

# Career Planning Center



## Preparing for an interview

### Know Yourself and Review Your Application Materials:

- Be able to articulate why you are interested in the specific employer and particular position you are interviewing for in advance of the actual interview. Think about how your current skill set will be beneficial to the employer and how your talents make you a good “fit” for the position and employer.
- Thoroughly review all your application materials including your resume, writing sample and transcript. Most of the questions you will be asked will be based upon these documents.
- Make additional copies of your application materials (resume, transcript, writing samples and printed list of references) to provide to the interviewer(s) at the interview. Take these documents with you to the interview in a portfolio for a professional appearance.

### Research the Employer & Interviewer:

- Prior to an interview, thoroughly research the employer and interviewer(s). Researching the employer and interviewer(s) can be done by investigating the employer’s website, promotional materials and using resources such as martindale.com, Lexis, Westlaw and Leadership Library.
- Knowing key details about the employer and interviewer(s) prior to the interview can help facilitate conversation during the interview.

### Practice Responding to often asked Interview Questions:

#### Law School/Academic /Credential Related Questions:

1. Why did you decide to go to law school? Valparaiso University School of Law?
2. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your law school experience?
3. Why did you select the particular extra/co-curricular activities you participate in? Why did you decide not to participate in any extra/co-curricular activities?
4. What law school courses have you liked the most/least? Why?
5. Explain how your academic success as a law student would contribute to your success in this position.
6. Can you explain why your class rank and gpa do not appear on your resume?
7. Give me an example of an effective time management tool that you have implemented effectively as a law student.
8. Looking back over your law school experience thus far, what, if anything would you change if you could?
9. If you knew then what you know now, would you still decide to enroll in law school? Why or why not?
10. Think of the course that you have been most successful in to date and explain to me the keys to your success in that particular class.

#### Work Experience/Skillset/Qualification Related Questions:

1. What sets you apart from the other individuals interviewing for this position? Why should we hire you?
2. What did you like most/least about your last position?
3. Describe the type of work environment that is most conducive to your work style.
4. Give me examples of things you have done in past positions that would contribute to your success in this position.
5. What types of things from your past employment history indicate that you would be able to thrive in the type of environment we have here?

6. Why do you think you would be successful in this position?
7. If you were hiring for this position, what qualifications would you be looking for?
8. What do you consider to be your outstanding job-related qualifications?
9. Describe your best/worst supervisor or boss.
10. As you look at your qualifications for this position, what do you see as some of your development needs? If hired, how would you improve in these areas of development?

#### Behavioral/Theoretical Based Questions:

1. Tell me about a time when you were faced with a difficult or contrary person in the workplace. How did you handle that?
2. What mechanisms do you use to handle conflict?
3. How would you work towards consensus building while working in a group of individuals with varying/opposing ideas on completing a task?
4. How would you handle presenting a position or working on a project that you did not totally believe in?
5. Describe a situation in which you had to step up and take a leadership role.
6. Describe how you would handle a situation in which you realized you had made a mistake.
7. Share with me how you approach working through something that you particularly difficult or challenging.
8. Tell me about a time when you were criticized by either a peer or a supervisor. How did you handle that?
9. Tell me about a time when you had to handle multiple responsibilities at once. Was this difficult or easy for you? How did you organize to complete the tasks?
10. Recall a time from your work experience when your manager or supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. How did you handle that situation?

#### Career Goals and Objectives:

1. Where do you see yourself in the next five to ten years?
2. Describe your ideal summer job.
3. What do you hope to accomplish professionally with your legal degree?
4. What characteristics do you think a person needs to be a successful attorney?

#### Employer/Position Specific Questions:

1. Tell me why you are interested in our firm/agency/organization.
2. What makes you particularly suited to perform the duties required for this position?
3. What do you think you would enjoy most about working here?
4. Why are you interested in working in government? A large law firm? A small law firm? A not-for-profit organization?
5. Tell me about your specific geographic ties to the area?
6. What are your salary requirements?

#### Personal Attributes/Characteristics:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What motivates you?
3. Share two or three things that are important to you in your job.
4. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
5. If I were to ask one of your past supervisors to describe you in terms of your job performance, what would they say?
6. How do you define success?
7. What criteria do you use when making a decision about where you would like to work?
8. What's the most useful criticism you have ever received?
9. How do you manage stress?
10. What key qualities do you feel a leader should possess? What key qualities should a team player possess?

**During the Interview:*****Ask Questions of the Interviewer and request a business card:***

- At the end of the interview, the interviewer(s) will likely ask you if you have any questions for them. Prior to the interview, prepare a list of 8-10 questions that you have for the interviewer(s).
- Refer to this list and ask any follow up questions you may have from the interview. Chances are that some of your prepared questions were already answered during the interview.
- If the interviewer has not informed you of the next step in the hiring process or the timing of when you will hear back, you should inquire about this information before you leave the interview.
- Remember to ask for the interviewer's business card to prepare a thank you note and for future reference.

**After the Interview:**

- Thank you notes should be sent out preferably within 24 hours of the interview.
- Make a follow up call to the employer if you have not heard back from the employer within the time frame outlined by the employer or within two weeks of your interview. The purpose of this contact is to inquire about the status of the decision.