QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED
Different interviewers have different styles, so it’s hard to predict what kinds of questions you will be asked when you interview. Preparing for a wide variety of questions is the best way to head into any interview confident that you will be able to answer any question that comes your way. As you read through the questions below, stop to consider how you would answer each one – and then verbalize those answers. You will find that “knowing what you will say” and actually saying it are two different things. Practicing answers aloud will ensure that your answers are well organized, concise, and articulate. It may take you several tries to get your answer to come out best. You do not want to go into an interview with pat, preplanned answers or you risk sounding scripted – but you do want to go into an interview confident that you will be able to talk about your skills and experience in an engaging and articulate way.

Not all interviewers will ask you point blank, “Why should we hire you?” However, this is the question behind every question you will be asked. Make sure that your answers express your interest in the practice of law and the particular employer you are interviewing with. Prepare to give the interviewer concrete examples of any strengths, skills or experience you plan to talk about – saying that you have “strong leadership skills” doesn’t really tell a potential employer anything, but discussing a group, program or project that you have led does. Make sure that your answers reflect the characteristics employers are looking for – good judgment, problem solving skills, dedication, strong work ethic, legal writing and reasoning skills, the ability to work independently, the ability to get along with others, and plain old common sense.

Career Path & Goals
- Why do you want to be an attorney?
- What type of law are you interested in practicing?
- What interests you about litigation/M&A/tax/etc.?
- What qualifications or skills do you think will make you successful as an attorney?
- What are you looking for in a law firm?
- Where do you see yourself 5, 10, 15 years down the road?
- What are your career goals?
- What non-work related goals do you have for yourself in the next 10 years?
- What would be your dream job?
- If you couldn’t be a lawyer, what else would you be and why?
- How do you define success?
- What do you take pride in?

Law School
- Why did you decide to go to law school?
- Why did you choose Loyola?
- How have you enjoyed law school so far?
- Has law school been what you expected?
- What is your favorite thing about law school?
- What is your least favorite thing about law school?
- What activities are you involved in outside the classroom at Loyola?
- What has been your favorite class/area of study/professor in law school?
- What has been your favorite extra-curricular activity in law school?
- Do you prefer courses with exams or papers?
- Why aren’t you on law journal/moot court?
- Have you been happy with your grades in law school?
- Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your abilities/what kind of lawyer you will be?
- What happened in [class in which you did not get a good grade]?
• How do you balance your academic obligations with other demands on your time (law journal, moot court, work, etc.)?

**Skills & Strengths**
- How will you contribute to our organization?
- Are you a better public speaker or writer?
- What do you think will be your chief strength as a lawyer?
- What do you think will be your primary weakness as a lawyer?
- Tell me about your writing sample.

**Past Work Experience**
- Tell me what you did before going to law school.
- Walk me through your resume – what are the highlights of your career to date?
- Tell me about your job last summer. Did you receive an offer?
- Tell me about [any job on your resume]. What did you do? What did you learn? What did you like most about the job? What did you like least?
- How would your previous supervisors describe you?
- Of all the jobs you’ve held, which was your favorite and why?
- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond the call of duty in a job.
- Tell me about a time you voluntarily took on a leadership roll in a job.
- What did you do in the summers during college?
- What type of work have you found most satisfying?
- Tell me about a challenge you faced in one of your past jobs and how you overcame it.
- Have you ever had to deal with a difficult client or supervisor? How did you handle the situation?

**Work Style**
- What motivates you?
- How would you describe your work style?
- Do you prefer working independently or as part of a team?
- Give me an example of a time you worked on a team, and how well you think it worked.
- Are you a leader or a follower when asked to work as part of a team?
- How do you work best?
- How well do you take instruction?
- Are you comfortable working under pressure?
- What type of people do you work best with?
- What kind of a boss do you prefer?
- Define leadership. Define cooperation.
- Do you consider yourself competitive?
- As an associate, you will often be called on to work on several important cases or deals at the same time – how comfortable are you juggling multiple responsibilities?
- When you are an associate, how will you handle a situation where you have too much work to handle it all successfully?

**Employer/Market Specific**
- Why are you interested in [employer you are interviewing with]?
• Why do you want to be in [geographical area employer is located in]?
• What can I tell you about the [firm, agency, office, etc.]?
• Where did you work last summer?
• Where else are you interviewing?
• Do you have any outstanding job offers? Where?

Public Interest/Government Specific
• What experience do you have working with the issue/population we work with?
• How did you develop an interest in the issue/population we work with?
• How are you going to deal with the often difficult issues we deal with?
• What do you do to relieve stress?
• How will you handle the limited resources we work with?
• How much and what type of supervision do you need to work well?
• How will you handle your law school debt on a public interest/government salary?

Judge Specific
• Why are you interested in working in chambers?
• What are your future career plans?
• What are your views on [any current political issue or news item]?
• What do you think about the recent decision in [major case in the jurisdiction]?
• Who is your favorite Supreme Court Justice and why?
• Tell me about your legal writing/civil procedure/evidence grades.

Personal
• Tell me about yourself.
• What was the last good book you read?
• What is your favorite movie?
• How do you keep aware of current events?
• Do you have any hobbies?
• What do you do for fun/to let off steam/in your spare time?
• What accomplishments in your life are you proudest of?
• Who are your heros?
• What is your greatest strength?
• What is your greatest weakness?

Random Questions
• Tell me something about yourself that is not on your resume.
• If you could be any type of animal/car/cookie, what would you be?
• If you won the lottery tomorrow, what would you do?
• If you could have lunch with any three people, living or dead, who would they be and why?
• I’m tired of interviewing, you ask the questions.
All of these questions can and will be asked during interviews with law firms and also included is guidance on the kinds of answers that are appropriate. Think about how you will respond to these questions. Develop concise, well-organized answers. Consider how each answer responds to the interviewer’s unspoken question: “Why should we hire you?”

EXAMPLES OF PROBING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

**Interest Level**

1. **Tell me something about yourself.**
   Students should be able to provide a 20 to 30 second focused, concise statement about themselves, as if they were responding to the question “Why should we hire you?”

2. **Why are you interested in our Firm?**
   Students should be able to articulate what it is specifically about the firm that interests them. Look for facts: specific practice areas, actual clients, actual results (successful completion of the merger between Client A and Client B). Don’t be satisfied with: Your size, location, and breadth of practice areas,

3. **Why are you interested in Washington? Do you have any ties to this community?**
   If students have lived/worked in Washington, this is easy. For students with no ties to Washington, they should refer to ties to the east coast; experience in large urban areas; visits to Washington; interest in living & working in the nation’s capitol; extra points if they have talked to classmates/friends who have lived and worked in Washington and can give details about events/places/neighborhoods.

4. **What can I tell you about the firm?**
   Applicant should lead with something s/he knows about the firm, e.g., “I know that you recently added an Intellectual Property group. What led to that decision?”

5. **Why did you go to law school?**

6. **Why did you go to Loyola?**

7. **Do you think your grades are a good indication of what kind of lawyer you’ll be?** No matter what the student’s grades are, s/he needs to go beyond grades to those professional/leadership/counseling/advocacy skills that are essential to good lawyering.

8. **Where else are you interviewing?**

9. **What is your favorite interview question & why & how do you answer it?**

10. **What is your least favorite interview question & why & how do you answer it?**

**Judgment/Problem-solving**

1. **Tell me about a situation from your job last summer that required you to exercise judgment.**

2. **In law school, how do you approach a problem for which there appears to be no definitive answer?**

3. **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.**
4. Assume you are asked by two partners to complete two different assignments, but you only have time enough to complete one. What would you do? Students should show good judgment and problem-solving skills, e.g., get the partners together to discuss priorities. An answer like “Stay up all night and all day and multi-task until they’re both done” is not good.

5. Tell me about your last big mistake. How did you handle it?

6. What is your biggest weakness?
   This stupid question is often asked by recruiters. I would like every student to answer it “Lack of professional experience” but some prefer their own answers. Don’t let them get away with “I work too hard” or “I take on too many responsibilities”-it’s the old pretend the virtue is a vice syndrome. However, “gin” is not an acceptable answer either.

7. What do you like least about law school?

**Motivation**

1. How do you balance your academic obligations and (some other responsibility gleaned from resume, e.g., law journal, part-time work, volunteer work)?

2. Have you been on a committee or had a work-related situation in which you were asked to accomplish a task with insufficient guidance? How did you proceed? This is an opportunity for students to show process-how they ask for guidance, how they get the information they need, and maturity-their ability to admit that they need help.

3. All of us have had times in our lives in which we felt unmotivated, or encountered problems which seemed insurmountable. Describe such a situation and explain how you dealt with it. This question goes to the heart of professionalism-how do we maintain high personal and professional standards day-in and day-out, even when inspiration and motivation are lacking. Look for evidence of structure, e.g., (1) Getting up in the morning, showering, getting dressed-physically preparing for work/study as if one was motivated, rather than waiting for inspiration to strike; (2) Sitting down at the desk with books open and beginning the motions of studying knowing that habit can replace inspiration.

4. Tell me about a situation in which your personal obligations and business/school commitments conflicted. How did you resolve the conflict?

**Leadership**

1. What attributes do you have that would instill client confidence?

2. When you are in a team/group/committee setting, how often are you chosen to be a leader? Why? Are there times when you choose not to lead? Why?

3. Describe a situation in which you acted as a leader that was particularly satisfying to you.

4. Tell me about your role with (some extracurricular activity selected from resume). Students should be able to tell a story about themselves, weaving in information from their resumes and making the story relevant to the interview.

**Interpersonal Skills**

1. Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team. What is your favorite part about teamwork? Least favorite part?
2. What do you do when you know you need help or more expertise?

3. Have you had a person who acted as a mentor at some point in your life? Tell me about him/her. Does the applicant recognize that others who have gone before him/her have helped him/her? Can the applicant give credit to others? The failure to be able to give credit to anyone else could be an indication that the student will now work well with others.

4. What skills do you believe that you have that would contribute to a team effort?

5. Why do people like working with you? Why might people not like to work with you?

6. Tell me about a time when you were in a pressure situation. Why do you think this situation arose? What, in hindsight, were you most dissatisfied with about your performance? What do you wish you had done differently?

7. Tell me about a task you accomplished as a member of a group which you now believe you could have handled better alone.

8. Law school, especially the first year, can be extremely stressful. How do/did you deal with the stress?

9. When disappointment or failure occurs in your life, what do you do?

10. Describe an event in your life that has had a major impact on you.

11. How do you help others who are in crisis or under stress?

12. What is your favorite non-law-related activity? Student should demonstrate good judgment (e.g., if the student’s two favorite activities are drinking in bars, and attending the opera, does the student choose to discuss opera?) and demonstrate a well-rounded personality.

13. If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you do with it (working or studying is not permitted)?

Ability to Work Independently/Goal Direction
1. Have you ever undertaken something just to prove to yourself or others that you could do it?

2. What non-law-related goals do you have that you would like to accomplish in the next few years? Are the student’s non-law-related goals consistent with the job s/he is interviewing for?

3. Which law school courses have you enjoyed most, and why? Which have you least enjoyed?

4. What part of law school is most challenging for you?

5. Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of? Why?

6. If you don’t get a job with our Firm, what will you do? Clearly, students, as good lawyers, should have a Plan B in mind. Good answers might include
demonstrations of interest in firms that have something in common with our firm, e.g., large firms in Washington with similar practice areas.

**CLOSING QUESTION**

*It looks like our time is up. Do you have any other questions?*

Students must ask a question. It should be something short and easily answered, since the interviewer really just means, “Our time is up,” but has tacked on, “Do you have any other questions?” because they always do. But students can’t admit that they don’t have any other questions because they should leave the interviewer with the feeling that if the interviewer had time, the student would like to talk to them all day. Good responses include: “If I have the opportunity to work for your firm this summer, will I have the chance to work with you?” Or, “I am excited about this opportunity. What additional information or references do you need to make your decision?”