

**Perceptions of Candidates in Job Interviews**  
**Interview Question and Answers Texts**

**Question 1**

Interviewer:

What effect will Brexit have on UK law firms?

Candidate A:

Brexit may not have a major effect on British law firms, though of course it's too soon to tell what the effects will be. Some Europeans will move back to their home countries, so that affects how many EU citizens will be in the UK. This might mean fewer EU workers in Britain. But we may not know the outcome of Brexit for a while. There are first the current negotiations with the EU, and then more detailed agreements to be drawn up of how the exit from the EU will be implemented.

Candidate B:

Depending on how the Brexit deal is agreed, it could have an effect in many areas. One is British financial services, especially as passporting rights could be affected. There might also be an effect if financial firms move out of the UK, so that they can stay in the EU once withdrawal has finished. English law may continue to be the governing law for most of their deals, but clients might want to transfer their staff, and this will have an effect on where law firms decide to place their staff too.

## Question 2

Interviewer:

Think about the 2008 recession. What effects do you think that had on us as a firm?

Candidate A:

The recession took place while I was in school, and I recall that some of my classmates' parents lost their jobs at the time. There were fewer jobs available for people and the firm would've taken on fewer trainees. Firms were still quite busy at the time though, and you may not have been too affected. The market has recovered, so those effects are no longer a major issue. It's clear that the firm has been very successful in recent years.

Candidate B:

There would've been less business overall for the firm, so that must've had various effects. Employees are expensive, so you might have thought about reorganising both lawyers and support staff. You would've also thought about fixed costs, like the lease on the firm's main office. There would have been more competition for legal work from other firms, so you would've had to think about how many lawyers were assigned to deals, and how the deals were priced.

### Question 3

Interviewer:

What role would laws and lawyers play in a corporate acquisition by one company of another?

Candidate A:

For both sides lawyers are needed to advise on laws and terms, prepare the documentation, and make sure the deal goes smoothly with the best result for their client. If you're representing the acquiring company for example, you'll want to make sure all of the information provided about the company you're acquiring is accurate and up to date. You'd also want to be aware of any effects on the client's reputation and guide them in the case of a dispute.

Candidate B:

It would depend on which side you were representing. If you're representing the acquiring company, you'd want to acquire the company for as low a price as possible. A law firm can develop a reputation for negotiating ability. The acquisition process is about price. You'd negotiate with the other side to secure the best terms. If you were representing the company being acquired, you'd want to maximise the outcome for the company.

#### Question 4

Interviewer:

Give an example of a recent commercial deal that captured your attention and explain why.

Candidate A:

I paid a lot of attention to Bridgeport FC's recent acquisition of Glen Evans. I noticed the deal as I've been a supporter of Bridgeport FC for a long time. I'm very familiar with the history of the club. The deal went well and the acquisition seems to have had a positive outcome. I wasn't surprised by their decision, given how well they've done recently. I would enjoy working on football transfers, as specialising in legal work that deals with the world of sport would interest me greatly.

Candidate B:

I found Bridgeport FC's fifty million pound acquisition of Glen Evans very interesting. Of course you know about this as your firm represented Bridgeport. I followed the club as a fan, but until I started researching it I had no idea how complicated these deals are. I understand that it involved issues of all kinds: corporate, tax, regulatory, image and media rights, and employment. Football transfers could be a growth area for the firm, as these types of deals have become more complex and expensive.

## Question 5

Interviewer:

How would you demonstrate to a client that you were commercially aware of their business and their needs?

Candidate A:

It's important to research the client's business and how it operates. This includes details like supply and demand, pricing, competition, and company structure. For example, for oil and gas work, the lawyer should understand differences between upstream and downstream. In memos to the client I'd show commercial awareness by doing background research and avoiding naïve or incorrect statements. This would also help me to work out the best structure for the deal documentation.

Candidate B:

Commercial awareness is very important. Clients will appreciate a lawyer having excellent awareness of how their business works. You need to show the client that you understand all aspects of their business, and this is true no matter what kind of business it is. In communications, it's good to show this kind of detailed wider knowledge of how the client's business operates, so that they feel confident in your legal advice and your knowledge of their business needs during the transaction.

## Question 6

Interviewer:

Explain the difference between contract and tort.

Candidate A:

Contract and tort are both private law. The main difference is that people voluntarily enter into contracts, but that's not relevant in tort. Torts are civil wrongs. One of the most common torts is negligence. If you're texting while driving and you hit a person, you may have been negligent. There was no previous agreement between you and that person, but that's not needed for him to sue you in tort. In contrast to this, existing contracts will affect whether someone can sue in contract law.

Candidate B:

Contract law involves laws that deal with contracts between people, and tort law is where someone does something wrong. You can of course do something wrong in contract law as well, but that involves breach of contract law rather than tort law. In our training we covered contract law first, and then tort law, and compared and contrasted cases. There are many similarities across the cases, but also distinct sets of principles in the different situations, as only one involves contract agreements.

## Question 7

Interviewer:

A client wants to sue a supplier for £1,000. But the court fees will amount to £2,000.

What do you do?

Candidate A:

Well, they are the client. If they wish to spend the money to sue their supplier for one thousand pounds then that's what we should enable them to do. I've dealt with difficult customers in previous jobs and it was important to avoid conflict, even if they were being unreasonable. We might point out to them that the court fees exceed the amount being sued for by a large margin, but they are the client, and we'd try to accommodate their preferences and move forward.

Candidate B:

I'd say that we should look into the client's concerns further. It's important for law firms to build the relationship and show that we understand their business. It seems that litigation might not be the best idea here, so we should try to understand what's important and relevant to the client, not just the cost of the court fees. We should find out what the client's problem is, why they want to sue, and see if they can meet their goals in another way.

## Question 8

Interviewer:

Give an example of a recent legal decision that you disagreed with and explain why.

Candidate A:

I disagreed with the Supreme Court decision in favour of a minimum salary for a UK person to bring a non-European spouse into the country. I do understand that the government has to avoid people coming into the country to claim benefits. But poor people have just as much right to fall in love with foreigners as wealthy people do. There are also other elements of unfairness. The UK citizen may be a non-working spouse and the non-European spouse may be wealthy. So I think that decision was short-sighted.

Candidate B:

The Supreme Court recently agreed that a British person has to make a certain amount of money if they want to marry a non-European and live in the UK with them. You can't expect people to choose who they fall in love with based on their income. It's problematic if laws intrude on people's personal relationships in this way. People will be forced to make relationship choices for legal reasons, or they may have to separate. It was a very unfortunate decision.



## Question 9

Interviewer:

How has the Human Rights Act 1998 affected law in this country?

Candidate A:

The Human Rights Act is an important piece of legislation. The requirement for a private and family life means that some criminals can't be deported for a long time, and that prisoners have the right to vote. Some of these requirements are problematic. You could argue that criminals and prisoners shouldn't have these rights. So it has done some good but I do disagree with some aspects of it. But it has been useful to have human rights set out in one place this way.

Candidate B:

The Human Rights Act brought some items from the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law, like the right to a private and family life. It also clarified that the police have to respect and protect human rights. In its manifesto, the government said that it was going to scrap the Human Rights Act and replace it with a British Bill of Rights, but that's been put on the back burner. It'll be interesting to see how the courts interpret the Act after we leave the EU.

## Question 10

Interviewer:

In your view, what are the major problems or opportunities facing the legal profession in the next few years?

Candidate A:

Many things that seem like challenges can also be opportunities for law, for example in the area of globalisation, technology, or competition. One of the most significant opportunities is new technology in the workplace. The use of smart contracts, blockchain and online dispute resolution can really increase efficiency. Lawyers spend much less time on many tasks. But it does mean putting new systems in place and potentially dealing with new kinds of regulation. We'll see if law firms can adapt as quickly as their clients do.

Candidate B:

Technology is going to be increasingly important. People have been talking about great new technologies such as blockchain. I read that British law firms were still using faxes a lot until ten years ago, which shows how outdated our technologies can be. In my view, new technology is inevitable, and law firms need to keep up with the latest innovations, and work with them. It doesn't help to bury our heads in the sand and hope that we won't have to change how we work.

## Question 11

Interviewer:

Tell us of a time you worked in a team.

Candidate A:

For my Company Law module at university, we had to do a group presentation worth 25% of our mark. Another student and I prepared our parts, but the day before we had to present we found out that the other two people hadn't even started theirs yet. We dropped everything and all worked together. We ended up doing well but it was frustrating. So when I had a group presentation for my Mergers and Acquisitions module, I checked in with the others regularly to make sure everyone's part was progressing properly.

Candidate B:

I was on the ball committee on the Law Society, and I worked with the president and vice-president to organise the annual ball. The ball was over-subscribed and people had a really memorable experience. It was a lot of hard work to organise the event, but we worked together as a team and it came off well in the end. We created a Hollywood theme and arranged quite impressive decorations and fancy dress. The members of the ball committee are still very close friends.

## Question 12

Interviewer:

Tell us of a time you solved a problem.

Candidate A:

We always had very interesting problem questions in my Business Law and Practice module on the LPC. My group would meet to work through the material together. One problem in particular involved the incorporation of a company and how that's done at Companies House. I was the first to solve the problem, and I helped several of my classmates working through the problem. The lecturer commented that I'd manage well with problem-solving in practice, if I could spot issues on the LPC that quickly.

Candidate B:

I worked as a part-time shop manager during the summer before my LPC. One of the things I did was submit orders of craft beer to our suppliers. One night while shopping in the supermarket, I noticed they had started to sell some of the beer that we stocked, at a lower price than we had been able to order. I raised this with my shop's owner and we looked into the impact on how profitable some of our product lines were. Eventually we negotiated a lower price with the supplier.

### Question 13

Interviewer:

Why do you want to be a lawyer?

Candidate A:

I find the work very interesting. I have an interest in different areas of the commercial world like financial services and oil and gas companies, so I'm eager to work with different types of clients to see the differences in how the industries work. I have very good attention to detail, which you can see from my degree results, and I'm good at working in teams. I think both skills are a benefit in this profession. In my part-time jobs and placements I've seen a bit of the wider commercial picture too.

Candidate B:

I've wanted to be a lawyer since I was a young child. My family used to joke that I was extremely good at arguing and I ought to be a lawyer. So this desire made me pursue a law degree and then the LPC. It would be a great opportunity to work on a big deal and experience the process. I've always hoped to work in a big law firm and be part of the excitement and the success here. I find the career very appealing and I would love to work for the firm.

## Question 14

Interviewer:

Tell us about what you've found most interesting at university.

Candidate A:

I've enjoyed the modules that looked beyond black letter law, or established legal rules. I know we have to study contract and tort law, but they can be very dry. I really enjoyed modules like Literature and the Law, where we looked at how some writers were fascinated with the law, and how some of the law in place at the time that they wrote has resonated down to the present day. For example, the question of inheritance in King Lear is fascinating when looked at through a legal lens. I really enjoyed modules like that.

Candidate B:

I've enjoyed both the technical side of studying law and the more academic side of it. For instance when studying contract law, I enjoyed learning about the technicalities of force majeure clauses and exclusion clauses, as I think this will be very helpful to my future career. However, I also liked the philosophical issues that came up, such as the tension between freedom of contract and protection of the consumer. This is probably less likely to be explored in practice, but I really enjoyed thinking and talking about it at university.

## Question 15

Interviewer:

What attracts you about working in law?

Candidate A:

I'm aware that the work is demanding, with long hours and significant time pressures. But from what I've seen, the work is incredibly exciting too. I like to push myself, and I'm happy to work in a 24/7 world that bridges time zones. In my previous work experience, I've seen the excitement and buzz that comes from working in teams with really talented, motivated people, both clients and other lawyers. When I'm working on a project I can spend hours just focusing on it and getting lost in the work. I thrive under pressure and enjoy it.

Candidate B:

Law is interesting and I enjoyed my studies. I can't pretend that money isn't a factor. We all come out of university with significant debt, and a career in law allows a good quality of life and financial security. I'm also very interested in the international aspects of working in law. I've always dreamed of working in America, and this could be the first step towards international career experience too. I work hard and I think my style of working would be suited to law, and the type of international work that is done.