, well-rounded person. No one likes a workaholic.
12. Will you be writing a note for your journal? What is the topic? How did you select it?
13. Tell me about a time when:
 - You had to overcome a challenge
 - You had to make a difficult decision
 - You failed to meet expectations
 - You made an unpopular decision
 - You had to prioritize tasks
 - You demonstrated initiative
 - You had to resolve a conflict
14. What can I tell you about our firm/summer program/practice?