

CDO Guide: *Interviewing*

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Interviewing

You can think about a job interview as an intensely focused conversation. A good interview should be a dialogue between the interviewer (or interviewers) and the interviewee.

Interview performance is often critical in determining whether a candidate ultimately gets an offer. Your application materials get you an interview; a good interview gets you a job offer.

Get the Details About the Interview

- How will it be conducted - in person, via video conferencing, or by phone?
- How many people will be on the employer's interview panel?
- Who will be on the employer's interview panel?
- How long is the interview?
- Will there be multiple rounds of interviewing?
- Your point of contact may not answer all your questions but ask! Set yourself up for success by knowing what to expect.

Research the Employer

Your research and preparation are demonstrations of your interest and enthusiasm for a position.

Research Questions About the Employer

- What practice areas/issues is the employer known for?
- Who are the employer's major clients? What client population does the employer serve?
- What are some notable cases the employer has been involved in?
- What information can you find out about the employer's training and internship/ externship/ fellowship/ new associate programs?
- What is the employer's mission statement, vision statement, or statement of values?
- Does the employer have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement? What DEI initiatives are they engaged in?
- Does the employer have a pro bono policy? What pro bono initiatives are they engaged in?
- Try to answer your own questions. If you can't find the answer, that could be a good question to ask during the interview.

How to Research the Employer

- Review their website thoroughly.
- Find out which attorneys work in the section/division you are applying to.
- Look up biographies on the employer's website and on LinkedIn.
- Google the employer to see if they have recently been in the news.
- Research the employer's competitors to learn what distinguishes them from other employers in the industry.
- Look up the employer on social media. What can you learn about their culture and values through their social media posts?
- Reach out to students or attorneys in your network who work there or used to work there. Connect with them to fill in gaps in your research.
- The CDO can often provide insight into employers and connect you to students and current and former employees.

Additional Resources:

- [NALP Directory](#)
- [Martindale](#)
- Lexis, Westlaw, Bloomberg

Research Yourself

Employers want to see candidates with self-awareness. They are also looking for individuals with skills and experience that match the position they are looking to fill.

- Authenticity and honesty are key!
- Employers are people too, and they want to get to know you.

Know Your Whys

- Why this job?
- Why this area of law?
- Why this employer?

Elevate Your Resume

- Every word of your resume is fair game for questions.
- Elevate the conversation by articulating what you *learned* from each experience.
- Think about the *transferable skills* you gained from each position.
 - EXAMPLE: You worked in retail before law school. The customer service skills that you gained in that role are transferable to the client communication skills you will need in the legal position you are applying for.
- Speak positively about previous experiences and employers. Reframe a less than stellar experience as a learning opportunity.
 - EXAMPLE: While your previous supervisor didn't give you enough work, you might discuss how you learned to be a more thorough researcher from that experience.

Show Off Your Strengths

- Write out a list of your strengths including hard and soft skills.
- Take time to reflect on your professional and educational history. Think about feedback you have received from supervisors or professors.
- Map out how your strengths match the *job description/job posting*.
- Come up with one (or more) example of a time you demonstrated each strength.
- While you should start by considering your professional and educational experience, you can use non-legal examples when they are relevant.
 - EXAMPLE: The job description states the desire for candidates with leadership skills. You might share that you were captain of your soccer team and led your team to the state championship.

Work Through Your Weaknesses

- Write out a list of your weaknesses.
- This is an opportunity to show your ability to learn, maturity, and ability to take constructive criticism.
- How to address a weakness:
 - Identify the weakness – be genuine to avoid coming across as arrogant or lacking self-awareness.
 - Give an example of when that weakness caused a problem.
 - Explain what you are doing to grow and how you are working on the weakness.
 - Give an example of how you have overcome that weakness.
- Do not make excuses and do not blame others.
- Do not choose a weakness that is essential to the position.

EXAMPLE: Addressing Weaknesses

- I used to procrastinate.
- While I would make my deadlines, I would have to work long days as the due date approached causing unnecessary stress.
- I talked to some colleagues who seemed to manage their time well. They shared how they blocked time for specific tasks.
- I now use time blocking to make sure I am using my time efficiently and meet deadlines without the avoidable stress.

Plan Your Agenda

- After researching yourself, create an agenda of 3 to 5 points you want to discuss during the interview. Your points should relate back to the job requirements.
- Connect your answers in the interview back to this agenda. However, be flexible because it is also important to answer the question being asked.
- Your answers should be *concise, organized, and meaningful*. Knowing what you want to talk about will help you accomplish this goal.

Practice, Practice, Practice

- Practice, don't memorize. Practicing with CDO counselors, friends, family, or classmates are safe opportunities to try different answers, make mistakes, and learn.
- Practice in the mirror or record yourself. Talking out loud activates different neural pathways than writing. Reviewing a video or audio recording will help you see and hear how you come across.
- Practice the hard questions. Practice the questions that make you squirm, so you can figure out how to address them directly while presenting yourself in the best light.

Difficult Issues

When difficult topics come up, be open and honest. However, do not dwell on these topics. After addressing the issue, try to lead the conversation back to your agenda.

Low Grades

- Do not be defensive but share any extenuating circumstances that are unique to you.
- Point out positive trends in your grades over time. Point out any positive relevant grades.
- Describe what you have learned and explain the steps you have taken/are taking to improve your grades moving forward.

No Offer from Summer Employer

- Do not speak poorly about the summer employer or any attorneys you worked with.
- Identify any issues you may have had and explain how you have improved.
- Try to get a positive reference from the summer employer.

Gaps in your Resume

- Explain enough that the employer can understand the gap, but do not feel like you must share more than you are comfortable with.
- Highlight the fact that you are currently ready for the responsibilities of the position.
- Share anything you learned or gained from the time you were not working.

Lack of Ties to a Geographical Area

- Show your enthusiasm for the employer. They want to know that you are a safe bet and are not going to leave after a year or two.
- Mention any ties you do have to the area and the significance of them.
- If you do not have ties to the area, focus your answer on what motivated you to apply for the position regardless of location.

Lack of Experience in or Certainty about a Specific Area of Law

- Highlight what attracted you to the employer specifically.
- While most employers do not expect new attorneys to know exactly what they want to specialize in, you should be able to articulate your area(s) of interest that aligns with their work.
- Certain employers will require more specialization, so it is important to make sure the employer you are interviewing with is a good match for you.

Identity or Political Issues

- Review the [Improper/Illegal Interview Questions](#) section.
- You do not need to disclose information about your identity or political beliefs that you do not want to disclose.
- Consider redirecting the conversation, asking for clarification, or addressing a work-related issue underlying the question.

Common Interview Questions

While not comprehensive, this section presents some common interview questions with advice about how to approach them.

Tell me about yourself.

- This question often sets the tone for the rest of the interview. Practice this answer so you make a good first impression and give yourself a boost of confidence!
- Summarize your experience highlighting experiences that are most relevant to the position you're applying for.
- Organize your answer in an easy-to-follow manner. Consider chronological order or some variation like present, past, future.
- Consider making an opening statement that provides a roadmap for the employer of where you are going with your answer. This will make your answer easier to follow.
- Explain what led you to the law and why you are interested in the employer.
- You can discuss personal aspects of your life but maintain a steady focus on your agenda.

Questions about the future (Where do you see yourself in X years? What are your long-term goals?)

- Show ambition, but not impatience.
- Focus on how you want to grow as a professional and be specific.
 - EXAMPLE: "Where you see yourself in 5 years?"
 - What kinds of projects/cases do you want to be working on in five years?
 - What level of attorney/professional would you be? (If you are a rising 2L, you would be a third-year attorney).
 - What kind of skills or knowledge would you like to have developed?
 - What kind of clients would you like to be working with?

Why are you interested in working for us?

- Show off your preparation and research!
- Interviewers love enthusiasm! People love hearing good things about themselves! Express your passion and excitement for that employer and what they do.
- Be specific about what you are interested in.
- Show how the employer's values align with your own.

Questions about diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

- As the law becomes a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable profession, you can expect questions regarding your experience with, knowledge about, and contributions to DEI.
- Read the employer's diversity statement, DEI policy, value statement, etc.
- Identify activities you have participated in or would like to engage in to foster DEI efforts (e.g. mentoring, group membership, reading a book, engaging in conversations, etc.).
- Think about the experience, identity, and perspective you bring to an organization. Also, consider experiences, identities, and perspectives that are unfamiliar to you.
- Assess the organizations you are involved with and want to be involved with (including the prospective employer). What are they doing well? How could they improve?

What are your interests and hobbies? What do you do for fun?

- This is a chance to build rapport, make an impression, and show them your personality.
- Share your passions and be specific.
 - EXAMPLE: Many people in Colorado like to hike... but if you are hiking all of Colorado's 14er's, tell them about it!

Behavioral questions

- These questions are used to assess future performance under the theory that historical

- performance is the best indicator of future performance.
- These questions can help employers distinguish between similar candidates.
- They often address qualities such as teamwork, leadership, client communication, critical thinking, and decision-making.
- You will be asked to provide an example of a time when you behaved in a certain way.
 - EXAMPLE: Tell us about a time you were successful on a team.
 - EXAMPLE: Share an example of a time you made a mistake.
- Tell a story with the *STAR Method*:
 - **Situation** – provide context and identify your role.
 - **Task** – what task were you given responsibility for?
 - **Action** – the steps you took or the skills you used to address the problem. Try to highlight your strengths here.
 - **Result** – summarize the outcome and articulate any lessons learned.
- The STAR method can be used to tell a success story or to show how you rebounded from a mistake.
- Practice the STAR method so it becomes natural.
- Be specific, focused, and succinct. Providing detail is good but stay focused.

STAR Method		
Question	<i>Tell us about a time you were successful on a team.</i>	<i>Share an example of a time you made a mistake.</i>
Situation	I was preparing for a mock trial competition with three classmates I did not know well.	I worked for a partner in a firm. I conducted legal research on some of their cases.
Task	We were each responsible for either an opening statement or a closing argument.	The partner assigned me a memo on an issue that might arise in a hearing the next week.
Action	I suggested that we all practice our statements/arguments together to get our themes aligned for the competition.	I dove right into the project given the tight deadline. I spent hours researching, analyzing the issue, and drafting the memo.
Result	We got second place in the competition, received positive feedback about our team's cohesiveness, and are working together in another competition.	When I gave the partner the memo, they told me I had researched the wrong the issue. The memo was not helpful for the hearing. I learned that I need to ask more questions before jumping in.

Hypothetical questions

- Hypothetical questions will present a scenario and ask how you would respond.
- Typically, these questions are not testing you for the correct answer. They are designed to test how you think, your judgement, and your communication skills.
- Walk the interviewer through your thought process. Describe your thinking as you issue-spot, analyze, seek additional information, and draw conclusions.

See [APPENDIX A](#) for a List of Sample Interview Questions

Questions for the Interviewer

The questions you have for the interviewer can be as important as the questions they ask you. Your questions will reveal your level of preparation, knowledge of the employers, and curiosity.

Questions that Send the Right Message

- Use your questions to show the employers that you have done your research and to convey your interest in the opportunity.
- These questions could be inspired by:
 - Recent filings, news articles, the employer's website, or social media posts.
 - Your curiosity about how the employer operates or specific inquiries about the role you are applying for.
 - Your review of their mission statement/values statement, DEI efforts, pro bono policies, sustainability policies or other guiding documents.
- In addition to your prepared questions, ask questions that arise during the interview.
- Interviews are reciprocal. This is your opportunity to ensure the employer is the right fit for you too!
- If you have multiple interviews with the same employer, draft more specific and detailed questions for later interviews.
- Ask about the next steps in their hiring process and their timing.

Questions that Express Enthusiasm:

- I am very interested in this position, so I am curious about the next steps in your hiring process.
- What are the common qualities of externs who excel at this firm?
- I understand your organization is growing in areas X and Y. How do you anticipate that growth impacting this position?

What Not to Ask

It is best not to ask about...

- Anything you can find out through your own research.
- Salary and compensation (unless they bring it up first).
 - Save these questions for after they have made you an offer.
 - Nonetheless, go into the interview with a salary range in mind (in case they ask).
- Work-life balance. There are other ways to get this information:
 - Talk to students or attorneys who work there or former employees.
 - Ask the CDO and your network about the employer.
- Employers are looking for attorneys with genuine interest and commitment. Questions about money and hours can give the wrong impression.

Instead of Work-Life Balance... Ask:

- Tell me about this employer's culture.
- What does a typical week look like for a new employee?
- How would you describe the life of a new associate?

See [APPENDIX B](#) for a List of Sample Questions for the Interviewer

Prepare for Different Types of Interviews

There are many different approaches to interviewing, so you need to be able to adapt to various styles. Attorneys are busy professionals, so be ready to adapt to last minute changes to the format or length of the interview or the composition of the interview panel.

- Sometimes the interviewer will do a lot of the talking.
 - Do not interrupt. You can learn a lot from listening.
 - Excel through your nonverbal communication. Stay engaged by leaning in, maintaining eye contact, and smiling.
 - Focus on getting your agenda points out at every opportunity you get.
 - Feel free to take some notes, but don't let them become a distraction.
- Sometime the interviewer will not have great interview skills or be unprepared. You need to be ready to "carry the interview."
 - Have thoughtful questions prepared to ask the employer. Ask questions that will engage the employer and get the conversation flowing.
 - Be ready to ask follow-up questions that arise through the conversation.
 - Focus on your agenda at every opportunity you get.
 - Let your personality shine through.
- Structured interviews are designed to minimize the effect of implicit bias in hiring.
 - In these highly scripted interviews, every candidate is asked the same questions.
 - The interviewer may not have the candidate's application materials. The interviewer may have even been instructed not to react to the candidate's answers.
 - It may be more difficult to connect with the interviewer in these interviews, but still allow your personality to come through.
 - These interviews often include behavioral and/or hypothetical questions. Be prepared with examples to address various scenarios.

Virtual Interviews

Virtual interviews are common, and they are here to stay.

Preparing for a Virtual Interview

- Practice with a CDO counselor, friend, or family member or record yourself (or all of the above), so you can get feedback or see how you come across.
- Technology Check:
 - Familiarize yourself with the video conferencing platform. Check for software updates.
 - Check your link, audio, video, and internet connection.
 - Have the dial-in number ready in case there are any technical issues.
 - Keep your computer plugged in to avoid any battery issues.
 - Turn off notifications to avoid distractions during the interview and consider turning off video mirroring.
 - Use a computer, not a cell phone.
- Set the Scene for Success:
 - If you're using a virtual background, ensure it is framing your head well. Choose a simple background that does not distract from you.
 - If you are using a natural background, make sure it is tidy, simple, and not distracting.
 - A study rooms at Denver Law can be a good setting for virtual interviews. [Book a study room](#).
 - Center yourself in the frame and keep the camera at eye-level.
 - Natural lighting is best. Light yourself from the front. Light from behind will make you look dark and shadowy.
 - Consider using headphones to block out any background noise. Headphones with a built in microphone are best.
 - Limit distractions: tell housemates about your interview, put pets in another room, silence or turn off your cell phone, etc.
- In the Event of a Technical Difficulty...
 - *Stay calm.* This is an opportunity to show your ability to cope under pressure and that you are a problem-solver.
 - *Communicate.* Use the chat feature, use the dial in number, call the interviewer or your point of contact, or send an email.
 - *Offer solutions.* Can you finish the interview via phone? Can you use a phone and the video capabilities? Can you offer times to reschedule?

Creating Virtual Connection

- Make an initial connection by looking into the camera, greeting the interviewer (“nice to meet you,” “good morning/afternoon,” etc.), smiling, and giving a nod or a wave.
- Look down the lens of the camera to make “eye-contact.”
- Try not to fidget, spin in your chair, or move unnecessarily.
- Limit your use of notes. It is obvious when you are reading or reviewing materials on the screen.
- Feel free to take notes, but you may want to let the interview know what you are doing, and do not let the notes become a distraction from the conversation.
- Use an interviewer’s name when there are multiple interviewers present. This is helpful in place of body language or eye contact to signal who you are trying to engage with.
- Dress how you would for an in-person interview.
- Nod or smile in place of vocalizations like “mm-hm” or “yeah,” so you don’t interrupt the speaker.
- Let others finish speaking. Mute yourself when others are speaking then unmute when they are done. This gives you a moment to ensure they have finished their thought before you begin.
- Communicate confidence by sitting up straight, smiling, and keeping the camera eye level.

Day of the Interview

Your planning is critical, but you will be judged by your performance during the interview. Try to come across as confident, interested, and prepared to leave an excellent impression.

Implement Your Plan

- Before your interview, plan something that will help you relax and feel confident.
 - EXAMPLES: work out, do some deep breathing, talk to your best friend, etc.
- The interview starts the moment you leave your house. Be professional, friendly, and polite to everyone you encounter.
- Acknowledge there may be awkward moments, but stay calm, cool, and collected.
- Bring copies of all your application materials for yourself and the interviewer(s).
- Arrive about 10 minutes early, and do not plan anything immediately after your interview.
- Know where you are going. Think about parking, the location of the bus/train stop, what building you are going to, and how to get to the correct suite.
- Remember it is a two-way assessment: observe the office environment and interaction between colleagues while you wait. Could you see yourself working in this environment?
- Upon entering the building, turn off or silence your phone. Put it away until the interview is over.

Box Breathing:

- Breathe in for four seconds - count in your mind: 1, 2, 3, 4
- Hold for four seconds
- Breathe out for four seconds
- Hold for four seconds
- Repeat as many rounds as needed

Dress for the Role You Want

- Deciding what to wear to an interview can be tricky. Look at pictures on the employer's website and social media to get a sense of their culture and dress.
- Dress in a manner that feels authentic to you. There is not a set of rules about how to wear your hair, makeup, jewelry, accessories, etc.
- While there is not one agreed upon definition of "professional dress," for an interview, you want to dress as formal or slightly more formal than the interviewer.
- When in doubt, dress more conservatively. Law is a traditional profession.
- A darker colored (black, grey, or navy) suit with closed toe shoes is a conventional legal-industry interview outfit.
 - If you do not have a suit, please contact the CDO or DEI office. We can try to help!
 - Additionally, DU has a [career closet](#).
- Avoid products with strong smells.
- Reach out to the CDO with additional questions or if you want feedback on your interview outfit.

Tips for During the Interview

- Don't forget to be a good listener!
- Introductions and small talk matter. Use them as opportunities to build rapport.
- Try to make a connection with the interviewer. Ask them a question. Ask how their day is going, bring up a common interest, or give them/the organization a compliment.
- It is ok to ask for a moment to think. You can also repeat a question to buy yourself time to think. It is appropriate to ask a clarifying question when necessary.
- Do not speak too fast. This is a nervous reaction for many people.

Most Communication is Nonverbal

- If both you and the interviewer are comfortable with it, greet the interviewer with a firm handshake.
- Focus on maintaining eye contact especially during greetings and when listening to the interviewer talking or asking questions.
- Let the interviewer set the tone in terms of the formality of the interview.
- Show enthusiasm! Smile, nod to acknowledge a point, and display an open body posture (don't cross your arms, do lean forward slightly).
- It is ok to take notes, but don't let that distract you from being present and engaged.
- Be mindful of your communication and body language both before and after the interview. The interviewer may seek feedback from anyone who you interacted with.

Improper/Illegal Interview Questions

While you may assume that hiring attorneys know what questions they should avoid asking interviewees, that is not always the case. The University of Denver and the CDO take issues regarding harassment and discrimination in the workplace seriously, and we are here to support you.

- If you are asked an inappropriate question during an interview, please notify the CDO.
- The CDO requires employers who recruit at Denver Law to abide by the CDO's Equal Opportunity policy. Learn more about the [CDO's EEO Policy](#).
- At the University of Denver, claims of harassment and discrimination are grave issues that we will work with you to address. Learn more about [DU's Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX](#).
- Employers should not ask about your age, national origin, religious affiliation, marital status, health, physical condition, political view, or family situation, unless they are a bona fide occupational qualification.
- If asked an improper question:
 - Redirect the conversation and talk about one of your strengths or accomplishments;
 - EXAMPLE:
 - Interviewer: "You have such a unique name, where are you from?"
 - Interviewee: "Thank you, my name is unique. That has helped me develop my confidence and communication skills because people often have questions about my name."
 - Ask the interviewer for clarification about how that question relates to the job; or
 - EXAMPLE:
 - Interviewer: "Are you married?"
 - Interviewee: "Thank you for that question, but could you please help me understand how my marital status is pertinent to this position?"
 - Respond to the underlying issue.
 - EXAMPLE:
 - Interviewer: "Do you have any physical disabilities?"
 - Interviewee: "I understand that this position requires extended periods of sitting and the ability to lift up to 20 pounds. I can fulfill those requirements."
- Consider the context in which the question was asked. Did a benign inquiry go too far? Or, was it an offensive or harmful question?
- Context should be a factor in both how you handle the question and in your decision-making process regarding continuing your candidacy with that employer.

Interview Follow Up

Whenever possible, ask about the employer's hiring process and timeline. Be thoughtful about follow-up communication, and feel free to make an appointment with the CDO if you have questions about your specific situation. Also, be sure to send the employer a Thank You Note. For more information, please review the Thank You Notes Section of the [CDO Guide: Application Materials](#).

Appendix A: List of Sample Interview Questions

Personal Attitude and Attributes

- How would you describe yourself?
- Why should we select you for this position over other applicants?
- What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- Use three words to describe yourself?
- Why did you choose law as a career?
- Why do you think you will succeed as a lawyer?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a firm/organization like ours?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our firm/organization?
- What motivates you to exert your greatest effort?
- How do you work under pressure?
- How do you function in a fast-paced environment?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Please provide examples.
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- Do you prefer to work independently or with supervision?
- Do you prefer to work in person or remotely?
- How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work independently?
- How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
- Describe the characteristics of your ideal supervisor.
- Describe your leadership attributes.
- Tell me about someone you consider a good leader and why.
- Have you ever been in a situation where a good leader caused success? What did they do?
- Who is your hero/heroine?
- What two accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- What is the greatest obstacle you have faced in your life? What did you learn from dealing with that obstacle?
- What is a legal skill you have struggled with?
- How would you describe your advocacy style?
- Talk about your experience with and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- What do you consider to be the most difficult ethical challenge lawyers face? Why?
- What community or extra-curricular activities have you found rewarding? Why?
- What do you enjoy doing when you are not working/studying?
- What is the last book you read?
- How do you maintain a well-rounded life?

Interest in the Position and Fit

- What are you looking for in a firm/organization?
- Why are you interested in this setting (large firm, small firm, government, legal aid, non-profit, etc.)?
- How did you learn about us?

- What part of this job do you think you would excel at? What part of this job do you think will be most difficult for you?
- What kind of training and supervision do you need to be successful?
- What criteria are you using to distinguish us from similar employers?
- Who else are you interviewing with? Why?
- Have you decided which city you would ultimately like to settle in?
- Why do you want to live in this city?
- Are you willing to travel for work? To what extent?
- What practice area do you see yourself working in?
- Are you interested in doing pro bono work?
- How will you contribute to our organization's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What is more important to you, the job itself or the salary?
- Is there any type of work you would not feel comfortable doing at our firm? Is there any type of client you would have a difficult time representing?

Academic Experience

- How do you like law school?
- Why did you decide to go to law school?
- What influenced you to choose this career?
- Why did you choose the University of Denver?
- What was your favorite course? Why?
- What was your least favorite course? Why?
- Who was your favorite professor? Why?
- Tell me about a written legal project that you are proud of.
- What changes would you make to the law school curriculum?
- Should we be concerned about your grades/class rank?
- Are your grades a good indicator of your academic abilities?
- What activities did you participate in during law school? Why did you choose those activities?
- How have you managed your time between law school and work?
- Have your ideas about being a lawyer changed since you started law school?
- What has been the most challenging aspect of law school for you?
- Explain a complex legal issue.
- Tell me about a Supreme Court case you disagree with and why.

Previous Jobs

- How would your previous employer describe you?
- What did you gain from your previous employment experience? How have your prior experiences helped you prepare for a legal career?
- Why did you leave your previous position?
- Describe your most effective former supervisor. Describe your least effective former supervisor.
- What problems have you experienced in previous jobs?
- What is the most interesting job you have ever had?
- Tell me about the culture of a job you considered positive. Tell me about the culture of a job you considered negative.

- Have you ever worked with a difficult person? How did you handle working with them?

Goals

- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 or 20 years?
- What long-term satisfaction do you hope to obtain from a legal career?
- What personal goals are you seeking through a legal career?
- What steps have you taken toward achieving your career goals?
- How do you evaluate success for yourself?
- What are your standards of success in school? Have you met those standards?
- If you were not in law school right now, what would you be doing?
- How do you expect to balance work and personal life?

Behavioral Questions

- Tell me about a time you made a mistake. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time you worked on a team. What role did you play?
- Discuss a time that you took on a leadership role.
- Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- Describe a time when telling the truth was difficult. Why?
- Tell me about a time you were faced with a problem that tested your coping skills.
- Tell me about a situation where you disagreed with a decision made by your supervisor. How did you handle it?
- Describe a situation when you had to think on your feet.
- Discuss a time you had to use written communication to get a complex point across to someone.
- Give me an example of a time you creatively and successfully solved a difficult problem.
- Tell me about a situation where you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things from your perspective.
- Describe a time you were not happy with your performance on an assignment. How did you handle that?
- Tell me about a major problem you encountered recently. Were you successful in resolving it?

Public Interest Jobs

For a more comprehensive resource, visit [Applying for a Public Good Legal Position in the CDO Handbook](#).

- Tell me about your prior public interest involvement.
- What does public interest/social justice/public good mean to you?
- What do you think will be the hardest aspects of working here/ biggest drawback?
- How would you go about establishing trust with a client? Do you foresee any challenges in connecting with clients?
- Do you have experience working with diverse populations? If you are different from the clients you will serve, how will you build connections with them?
- How do you handle working with people in times of crisis?
- What do you consider to be the most difficult challenge lawyers in this office/practice setting/subject area face?
- How do you deal with work stress/burnout/vicarious trauma?

Appendix B: List of Sample Questions for the Interviewer

Questions Based on Your Research

- I read about a case your firm was handling about X. Can you tell me more about it?
- I understand you're an industry leader in DEI. Can you tell me more about the initiatives you have found most impactful.
- Your firm/organization has a reputation for excellent mentorship of new attorneys. Can you tell me what programs and efforts are in place to foster mentorship?

Questions about the Role and Firm/Organization

- What characteristics does it take to be successful in this role?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- Who will supervise my work?
- What is the structure and management style at this firm/organization?
- How are assignments distributed during the summer?
- What kind of projects will I typically be working on?
- What does a typical week look like for an attorney in this role?
- How does this department develop new work?
- At what point in an associate's career do you expect them to bring in clients?
- What training opportunities are offered to new associates? Is there a formalized training program?
- Can you tell me about this firm's/organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Are there any initiatives you are really excited about?
- How do attorneys select practice areas?
- How do attorneys develop working relationships with partners or clients?
- Do you have mentorship opportunities? Can you explain what they look like?
- How are new attorneys integrated into the firm/organization?
- How soon do new attorneys have direct client contact?
- How soon do new attorneys get experience taking depositions? Appearing in court?
- What are the criteria for advancement?
- What types of outside activities (bar committees, pro bono work, charities, etc.) are attorneys in this firm/organization involved with?
- Can you tell me about the plans for the firm's/organization's overall growth. Where do you anticipate seeing growth and what practice areas?

Questions Seeking the Interviewers Opinions and Thoughts

- Why did you decide to work at this firm/organization?
- What makes this firm/organization stand out from its competitors to you?
- What is the culture like at this firm/organization?

- What do you like most about this firm/organization? What do you like least?
- How would you describe the firm/organization and the people who work here?
- What was the most satisfying project you worked on this year?
- What is the most interesting case/issue you are currently working on?
- How have you seen your practice evolve?
- What is one thing you wish you had known when you were interviewing during law school?