

Career Services

UALR William H. Bowen School of Law

The Interview

Your resume has made it through the screening process. The firm, company, or agency is looking for someone with your credentials. The objective part of the process is finished. Now the prospective employer wants to meet you in person. From this point forward, all decisions about you are going to be purely subjective. The first impression you make on the interviewer is of the utmost importance. The interviewer will notice immediately if you are dressed professionally, speak articulately, seem confident, knowledgeable, alert and motivated. It is perfectly normal to be nervous before such an experience, but if you come prepared, you will soon feel at ease and be capable of handling the interview like a two-way conversation.

1. Before the Interview

- Research the Firm

Research the firm as completely as you can. That includes researching the person who will interview you. Look up the firm in Martindale-Hubbell. This will tell you the kind of law its lawyers practice and their backgrounds. Is your interviewer a UALR Bowen graduate? Are any of the other attorneys Bowen graduates? Where did they earn their undergraduate degrees? Look for commonalities with your own background or experiences.

Check to see if they have a website. Get information about the firm from current or past employees (often classmates) you may know. Conduct a LEXIS search of the firm to determine what their recent cases have been so you are prepared to discuss them during the interview. Your goal is to show that you know a great deal about the firm and you are applying there because of what you know.

- Consider and Prepare to Answer Potential Questions

Familiarize yourself with potential questions that may be asked of you, and plan your answers. Prepare questions that you want to ask about the firm and possibly the interviewer. Sample sets of questions of both kinds are included at the end of this section.

The most important question you should be prepared to answer is “Why should we hire you?” Be positive, not defensive. Stress your strong points. Do not

point out your weaknesses. Answer with a description of the skills you can bring to the firm that will meet its needs.

- Participate in the mock interviewing program in January or practice interviewing with friends, attorneys you know, or the assistant dean. Try to make these practice interviews as realistic as possible.

2. Interview Day

- Be prompt. Smile when you meet the interviewer and shake hands firmly. Remember, the first few minutes are the most important ones. Keep in mind that the interview situation is stressful for the interviewer as well as the candidate.
- Be an active participant. Help to keep a conversation going rather than a question and answer period. Answer questions with descriptive statements rather than monosyllables.
- Expect to be asked some stress questions such as “Why did you choose Bowen School of Law?” or “What makes you think you will make a good attorney?” It is important to remain calm and poised while answering these questions in a positive, non-defensive manner. The interviewer may want to see how well you deal with pressure and think on your feet.
- Bring a writing sample, reference sheet, and extra resumes. Do not bring a written list of questions; have them memorized.

Eye contact is important. Look at your interviewer. Show a genuine interest in the firm. In your initial interview, DO NOT ask questions about salary, vacations, or how quickly associates become partners.

3. After the Interview

- Immediately after leaving the interview, write down as much information as you can remember, including the names of individuals with whom you spoke. Use this information to compose a thank-you letter to the interviewer or to the person who arranged the interviews if there were several interviewers. Express gratitude for the time that the attorney spent with you, and indicate that you found the experience both enlightening and enjoyable.
- If you receive an offer from the firm or company, you may take time to think about it. It is unusual that a candidate accepts on the spot. Make sure that you ask all the questions that may occur to you before you accept an offer. If you never had an opportunity to discuss salary, this is the appropriate time.