QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW
ASKING QUESTIONS DURING INTERVIEWS

One of the ways that an employer will evaluate the depth of your interest is by the nature of the questions you ask. You want to ask questions that show that you are interested in the employer, have already researched them, and want to learn more. **Avoid asking questions that can be answered with simple research e.g., NALP form, website, promotional brochure.** Take your questions to greater depth -- employers appreciate interviewees who have done their research.

Avoid confrontational or self-interested questions like “What is your billable hour requirement?” or “Tell me about the work/life balance at the firm.” Once you have been given an offer, you may dig deeper into hours requirements, work/life balance issues, etc. Your job during interviews is to impress the employer with what you have to offer them. Your job once you are deciding among offers is to figure out which will be the best for you personally.

Bear in mind that the questions you ask should differ depending on the type of job you are interviewing for. If you are interviewing for a part-time job during law school that will likely not lead to post-graduate employment, confine your questions to the type of work the employer does, the type of work the employer will expect you to do, how you will be assigned work, and the work hours the employer expects. If you are interviewing for a summer job that may lead to post-graduate employment, it is appropriate to ask more sophisticated, forward-looking questions about associate life. As a 3L interviewing for employment after graduation, you need to ask questions that show you very interested in and knowledgeable about the employer and that elicit information about the employer to know whether you will be a good fit. You will want to know as much about that employer’s management style and future business plans as possible.

Not all of these questions are appropriate for every interview. Use good judgment. If you are interviewing with a partner – they will want you to ask thoughtful, grown-up questions that are forward-looking and somewhat more “big picture.” It will depend on the type of job you are interview for and the person who is interviewing you.

- Describe the structure of the summer associate program at your firm?
- What is the organization looking for in the ideal candidate?
- What type of work should I expect and how are work assignments distributed to summer associates?
- What criteria are used to evaluate a summer associate? What criteria does the firm consider when determining whether to make a summer associate a post-graduation associate offer?
- Are offers extended by a particular department/group?
- Once an associate joins a department or practice group, is there mobility?
- What type of work should I expect to do as a new associate in your department? Are projects assigned or will I be expected to approach partners for work?
- How are new attorneys trained?

**Good Questions to Ask Partners**
- What criteria are used to evaluate associates? Does the firm have specific benchmarks for new attorney development?
- What criteria does the firm consider when determining whether to make an associate a partner?
• What are future growth areas of the firm?

• At what point are associates expected to bring in business?

• What is the "normal" partnership track? Is this standard for all practice areas in the firm?

• What does "becoming a partner" mean? One tier or two-tier system? What are the differences between the two?

• How many associates made partner over the last year?

• Describe the breadth of the client base. Does one client represent more than 10% of the firm's business?

• What types of clients do you work with?

• How do new clients typically come to the firm? What strategies does the firm have in place for acquiring clients?

• How early are associates asked to specialize?

• How are important decisions made within the firm? What are the major firm committees, their jurisdictions and ultimate authority within their jurisdictions?

Public Interest/Government Specific
Bear in mind that each public interest organization and government office is unique – make sure that you do your research on the specific employer you are interviewing with and tailor your questions appropriately. The following are suggestions to get you started.

• What are the responsibilities of the position?

• What is the case load like?

• What are the unique challenges of working with the issue/population you serve?

• How is the organization funded? (for public interest organizations)

• What is the hierarchy that this position reports to? (for government employers)

• What types of claims do you deal with most often?

• How do clients/cases come to the organization?

• What is the process for determining what clients/cases the organization will represent?

• What percentage of potential clients/cases does the organization take on?

• For you, what is the most satisfying part of working for this organization?

• Does the organization offer any type of law school loan repayment program?