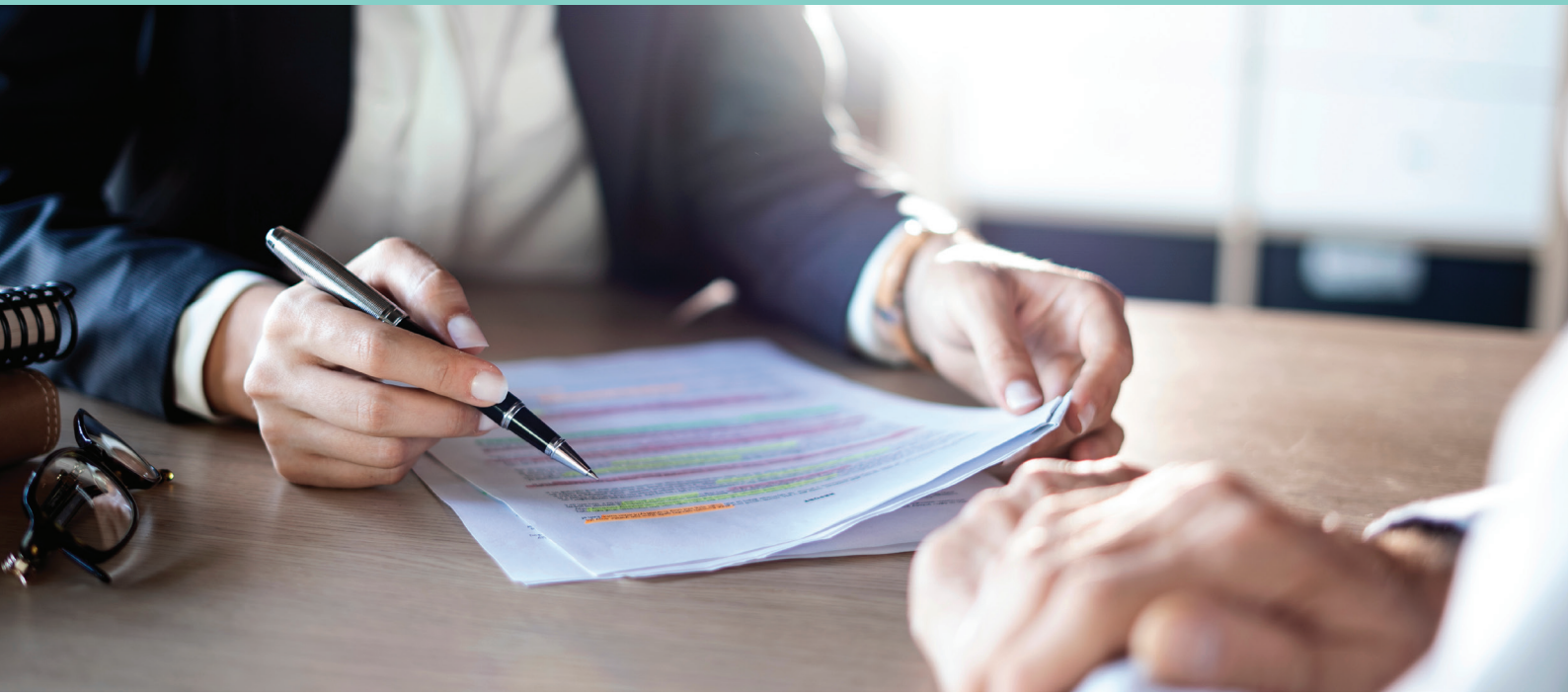


Preparing for an interview is crucial whatever the role or stage you are currently at in your career. Without adequate preparation it is unlikely even an excellent candidate will make a great impression. This guide runs through how to prepare for an interview, tips on interviewing, the types of questions to expect and what to do after the interview.

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION

### Do your research!

- 1. Make sure you know as much as you can about the employer organisation including the type of work they do, their clients, specialities and expansion plans.** The first stop is obviously the website. Make sure you also review any general recruitment pages or employee sections as an indication about an organisation's culture and values. More general searches including news, articles, media releases and social media are also extremely useful and will help you to be across any recent developments which might be relevant.
- 2. Find out as much as you can about those interviewing you.** You will benefit from knowing what their role in the organisation is, how long they have been there for, their fields of specialisation, who they act for, and even their employment history. LinkedIn is extremely useful for this type of information.
- 3. Speak to your recruitment consultant** to make sure you have as much detail as possible about the role, the team and the people you're meeting.
- 4. Review your CV** and make sure you remember key dates and can talk through previous roles/employers and why you left past positions. You must be able to discuss all your experience on the CV in detail, especially those relevant to the role. Be extremely careful if there are any confidentiality issues, and in that case, perhaps err on the side of describing your experience generically. For example, describe the type of client and the industry they are in rather than naming them. Anything set out in your CV is 'fair game' to be raised in an interview.
- 5. Make sure you know where you're going for the interview and plan to be early.** Being late for an interview without a really good reason is never acceptable. If you are late, ensure you apologise. Equally, arriving too early at the organisation's reception isn't appropriate either. Five minutes prior to the start time, but no more, is about right.



## INTERVIEWING TIPS

- **First impressions are so important**, so make sure you are dressed smartly in a business suit even if the employer allows casual dress. If wearing a suit will raise eyebrows at your current employer, speak to your recruitment consultant who can inform your interviewers ahead of time.
- **A firm handshake and smile are crucial** for a good first impression. If you are sitting when an interviewer enters the room (even if the interview has started) make sure you stand up and shake their hands.
- **Keep your body language open** and make sure you maintain eye contact with the interviewers throughout the interview. Try and make sure you do not cross your arms or fidget.
- **Do not assume they have read, thoroughly digested and recall everything in your CV.** So, make sure you give sufficient detail of your current role to give them an idea of the type of work you do.
- **Speak confidently and succinctly** but avoid answering a question with yes or no. Once you have finished answering, stop talking and avoid the impulse to fill in the silence.
- **Be confident.** Be clear on what you can bring to the organisation and why you are interested in the role.
- **Do not criticise your current employer** and be positive and enthusiastic about the role you are applying for rather than being negative about what you are trying to leave behind.
- **It is important to be friendly, open and professional; but be yourself.** A good cultural fit is just as important for you as it is for them.
- **Legal industry interviews are generally based on technical or competency-based questions, as well as behavioural questions** to see how you have handled situations in the past. Giving a sufficiently detailed response is important but your answer should not become too complicated or long.

**A good guideline, when asked about a specific piece of work, is to:**

- Briefly describe the background of the matter and who you were acting for.
- Describe your role and responsibility, including specific legal and commercially relevant issues, remembering to keep the focus on you rather than the team in general.
- Describe the outcome, which is ideally a positive result or outcome!

# COMMON TOPICS FOR YOU



Tell us about yourself.

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What do you know about our organisation?

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Why are you interested in the role?

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Why are you looking to leave your current employer?

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What are you looking for in a potential new employer?

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What are your career aspirations/goals?

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What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

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What would people/peers/clients say about you?

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Are you good at delegating and/or prioritising work?

*Make sure you have some examples to support your answer.*

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What types of people or management styles do you work well with?

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What types don't you work well with?

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Give an example of a difficult transaction you have worked on. Why was it difficult?

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What type of work do you enjoy doing and give an example of this type of work and why you enjoyed it?

*Make sure this reflects the position you are interviewing for.*

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What has been your greatest success in your current position or career?

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What are your weaknesses?

*Try and avoid the standard ones such as perfectionism or working too hard!*

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What are your strengths?

*It can sometimes assist in to refer to comments you have received during past performance reviews or client feedback. This type of objective feedback can carry more weight than your own self-assessment.*

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What type of client development have you been involved in?

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How have you handled conflict with a team member in the past?

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How have you handled stressful situations?

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What have you done in your current role that shows initiative?

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What is your notice period and what restraints do you have under your current contract of employment?

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What salary expectations do you have?

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Are there any clients who will follow you?

# QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWERS



It is also important to ask questions during an interview to demonstrate your knowledge of the organisation, as well as to show you are genuinely interested in the role. An interview is a 2-way conversation and asking appropriate questions is an important part of the process to make sure the role is the right one for you. Avoid questions on salary, budgets or typical working hours unless brought up by the interviewer; these topics can be raised later (but not at the first interview, ideally).

**Here are some examples of questions that you might consider asking, depending on the role:**

Why has the position become available?

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What is the culture like in the team and organisation?

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What do you like about working here?

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What are the future plans of the team and organisation?

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What sort of ongoing training and development is available?

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What sort of client development opportunities are available?

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What major client panels is the firm on?

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What type of employee is successful in your organisation?

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What are the medium and long-term prospects in the team or department?

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What is the department's structure and reporting process?

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How is work allocated in the group?

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What challenges is the department and/or organisation facing now?

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Is the organisation fully integrated with the overseas offices?

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Does the business collaborate nationally/internationally regarding business development?

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What is the partnership structure and split between salaried/fixed share partners and equity?

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What are the expectations of partners at the relevant levels within the partnership?

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How is one's contribution and performance assessed and how often?

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What are the next steps in the interview process?

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*This is especially important if you are interested in the role.*

## Remote Interviews

### – Online or Telephone

These tend to be more efficient and straight to the point with less 'small talk' or ice-breaking introductory commentary. Try to set yourself up in a location where any interruption will be avoided. With Zoom or similar formats, it is important to consider what the interviewers can see of you and your surroundings. Like an in-person interview, impressions are important so make sure you are dressed appropriately and your body language is open. Equally, make sure you are looking into your camera and not facing away from your interviewers and test the sound quality of your microphone. Whilst your interviewer is speaking, try to avoid interjecting too much. Regularly indicating your agreement with something they might say, as you might do in an in-person meeting, can impact on the sound continuity. So, a simple smile and nod of agreement is better than constant verbal affirmations.

### End of the Interview

At the end of the interview make sure you leave a positive impression. Thank the interviewers for their time and if you are interested in the role make sure you convey this.

### After the Interview

Note down any thoughts or questions you have immediately after the interview before you forget and call your recruitment consultant with honest feedback as soon as you can. A description of how the interview went, what you are positive about and any concerns you have is useful information for the consultant to have before speaking to the interviewer when obtaining their feedback and importantly providing yours.



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