

What to Expect at your Interview

Interview Process

Candidates will attend either a one-stage or a two-stage interview. This will depend on the complexity of the role and number of applicants as well as how quickly we want to fill the position. In most cases, job offers are made after the first interview.

Our Head of HR, Sarah Boynton, is responsible for coordinating the interviews, and she is the main point of contact for recruitment. She will also be present at all interviews, and is usually the main interviewer, again depending on the role. For example, interviews with Senior Fee Earners may also involve the Team Leader and Director Responsible, who will then be the main interviewer(s), as they will ask questions to “test” candidate knowledge and capability in respect of legal matters.

Interview Style

Our interviews are conducted in a formal, yet friendly way. Candidates will be made to feel relaxed and comfortable, as this is important to reduce nerves and should therefore improve interview performance. Candidates have the opportunity to ask questions and find out more information about the role and what it is like working at Maxwell Hodge. Although there are different questions asked by the interviewer(s), the interview is mainly a two-way discussion to better understand the candidate and their aspirations, to determine whether they are a good fit for us.

Interviews usually take between 20 minutes to 1 hour. We would say that the majority of interviews take approximately 30 minutes.

We expect candidates to be dressed professionally for their interview.

Interview Questions

During the interview, we assess candidates in relation to their communication skills, so that we can consider how well they would communicate with their colleagues and clients. As a law firm, we interact with clients and third parties daily, and whilst we don't expect everyone to enjoy public speaking, we expect candidates to be able to communicate well with different audiences and in different communication styles. This includes verbal and written communication. The significance of communication skills will again depend on the role. For example, candidates interviewing for a position that would involve a lot of client interaction, such as a call-handling role, we would expect them to have excellent communication skills.

In all interviews, we will discuss with candidates:

Educational Background:

- Whether they have the appropriate qualifications and training for the position

Previous Work Experience:

- Current role and responsibilities.

- What they like most / least about their current position.
- Why are they looking to move on from their current role / company?

Technical Qualifications/Experience:

- Do they have the technical skills necessary for the position? Asking about their strengths and weaknesses, as well as any areas for training/development.

Client Service:

- How are they able to meet client demands and needs?

Time Management:

- What techniques do they use to manage their time and meet deadlines?

Teambuilding/Interpersonal Skills:

- How have they contributed to a successful team project?
- How do they maintain good working relationships with colleagues?

Changing and Improving:

- How would they assess their ability to adapt to change?

In addition to the above, we will also assess:

- a) How much knowledge candidates show in the position they are being interviewed for, as well as in Maxwell Hodge in general. Therefore, you are likely to be asked why you are interested in the role/working at Maxwell Hodge, and what you already know about the company.
- b) Behaviour, integrity and honesty, by asking whether they have been subject to disciplinary action and whether they have any ongoing complaints/claims against them¹.

Some of the above may involve interviewers asking a scenario or competency based question as follows:

- How do you identify and deliver the standards required by clients?
- Give an example of how you have demonstrated an understanding of client needs and expectations.
- How do you respond to client feedback, both positive and negative?
- Describe a situation where you had to explain something complex to a colleague or a client. Which problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them?
- Provide an example of when you delivered excellent customer/client service.
- Tell us about a time when you had to calm an angry client.
- Give us an example of a situation where you worked under pressure. How have you dealt with a stressful project/situation?
- Describe a time where you made a mistake in your work. How did you find the mistake? What actions did you take?

¹ This question is also included as standard on our employment request form.

- How do you go about ensuring quality when there are time pressures? Describe a time where you have managed to produce quality work when you were under pressure.
- Can you provide an example of the biggest change you had to deal with in your previous employment and how you handled this?
- What big decision did you make recently? How did you go about it?

Summary

We hope this document provides prospective candidates with a good understanding of what their interview will entail. Overall, you should be assured that your interview would be a professional, friendly discussion around what skills, strengths, ideas and knowledge you can bring to the role, as well as your capabilities and experience. The main purpose of the interview is to get to know you better.