
Scheduling the Interview
All contacts with chambers are part of the interviewing process (this includes calls from chambers staff to set up the interview!)

There is a chance that the later interviews may be canceled if the judge decides to give an offer to an earlier interviewee. Try to accept the first interview slot offered.

Preparation for the Interview
Research the judge's background—try to get a sense of the interview format from the chambers staff or alumni who have clerked for that judge. Also look at the judge's biography in Almanac of the Federal Judiciary. A Lexis or Westlaw search of the most recent cases decided by the judge will give you an overview of the types of cases on the docket.

Let your references know of your interview to see if they might have any suggestions about this judge and so they are aware they may receive a call from the judge.

Make a packet of the information you gather on the judge and extra copies of your own application materials, which you should review and be prepared to discuss. Take this with you to the interview.

Dress Professionally—dress as you would for court.

The Content of the Interview
There is no standard format for the interview; depending on the judge the interview may range from 15 minutes to two or more hours. Be prepared to discuss yourself as well as the judge. Know your resume and be prepared to discuss your interests/hobbies/etc. One important feature that distinguishes a clerkship interview is the highly personalized nature of the relationship between a judge and law clerk, which may be reflected in the interview. Do not be surprised if the judge asks about your family, plans for the future, or other topics employers may not usually delve into.

Sample Questions a Judge May Ask:
Personal Goals and Background
Why should I hire you over all the other applicants (several students received this question and found it challenging as all applicants are very qualified and will do a great job)?

Why do you want to do a clerkship?

Why do you want to clerk on this (level and type of) court?

Why do you want to clerk for this judge in particular?

What are your future career plans for after the clerkship and where, geographically, do you plan to practice?

What are your goals in life and how does this clerkship fit within those goals?

What courses are you taking now/plan to take? What have been your most and least favorite courses?
Substantive or Legal Topics
Discuss your law journal note/article.
Be prepared to discuss your writing sample in great detail, including responding to any legal challenges raised by the judge.
What type of law interests you the most?
What are your views on [ANY] topic? (This may be a topic of a legal nature, a news item, or personal politics)
Who is your favorite Supreme Court justice and why?
What is your most or least favorite U.S. Supreme Court decision and why? How would you have decided the case differently?
Some judges may ask you to comment on specific recent decisions, especially those pertinent to their jurisdiction.

Qualities as a Potential Law Clerk
Describe your strengths and weaknesses.
Are you comfortable under pressure and juggling many different types of tasks? Could you provide some examples from your own life as to these skills?
How would you approach this case? If I ask you as a law clerk to write up a decision in a particular way and you disagree with the outcome what will you do?

Questions to Ask the Judge or Areas to Investigate with the Clerks:
What is the typical day like for a law clerk?
What is the typical workload for the clerks and what are the hours?
What is the division of labor/cases, including the different types of tasks? What are the primary responsibilities of a law clerk?
Does the judge believe in all written opinions or does he or she make oral decisions from the bench?
How do opinions get written? Does the judge or clerk write the first draft? How many drafts does the judge usually require? Does the judge heavily edit the drafts or not at all?
How accessible is the judge to the clerks? Do the clerks communicate with the judge predominantly on paper or in person?
How much time to the clerks spend in the courtroom? Do the clerks attend oral argument or settlement conferences with the judge?
How much contact do the clerks have with attorneys?
Are there contacts, periodic outings with present and former clerks?
Do clerks from other chambers interact frequently/socialize?
What are the types of cases and what is the size of the docket?
What qualities does the judge look for in a clerk? What is the judge’s timetable for making a decision?
For Magistrates:
What percentage of the caseload results in trials?

Thank you letters and Follow-Up
As a practical matter, the timing may not give you the opportunity to send a thank you note or letter before the judge has made a decision. If at all possible, you should send a brief follow-up letter very promptly.
Offers
Judges vary as to the timeframe they will allow for your response to an offer. It is not uncommon for a judge to expect you to give an immediate, enthusiastic acceptance of their offer for a clerkship. You should weigh against the possible benefits that you could gain by asking for time to decide whether to accept an offer, or rejecting an offer hoping that something better will come along, the tremendous opportunity you might miss.

If you accept an offer you must notify any judges you have interviews pending with that you have accepted and also indicate you are no longer available in OSCAR to withdraw your pending applications. You should also confirm your acceptance of the clerkship with the judge in writing (with thanks, appreciation, and a note that you are looking forward to a wonderful year, etc.).

Also notify Maureen Kieffer in Career Services mkieffer1@luc.edu and your references of any offers you receive (and especially the offer you accept!)