

Application & Interview Advice

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It's a given that academic achievement is essential to make it into the world of law, but don't forget to make the most of your research into careers, extra curricular activities and work experience to show that you are well informed and a well-rounded candidate. Creating an application form that stands out from the rest of the crowd and sells your skills can be a challenge. Here are our top tips for how to approach applications and interviews, and do just that:

1. **Know what's required** by familiarising yourself with the selection criteria. Communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills and commercial awareness are just some of the skills we look for so prepare examples to demonstrate your experience of each.
2. **Get involved.** We expect successful candidates to be on track for a 2.1 but we also want to recruit people who have experienced life outside of the library! Volunteering, joining a society or a team is valuable, especially if you take responsibility for a task, such as managing a budget or project, which you can then use as an example when answering a question about your skills on an application form.
3. **Be yourself.** We want to find out what type of person you are, so give yourself every opportunity to let your personality shine through. Whether you have taken a role on a project or team, or have an achievement of which you are particularly proud, let us know.
4. **Use your experience.** If you have completed legal, commercial or any other kind of work experience, think about what you have learned and observed. You may, for example, have taken part in a project or made a recommendation for improving a process to your manager. Using examples like this on your application form and during interviews shows you are willing to be asked about your experience.
5. **Take your time** over each application form - it can take a couple of hours to complete an application but the effort will be worth it if you secure an interview! The questions asked by different firms may look similar but it is unlikely you will be able to use exactly the same answer each time.
6. **Create the right impression.** It's a good idea to draft, re-edit and get someone else to read over your form before clicking 'Submit'. Ensure your form is free from spelling and grammatical errors – attention to detail is an incredibly important skill for a lawyer to have.
7. **Prepare for interviews** by re-reading your application form and anticipating the questions you will be asked. These are likely to include details about school and university studies, your interests and achievements, work experience, why you have chosen this career and why you want to work at this firm. **Practice makes perfect.** University careers services may offer mock interviews, so book one if you can. Getting feedback on how you come across in an interview scenario to someone you don't know can be really helpful before the event.
8. **Get reading** – you should expect to be asked questions about topical commercial or business issues which you have been following. Start reading up on stories in the papers or online which interest you, and be prepared to discuss your opinions at interview. We want to hear what you think and why.
9. **Before the interview** ensure you know the dress code, directions, the selection process and who you will meet. If you have any questions or concerns, always contact the Graduate Recruitment team. **First impressions count** so dress appropriately, smile, keep eye contact and give a firm handshake. Be confident – if you have been invited to an interview, the firm already thinks you have potential so remember this.
10. **It's a two way process** so whilst you will be expected to do most of the talking in an interview (around 80%), it's also your opportunity to see whether the firm is right for you. Prepare a couple of questions to ask at the end of the interview about issues you genuinely want to learn more about – e.g. training, future ambitions of the firm. If you are unsuccessful at interview, ask for **feedback** so you know what to work on in future interviews.

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