



Career Planning Center

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Interviewing Guide



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I. ATTITUDE AND PREPARATION ARE ESSENTIAL

Your résumé and cover letters (when constructed well) generate invitations to interview; these documents alone do not generate offers for employment. If they did, an interview would be irrelevant. Interviews generate offers. A key element to successful interviewing can be summed up in one word: *preparation*. If you want top consideration, you need to present as a polished, directed, knowledgeable, engaged, and enthusiastic storyteller. You achieve this only through thoughtful preparation. Being great at “small talk” is different from being an effective interviewee.

II. WHAT EMPLOYERS VALUE

Employers seek interested, motivated candidates – people who have carefully considered their career paths and who have thoroughly researched the interviewing organization. Here are a few responses from hiring attorneys who answered a survey conducted by the National Association for Law Placement regarding what they look for in interviews:

- “We want to learn how interested they are in our firm and why they are interested.”
- “In the first interview we try to size up the candidate as a person. Is he or she easy to talk to?”
- “The academic factor has been determined before the interview. Fit is what we try to determine during the interview.”
- “A sense of motivation is the primary quality we are seeking.”
- “We try to assess maturity and a sense of responsibility during an interview.”
- “Verbal and nonverbal communication skills and the ability to analyze and articulate issues are measures of a candidate’s ability to relate to colleagues and clients.”
- “Ultimately, an interview is an opportunity to examine whether the candidate has something which sets him or her apart from the hundreds of other people we see during the interview season.”

Employers are looking beyond your résumé, so it is important that you are confident, relaxed, personable, and self-aware. Interviewers will be asking themselves: *How do you handle yourself? Are you poised? Can you confidently field questions? Can you carry the conversation with ease, without constantly being prodded?* You need to present yourself as poised, intelligent, mature, energetic, and enthusiastic. Your goal is to establish a genuine, comfortable rapport with the interviewer so that after you leave, he/she/they remembers some specific details about you other than what you provided on paper.

III. INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Proper preparation prevents poor performance. You can have top qualifications, but if you fail to interview effectively, you will NOT generate offers for employment. Even a top GPA will not save a candidate from an underwhelming interview performance.

Three tasks are essential to interview preparation: (1) self-assessment, (2) research into the interviewer(s), the organization, and office with which you are interviewing, and (3) practice.

Three tasks are essential to interview preparation:

1. Self-assessment
2. Research of the interviewer(s) and the employer
3. Practice

A. Self-Assessment.

Employers are impressed with individuals who show thoughtfulness in their approach to setting and obtaining professional goals. There are four areas that you should be able to address clearly and concisely:

1. Your motivation(s) for pursuing a law degree;
2. Your motivation(s) for pursuing a position with the specific employer with which you are interviewing;
3. Your strengths/skills/qualities and experiences, particularly those relevant to the position for which you are interviewing; and
4. Your immediate and longer-term career interests and goals in relation to the interviewing employer.

Through self-assessment you should become aware of and be able to articulate the following information about yourself:

- Interests/motivations
- Relevant experience
- Strengths and deficiencies
- Skills/qualities
- Values
- Accomplishments/successes
- Short-term and long-term career goals and plans to achieve them
- Work style and work environment preferences
- Geographic considerations

Self-assessment is an ongoing process.

Accordingly, in preparation for interviewing, ask yourself the following:

- What are my accomplishments and what are the skills/qualities that those accomplishments demonstrate?
- What are my strengths and deficiencies, especially as they relate to the position for which I'm interviewing?
- What do I enjoy doing the most? Why?
- What are my career goals, both immediate and long term, and how will the position for which I am interviewing help me to achieve those goals?
- What values are important to me?
- To what type of work am I drawn? Why?
- At what do I feel most competent? Why?

Self-assessment also should enable you to articulate points about yourself that you want to make in an interview, regardless of whether the interviewer(s) elicits that information directly. If you are having difficulty identifying things that you want employers to know about you, make a list of your strengths and qualities. To assist you in this regard, identify your accomplishments and ask, "*What does each accomplishment illustrate about me?*" The answers should be placed on your list of strengths/qualities (see *Appendix E* in this guide for a list of examples of relevant strengths). Note that your assessment changes with time and experience. The conclusions you arrive at early in your law school career should become more refined and focused as you progress through your education.

B. Research.

Researching the **employer** and, if possible, the **interviewer(s)** prior to an interview is **essential**. Employers consistently rank lack of knowledge of the organization as a primary reason for not extending an offer. Research will enable you to:

- Avoid making uninformed comments (*e.g.*, telling an employer you are interested in a specialty that the employer does not practice)
- Learn more about why you want to work for the specific employer
- Exude self-confidence
- Show enthusiasm
- Provide responsive answers
- Ask intelligent questions
- Engage in meaningful discussion
- Impress the interviewer(s)



Advance your candidacy by researching the employer, the interviewers, and the position!

When interviewing, take advantage of opportunities during the conversation to highlight your research and knowledge. For example, instead of simply asking about the employer's summer program, you might instead phrase a question like the following which highlights your research: "I read that the firm has a Summer Writing Institute that focuses on enhancing clerks' legal writing. Would you mind sharing one or two specific objectives of the Institute?"

Employers want to know that you are attracted to them for specific reasons rather than simply because they are recruiting at Marquette, are located in a particular city, or have a position open. You should be able to demonstrate **familiarity** with the **employer** and the **position** for which you are interviewing.

1. Internet Resources. Depending on the employer in which you are interested and the type of information you are seeking, there are potentially numerous websites containing solid information. For a discussion of some of the more useful and prominent online resources for information about legal employers, please see the handout titled [Online Research Resources](#) available in the Career Planning Handbook and online at: <https://law.marquette.edu/assets/career-planning/pdf/Online-Research-Resources.pdf>. Employer web pages are also a tremendous source of information and should be thoroughly explored first when available. There are a variety of other websites that should be visited depending on the type(s) of positions you are targeting, and we encourage you to speak with a member of the CPC professional staff to identify the online resources that best fit your job search needs.
2. Human Resources. Individuals familiar with an employer are excellent sources of information. Reliable resources may include an MULS student or alum who works for -- or has worked for -- the employer, a fellow student who interviewed with the employer, attorneys who handled cases where the employer was involved either as opposing counsel or as a client, and/or a member of the CPC Team. These individuals can provide inside information, which is often the best information. Inside information enables you to prepare for questions you might be asked in an interview and to develop insightful, employer-specific questions to ask the interviewer(s).
3. Other Resources. The CPC maintains a collection of "Employment Critique Forms," forms containing feedback by Marquette students over the years based on their experiences with

employers. In addition, the CPC's Resource Library contains directories, books, periodicals, and other publications containing a wealth of employer-related information.

C. Practice.

Interviewing is not an innate talent; it is a learned skill that improves with preparation and practice. The more you practice, the more relaxed and confident you will be during the interview. You should practice for the purpose of identifying and shaping your stories, not for memorizing your responses. In an interview you want to have a conversation, not offer a presentation.

Practice to identify and shape your stories, not to memorize your responses.

You should take advantage of mock interviews and interview preparation sessions offered by the Career Planning Center. A mock interview can be invaluable, particularly if you have never had a legal interview. Interview preparation sessions enable you to practice posing and answering questions, address self-assessment issues, and obtain feedback on everything from your responses and demeanor to your clothing, all of which will assist you in identifying and improving areas that need refinement.

IV. THE INTERVIEW

Generally, every interview has three phases: greeting, discussion, and closing.

A. Greeting.

Do not discount the importance of the greeting. Frequently, the greeting will establish a rapport that sets the tone for the entire interview. Use a firm handshake, make good eye contact, and be pleasant and positive. When interviewing virtually, be engaged and ready to go the moment the interviewer enters the online meeting space.

B. Discussion.

During the discussion phase of the interview, you and the employer will exchange information for the purpose of assessing fit. Your ultimate goals are to convince the employer that your qualities and skills match the values and needs of the organization and that your interest in the specific opportunity is sincere. Give the interviewer reasons to want to hire you. Preparation and presentation are the keys to realizing these goals.

1. **Presentation.** At the most basic level, interviews allow employers to learn more about your skills and experience than is evident from your résumé. More important, the interview is an opportunity for the employer to get to know you as an individual. Personality fit with the organization often is the critical factor in hiring decisions. Accordingly, how you present yourself commonly plays a vital role in the determination of whether you reach the next stage of the hiring process, including receiving an offer.

Be personable, confident (without seeming arrogant), engaging, and enthusiastic. Make eye contact and play an active role in the conversation. Ask relevant questions and listen attentively. Show enthusiasm for the position, the employer, and the person with whom you are interviewing. Ideally, the discussion phase should be a conversation rather than a mechanical question-response, question-response. Thus, it is to your advantage to be relaxed. Also, try to avoid being overly self-deprecating, which can be perceived as a lack of confidence.

2. Interview Questions. It is impossible to predict the exact questions you will be asked since individual interviewers and employers take different approaches to interviewing candidates. If you devote a reasonable effort to preparing for the interview and you are comfortable addressing your interests/motivations and qualifications, you should be confident responding to most questions. Similarly, keep in mind that there is no “right” answer, so you should not try to produce responses you think the employer is looking for. Attempting to “get into the head” of the interviewer more than likely will generate anxiety for you and negatively impact your performance.

A list of sample legal interview questions is provided in *Appendix A* of this guide. Notice that there are many ways to frame questions seeking the same information. Don’t try to memorize answers to potential questions. The more you rely upon memorization, the less natural and more anxious you will appear.

3. Addressing Weak Areas of Your Résumé. Be prepared to address weak areas of your résumé such as gaps between jobs or schooling, sudden changes in career direction, poor academic performance (e.g., “Why is your GPA not on your résumé?”), and lackluster experience. Leave it to the interviewer to broach weak areas -- **do NOT bring these issues up on your own**. If/when the topic arises, do NOT be apologetic, defensive, or deflect responsibility. The best strategy is to answer the questions concisely and directly, ideally explaining other experiences that undercut the weakness or how you are going about remedying the weakness, and then move on to more positive areas of your candidacy.

Be prepared to address weak areas of your résumé such as gaps between jobs or schooling, sudden changes in career direction, low grades, and lackluster experience.

Lower grades or the absence of grades on your résumé may attract an interviewer’s attention, so be prepared to discuss your academic performance. Practice a brief, positive statement regarding your grades. Do not offer excuses. Do not place blame on exam format and/or professors. If there were exceptional circumstances surrounding your performance—and they are appropriate to discuss in an interview—share these. For example: “I was disappointed in my first semester grades. I felt I had a good grasp of the material and was diligent in studying. Unfortunately, I had my appendix removed two days before exams began, and it impacted my performance.” Acknowledge that your grades are not what you had hoped for, but then quickly focus on positive aspects of your candidacy. If you did poorly in your first semester but have improved, focus on the improvement. Employers are aware that the transition to law school is not always easy and slow academic starts are common. If your overall grade point average is mediocre, but you have done well in courses relevant to the employer’s practice, emphasize that aspect of your academic record.

4. Addressing Your Strengths and Weaknesses. You can almost guarantee that you will be asked a question about your strengths/relevant skills/reasons why you will excel in the position, which may be followed by an inquiry about your weaknesses. Self-assessment prior to the interview is critical for effective responses to such questions.

- a. **Strengths.** Your strengths should be directly job-related, transferable skills, *i.e.*, skills or qualities that an employer values that you have acquired and/or developed previously that you can transfer and use for the employer's benefit. A few examples of relevant skills/strengths are listed in *Appendix E*. Regardless of what you choose to provide as a strength, avoid sounding arrogant and be certain that you have *specific examples* that support your claim to possessing the skills/qualities presented. For example, working two jobs as a server to pay your way through college illustrates a strong work ethic, the ability to juggle multiple responsibilities, the ability to efficiently manage time, and good people skills.
 - b. **Weaknesses.** Questions regarding weaknesses are a bit trickier. One way to respond is to highlight a past deficiency that you have corrected. For example: "Organization used to be an issue early in my undergraduate degree. I realized this and enrolled in an organizational strategy and time management seminar, and it helped tremendously. I attribute the skills I gained in the seminar to my confidence in managing information in law school." This is only effective if you can provide specific information about how you made the correction. Another way to approach this question is to present a weakness the interviewer has already brought up or is known to the interviewer based on your résumé or transcript (*e.g.*, lack of experience, poor grades), being certain to explain what you have done (or what you are doing) to remedy it. You can also point to lack of job experience as a deficiency, since the fact that you are looking for a job should ameliorate it. Obviously, you should avoid citing as a weakness anything that clearly will negatively impact your ability to function as a lawyer or law clerk (*e.g.*, writing and research skills, ability to work under pressure, analytical skills, time management skills). Practicing your response to this question is particularly valuable.
5. **Why DID You Choose to Go to Law School?** One of the most commonly asked interview questions is, "Why did you go to law school?" Your response speaks volumes about your motivations and professional goals. You have made an enormous commitment of time, money, and effort to attend law school. Thus, the underlying assumption is that you put considerable thought into the decision to pursue a law degree. Your answer should reflect this. For instance, responding to the question with only, "I've always wanted to be a lawyer" or "I find law to be interesting" tells the interviewer little about your motivation. *Why* have you always wanted to be a lawyer? *Why* do you find law interesting? The interviewer is unlikely to ask follow-up questions, so in preparing for the interview you need to craft a response that is as complete as possible. Avoid entirely (i) citing a television show or movie as fueling your desire to attend law school, (ii) suggesting that you chose law school as a default option, or (iii) providing an answer that suggests a weak motivation (*e.g.*, "My parents wanted me to." "I have always been good at arguing.").
6. **The Interviewer is **Not** Your Advocate.** The interviewer is not your advocate and won't always ask the "right" questions. If there is information that you want the interviewer to know about you that will enhance your candidacy, do not wait for her/him/them to ask the perfect question that will provide you with the opportunity to share the information. Be ready to integrate key points that advance your candidacy into the conversation. Do this naturally through transitions in your responses or, for example, when you are asked, "Do you have any questions?"

7. Questions to Ask the Interviewer(s). Interviewing for a position is about exchanging information. The employer seeks to find the best-qualified candidate, and your goal is to find an employer that provides the best opportunity for your professional growth, so take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions. Do not underestimate the importance of asking the interviewer insightful questions. In some instances, up to half of the interview will be left for candidates to ask questions.

The best questions are those that are personalized to the interviewer and those that show off your research of the employer and the interviewer. A list of sample questions you might consider asking is provided in *Appendix D*. Use the example questions for ideas and personalize them to your individual circumstances. Note that it is *inappropriate* to ask questions about salary or benefits in initial interviews. Ideally, you should avoid discussing compensation until you have an offer; however, be prepared to address compensation earlier if the employer presses the issue. For more information, see the CPC's Salary Negotiations web page at <https://law.marquette.edu/career-planning/salary-negotiations>.



Thoughtful and pertinent questions convey genuine interest in a position.

Avoid the trap of asking questions only after the interviewer has invited you to do so at the end of the interview. The goal of the interview is to achieve a conversation, and asking questions throughout the interview creates this dynamic. Do remember that while you have your own agenda in getting your questions answered, sharing your strengths, and highlighting your employer research, you should not hijack the interview. **Let the interviewer direct it.** When an interviewer asks if you have any last questions, know that you always do. Even if you feel your questions have been exhausted, you should ask a final question of the interviewer.

C. Closing.

Close with energy. Re-emphasize your interest in the employer. It is okay to ask when you can anticipate hearing from them regarding your candidacy and who to call if you have additional questions. After the interview, write down the names of the people with whom you met and any information about the organization or the position that you had not known before – **do NOT take notes during the interview.** This will aid you in drafting personalized thank you letters to each interviewer, preparing for a follow-up interview, and making a decision if you are offered the position.

V. BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Some legal employers utilize behavioral interview questions to identify strong candidates. The goal of employers using behavioral interviewing is to elicit from candidates specific examples of past experiences that demonstrate attributes that are predetermined to be important. For example, a law firm may decide that leadership, communication, and critical thinking skills are characteristics necessary for success in the organization. The employer will then develop interview questions designed to explore whether you excel in these areas. You will recognize behavioral interview questions if they start with, "Give me an example of a time when...;" "Describe for me a situation in which...;" and "Tell me about a time when..." See *Appendix B* for sample behavioral interview questions.

Larger law firms and corporate legal departments are most likely to be deliberate in their use of behavioral interviewing. Even if the interviewer or employer is not using behavioral interviewing techniques, as the

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interviewee, you still benefit from offering specific examples of your accomplishments. Anytime you present detailed stories of achievement in an interview, you are much more likely to distinguish yourself positively from other candidates.

When answering questions in behavioral interviews you want to structure your responses in terms of identifying a **Situation** or **Task**, your **Actions**, and the positive **Results**. Thus, the acronym STAR is sometimes used when discussing behavioral interview responses.

It is particularly important for you to talk in terms of specifics if the content on your résumé is not independently impressive, *e.g.*, you do not have legal experience or other applicable prior professional experience. Most first-year and many second-year law students find themselves in this situation. By framing answers in terms of situations, actions, and outcomes, you connect dots between past and future that interviewers could not connect based on the four corners of your résumé. For example, if the sum total of your work history is the customer service desk at Walmart, identify a situation from the job that highlights a notable attribute. You could start a response by saying, “I developed my ability to make quick decisions based on sound judgment while working in customer service. For example, I had a situation with a customer...” By focusing on a situation, your actions, and the resulting success, you are providing the employer with a reason to hire you, and the former position and employer become incidental. What matters is that you have already proven you have the requisite skills to be an effective law clerk.

We encourage you to speak with a member of the CPC team regarding interview tips, strategies, and preparation.

VI. PROSECUTOR AND DEFENDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews for prosecutor and defender positions tend to be different than interviews with private sector employers (*e.g.*, law firms, companies). First, a great deal of emphasis is placed on your demonstrated interest in and commitment to the type of work they do and, in the case of public defenders, the clients with whom they work. These employers are seeking individuals who understand and embrace their missions and the constituents served. For example, you need to know the role of a prosecutor or defender, *e.g.*, a candidate for a position in a district attorney’s office might be asked, “*How should a district attorney’s office and the police department relate to one another?*” Second, sometimes these interviews have a more confrontational feel to them. The employer may be evaluating your ability to respond in a hostile environment/adversarial situation. Third, unlike traditional legal interviews, legal hypotheticals may play a prominent role in prosecutor or defender interviews. See Appendix C for examples of interview questions for prosecutor and defender interviews.

Prosecutor and government defender offices place significant emphasis on your demonstrated interest in and commitment to their work.

Hypothetical questions presented in government interviews generally deal with one or more of the following: ethics, legal knowledge, opening/closing arguments, fact patterns.

For example, in an interview for a position with a district attorney’s office, you might be given a hypothetical fact pattern to take into the next room where you are to prepare a rebuttal to potential defense arguments. Often, how you deliver your response to a hypothetical is more important than

whether the response is substantively accurate. The interviewer wants to see how well you justify your response and how persuasive you are when under pressure to form and deliver arguments.

In addition, a prosecutor or defender office might evaluate the presentation skills of candidates by asking that they prepare and present a five-minute story about a topic of their choosing (fiction or non-fiction) to demonstrate the candidate's ability to present a set of facts in a compelling and descriptive way.

VII. WHAT TO BRING TO THE INTERVIEW

When the interview is at the offices of the employer, bring extra copies of your résumé and copies of your transcript, writing sample, and list of references. Bring these documents even if you provided them to the employer prior to the interview. They can be carried in a slim attaché case, portfolio, or carry-all (not a book bag or backpack). For on-campus interviews at Eckstein Hall, only bring documents if you have been requested to do so by the employer.

VIII. WHAT TO WEAR

When determining what to wear to an interview, your default should be dressing like a lawyer who is on his/her/their way to argue before the United States Supreme Court. While many firms and companies have business casual dress policies, you should err on the side of being more formally dressed than your interviewer. Not all office attire rises to the level of interview attire. Dress professionally regardless of the interview format. Standards for interview attire are the same regardless of whether the interview is in person or virtual. You do not need to forget being fashionable during interview season. Just make choices that on the continuum remain on the far end of daytime professional.

Standards for interview attire are the same regardless of whether the interview is in person or virtual.

Pant Suit Standards: Pant suits are coordinating coats/jackets and pants. This means the coats and pants are of the same fabric. When opting for a pant suit, wear a solid or subtle pinstriped navy, dark gray, or black color. Sports jackets/blazers that do not coordinate with the pants are not suits. **The unmatched jacket/blazer and pants are considered business attire, not interview attire.** Traditional interview suits are single-breasted suits. Single-breasted coats are always in style, so opt for single-breasted rather than double-breasted when investing in a first suit. The fabric should be high quality so that it does not wrinkle. The fit of the suit is important. If you are not able to get a good fit from an off-the-rack purchase, invest in having the suit tailored.

Skirt Suit/Dress Suit Standards: Skirt suits and dress suits are coordinating coats/jackets and skirts or sheath dresses. This means that the coats/jackets and skirt or sheath dress are of the same fabric. When opting for a skirt suit or dress suit, wear a solid or subtle pinstriped navy, dark gray, or black color. Jackets/blazers that do not coordinate with the skirt/dress are not suits. **The unmatched jacket and skirt/dress are considered business attire, not interview attire.** When wearing a skirt or dress suit, be attentive to the length of the skirt/dress. Assess the appropriateness of the skirt/dress length while standing and sitting.

Shirt Options: You have options for shirts that can be worn with pant, skirt, and dress suits. A white, collared, cotton, button-down shirt is a traditional option. Other options include a shell or blouse. If you select a color or patterned shirt or blouse for an interview, it is best to stick with subtle patterns and light

colors over bold choices. Bold colors and prints are better for workday attire rather than interview attire. **Do not wear a black shirt for an interview.**

Shoes, Belts, Socks, and Ties: Shoes should be polished and scuff free. If wearing a heel, select a heel height that allows you to walk comfortably. Sky-high stilettos are not recommended for interviews. Sandals and open-toed shoes are not interview appropriate either. For interviews, traditional black and brown leather hues are good options. The color of the shoes should coordinate with the color of the belt if you are wearing one. Socks should be dress socks, not sports socks. In recent years, colored and patterned socks are trendy and are fine to wear. Ties should be silk and of a color and pattern that are professional and do not distract from you as a person.

Accessories, Tattoos & More: Hair, makeup, and jewelry should be business-day appropriate. If you are wondering about a certain look, such as facial hair, hair length, tattoos, and/or piercings, research people who work for the organization/law firm by viewing the photographs of the attorneys on the employer's website or on LinkedIn. Often the profile pictures will provide insight as to the standards of appearance/attire expected by the organization.

If you choose to wear a scent, make certain it will not overpower the space during an in-person interview.

Facial piercings are often removed for interviews and tattoos are often covered during interviews. Consider the employer with whom you are interviewing when making decisions about visibility tattoos and of nose, lip, and eyebrow piercings.

IX. INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

A. Thank You Letters.

You must send thank you letters following a job interview, ideally within 24 hours of the interview. Refer to the [Guide to Thank You Correspondence](#) available in your Career Planning Handbook and online at <http://law.marquette.edu/assets/career-planning/pdf/Thank-You-Guide.pdf> for guidance in writing a thank you letter.

B. Follow Up After Interviews

You may ask interviewers about the expected recruiting timeline so you have a sense of when you might receive an invitation for a second interview or for an offer of employment. If the date the interviewer shared arrives and you have not been notified of the status of your candidacy, wait a few days beyond the deadline and then reach out to reaffirm your interest in the opportunity. Do not hold employers accountable to a specific date, but rather express your continued interest and inquire if they need additional information to consider your candidacy.

X. CALL-BACK INTERVIEWS

Interviews that take place at the employer's office for selected students following the initial screening interview are commonly known as "call-back interviews." You are scheduled to meet with numerous attorneys over several hours. Lunch and/or dinner may be part of the schedule.

The focus at this stage is "fit" as you've been deemed qualified based on your documents and your initial screening interview. Now the employer is assessing how well you fit with the attorneys and with the

employer's work environment. Accordingly, employers often have you meet with a cross-section of attorneys, from new associates to partners. The idea is to get feedback from a variety of individuals regarding your candidacy and to give you a feel for the attorneys you might be working with and the general atmosphere of the organization. While you still likely will be asked traditional interview questions, often the emphasis is placed on how you interact with the employer's attorneys and other staff. Conversations might be entirely informal, having little or nothing to do with law school, the practice of law or your candidacy. In this light, the best advice for call-back interviews is to be *relaxed, confident, engaging, and enthusiastic*. If not already provided, you should request from the employer in advance of your interview a list identifying the attorneys with whom you will be meeting, so you can research those individuals.

XI. VIDEO/VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

Employer expectations for candidates' professionalism and preparedness remain high during video/virtual interviews, so you should approach your general interview preparations as you would for an in-person interview. The following are some best-practice tips for video-based and/or virtual job interviews.

A. Before the Interview.

1. Equipment Check.

- Confirm which platform the interviewing employer is using and make certain you have the software downloaded and/or an account set up as the system may require. Most employers are using either Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business, or GoToMeetings, but there are myriad platforms being utilized.
- Prior to interviewing, test the platform being used so that you can identify any technical glitches in advance of your interview. Doing so also allows you to acclimate to the program's features, such as controlling volume and screen orientation if you are interviewing on a platform that is new to you.
- It is best to use a laptop or desktop rather than a phone or tablet for video interviews. The stationary feature of a laptop/desktop will serve you better in a video interview than a handheld device.
- Confirm you have a strong Wi-Fi connection in the space from which you will be participating in interviews. If you are interviewing from your home and you have multiple individuals in your home using Wi-Fi, try to schedule interviews at times that roommates/family members do not also have mandatory streaming events like classes and work meetings that may impact Wi-Fi reliability.
- Have a back-up device ready. Anticipate connection issues and be prepared to reconnect to the meeting through a secondary device.

2. Location, Location, Location.

- Select a space in your home or elsewhere where you will have uninterrupted privacy throughout your interview session. Roommates, family members, and pets should be issued a "no-fly zone" mandate during your interviews. This includes asking roommates/family to refrain from playing loud music or having a movie or TV program playing in the distance that can be heard by employers during your interview.

- Students may reserve the CPC interview rooms for virtual/video interviews. Rooms are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. You may check availability of the rooms by visiting the CPC (Suite 240), emailing mulawcareers@marquette.edu, or calling 414.288.3313.
 - Set up your computer and sit down in front of the screen and assess your backdrop. You are inviting interviewers into your personal space when interviewing from home—be thoughtful as to what they will see and learn about you. Most virtual platforms allow users to blur backgrounds. If selecting a virtual background, refrain from selecting virtual backgrounds that show you on a beach, etc. during an interview. Professional options for Marquette Law School virtual backgrounds can be found here: <https://law.marquette.edu/marquette-lawyers/social-media-backgrounds>
3. Attire and Appearance.
- Dress and present yourself for your video interviews exactly as you would for in-person interviews. Wear a suit and be attentive to your overall grooming. Best practices such as removing facial piercings, covering tattoos, etc., remain. Review Section VIII (pp. 9-10) for guidance on appearance and attire.
 - Appearance includes considering how you look on camera in terms of the angle of the camera and your proximity to it. The camera should be at eye level or close to eye level. This may require you to place your laptop on top of something. You also need to consider how close you are to the camera. If you are too close, your face will be distorted.
 - Consider your option of headphones if wearing them during an interview. Some of the larger headphones with attached microphones establish the appearance you are ready to game rather than impress an interviewer. Smaller, more discrete headphones can enhance your professional look. Quality audio is important, so the advice is not to avoid using headphones but to simply consider how they look as you select which set to use.
 - It is worth repeating that the appearance of the physical space around you is also open to employer evaluation and judgment. If interviewing from home, make certain the area is tidy and that you are not inviting an interviewer into a part of your living space they would prefer not to be in.
4. Double-check Interview Times. Always confirm your interview time, especially if you are interviewing with an employer that is based in a different time zone.

B. During the Interview.

1. Look at the Camera. You will not appear to be looking at the interviewer if you watch only the screen; make certain to look at your camera as well. Consider placing a sticker near the camera to remind yourself where you should look.
2. Avoid Distracting Noises.
 - If you have any documents in front of you (e.g., a printed list of questions, a résumé), be careful to not move them around as the crackling of moving papers will be caught by the microphone and will be distracting to the interviewer.
 - Do not use a keyboard during an interview, e.g., trying to type notes during the interview. The clicking keyboard will be heard by the interviewer.

- If wearing noise cancelling headphones, know that while you will not hear the background noise from roommates/family members/pets, the interviewer may be able to hear all of these distractions. Be very aware of what the interviewer may hear.
3. Disconnect. Make certain you are completely disconnected from the interview before you walk away from your computer or otherwise transition out of interview mode.

C. After the Interview.

1. Express Gratitude. Send a thank you to every interviewer with whom you met. A well-written thank you denotes your professionalism. Because some professionals continue to work remotely to some degree, and their access to U.S. mailed documents may be delayed, an emailed thank you may be appropriate. Thank yous must be error-free, professional, thoughtful, and personalized.

We encourage you to review the CPC's [Guide to Thank You Correspondence](https://law.marquette.edu/assets/career-planning/pdf/Thank-You-Guide.pdf), which is available online at <https://law.marquette.edu/assets/career-planning/pdf/Thank-You-Guide.pdf> and in the Career Planning Handbook.

APPENDIX A

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How would you describe yourself as a person?
3. What three words best describe you and why?
4. If I were to call [previous/current employer] and ask about you, what do you think they would tell me?
5. How would your best friend describe you?
6. How would your harshest critic describe you?
7. What is the last book you read?
8. When you're not in school, what types of activities do you enjoy?
9. What do you think it takes to be a successful lawyer?
10. What qualities do you possess that will make you a successful lawyer/advocate?
11. How do you define success?
12. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
13. Describe your most rewarding experience.
14. What is the worst decision you have ever made (other than personal)?
15. What is the most unpopular decision you have ever made?
16. What was the worst job you ever had? What made it bad?
17. What is your greatest strength/weakness?
18. Why should we hire you?
19. What can you do for us, and what have you done that proves that?
20. If you couldn't be a lawyer, what would you do? Why?
21. What are you passionate about?
22. How do you respond to criticism?
23. What do you think is the difference between confidence and arrogance?
24. Do you prefer to collaborate or work alone?
25. What do you expect from a supervisor?
26. What did you do in school when you got a lower grade than you thought you deserved?
27. Describe your work experiences. What did you like/dislike about them?
28. How do you manage stress?
29. What skills did you develop in your previous positions?
30. How is your experience relevant to our work?
31. How do you manage conflict with peers?
32. Tell me about a research project you've enjoyed.
33. What do you think is a basic quality of legal writing that differentiates it from other kinds of writing?
34. What is your writing style?
35. Are you motivated by going up against deadlines or do you prefer to set early deadlines to avoid pressure?
36. Why did you choose to pursue a law degree? Have your goals changed since then?
37. Why did you choose to attend Marquette Law School?
38. Where do you see yourself on a continuum in terms of your interest in "the law" or "being a lawyer?"
39. How has law school been better, worse, or different from what you expected?
40. What law school courses have you enjoyed the most/least? Why?
41. Who is your favorite professor? Why?

42. How did you choose your college?
43. Why did you choose your undergraduate major?
44. What do you want to be doing in 5/10 years?
45. What are your short-term/long-term goals? How are you planning to achieve those goals?
46. What do you hope to accomplish with your law degree?
47. What are you looking for in an employer?
48. What would make you want to come to work versus have to come to work?
49. What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
50. Describe what would be an ideal work environment for you.
51. What factors will be the most important in your decision to select one employer over others?
52. How will you know in the first three months of working for an employer if you've made the right choice?
53. What do you consider to be reasonable hours to work in a week?
54. If you joined us, what would sustain your motivation and commitment if you found you had to put in really long hours?
55. What ties do you have to this geographic area?
56. Where else are you interviewing?
57. Why do you want to work for us?
58. What concerns do you have about joining us?
59. What do you hope this job is not?
60. How did you learn about us?
61. Is there anything that is not on your résumé that you would like to tell us about that you think would help us make a decision regarding your candidacy?
62. Do you have any unique skills or knowledge not already disclosed that you think would make you an asset to this office?
63. Assume you are a first-year associate with this firm. How would you handle a situation in which the partner is unavailable, and the client needs an immediate answer to a question?
64. What is the hardest format of exam questions for you to answer, and why do you think that is the case?
65. In law school, how do you approach a problem for which there appears to be no definitive answer?
66. What would you do if you were given two urgent projects to complete with the same deadline and you did not believe you could get them both done on time?
67. What would you do if a client were asking you to argue or pursue an endpoint that (in your view) had little chance of success?
68. Have you ever served in a mentoring relationship or been on the receiving end of such a relationship? What are the qualities of a good mentor?
69. What steps would you take to inspire exiting firm clients to have confidence in you?
70. Describe how you would go about building new client relationships.
71. Are you comfortable with public speaking? If not, what steps could you take to increase your comfort level?
72. What have been your favorite case to study in school and why?

APPENDIX B

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Describe a time in your academic or professional life when you had to hear some tough feedback or criticism, and how you responded.
2. Give an example of a time you were working in a group and the group lost focus/came off the rails. What did you do to get it back on track?
3. Describe a stressful situation you have experienced and tell me how you responded to it.
4. Describe a major problem you encountered in a past job and how you managed it.
5. What was your most difficult decision in the last 6 months? What process did you undertake in making that decision?
6. Tell me about a situation in which your personal obligations and business/school commitments conflicted. How did you resolve the conflict?
7. Have you been on a committee or had a work-related situation in which you were asked to accomplish a task with insufficient guidance? If so, how did you proceed?
8. Describe an obstacle or challenge that you have overcome and how you did it.
9. Tell me about a mistake you have made in your school or professional life and how you addressed it.
10. Give an example of a time when you successfully persuaded someone to change her/his mind.
11. Give an example of a time when you identified and successfully pursued a specific goal.
12. Tell me about a time that you faced a disorganized situation and how you addressed it.
13. Give an example of a time when you were proud of your resourcefulness and creativity.
14. Have you ever been part of a team that was poorly led? What do you think could have been done better?
15. Have you ever worked with others in a volunteer effort to improve or serve your community? If so, please describe.
16. Have you ever served as a peacemaker/bridge-builder between others in conflict? If so, explain.
17. Give me an example of a situation in which you have demonstrated leadership ability.
18. Describe a situation where you had to earn the trust of others.

APPENDIX C

Sample Interview Questions for Prosecutor and Defender Interviews

Prosecutor Interview Questions

1. While reviewing a petty theft report, your supervisor comes by and says to you, "I know this person. I know him to be a good, honest person. I don't want you to file this case." What do you do?
2. Do you think that the people who are arrested for crimes should be required to provide samples of their DNA to be entered into a DNA database? Why or why not?
3. How would you handle a situation in which you felt another prosecutor was acting unethically?
4. How should a district attorney's office and the police department relate to one another?
5. Most criminal cases are resolved through plea agreements. What factors do you think are most important for a prosecutor to consider in negotiating a plea agreement?
6. What do you believe is the role of a defense attorney in a criminal case?
7. Police can stop and detain a person if they have reasonable suspicion to do so. How would you define reasonable suspicion? Do you think the standard is too low or too high?
8. What challenges do you feel that you, personally, will face when balancing racial equity with criminal justice?
9. In what circumstances do you believe prison is an appropriate sentence?
10. Do you think police should be required to read Miranda warnings to suspects who are in custody? Why or why not?
11. How will you work with victims and witnesses who may not want to participate in the prosecution of criminal cases?
12. Do you think a prosecutor should be concerned about potential collateral consequences a defendant may suffer following a conviction, such as deportation, loss of a job, expulsion from school, or loss of housing? Why or why not?

Defender Interview Questions

1. In your opinion, what is the difference between a prosecutor and public defender?
2. What do you do in a situation where your client contacts your supervisor and tells her/him that you are not competent and/or not prepared?
3. A client tells you he is guilty of the crime but wants to go to trial. What are the challenges involved in this situation and how would you address those challenges?
4. During a conversation with a client, you realize that you missed a deadline to file a motion for substitution of judge that you had told your client you would file. How would you handle this situation?
5. Your client makes a statement to the police without any Miranda warning. The state offers a deal to your client. Your client wants to fight the statement because he was never read his rights. How do you handle the situation?
6. Are there any types of cases that you will not handle? Why?
7. How would you handle a situation where your client's family members continue to call you about the case?

8. You and your client want to subpoena four witnesses, all with similar testimony, but your process server is only able to serve three witnesses. Your client and the process server believe that the fourth witness will be a very compelling witness. What do you do?
9. This job brings you into contact with people from backgrounds different from your own. Describe an experience - working or living or studying/learning - with people from backgrounds different from yours. What did you learn from the experience?
10. You are scheduled to work with a new prosecutor in misdemeanor court who is just out of law school and unfamiliar with the routine of daily practice, including the rigors of the judge assigned to her courtroom. What are the opportunities involved in this situation? How would you address those opportunities?
11. You are asked to cover intake court for another attorney at the last minute. You have not had a chance to meet with any of the clients who will be making their initial appearances, but you have the bail information sheets to make your arguments. Delaying the proceedings for you to re-interview the clients is not an option. When the court calls the first case, the client emerges from the holding cell and is directed by the bailiff toward the podium where you are standing. What are the challenges involved in this situation and how would you address them?

APPENDIX D

Sample Questions to Ask Interviewers

The below questions are generic examples that should be used as ideas for questions you might ask. You should always *personalize* the questions you ask the interviewers and employers. If there is relevant information about the employer in the news, inquire about it, *e.g.*, a new office, added practice areas.

1. Do you enjoy your work overall?
2. What do you like about your job?
3. Tell me a little about how you came to work here.
4. On what kinds of cases/issues are you currently working?
5. What's the most interesting case you've worked on?
6. Did you clerk here? If yes, what did you enjoy most about the experience?
7. If you were to stay for 20 years, why would you stay?
8. How would you describe the organization's general character?
9. If you could change anything about your job, what would it be?
10. How long were you at the firm before you had significant client contact?
11. What do you find most challenging about being a lawyer?
12. What do you find to be the most rewarding aspect of your work?
13. What are your expectations for the person hired into this position?
14. Are there practice specialties your firm/organization does not focus on that you would like to develop?
15. What kind of person is your organization looking for to fill this position?
16. What skills and attributes are required to do this type of work well?
17. Thinking about previous law clerks who excelled, what characteristics did they seem to have in common?
18. How much direction/autonomy is there in this position?
19. What kind of training do attorneys receive?
20. What will a typical day be like for me?
21. Will I get feedback on my work?
22. How often will my performance be evaluated? How will I be evaluated?
23. Can you share with me some examples of projects your last law clerk was given?
24. Do you typically give law clerks work, and if yes, what do you look for in their work?
25. How will I receive work? Is the expectation that I take initiative to ask for projects or are they assigned?
26. Can you share with me the organization's formal feedback process?
27. Do you have benchmarks for young attorneys to meet in their early years of practice?
28. What was it about my résumé that got me this interview?
29. Do you encourage participation in community or professional activities?
30. What kind of turnover has there been among staff attorneys?
31. How has the practice changed over the last 5 years? (For experienced attorneys.)
32. What do you see as your greatest challenges for the coming year?
33. How would you describe the work atmosphere here?
34. When do you plan on contacting students for call-back interviews/offers? Can I contact you (or someone else at your office) if I haven't heard either way by that time?

APPENDIX E

Examples of Relevant Strengths

- Analytical skills
- Diligence
- Legal research skills
- Legal writing skills
- Hard working/work ethic
- Time management
- Problem-solving skills
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiation skills
- Ability to work effectively under pressure
- Stress management
- Communication skills (both oral and written)
- Listening skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Self-awareness
- Assertiveness
- Decisiveness
- Enthusiasm
- Ability to think on your feet
- Ability to empathize
- Relationship building skills
- Energetic
- Organizational skills
- Ability to work on own initiative
- Ability to juggle multiple responsibilities
- Leadership skills
- Patience
- Resourcefulness
- Creativity
- Determination
- Oral advocacy skills
- Counseling skills
- Detail-orientation
- Integrity
- Teamwork skills
- Management skills
- Adaptive learner
- Tenacity
- Sense of humor
- Client development skills
- Ability to work autonomously
- Discipline
- Maturity
- Dedication
- Perseverance

APPENDIX F

Interviewing DOs and DON'Ts

- ✓ DO your homework. Collect as much information about the employer and the position as possible before the interview. Find out with whom you will be meeting and research the person's professional experiences through LinkedIn and/or the employer website. If you appear to know nothing about the position you are seeking or the organization you hope will employ you, your chances of success are slim.
- ✓ DO recognize that you are the expert in the conversation. Interviews are about your motivations, goals, skills, and interests, and YOU are the expert on YOU. Prepare in advance to determine which of your stories and successes are best to share with the specific, interviewing employer, and deliver them with confidence.
- ✓ DO be punctual. Plan to arrive 15 minutes ahead of your scheduled interview so you have an opportunity to focus your thoughts. There is almost no excuse for being late that will shake the negative, initial impression that tardiness creates.
- ✓ DO relax. When you prepare yourself thoroughly before the interview, you can enter the interview confidently and calmly. You are far more likely to impress the interviewer with a candid and thoughtful response rather than with a "canned" statement that sounds memorized or trite. Your questions and responses should be based on your research and derived from your genuine interest in the employer.
- ✓ DO show enthusiasm.
- ✓ DO pay special attention to your grooming.
- ✓ DO dress appropriately for the position you are seeking.
- ✓ DO look the interviewer in the eye.
- ✓ DO be able to discuss every entry on your résumé in a way that connects to the employer.
- ✓ DO be prepared to discuss any obvious weaknesses, such as grades, lack of experience, absence of leadership positions, etc.
- X DON'T speak negatively about a former employer or school. Your focus should be on how you have learned and grown from past experiences rather than about any personal dissatisfaction with the past. Most interviewers think that if you were unhappy in your past position, the chances are good that you will be unhappy in your next one.
- X DON'T dominate the interview. Assertiveness and decisiveness are admirable qualities to convey, but arrogance and self-absorption are not. Try to strike a balance between providing thorough information for the interviewer to evaluate you on and having a pleasant conversation.
- X DON'T interrupt the interviewer.
- X DON'T be defensive or apologetic.
- X DON'T bring up compensation before the interviewer does. If you are interested in the position, you should demonstrate that with relevant questions about opportunities for advancement and responsibility.
- X DON'T bring up personal issues or crises. The interviewer will not want to hear excuses for problem areas in your résumé or background, but instead will want to see that you have thought through how to handle both the question and the situation itself. Focus on the positive.
- X DON'T blame poor performance on others.