

**SABA-SC PRESENTS**

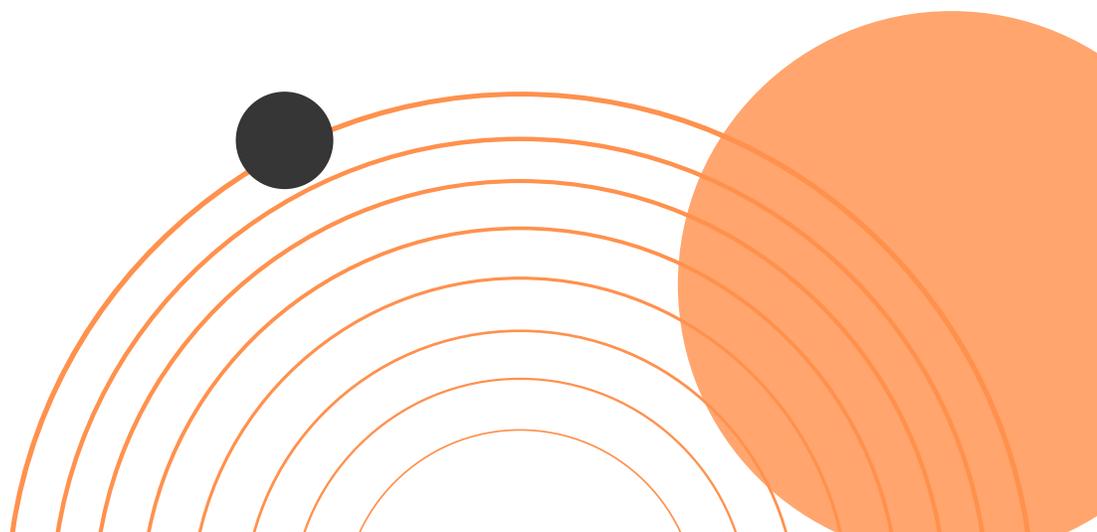
# OCI Tips & Tricks

**Exclusive insight from OCI experts  
including hiring partners,  
attorneys, and students**

**A HOW-TO FOR NAILING YOUR  
OCI INTERVIEWS**

Special thanks to Davis Wright Tremaine  
for hosting our original event, and our  
panelists:

- Purvi Patel
- Ashe Puri
- Gopi Panchapakesan
- Labdhi Sheth



# PRE-OCI

## **PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD**

OCI is a process where a myriad of factors are out of your control. However, the quality of your materials is something that is entirely dependent on how much work you put in. Make sure everything you submit - resume, writing sample, or any other document - is free of any typos or grammatical errors. Even one typo can get make you lose an interview.

## **SHOULD I SEND A DIRECT APPLICATION?**

Direct applications can be a helpful tool during OCI. Make sure to speak to your school's career services offices to see if firms have stated a preference regarding direct applications. However, with changes in NALP guidelines, direct applications may lead to pre-OCI interviews and offers.

## **HOW CAN I PRACTICE INTERVIEWING?**

Take any and all opportunities your school has for practice interviews. This includes any career services or mock interview opportunities. Treat every mock interview with an attorney as the real deal - performing well at these interviews could lead to future job opportunities. Make sure to spend time preparing answers to commonly asked questions like, "Why do you want to be a lawyer?" or "Why this firm?". Know your resume like the back of your hand and be comfortable speaking about your writing sample. Be careful not to make your answers sound too rehearsed: firms are looking for applicants who are prepared and professional, not robotic.

## **WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH SHOULD I BE DOING?**

Know the areas of law that the firm you are interviewing for practices. Telling a firm that only performs litigation you are interested in transactional opportunities is a sure way to have your candidacy terminated. If you know your interviewers, research their background. See if they practice any areas of law that are of interest to you or if you share any mutual interests.

# OCI DAY-OF

## **SHOULD I USE THE HOSPITALITY SUITES?**

Yes. Hospitality suites are an excellent way to network with firms and another opportunity to show your interest. If you were unable to be scheduled onto a firm's calendar, hospitality suites are an avenue for securing an interview during a break. However, make sure to treat everyone with respect. Firms will compare notes about candidates and a candidate's behavior at a hospitality suite should always leave a positive impression.

## **HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ASKING A "GOOD" QUESTION?**

Always remember that the purpose of your OCI interview is to leave the firm interested enough in you (for good reasons) to ask you back for a callback. As a result, generic questions like "tell me about your pro bono program" or "what is the structure of the summer associate program," though not negative, are not the most dynamic questions you can ask. Instead, ask questions that show you have done research about the firm and your interviewers. Asking about specific opportunities that you discovered leads to in-depth, insightful answers and shows you've done your homework. Avoid any questions that puts the firm in a negative light (i.e. asking about a lawsuit against the firm) or makes you seem overly confident (i.e. asking about the path to partnership).

## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FREEZE?**

Always stay calm and do not let one flub throw your entire interview off. Interviewers may ask you questions that are meant to be unexpected. These questions may be meant to test out how you react under pressure and may have unclear answers. Make sure to think about the question and form a response that is clear, professional, and well-thought out. If possible, try to ground your response in a way that highlights one of your strengths or an experience that shows why you would be an interesting, dynamic, and qualified candidate for a summer associate position at the firm.

# POST OCI

## **SHOULD I SEND THANK-YOU NOTES?**

For an OCI screener, you should probably not send thank-you emails. These notes do little for improving your chances for a callback. However, any typos or errors may negatively affect your candidacy. If you feel compelled to send a note to a screener interviewer, proofread your email thoroughly. Individual thank-you notes are heavily encouraged at the callback stage.

## **HOW SOON WILL I HEAR BACK FROM THE FIRM?**

All firms work on their own hiring timelines. You may hear as soon as when the interview is complete or even a week, after OCI. Some, but only a few, firms will send out rejection notices. The most important thing is to stay calm and not give into the anxiety of the inevitable OCI "waiting game." Take time for yourself to breathe and wind-down after your interviews so you are refreshed for any callbacks.

## **I RECEIVED A CALLBACK- NOW WHAT?**

First, make sure you respond to the recruiter in a prompt and professional fashion. Besides being respectful of the firm's calendar, these initial interactions exemplify how you may interact with associates or clients if you were hired. Second, if you have multiple callback opportunities, schedule them strategically. The later you schedule the callback, the more likely it is the firm has already given out offers. Make sure to schedule callbacks for firms you are strongly interested in early. Third, learn much more about the firm at this stage compared to the screener stage. Make sure to read the bios of each person you will be meeting at the firm. Prepare deeper questions that show a real interest in the firm and delve into the firm's culture and leadership opportunities. Fourth, and most importantly, stay calm! At the callback stage, firms generally assume you are qualified "on paper" for the job. Focus more on having real conversations and showing you can be a genuine team player if you were hired. Treat everyone with respect and turn that callback into an offer!