

Interviewing Skills – Sample Questions

Questions That May Be Asked By Employers

Questions About Your Personal Background

Tell me about yourself.

(Practice your answer to this before the interview. Be prepared to tell the firm facts about yourself that you want the firm to know; do not tell your life story.

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years? In 10 years?

What are you seeking from your career? What are your short and long range goals?

What qualities do you possess that will help you to become a successful lawyer?

What is your idea of the characteristics a successful lawyer should possess?

How would you describe the ideal position for you?

What two or three things are most important to you in any job?

If you are not from West Virginia, do you intend to work in the state after graduation?

Do you have an idea of the type of law you would like to practice?

(Do not answer with something the firm does not do.)

Questions About Your Educational Background

Why did you select your college or law school?

What do you like best / least about your law school?

(Never criticize your school or professors when discussing this).

What courses did you like best? Least? Why?

(Present your answer in a positive way: e.g., ?I would have preferred not to take tax, but I got through it well, and I know that it will be helpful in many situations.)

Tell me about your grades. Where do they place you in your class?

If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently?

Tell me about your participation in: law review / in the clinical program / student organizations or government. Or perhaps your work on your thesis / research /publications.

Questions About Your Experience

Describe your recent work experience. What did you like / dislike about the experiences? Why did you leave? Are there any time gaps where you did not work? Explain.

Did you get an offer from your summer employer?

(If not, explain the situation. “They knew I was moving.” “They didn’t have any open litigation positions.”)

Or tell them you talked with your employer about why an offer was not forthcoming, and will be able to build on suggestions they gave you. (You learned from your experiences.)

How is your work experience relevant to our practice?

What skills have you developed? (e.g.; drafting, negotiating, litigation, computer research, etc.)

Have your work experiences helped you decide the area of law in which you are interested?

In what community or extracurricular activities have you been involved?

Describe the issues you confronted in your work at _.

Based on your experience, what is your analysis of this case / problem? (Take your time with this one. If you have not yet had the relevant class, say so, but then give it your best shot.)

Questions About Your Career Objectives

Why did you choose law as a career?

Why did you choose WVU College of Law?

Questions about Your Personal Preferences

What books other than law books have you read recently?
If you could have dinner with five famous people, who would they be?
What is your favorite class in law school? Why?
What is your favorite TV program / movie?
Do you spend much time on the web?

Questions About Your Job Seeking

How did you choose a geographical area?
What ties do you have to this area?
What makes you think you might like to live in this area?
Where else are you interviewing? Why?
How long have you been looking?
Are you holding any outstanding offers?
What factors will influence your decision?
In what kind of environment are you most comfortable? (Formal, informal; group, solo)

Questions Relating to Why Us?

How did you learn about us? Why did you decide to interview with us?
What criteria are you using to distinguish us from similar employers?

What do you think it takes to be successful in a firm like ours?

If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you seek in applicants?

Why should we hire you? What distinguishes you from other candidates?

Questions for YOU to ask Employers during an Interview

Adjust these questions to the firm or agency.
Do not attempt to memorize the questions or read from a list.

Questions About the General Character of the Firm or Organization

What is unique about the firm? What are some of its special qualities or traditions? What do you think are the firm's strongest practice areas now and do you see that changing in the future?

What would be the firm description of an ideal associate/law clerk?
Does the firm project a plan for its future growth?

How does the firm determine how many associates and/or laterals it will hire this year?

In practice areas where the firm currently is not involved, would you welcome someone with a particular interest who would develop that practice area?

How many second year summer clerks did you hire last year?

Will I be assigned to one practice area, or does your firm rotate summer clerk assignments? How do associates progress? How are they evaluated?

How many associates has the firm hired recently? How many lateral attorneys have you hired? Did you hire them to fill a particular practice area?

Generally, how many partners are named each year? How many started with the firm as associates? What is the ratio of partners to associates?

In what types of social and community activities are members of the firm involved?

How would you describe the relationships among the attorneys?

How does the firm support participation of members in: pro bono cases? Continuing legal education (CLE)?

Questions About the Practice

To what extent is the firm specialized? What are the strongest areas of practice?

What work could I expect to be assigned as an associate/ law clerk?

Will I get to rotate among practice areas, or will I be assigned to a specific area? When does an associate have the opportunity to specialize?

What emphasis is placed on bringing in new business? (Portables)

What are some of the cases on which attorneys are currently working?

Questions About the Administration

What is the firm's system of management? Are associates included on any committees?

How does the firm determine assignments for new associates?

How is work supervised and evaluated?

How are the new associates/law clerks trained?

What are the criteria for advancement?

On what basis is admission to partnership determined?

What administrative support systems are available to an attorney? (Secretaries, paralegals, use of WestLaw, Lexis, etc.)