

HIA TIPS FOR CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Always allow plenty of time for travel. Aim to arrive at least 20 minutes before your scheduled meeting so you can take a moment to clear your mind, settle any nerves and arrive relaxed and focused. Make sure you have thoroughly researched the firm and the opportunity, including the type of work they do and any high-profile matters they have handled.

1. Common Interview Questions

a. Tell me about yourself

Prepare a concise overview of your key strengths. Focus on notable matters you have worked on (especially those that were high-profile, complex or precedent-setting), language skills, academic achievements, awards and publications.

b. Talk me through your experience to date

Anything you mention is open for discussion. Showcase your full range of experience, but prioritise the matters most relevant to the role, those in which you played a leading part, and those you feel most confident discussing in detail.

c. Why are you looking to leave your current firm?

Keep the answer positive. Focus on what a new role could offer you, rather than any negatives about your current team or firm.

d. Why does this role interest you / What are you looking for in a new role?

Demonstrate a clear understanding of what the firm and team actually do. Your answer should align with what is on offer - for example, particular types of matters that interest you, team size, broader or more specialised scope of work, or other distinctive features of the practice.

e. What are your strengths / weaknesses?

This question is more commonly directed at junior associates. Any weakness you mention should be paired with a clear explanation of the steps you have taken (or are taking) to address it.

f. Can you describe a challenging situation you have encountered as a lawyer and how you dealt with it?

Examples might include managing a demanding client, juggling multiple matters under tight deadlines, or finding a creative solution to a difficult issue on a deal.

g. Technical questions

A significant part of most interviews will be technical. Interviewers will often ask you to select a matter from your deal list and talk through it, or they may choose one themselves. You will be expected to discuss the matter confidently at both a commercial and technical level appropriate to your PQE. Review every matter on your CV before the interview and be prepared to speak about any of them.

Key points to remember:

- It is not unusual for interviewers to probe deeply with detailed technical questions to assess your competence and knowledge. Answer honestly and concisely. If you genuinely do not know the answer (because you have never encountered that particular issue), say so - interviewers understand this. Where possible, pivot to an analogous experience to demonstrate related knowledge.
- If you are asked about a matter on which you had only a limited role, it is perfectly acceptable to say so and then offer to discuss a matter on which you had greater involvement and have prepared a summary. Interviewers primarily want to hear you speak knowledgeably about a transaction; they are usually less concerned about which specific matter you choose (unless they were involved in it or it is central to their team's work).
- Interviewers are not trying to trip you up. They want to give you the opportunity to show what you know and how you could add value to their team.
- Know one or two matters on your CV thoroughly so you can deliver a confident one-to-two-minute summary covering your role, the deal structure, and any particularly interesting legal or commercial points. Prefer matters on which you had the most comprehensive involvement rather than simply the most recent ones. If the firm you are interviewing with was involved in any of your matters, refresh your memory on those specifically.
- Keep all technical answers crisp and concise.

2. General Points

a. Knowledge of the firm, partners and region

Research the interview team and the firm. Check whether the team or individual interviewers have worked on anything noteworthy recently, won awards, or hired new

partners. Demonstrating awareness of relevant transactions, awards or developments shows genuine interest in the specific role and team.

b. Enthusiasm

Be consistently enthusiastic. Aim to leave the interviewer with a clear sense that you genuinely want the role and that you are someone they would enjoy working with and who would fit well into their team.

3. Do's and Don'ts

Do not over-rehearse. You want to sound knowledgeable and prepared, not robotic. The fact that you have reached the interview stage already demonstrates that you have talent and a strong track record – Do, own that confidence in every interview you attend.

4. Final Thoughts

It is completely normal to feel a little apprehensive before an interview. Just remember in today's legal market, talented lawyers remain in very high demand. Use the interview as a two-way conversation: learn about the firm and get a genuine feel for whether the team and working environment would be a good fit for you. HIA Legal offers structured mock interviews (via Teams or in person) if you would find that helpful please discuss with your consultant. Final thoughts....***You've got this.***