

Screening Interview Candidate Evaluation Form

Law Firm:

Law School/Year of Graduation:

Candidate Name:

Date:

- ☐ An outstanding applicant, I strongly recommend callback
☐ A very good applicant, I recommend callback
☐ A good applicant, but I do not recommend callback
☐ A mediocre or below average applicant, I do not recommend callback

Competency:	Comments/Examples:
Initial Impressions Professional appearance, punctuality, confidence, verbal expression	
Education/Intellectual Capacity Academic record (undergraduate, graduate and law school), breadth and depth of education, relevant business, finance or law-related courses	
Analytical Abilities/Writing Skills Logical thinking, advanced problem solving skills Strong research and writing skills, journal participation	
Work Experience Relevance of experience to law firm, skills transferable to law firm environment, ability to discuss matters of substance Demonstration of judgment, record of responsibility, diligence, initiative, and success in all types of jobs	
Extracurricular Activities Evidence of leadership skills, skills transferable to law firm, diverse interests, high energy level and discipline Time management and organizational abilities	
Communication / Interpersonal Skills Communicates clearly and effectively Ability to interact with clients Ability to establish effective and cooperative relationships (attorneys, clients, support staff) Strong listening skills, tact, diplomacy	
Drive & Focus Hard working, motivated, energetic, demonstrated leadership ability	
Personality, Maturity & Poise Personable, likable, courteous, confident, well adjusted, at ease, polished, knowledge of acceptable social behavior Articulates aspects of background that reflect values Describes experiences that demonstrate maturity	
Interest in Firm Ability to articulate goals, relevance of background and goals to firm's practice Evidence of firm research	
Practice Area Interests	
Others Comments/Concerns	

EMPLOYER RESEARCH RESOURCES

- A. Employer's website (at the very least!)
- B. Firm's NALP Directory profile www.nalpdirectory.com
- C. Vault Guides (Top 100/200, Pro Bono, Diversity; available for free download from the CSM homepage)
- D. AmLaw Surveys www.law.com (Corporate Scorecard, Summer Associate Surveys, Global 100, etc.)
- E. EIW Practice Area and Employer Research Guide 2015 (to help evaluate firms and practice areas; available in the CSM Career Resources Library)
- F. Lexis/ Nexis or Westlaw research (to find recent news articles; particularly for a call back interview)
- G. Chambers and Partners Guides www.chambersandpartners.com (provides rankings of global law firms and lawyers in a variety of practice areas)
- H. Chambers Associate: The Student's Guide to Law Firms (free copies today or at OCS Library)
- I. New York Law Journal articles www.law.com/jsp/nylj/index.jsp (sign up for the Daily Buzz email blasts)
- J. Summer Employer Evaluations of firms (instructions for accessing critiques are available on the CSM homepage)
- K. Alumni, current students or your network of contacts working at the employers. You can mention that you have spoken to these people during the interview.

**NYU SCHOOL OF LAW OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES
INTERVIEW AGENDA BUILDING WORKSHEET**

Step I. *Develop Your Agenda “Selling Points”:*

Use the space below to list your four selling points/strengths that would be of interest to a private sector legal employer. Consider positive feedback you have received from prior employers or recommenders.

Examples include:

- academic achievement - strong research and analytical thinking and writing - being a team player
- leadership ability - strong work ethic/ability to work under pressure - maturity/judgment
- ability to overcome obstacles/challenges - background in a particular practice area
- geographic connection where not obvious from resume

Selling Point 1: _____

Selling Point 2: _____

Selling Point 3: _____

Selling Point 4: _____

Step II. *Give Examples:*

For each Agenda “Selling Point”, use the space below to list concrete examples/illustrations/anecdotes to backup your claim of having such strength. This is an opportunity to editorialize experiences you have listed on your resume. An *example* for “strong research and writing” would be your research assistant position this past summer and completing your senior thesis.

Selling Point 1 –

Example A: _____

Example B: _____

Selling Point 2 –

Example A: _____

Example B: _____

Selling Point 3 –

Example A: _____

Example B: _____

Selling Point 4 –

Example A: _____

Example B: _____

Step III. *Address Weaknesses:*

Use the space below to list possible issues for concern/soft spots/weakness and a proactive strategy for handling each issue.

Examples include:

- poor grade(s) + focus on steps taken to improve grades going forward
- strong public interest background + focus on transferable skills
- gaps on resume + explanation of gap
- presentation issues (nervous habits, voice inflection, verbal tics such as “um” or “you know”) + advance practice to overcome specific issue

Practice! Practice! Practice!

Now that you have created your Interview Agenda in Steps I - III, practice answering common interview questions with the goal of working in one agenda point per answer. Sample questions are available in the Career Development Resources Handbook (available under the CSM Resources Tab).

Additionally, use the space below to develop a list of questions that you can have on hand to ask your interviewer. The best questions help to solidify your Interview Agenda. For *example*, if one of your “Selling Points” is that you don’t shy away from responsibility, you could ask the interviewer whether she was given a good amount of responsibility at an early stage in her career at the firm. Examples of questions you can ask the interviewer are available in the Career Development Resources Handbook.

THE ANATOMY OF A SUCCESSFUL ATTORNEY

List of qualities of successful attorneys, compiled by The National Law Journal from a survey of partners at major national law firms:

- Ability to build networks
- Ability to work well under pressure
- Ability to deal with and manage people
- Ability to assemble deals
- Ability to get along with and impress clients
- Ability to get along with colleagues
- Ability to manage complex tasks
- Ability to solve problems creatively
- Ability to inspire confidence
- Achievement in a related field
- Agreement with the firm's or organization's lifestyle and philosophy
- Analytical abilities
- Business planning
- Customer service focus
- Commitment/Drive
- Determination
- Fact gathering and analysis
- Financial analysis and management
- Good judgment and common sense
- Interviewing skills
- Leadership skills
- Legal drafting and writing
- Legal research
- Mediation
- Negotiation
- Oral Advocacy/Communication skills
- Outgoing personality/professional appearance
- Political judgment
- Productivity/Ability to use the firm's or organization's time and resources efficiently
- Public service/Community involvement
- Rainmaking (ability to bring in new clients and new business from existing clients)
- Teamwork
- Willingness to put in long hours

TYPES OF INTERVIEWERS

- A. *Chatty, cocktail party host.* "So, you worked at the National Hockey League last summer – that must have been awesome. I remember when I did an internship with the American Baseball League – damn those were the days. We used get free tickets all summer and I'd invite a bunch of friends and we'd party all night.....and on and on." Consumes 15 minutes with chit-chat; may be colloquial or even swear. This is not your invitation to be too informal or unprofessional; remember, they already have the job! You will have to work harder to direct the conversation and lead the interviewer to the points you want to make regarding what skills you have and why you are a good match for that employer.
- B. *Lazy, bored, distracted.* "So, tell me about yourself." This type of interviewer is hard to engage in conversation. It means you have to work harder to be engaging and interesting, to catch their attention and direct the conversation to the points you want to make.
- C. *Thorough resume reader.* "I see that your senior honors thesis dealt with the US governments treatment of conscientious objectors during the Vietnam War – how did you become interested in this topic and what did you conclude?" This type of interviewer will ask you about the littlest detail on your resume. You should be prepared to discuss anything listed on your resume; anything on there is fair game—work experience, papers you wrote, activities, committees, language skills, etc.
- D. *CIA agent.* "Your resume indicates graduation from Cornell in December 2010 and employment as a finance analyst with the Hilton Corporation in March 2011. What were you doing from January to March 2011?" This interviewer is a fact checker, seeking an inconsistency or gap. Be prepared and confident.
- E. *Confrontational.* "Why did you work at a massage kiosk at the local mall when you could have been doing something to further your legal career?" This interviewer is assessing your reactions and testing you under pressure to see how you will think on your feet. The interviewer might do this with a pointed grades question, or a question about a particular job choice. Always act professionally and be courteous.
- F. *Partners vs. Associates:* don't make assumptions about an interviewer's importance! All interviewers are filling out the same response form on you, all have input. Many students assume that partners will be more stringent in their evaluations and associates more lax, but often that is not the case and the associates give a tougher evaluation. Similarly, when you go in for a callback interview, the same goes for recruiting personnel, secretaries or any other people at the firm that you interact with.
- G. *NYU Alumni v. Other:* Sometimes alumni want to go down memory land, talking about their former professors, "how things used to be." They can unintentionally cut into your interview time and leave very little time to focus on you and your resume. Remember that you have a limited amount of time to communicate your agenda points. Good questions, based on your resume, can sometimes bring the conversation back to YOU.
- H. **Once you have your agenda in place, it should be easy to handle these different interviewer types!**