

Trainee Interview Cheat Sheet – November 2015

1. Participating in our training recruitment is a personal/professional development opportunity – we would invite you to take the opportunity to develop your experience and skills.
2. The interview process is two way – while we are seeking the best candidates, the best candidates are seeking the best firm. During the interview process, candidates are deciding whether they want to train with us just as much as we are trying to decide whether to offer the candidate a traineeship. We only have 40 minutes to make a good impression on each other.
3. Review the candidate's full application before the interview. This may seem obvious, but by knowing your interview questions and reviewing the application, you are showing the candidate you have taken the time to ensure a productive interview that reflects well on the firm and on you. The applications and the questions will be sent to you in advance.
4. Refer to the sample questions which have been prepared and familiarise yourself with them.
5. Time the interview.
6. Outline the interview structure for the candidate – this will be done by Crona or Sandra. This sets out the parameters of the interview, keeps everyone focused, and gives the candidate an idea of what to expect.
7. Clearly articulate the firm's mission - this will be done by the Senior Associate / Partner. Here is a link to our **[vision mission values]**. Emphasise our focus on excellence, progression, connection and integrity and also on learning and development.
8. We are hiring for the smartest people and people who demonstrate excellence in the following:
 - 8.1 ABILITY - intellectual / academic as well as social / emotional
 - 8.2 APTITUDE – why law is a good fit, why BW is a good fit
 - 8.3 ATTITUDE - engagement/positivity/energy/rapport/presentation/confidence
9. When in doubt, ask open questions which encourage the candidate to speak: “How”, “Where”, “What”.
10. Watch out for any typos or errors in the application. It is important that the candidate gets these correct.
11. If you spot any anomalies in the application (e.g. gaps in time), refer to Sandra or Crona in advance if possible.
12. Ask for specific examples of past performance and behaviour. Previous success is a good indicator of future performance.

13. Don't talk too much during the interview process. Allow candidates time to describe their candidacy during the interview.
14. Extend professional courtesy. Be on time. Be suited and booted with 'game face' on. You have an important task ahead that you take seriously but enjoy.
15. Take notes. Switch your phone off and put it away.
16. Watch non-verbal signals. Just as you are looking for eye contact and appropriate dress, the candidate is looking for those unspoken signals from you. Be sure your tone of voice is appropriate and professional.
17. While being polite and professional, don't get too friendly. Keep all your questions job-related. While introductory chatting is important, it is important that a sufficient time is spent on the formal business of the interview. There are significant equality issues to be aware of. For example, we cannot ask questions about children, disability, partnership status even if you may have some acquaintance with the candidate. See our equality policy [[attach link](#)].
18. Would you be comfortable introducing the candidate to one of the most important clients of the firm and bringing the candidate to legal meetings?
19. Your role is to lead the interview and to make a recommendation as to progress/decline. We need you to document your reasoning clearly. This will support us in making a final decision on progression to the next round, and explaining decisions if needed.
20. We expect approximately one in three to advance to round two.
21. We repeat, we are looking for the best candidates which means we will have to decline many applicants.
22. Questions on the next steps and the trainee programme will be answered by the HR team.
23. The role of HR is to support you in carrying out the interview and jointly assess the candidate with you.

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