

2020

Interview Guide

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Interview Guide:

Before the Interview:

The key to any successful interview is preparation; this involves conducting research before attending the interview. You will need to find out as much as you can about the firm, the interviewers, your role and the market.

Many interviewers will ask you about the company as a way of assessing your interest in working for the firm. The more in-depth your research is (i.e. not just taken from the firm website) the stronger your answers will be. Your research should include who their clients are, how big the firm is, how they are structured and who their main competitors are.

It is important that you are familiar with the role you are being interviewed for paying close attention to the requirements and personal skills specified for the ideal candidate, determining how your previous experience relates to the current role. As the interviewers are going to want to establish that you meet the criteria set out, use the information on the role to have an educated guess as to what questions they may ask during the interview. It may also help you think of questions you can ask once the main interview is over (Nicholas Scott have collated the top 100 Law interview questions which are available on request)

Popular interview questions include:

- Tell me about yourself
- Why do you want to move from your current role
- Why do you want to work for this firm
- What are your key strengths
- What would you say is your biggest weakness

Also as part of your preparation make sure you plan your route to interview, give yourself plenty of time to get there as being late will not make a good first impression. It may sound obvious but make sure you look presentable and professional.

Preparation is important as pre planning and anticipating potential questions can help you relax during the interview, make you feel more confident and make the whole process slightly less intimidating.

The interview:

Having planned your route beforehand you should aim to arrive to the interview 10 minutes early. It is important that despite the nerves you try to stay calm.

Keep in mind the importance of first impressions; they say an interviewer will have formed an opinion in the first 7 seconds of an interview so make sure you are polite and well presented. First impressions can be improved by a firm handshake, smiling, eye contact and building a rapport with the interviewer.

You may be interviewed by more than one person so make sure you don't just focus on the person asking the question engage with all them. Take a moment to think about the questions you are being asked and remember your preparation. Make the answers relate to the role and job specification.

Often the interviewer will start by asking you for a summary of your background, here you can highlight important areas from your CV or cover letter. Make sure you get your personality across as hiring is as much about being the right 'fit' for the firm as about your qualifications.

You may be asked competency based questions (also known as behavioural questions) designed to demonstrate how you will behave in the work place. It will involve being asked about a situation or task that led you to take a certain course of action, the best way to handle these questions is to have a couple of examples prepared and take a moment to think of an answer.

You need to have intelligent questions to ask at the end interview otherwise you may come across as lacking interest or enthusiasm for the role.

Key things to remember are:

- Be confident and remain positive throughout
- Speak clearly -people have a habit of talking too fast when they are nervous
- Be enthusiastic and show a keen interest in the firm and the role
- Keep to the point and try to be as concise with your answers as you can and be honest
- Smile
- Eye contact



Body Language:

As mentioned previously first impressions are extremely important during interviews and they can be hard to change. Keeping this in mind, with the following can help you make a good first impression.

Walk confidently into the interview, you could be representing their firm so it is important to look professional from the beginning. An obvious one is the handshake, you should try and avoid a weak handshake and if you are being interviewed by a panel of people make sure you shake each person's hand.

Try to avoid fidgeting or nervous gestures like playing with your hair or a pen but also remember to not cross your arms. And keep in mind the simplest ones: smiling and eye contact.

No matter what the outcome of the interview it is important that you get feedback from the interviewers. If successful it is a good way to see why they were impressed and if the outcome is unsuccessful it is a good way to discover areas to improve upon for future interviews. Any feedback will be constructive.

Our Nicholas Scott team can help you with your interview skills by going through mock interview questions and providing honest and constructive feedback on your performance.

Second Interview:



Getting a second interview means you have shown you have the relevant skills and experience for the role, but that doesn't mean that the second round will be any easier as now there are fewer candidates all of whom have made a good impression.

Review your performance and answers from the first interview; you clearly made a good impression but think or where you could have provided a more relevant, detailed response (2nd round interviews will often start with similar questions to the first interview). As with the first interview research the people you are meeting and again rehearse / plan answers. You should be prepared for the likelihood of being asked trickier and more technical questions than before so remember to stay calm and make your answers concise.

This is the time when the firm will determine if you're the right cultural fit for them and how you'll interact with the existing team members. It's also your time to make the same decision so take in the office surroundings and the language they use. Is it right for you?

The first day:

We have previously covered the importance of first impressions in the context of an interview but it is equally important to make a good impression with your co-workers so keep these tips in mind for your first day:

- You will be given a lot of information on the first day so it is important to pay attention and listen carefully, but don't be afraid to ask questions when necessary as this can demonstrate your desire to learn and to integrate into the company. It may be beneficial to take notes to make things easier for yourself.
- Colleagues are going to be interested in who you are, your background and your role within the firm so prepare a short explanation covering these areas as you could be asked this multiple times. Remember to ask your co-workers questions as well as providing your own history; this is a good way to appear friendly and approachable it also allows you to begin building a relationship with them. You will be working closely with the same people every day so you might as well begin to build rapport with them from the offset.
- Try to arrive 15 minutes early, as with the interview plan a route to avoid being late. Try to remember to relax, first days can be daunting and stressful but being relaxed is a good way to improve your productivity.
- Smile, dress appropriately and put your phone on silent.
- Going into work with an open mind can make a difference when talking to your boss and colleagues.
- Have a positive attitude and show enthusiasm.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask for help.

3 main tips:

- Punctuality and honesty
- Get to know your co-workers
- Show your full potential



Being new to any job is both challenging and exciting. You'll be faced with both difficulties and opportunities and your goal should be to make the most of all situations but these guidelines should help provide you with some insights and direction as you approach that new job.