Purpose of the Interview

- **Interview Flow**
  - Make the interview a conversation

- **Interviewer’s Role**
  - Find a good match for the employer
  - Act as a gatekeeper
  - Provide a substantive assessment
  - Serve as your ambassador

- **Candidate’s Role & Goals**
  - Sell yourself
  - Support your resume with examples
  - Reveal your personality/connect with interviewer
  - Impart knowledge about the employer and practice areas through thorough research

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Today’s Agenda

- Purpose of the Interview
- Self Assessment & Agenda Building
- Challenges of the Interview Process
- Anticipating Questions & Concerns
- Uncomfortable & Illegal Questions
- Questions You Can Ask the Interviewer
- Image Management
- After the Interview
- Final EIW Tips
Know:
- Firm's History
- Office Locations
- Size of firm/specific office
- Practice Areas/Types of Clients
- Recent Press
- Summer Associate Program
- Interviewer's Bio

Review "Employer Research Resources" Handout

Gain Control of the Interview
- Conduct a Self Assessment
- Determine Clear Agenda:
  - 3 to 4 personal selling points
  - Back each point up with concrete examples
  - Identify and focus on transferable skills
  - Counteract soft spots

Agenda Examples
- Communication Skills
- Research/Writing Skills
- Quality Work/Attention to Detail
- Responsibility/Initiative
- Work Under Pressure
- Leadership
- Business Experience
- Longstanding Interest in Law
Challenges of the Interview Process

- Lack of specificity/short answers
- Low energy/intensity
- Undervaluing experiences/achievements
- Arrogance/cocky behavior
- Negative language/bad attitude
- No obvious interest in this employer (or in private sector generally)

Common Types of Questions:

- Broad, Opening
- Strengths & Weaknesses
- Experience-based
- Probing
- Situation-based
- Comparative
- Conversational, “Chit-chat”

Anticipating Interviewer Questions

- Review “Employer Research Resources” Handout
- Rehearse Out Loud

Refer to “Types of Interviewers” Handout
Common Interviewer Concerns

✓ Grades or attitude toward grades
✓ Lack of professional experience
✓ Lack of obvious geographic ties
✓ Extensive public interest background
✓ Career transitions
✓ Joint degree
✓ Resume gaps due to illness or difficult life circumstances

→ Affirmatively address employer concerns, so you don’t leave the interview with unanswered questions

→ Don’t make excuses, accept responsibility

→ Don’t dwell on the topic, end on a positive note

Uncomfortable & Illegal Questions

Uncomfortable Questions
✓ Deflect the question and redirect to your qualifications
✓ Examples:
  ➢ With which other firms are you interviewing?
  ➢ How quickly could you make a decision if you were to receive an offer?
  ➢ Family background

Illegal Questions
Race, National Origin, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Color, Marital Status, Disability, Age, and/or Religion

Prepare Questions to Ask the Interviewer
✓ Weave your questions throughout, but leave some for the end
✓ Use your questions to exude genuine interest in the firm
✓ Ask research based questions that you really want answered
✓ Avoid asking premature questions (split-summers, salary, benefits, perks)
✓ Avoid “sensitive” questions (recent layoffs, attorney departures, firm’s financial situation)
✓ Ask “You” focused questions
Image Management

- Check your appearance and presentation style
  - Choose conservative styles for hair, clothing, and jewelry
- Be aware of eye contact, body language, posture, and gestures
- Refer to “Table Manners Tips” handout

After the Interview

- Do not take or refer to notes during the interview
  - After the interview, jot down your notes quickly
  - Always record the name of the interviewer and any additional paperwork requested
- Thank you notes:
  - Not necessary for screening interviews (EIW)
  - Callback thank you notes may be sent via email
  - Do not send the same note to multiple interviewers in the same firm
  - Proofread
- Follow Up!

Final EIW Tips

- Bring 2 copies for each interview: resume (on bond paper) and transcript (with Spring Classes)
- Bring 1 writing sample for each interview

Add/Drop Process

- Add Process:
  - Online Open Sign-Up
  - Same Day Free Sign-Up
  - Hospitality Suites
- No Drops Permitted – NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

Callbacks

- Review Callback FAQs Available During EIW
- Attend “All About Callbacks” Panel During EIW
  - August 11, 12:30, Student Lounge
  - Recruiting Professionals and Hiring Partners speak about the Callback process
  - Lunch will be served
- NAUP Timing Guidelines – “28 Day Rule”
  - But be ready to make decisions quickly
OCS Counselors will be available throughout EIW to answer questions or concerns.

KEEP CALM AND INTERVIEW ON
## 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency:</th>
<th>Comments/Examples:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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 2016 (to help evaluate firms and practice areas; available in the CSM Career Resources Library)

F. Lexis/ Nexis, Bloomberg Law or Westlaw research (to find recent news articles; particularly for a call back interview)

G. Rival Edge www.rivaledge.com (research law firms and attorneys)

H. Chambers and Partners Guides www.chambersandpartners.com (provides rankings of global law firms and lawyers in a variety of practice areas)

I. Chambers Associate: The Student’s Guide to Law Firms (free copies today or at OCS Library)


K. Summer Employer Evaluations of firms (instructions for accessing critiques are available on the CSM homepage)

L. 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.
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

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*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.

_______________________________________________________________________________________
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_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
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 government’s 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!**
You receive a telephone call from your supervisor. He would like to schedule a lunch meeting with you. But this time it will not be in his office or on the company’s premises. This time, he has asked you to go to lunch.

Why? You ask yourself. Is it because he has no one else to eat with? Think again. The reason for this invitation is to meet you in a more relaxed, social setting — to get to know the “real” you.

This meeting WILL be different. Different questions will be asked. Perhaps, questions about you. As important as your answers — will be your table manners.

This tip sheet has been developed to raise your level of awareness about “the rules mother never taught you.” It will reinforce other table manners rules that she did teach you, but that may not have seemed important at the time. It will give you the ability to concentrate on what is being said, rather than having to worry about which fork to use or when to begin eating.

You will learn:
- The six commandments for using napkins
- “Super” soup eating tips
- Some of the most commonly asked questions about eating bread and rolls.
- The difference between the “American” and “European” styles of dining.
- The 10 most commonly made table manners faux pas.

Bon appetit!
THE SIX COMMANDMENTS FOR USING NAPKINS

I. Thou shalt place thy napkin on thy lap as soon as everyone is seated. (See Faux Pas #1)

II. Thou shalt place thy napkin folded in half with its crease toward you.

III. Thou shalt know that it is appropriate to use thy napkin either before taking a drink, after taking a drink — or both — whichever is necessary for thee.

IV. *Thou shalt place thy napkin on thy chair or to the left side of thy plate when excusing thyself from the table for a “fleeting moment.”

V. Thou shalt leave thy napkin on thy lap until everyone at thy table has finished dining.

VI. Thou shalt place thy napkin to the right of thy plate when leaving the table at the end of the meal. *Thou shalt excuse thyself from the table only when it is necessary, since thine exit can break the momentum of the meal. If thou need to leave thy table, thou shalt do so between courses.

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SUPER SOUP EATING TIPS

- When you order soup, a soup spoon will be provided. If it is a pre-arranged meal, your soup spoon will be found to the right of your teaspoon.
- It is appropriate to hold the soup spoon with your thumb across the top of the handle, rather than holding the handle in the palm of your hand.
- When eating soup, take the soup spoon AWAY from you rather than toward you. Why? It will keep the soup from dripping on you. Instead, it will drip back into the bowl.
- When sipping broth, do so from the side of the spoon, rather than using the front of the spoon. When eating vegetables or meats in soup, you may insert the spoon “forward march.”
- It is appropriate for oyster crackers to be placed in soup. Other crackers — Saltines or Ritz — should be eaten with the soup rather than by crumbling them into the soup.
- A soup cup/bowl may be tipped if it contains a handle. If you choose to tip it, be sure you do so away from you rather than toward you. If a soup cup/bowl does not contain a handle, stop eating when you begin to hear yourself clinking and clanking. Remember, it is not your LAST SUPPER.
- When “resting,” place the soup spoon in the cup/bowl rather than on the service plate.
- When you have finished, place the soup spoon on the right of the service plate* (plate underneath the soup cup/bowl). *If the soup has not been served with a service plate, the spoon should remain in the cup/bowl with the spoon handle to the right of the plate.
- Serving etiquette dictates that waiters “serve” from the left and “remove” from the right. That is the reason for your soup spoon handle to be placed on the right hand side of the service plate/soup bowl.
QUESTIONS ABOUT EATING BREAD AND ROLLS

1. Q. "I have experienced the embarrassment of using someone else’s bread and butter plate. Rather than risking that embarrassment again, I now wait to see which plate is available before ‘staking’ out my territory."
   A. You will never have to experience that "moment of hesitation" again if you remember the phrase, "Solids on your left, liquids on your right." Your solids - bread plate, pre-set salad plate - will always be found on the left-hand side of your place setting. Your beverage(s) will be found on the right hand side of your place setting.

2. Q. "How should a dinner roll and other breads be eaten?"
   A. Rolls and other dinner breads are among few foods that may be eaten with your fingers - even when you are "dining". It is appropriate to break off a bite-size piece, butter it and then enjoy that piece. It is inappropriate to break the roll in half, butter it and then begin munching.

3. Q. "After buttering a bite-size piece of a roll, where should I place my knife?"
   A. If a butter knife was part of the table setting, when you have finished eating the roll it should be placed across the center of the bread and butter plate - with the knife handle to the right hand side of the plate and the serrated (blade) edge facing you. If a butter knife is not part of the place setting and you have used your main course knife to butter your roll, once you have finished eating your roll, you should transfer your "main course" knife to across the top of your main course plate.

“AMERICAN” AND “EUROPEAN” STYLES OF DINING

The “American” Style of Dining

STEP I.- When cutting a piece of food, place your fork in your left hand, with the handle hidden in the palm of your hand and the fork tines down. Place the knife in your right hand, also with the handle hidden and the serrated edge facing the plate.

STEP II.- After cutting ONE piece of food, the next step is to lay the knife across the top of the plate, with the knife’s serrated edge facing you. Transfer the fork from your left hand to your right hand - this time with the fork handle showing between your index finger and thumb.

STEP III.- After you have chewed and swallowed the piece of food, repeat step one.

STEP IV.- If you decide you would like to lay your utensils down to get a sip of a beverage or to listen more intently to the person with whom you are dining, "rest position" is knife across the top of the plate with blade toward you and fork on the plate with its handle on the right side of the plate, tines up. (See Diagram 1)

STEP V.- When you have finished the meal, your fork should be placed across the center of the plate, with the handle to the right and the fork tines placed down. The knife should be brought down from the top of the plate next to the fork, with the blade still facing you. (See Diagram 2)

See page four for diagrams
The “European” Style of Dining

**STEP I.** Follow step one of the American style of dining.

**STEP II.** Rather than transferring the fork to your other hand, leave the knife and fork in the same positions as described in Step 1. As you keep your knife in your right hand, lift your fork (containing the bite-size piece of food) to your mouth, times down.

**STEP III.** When you want to cut the next piece, repeat step one.

**STEP IV.** When you choose to lay down your utensils, place your knife on the plate first, with its handle on the lower right of the plate. Lay your fork, times down, on the lower left of the plate across the knife. (See Diagram 3).

**STEP V.** When you have finished, follow STEP V of the American Style of dining. (See Diagram 4).

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**AMERICAN STYLE**

![Diagram 1 - Rest Position](image1)

![Diagram 2 - Finished Position](image2)

**EUROPEAN STYLE**

![Diagram 3](image3)

![Diagram 4](image4)

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**THE 10 MOST COMMONLY MADE TABLE MANNERS FAUX PAS**

1. Putting your napkin on your lap when you sit down, rather than waiting until everyone at the table has been seated.
2. Blowing on soup or stirring it, rather than allowing it to cool naturally.
3. Acting as though ice cubes are the edible part of a beverage by chewing them.
4. Beginning to eat when your food has been served to you, rather than waiting to begin until everyone at the table has been served.
5. Eating a dinner roll by breaking it in half (rather than tearing a bite-size piece), buttering it, and munching on the bread.
6. Talking with food in your mouth.
7. Chewing with your mouth open.
8. Eating a larger than bite-size piece of food.
9. Blowing your nose at the table.
10. Pushing your plate away from you and stacking dishes when you have completed your meal, rather than leaving them in the same place as they were served to you.
NALP TIMING GUIDELINES

To promote fair and ethical practices for the interviewing and decision-making process, NALP, the professional organization for law schools and legal recruiting professionals, adopted the following standards for the timing of offers and decisions. Please read these carefully.

A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. All offers to law student candidates ("candidates") should remain open for at least two weeks after the date of the offer letter unless the offers are made pursuant to Sections B and C below, in which case the later response date should apply.

2. Candidates are expected to accept or release offers or request an extension by the applicable deadline. Offers that are not accepted by the offer deadline expire.

3. A candidate should not hold open more than five offers of employment at any one time. For each offer received that places a candidate over the offer limit, the candidate should, within one week of receipt of the excess offer, release an offer.

4. Employers offering part-time or temporary positions for the school term are exempted from the requirements of Paragraphs B and C below.

5. Practices inconsistent with these guidelines should be reported to the candidate’s career services office.

B. FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS (See text at: www.nalp.org/principles)

C. SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS FOR SECOND AND THIRD YEAR STUDENTS

1. Employers offering positions for the following summer to candidates not previously employed by them should leave those offers open for at least 28 days following the date of the offer letter or until December 30, whichever comes first. Candidates should reaffirm these offers within 14 days from the date of the offer letter, if an employer requests such affirmation in its offer letter. Employers that have requested this reaffirmation may retract any offer that is not reaffirmed within the 14-day period. Offers made after December 15 for the following summer should remain open for at least two weeks after the date of the offer letter.

2. Candidates may request that an employer extend the deadline to accept the employer’s offer until as late as April 1 if the candidate is actively pursuing positions with public interest or government organizations. Candidates may hold open only one offer in such circumstances. Employers are encouraged to grant such requests.

3. Employers offering positions for the following summer to candidates previously employed by them should leave those offers open until at least October 1, provided that such offers are made prior to or on September 2. Candidates should reaffirm these offers within thirty days from the date of the offer letter, if an employer requests such reaffirmation in its offer letter. Employers that have requested this reaffirmation may retract any offer that is not reaffirmed within the 30-day period. After September 2, employers offering positions for the following summer to candidates previously employed by them should leave those offers open for at least 28 days following the date of the offer letter.

4. If an employer makes an offer to a law student candidate not previously employed by that employer before the beginning of the law school's on-campus interview program, that offer should not expire until at least 28 days following the first day of the law school's on-campus interview program. Employers should contact the appropriate law school(s) to determine these dates. See Part IV F above.

5. Employers offering candidates positions for the following summer and having a total of 40 attorneys or fewer in all offices are exempted from Paragraphs 1-4 of this Section. Instead, offers made on or before December 15 should remain open for at least three weeks following the date of the offer letter or until December 30, whichever comes first, and offers made after December 15 should remain open for at least two weeks.