

# ALLEN & OVERY

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## Application, CV s and Interview Skills



- Introduction
- Applications, CV's
- Successful Interview Technique
- What is commercial awareness

# Applications and CV's

# Qualities sought by law firms

- Academic ability
- Intellectual skills
- People skills
- Drive for achievement
- Motivation
- Commercial awareness

## How to develop these

- Academic projects
- Work Experience / Part Time jobs
- Voluntary / Charity work
- Clubs & Societies
- Sports
- Family Commitments

## Think about the key areas of the form

- School, university
- Interests and achievements
- Vacation work/ work experience
- Extra-curricular activities
- Competency based question(s)... Describe a situation...
- Why you have chosen this career
- Why you want to work at this firm
- What you want to know about this firm

# Completing the application

- Become familiar with the selection criteria
- Prepare the best examples to demonstrate your skills
- Draft, edit, re-edit
- Get someone else to read it
- Word limits
- Spelling & grammar
- Quality vs quantity

## Examples of mistakes in CV's

- CV should be accompanied by a cover letter – not in a form of essay – brief, factual, polite
- Position / role – applying for a job now, or next year when you complete some studies?
- University not mentioned
- Timing
- Your main expectations (full, part time job)
- Spelling mistakes



# Making your application stand out

- Get the basics right
- Don't rush it
- Highlight your skills
- What makes YOU stand out?
- What are we asking you?
- Think about the level of detail
- Be yourself

# Successful Interview Technique

## **An interview is...**

- A conversation with a purpose
- A two-way process
- Your personal introduction to a potential employer
- Your chance to ask questions

## Preparation – think about....

- What is the employer looking for?
- What evidence do you have of the required skills and qualities?
- What are your main achievements?
- What do you know about the firm?
- What questions do you have?

## Before the interview - tips

- Dress code
- Know what's going to happen to you!
- Get a good night's sleep
- Check your journey – and your destination

## On the day

- What to wear
- Make a good first impression
- If you are late... make sure you call
- Body language
  - Smile
  - Sit up straight
  - Mirror

## In the interview

- How much should you talk?
- It's your interview!
- Back up all your answers – evidence is key
- Don't be afraid to stop and think
- Nerves are not to be feared

## Questions you might be asked - some examples

- What motivates you to succeed?
- How do you manage your time effectively?
- What role do you usually play within teams?
- How would your friends describe you?
- What is your proudest achievement?
- Why does this career/firm appeal to you?
- How do you keep up to date with current affairs/business issues



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# Challenging Questions

- Think of a challenging question that you may be asked
- What skill(s) do you need to improve on?
- Why do you want to join our organisation?
- Probing questions...
  - Why did you do that?
  - How did that feel?
  - What did you learn?
- Contrary evidence...
- Give me an example of when things didn't go to plan.
- Have you learned from your mistakes?

# What is commercial awareness?

## What commercial awareness is

- Awareness of events in the business world
- Awareness of other current affairs
- Understanding how companies work
- Some knowledge of business concepts
- Some knowledge of the firms business
- Seeing things from clients' perspective
- Drawing from your own experiences

## What commercial awareness isn't

- Knowing lots of jargon (*but not understanding what it means*)
- Reading the newspaper 5 mins before an interview (*and not knowing the details or facts*)
- Quoting deals from our website (*without understanding what happened... and what if your interviewer worked on that deal...*)
- Making sweeping statements about the economy (*and not having the evidence to back this up*)

## General commercial awareness

- Read business pages regularly, follow stories
- Research our deals (form an opinion)
- Business games / workshops
- Portfolios / shadow trading
- Clients' websites
- If you don't understand something you read about – look it up / ask someone to explain

## General commercial awareness (2)

- Be prepared to discuss your thoughts and opinions on issues
- Why has the situation arisen?
- What are the causes?
- Who are the main players?
- What are the implications of the situation?
- What would you do to turn the situation around?

# Using your own experiences (1)

- Part-time job
- Vacation Placements
- Society / Club roles
- Voluntary work
- Charitable work

## Using your own experiences (2)

*Think about these questions...*

- How is the company structured?
- What are the main products / services on offer?
- Who are the main competitors?
- How do they differentiate themselves in the market?
- Who are the target audience / clients?
- Strengths / weaknesses?
- What changes would you make if you were in charge?



## **Employers... they're a business too!**

- Visit their website
- Recent news / deals etc
- Trends in the market place / industry
- Issues facing the organisation
- Employers want to know you have thought about their business and how it works

## And finally... your questions

- Prepare topics about which you genuinely want to learn more
- Learn from the interviewer's experiences
- Demonstrate your research
- Prepare at least 2 questions

[www.allenoverly.com/careeruk](http://www.allenoverly.com/careeruk)

## Questions?

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