

WHEN THERE
EST. ARE NINE 2020



ON CAMPUS INTERVIEW

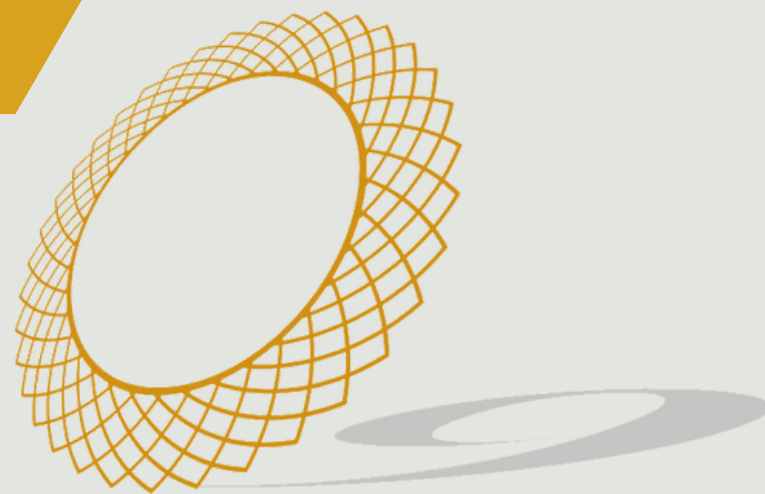
(OCI) Tips

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I. BEFORE OCI

Research areas of law:

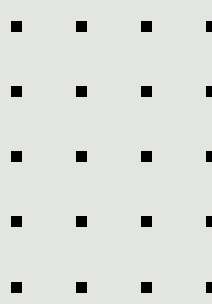
- Look for opportunities to talk to a wide variety of attorneys about their careers and practices.
- Set up “informational interviews” with any attorney in your network who practices a type of law you may be interested in. Don’t limit yourself.
- Many attorneys are happy to discuss their careers with students and respond well to a polite email asking if they have time to grab coffee and chat.
- If you don’t get a response from someone or they are too busy to meet, don’t take it personally! Many attorneys are very busy, so cast a wide net.
 - If you reach out and get no response, it’s probably ok to follow up once; after that, if they don’t respond, let it drop.
 - When meeting with an attorney, do a little research into their biography and area of practice. Have a few questions ready to go, but attorneys are usually very willing to talk about themselves. Also be prepared to give a brief backstory on yourself and your interests.
 - "Consider asking about the attorney’s day-to-day practice" – what kind of clients do they represent and in what kind of proceedings? What statutes or aspects of the common law do they litigate under? What client concerns or fact patterns do they commonly encounter? Do they spend a lot of their time on research and writing or do they do more negotiating? What makes their practice different from others?
 - Consider asking about how the attorney works with associates. What kind of tasks do they delegate to associates? How does that vary from associate to associate? Why is that?



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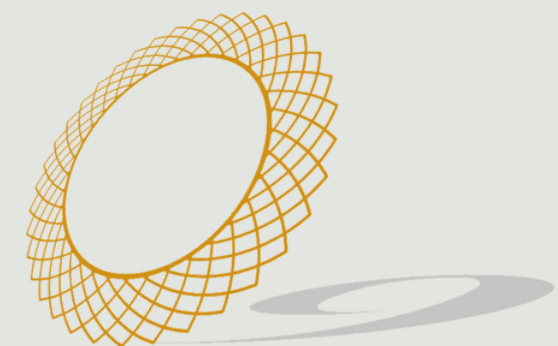
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Research firms:

- This is one of the most important things you can do. You need to know what you are getting into. And attorneys want to know you if you bothered to research their firm and they want to know if you will “fit” into the firm and meet the firm’s needs.
 - One overall point – you don’t want to ask questions about topics you could research on your own (think, “where does the firm have offices?”). You want to ask questions that show more sophisticated thinking (think, “Who is a typical client in the firm’s employment law cases” or “Does the firm’s securities law practice focused entirely on defensive cases or are you ever on plaintiff’s side?”)
- There are many resources available to assist law students with their job search. Chambers Associates and other websites like it provide background on firm culture, prominent practice areas and clients, notable representations, associate life, development opportunities, and compensation.
- Cross reference the list of firms recruiting at your school’s OCI with these databases. Make a note of firms that stand out for positive reasons or for negative reasons.
- Later, you may wish to make an Excel spreadsheet or other tool to help you compare and contrast firms.

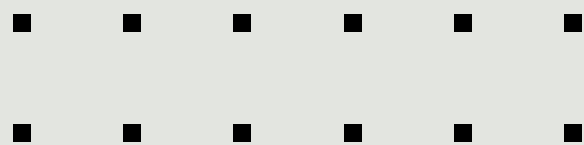
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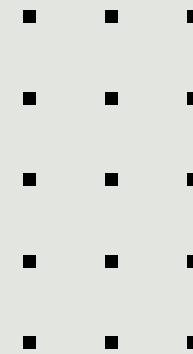
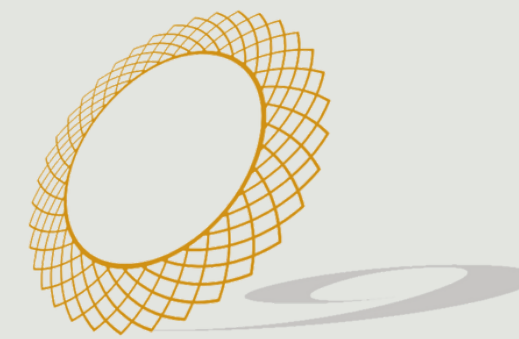
Reach out to connections and network:

- Reach out to anyone you know, including friends of friends and distant family members, who works at your desired firm.
- If appropriate given your relationship with that person, ask if they can put in a good word with you with whoever is doing recruitment/screening.
- Ask about their OCI experience: What was successful? Unsuccessful? What do they wish they had done differently or known?
- Ask about their experience at the firm: What surprised them, in a good way or bad way? What do they wish they had asked their interviewers? What has made them a successful attorney?
- Try to do this by phone or zoom, not email. If a contact has something negative to say about another firm (or their own) they will likely not want to put that in writing, but might be candid in a conversation.



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BEFORE OCI cont'd



Materials to prepare in advance of the interview:

- **Writing Sample.** You might be asked to submit a writing sample. Aim for something that will have an impact and that you feel comfortable discussing at the interview. Reread it before the interviews – you should be totally fluent discussing it if someone has questions about it.
- **Resume.** Consider including a few interests that can help break the ice and foster a connection with the interviewer. Consider having tailored versions of your resume for different recipients that emphasize different experiences/interests, depending on what you're interviewing for (this is not necessary, but can be helpful for those with varied experiences). Again, be fluent about everything on your resume – your undergraduate classes, your law school papers, etc.
- **LinkedIn.** Consider creating a LinkedIn and joining relevant academic networks. You can use the search features to find and connect with your college or law school's alumni at the firm.
- **Interview Responses:**
 - Consider drafting an annotated version of your resume that includes one story you could tell about every item listed. If you can't say anything interesting about it, take the item off your resume.
 - Think about how to answer questions like "Tell me about yourself" and "What is the most challenging experience you have had in law school or in another job?" "What is a challenging legal issue you faced in a class or clinic and how did you think it through?" Questions like this are easy for interviewers, but also give them an opportunity to assess you in a range of ways, e.g., can you comfortably handle open-ended questions; how you respond to challenging situations; how comprehensively can you describe legal issues, etc. More specific suggestions for common questions are below.



MOCK INTERVIEWS

Mock Interviews:

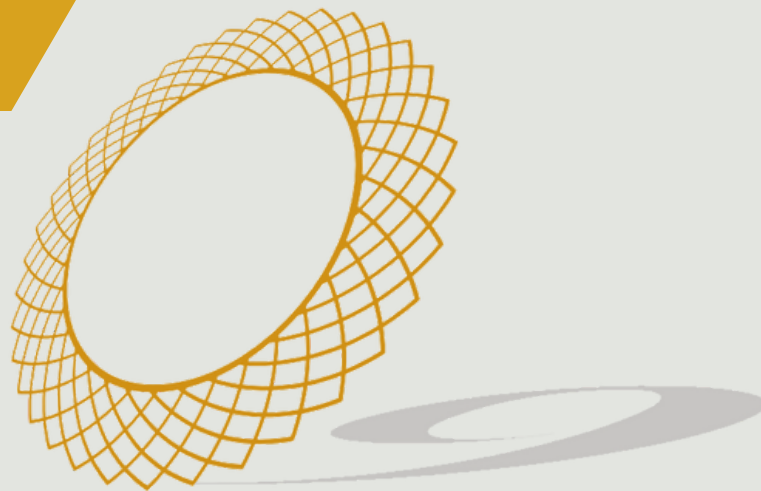
- Take advantage of any practice interviews that your school's office of career services may offer.
- Practice answering questions in front of a mirror.
- Prepare anecdotes or specific responses to expected questions: your favorite classes, your hardest project, your future interests, jobs before law school, undergraduate classes, etc.
- Strongly consider videoing yourself.

Getting Interviews:

- Use all your bids; cast a wide net.
- Find a system that works for you to keep track of different hiring schedules (e.g., calendar holds, excels, charts).



II. DURING THE OCI PROCESS



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The Interview:

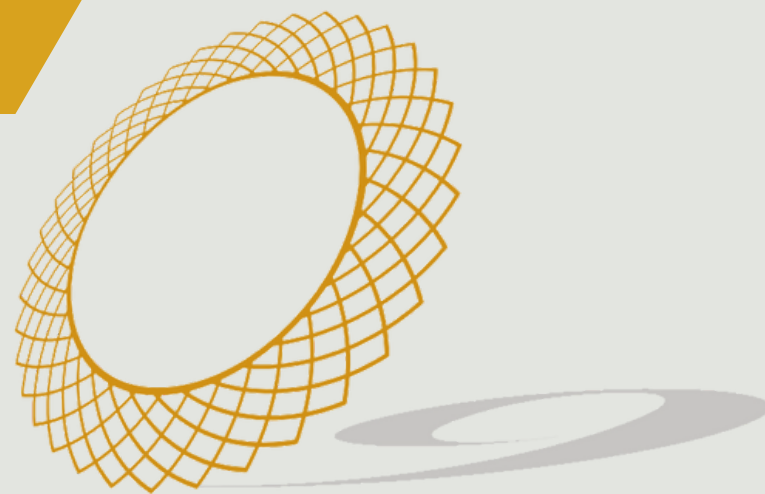
- For each firm, be ready to articulate why you are interested in that specific firm. Part of getting an offer is showing that you know what the firm is about and that you would be a good fit. You could identify a particular characteristic of each firm that you like and can use to explain why you are interested in that specific firm.
- Ensure that you can keep firm names and key characteristics straight. Consider bringing a notebook to the interview.
- Do some brief research on your interviewers: What kind of law do they practice? What other experience do they have? You won't be able to reference this research during the interview, but write it down and keep it in one place for easy reference between interviews.
- Consider prepping a brief "connection point" for each interviewer, and glance at it before you go in (when you're meeting a dozen people back-to-back, they begin to blur together). For example, you both studied philosophy, played soccer as undergrads, or you have an interest in healthcare and their firm bio shows they were recently involved in a big healthcare case.

II. DURING THE OCI PROCESS cont'd



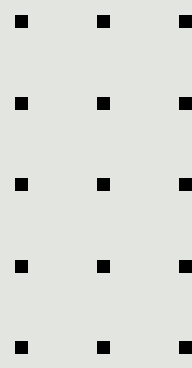
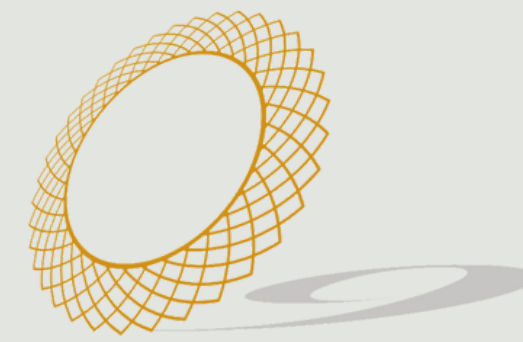
The Interview cont'd:

- Be polite but keep the conversation flowing. Don't be afraid to be friendly or ask questions. Allow your personality and interests to show. Use the research you have done on the firm and have a handful of questions about the firm: questions about practice areas, opportunities for associate development (e.g., training, pro bono); office culture.
- Don't express interest in an area of law the firm does not practice.
- You don't need to know what kind of law you want to practice. If you have a general idea or a few ideas about what you'd like to try, that's great. But, you can always explain that you're not sure yet and are open to trying a variety of things. always explain that you're not sure yet and are open to trying a variety of things.
- If you plan to express an interest in a specific area of law, keep track of news and trends that are relevant to the field.



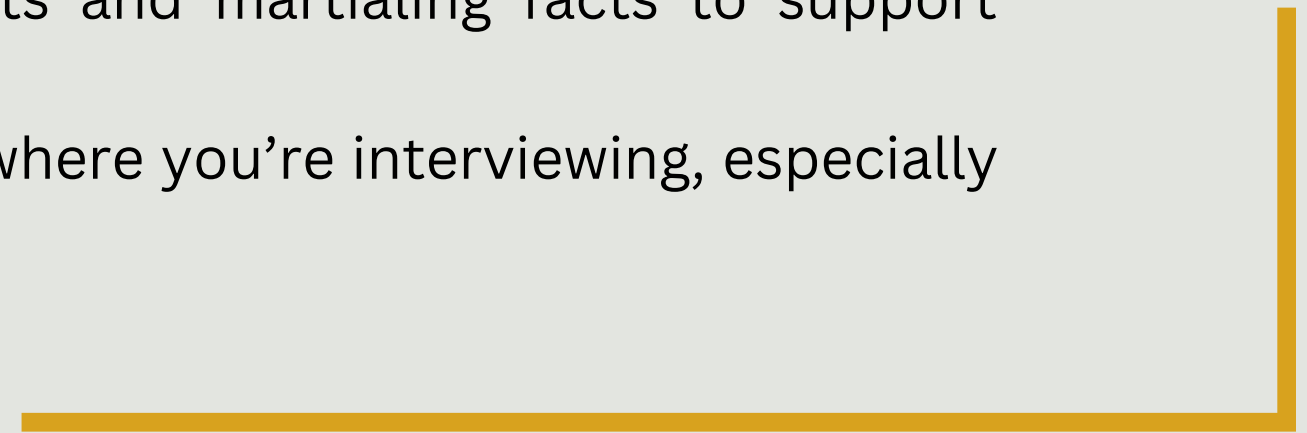
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II. DURING THE OCI PROCESS cont'd.



Tips for common questions:

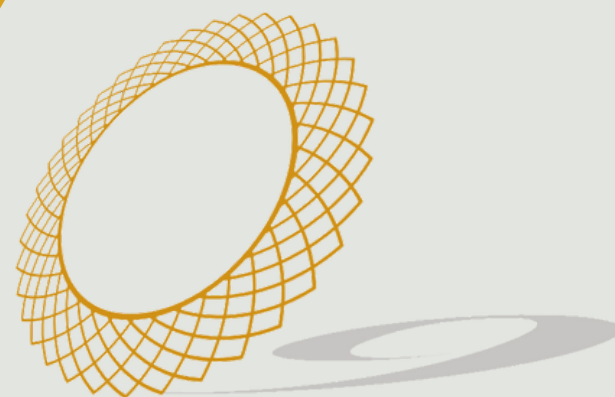
- Be prepared to answer the broad questions: “tell me about yourself” or “walk me through your resume.” Briefly tell your interviewer where you are from and have gone to school, what you studied or specialized in as an undergraduate, why you decided to go to law school, and how your law school experience has been so far. This is your “elevator pitch” and should provide jumping off points for the interviewer to begin asking you follow-up questions. Try not to be overly rehearsed or simply reiterate things already on your resume; a dynamic response that is somewhat tailored to the interviewer/firm can provide for a more interesting and memorable conversation.
- “Describe a challenging experience in [law school, other job, or other setting].” This is an opportunity for you to show how you came up with a creative solution, collaborated, were able to handle constructive criticism.
- Be prepared to talk about your prior work experience and explain how it helped you develop skills transferrable to the legal setting. This can include people and communication skills, organization skills, and time management skills.
- Be prepared to talk about your favorite class and/or experience of law school so far.
- Be prepared to explain what it is you like about law and legal practice: do you like talking about complex ideas? Writing? Crafting legal arguments and marshaling facts to support them?
- Be prepared to say why you want to live in the location where you’re interviewing, especially if your resume indicates you’ve mostly lived elsewhere.



II. DURING THE OCI PROCESS cont'd.

Tips for common questions cont'd:

- Avoid sounding scripted. If you can, enjoy the conversation and see it as an opportunity to learn more about someone's practice of law.
- At this stage, you are not expected to display a fulsome understanding of how to practice law. Focus instead on displaying your analytical skills, practice group interest(s), interest in the firm, and eagerness to learn.



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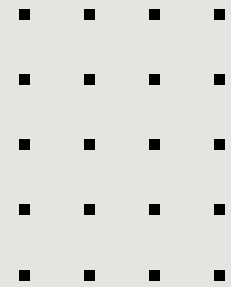
II. DURING THE OCI PROCESS cont'd.

Interview follow-up:

- Consider creating an excel to keep track of interviewers, their practice area, and their contact information. Down the line, this may help prepare for any follow-up interviews at the same firm.
- Acknowledge interview invitations and do your best to send thank you notes within one business day. These notes should be personalized, but can be short and sweet. No need to overdo it. You can address attorneys by their first name. Emails are fine – no need for handwritten notes.

Additional considerations:

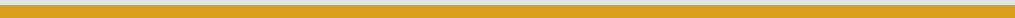
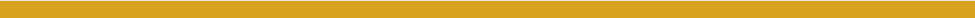
- A suit (pants or skirt) or a dress and blazer is highly recommended and almost universally expected. You should look as professional as possible. Avoid clothing or anything else that could distract from your academic and professional accomplishments. Solid, dark colors (black, navy, etc.) and simple jewelry will be the least distracting for the interviewer. Many of us have vivid wardrobe-gone-wrong memories – whether in an interview or in court before a particularly brutal judge. It might help to recall that as a lawyer, while you have to be yourself, you are quite literally representing someone else -- so your professionalism, first and foremost, should be on display. So when you select what to wear, be the neatest, most professional version of yourself!
- If the interview process involves meals, order food that is familiar to you and easy to eat, and it is probably best to forego alcohol.



III. AFTER OCI cont'd

What's Next:

- The waiting game. Expect rejection but do not take it personally. Firms receive large numbers of applicants and cannot extend callbacks and offers to even the most qualified of candidates.
- Reflect on what went well and why, what went badly and why, and then trust yourself.
- Don't be limited by whatever avenues your school presents (OCI or otherwise). Do your own research. Many all law firms and employers allow you to submit an application directly on their website.



IV. THINGS I WISH I HAD KNOWN BEFORE OCI

- Informational interviews are a great tool. Don't worry about being a burden on the lawyer – people don't agree to do them unless they want to. People like mentoring and helping younger people, and even if they don't have a job to offer at that moment, they might be able to connect you to someone who does.
- You may and most people will wear their interview attire (i.e., suit) to post-interview cocktails and dinners. When in doubt, be more formal, not less formal, than the lawyers interviewing you.
- Employers want to know that YOU are interested in THEM, as well as the other way around.
- Find a great book or something to occupy your mind during callbacks.
- You won't personally connect with everyone you speak to. That's not a reflection on you and need not influence your chance of success at a firm.
- Life is long and if you don't have the perfect resume or get the perfect job, you can build your experience and resume to broaden your chances. And if you can afford it, you can make choices that make you a better lawyer early in your career. Opportunities for higher earning will likely come the better and more interesting your resume.
- Talk to older law students – they have been through this recently, know the most recent word-of-mouth details, and will be the most candid.

V. RESOURCES FOR OCI



Resources for OCI:

- 8 Tips For On-Campus Interviewing, Above the Law (Aug. 6, 2014), <https://abovethelaw.com/2014/08/8-tips-for-on-campus-interviewing/>
- OCI Advice from the interviewers, Chambers Associate, <https://www.chambers-associate.com/where-to-start/commercial-awareness/oci-advice-from-the-interviewers>
- Preparing for Interviews, Columbia Law School, https://www.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/2020-02/preparing_for_interviews.pdf
- Make the Most of Law School Recruiting Events, U.S. News (Sept. 5, 2016), <https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/law-admissions-lowdown/articles/2016-09-05/make-the-most-of-law-school-recruiting-events>
- What is the Timetable for Legal Recruitment, NALP (2023), https://www.nalp.org/pre-law_timetable
- On-Campus Interviews, Chambers Associate, <https://www.chambers-associate.com/where-to-start/getting-hired/on-campus-interviews>
- The Law Student's Interview Cheat Sheet, Dan Binstock, BCG, <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/The-Law-Students-Interview-Cheat-Sheet.pdf>