Interview Guide for Real Estate Litigation Attorney

Maxwell Fairview

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# About this Guide

This guide serves as a structured approach for evaluating candidates for the Real Estate Litigation Attorney position at Maxwell Fairview. It is crafted to align with the firm’s mission and values, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of both technical legal skills and cultural fit. The guide provides a clear framework for the interview process, from job description to competency evaluation.

The competencies are derived from the job requirements and are infused with Maxwell Fairview’s values. They are designed to identify candidates who are not only technically proficient but also demonstrate a commitment to service, trust, and inclusion. This guide will assist interviewers in conducting a fair, consistent, and effective interview.

Interviewers should use this guide to navigate the interview process, ensuring that all relevant areas are covered. It will help in asking pertinent questions, evaluating candidates fairly, and ultimately selecting the best candidate for the role. The guide is a reflection of Maxwell Fairview’s dedication to maintaining high standards of legal practice and ethical conduct.

# Job Description

**Real Estate Litigation Attorney**

**Position:** Real Estate Litigation Attorney  
**Location:** San Francisco, CA  
**Practice Area:** Construction & Real Estate  
**Open Date:** Friday, December 15, 2023  
**Job Function:** Legal

**Job Description:**  
At Maxwell Fairview, our priority is to attract, retain, and promote talented individuals from a wide range of racial, ethnic, social, economic, religious, and personal backgrounds, genders, and sexual orientations. Therefore, we encourage talented individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences to apply.

More than a third of Maxwell Fairview’s lawyers are litigators. We have decades of experience representing clients at every level of the trial and appellate courts in multiple jurisdictions, in international forums, and mediations, arbitrations, and other methods of alternative dispute resolution.

A career at Maxwell Fairview is the opportunity to do work that matters. It’s a chance to use your knowledge to shape what’s ahead, to innovate, and to learn at a firm that taps into the power of collaboration and collective thinking.

In accordance with applicable Federal and State laws, the anticipated annual salary range for this position is as follows:

* San Francisco, CA: $160,000-$175,000

In addition to a standard benefits package, this role may be eligible for additional contingent compensation based on an array of factors, including but not limited to: work performance, geographic location, work experience, education, and qualifications. Because such contingent compensation is not yet calculable or may be zero ($0) in some circumstances, the above-listed salary range is Maxwell Fairview’s good faith estimate of the annual salary it reasonably expects to pay for the position at the time of this posting.

**Job Requirements:**  
Our Construction and Real Estate Litigation practice group is seeking to hire a department attorney to join our San Francisco, CA office. The successful candidate will work with our team on California landlord-tenant matters.

Qualified candidates will have at least three to six years of commercial and real estate litigation experience. Ability to work in a fast-paced client-centric environment with a varied caseload involving complex issues is essential. California Bar admission is required.

Principals Only.

Maxwell Fairview LLP is an Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer. Disability / Female / Gender Identity / Minority / Sexual Orientation / Veteran.

Pursuant to the San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance and the Los Angeles Fair Chance Initiative, we will consider for employment qualified applicants with arrest and conviction records.

To comply with Federal law, Maxwell Fairview participates in E-Verify. All newly-hired employees are verified through this electronic system established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to confirm their identity and employment eligibility. Please refer to the Notice of E-Verify Participation and the Right to Work posters on the Maxwell Fairview Careers page for more information.

# Interview Agenda

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
2. Overview of Maxwell Fairview and the Real Estate Litigation Attorney role (10 minutes)
3. Discussion of candidate’s background and experience (20 minutes)
4. Competency-based questions (30 minutes)
5. Case study or role play exercise (20 minutes)
6. Candidate’s questions (10 minutes)
7. Closing remarks and next steps (5 minutes)

# Competency Framework

The competency framework for the Real Estate Litigation Attorney role at Maxwell Fairview is designed to identify the key attributes required for success in this position. It includes a mix of technical skills, personal characteristics, and alignment with the firm’s values. Each competency is critical to the role and reflects the firm’s commitment to excellence and diversity.

1. **Legal Expertise**: Knowledge of commercial and real estate litigation, specifically California landlord-tenant law.
2. **Analytical Thinking**: Ability to analyze complex legal issues and develop strategic solutions.
3. **Communication Skills**: Clear and effective communication, both written and oral.
4. **Client-Centric Approach**: Dedication to client service and understanding client needs.
5. **Collaborative Work Ethic**: Ability to work well in a team and contribute to a collaborative environment.
6. **Diversity and Inclusion**: Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.
7. **Legal Expertise**: Deep understanding of commercial and real estate litigation, with a focus on California landlord-tenant matters. This competency aligns with Maxwell Fairview’s value of Rich Experience.

## Lead Question

**“Describe your experience with commercial and real estate litigation, particularly in California landlord-tenant law.”** Can you provide specific examples of cases you have worked on? What was your role in these cases?

*Look for detailed knowledge of relevant laws and regulations, as well as practical experience in litigation.*

## Situational Scenario

**“Imagine you are representing a client in a complex landlord-tenant dispute. How would you approach the case from initial consultation to resolution?”**

*Look for a strategic approach to litigation, including case assessment, development of legal strategy, and execution.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you stay updated on changes in real estate law?”
* “Can you discuss a time when you had to adapt your legal strategy due to new information or developments in a case?”
* “How do you balance the need to be thorough with the demands of a fast-paced legal environment?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Limited understanding of relevant laws | Basic understanding with some practical experience | Good knowledge with solid case examples | Strong expertise with significant case experience | Expert level with extensive experience and proven results |

1. **Analytical Thinking**: The ability to dissect complex legal issues and think critically to devise effective strategies. This competency is essential for navigating the intricacies of litigation and aligns with Maxwell Fairview’s value of Unparalleled Service.

## Lead Question

**“Walk me through your process for analyzing a new legal issue presented by a client.”** How do you break down the problem? What steps do you take to research and form your legal opinion?

*Look for a methodical approach to problem-solving and the ability to think critically about legal issues.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You are faced with a case that has multiple potential outcomes. How do you evaluate the risks and benefits of each possible scenario for your client?”**

*Look for the ability to conduct a thorough risk assessment and communicate potential outcomes to clients.*

## Diving Deeper

* “Describe a time when you had to analyze a complex legal document. What was challenging about it?”
* “How do you ensure your analysis is comprehensive and accounts for all relevant factors?”
* “Can you give an example of a time when your analytical skills led to a positive outcome for a client?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Struggles with complex issues | Can analyze standard issues | Good at analyzing complex issues and forming opinions | Very skilled in complex analysis and strategy development | Exceptional analytical thinker with a track record of innovative solutions |

1. **Communication Skills**: Effective communication is crucial for a litigation attorney. This competency ensures the candidate can articulate complex legal concepts clearly and persuasively, aligning with Maxwell Fairview’s value of Unshakeable Trust.

## Lead Question

**“How do you ensure that your communication, both in writing and verbally, is clear and effective for clients, colleagues, and the court?”** Can you provide an example of a complex legal argument you successfully communicated?

*Look for clarity, persuasiveness, and the ability to tailor communication to different audiences.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You need to explain a complicated legal strategy to a client who is not familiar with legal jargon. How do you approach this?”**

*Look for the ability to simplify complex information and ensure client understanding.*

## Diving Deeper

* “Tell me about a time when you had to persuade a skeptical audience.”
* “How do you handle difficult conversations with clients or opposing counsel?”
* “What techniques do you use to ensure your written legal arguments are compelling and clear?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Often unclear or confusing | Usually clear but can improve in persuasion | Clear and somewhat persuasive | Very clear and persuasive in most situations | Exceptionally clear and persuasive in all forms of communication |

1. **Client-Centric Approach**: This competency focuses on the attorney’s dedication to understanding and meeting client needs, which is a core aspect of Maxwell Fairview’s value of Unparalleled Service.

## Lead Question

**“Describe how you have tailored your legal services to meet the specific needs of a client.”** What steps did you take to understand their needs? How did you ensure their satisfaction?

*Look for examples of personalized service and a focus on client satisfaction.*

## Situational Scenario

**“A client comes to you with a pressing legal issue that requires immediate attention. How do you prioritize their needs while managing your existing caseload?”**

*Look for the ability to manage time effectively and prioritize client needs.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you build trust with new clients?”
* “Can you give an example of a time when you went above and beyond for a client?”
* “How do you measure client satisfaction?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rarely considers client needs | Sometimes considers client needs | Often meets client needs effectively | Consistently prioritizes and meets client needs | Always exceeds client expectations with exceptional service |

1. **Collaborative Work Ethic**: The ability to work well with others and contribute to a team is essential. This competency reflects Maxwell Fairview’s emphasis on collaboration and collective thinking.

## Lead Question

**“Tell me about a time when you had to collaborate with a team to achieve a legal objective. How did you contribute?”** What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?

*Look for examples of teamwork and the ability to work collaboratively.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You are part of a legal team working on a high-stakes case with tight deadlines. How do you ensure effective collaboration and communication among team members?”**

*Look for strategies to foster teamwork and manage group dynamics.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you handle disagreements within a team?”
* “Can you share an experience where you had to lead a team? What was your approach?”
* “What do you think is the key to successful collaboration in a legal setting?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Struggles with teamwork | Can work in a team but prefers solo work | Good team player | Strong collaborator and team contributor | Exceptional leader and team player who enhances group performance |

1. **Diversity and Inclusion**: Maxwell Fairview values diversity and inclusion. This competency ensures the candidate respects and promotes these values in the workplace.

## Lead Question

**“How have you contributed to creating an inclusive environment in your previous roles?”** Can you share specific actions or initiatives you’ve been a part of?

*Look for a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

## Situational Scenario

**“You notice a lack of diversity in your team or among the clients you serve. What steps would you take to address this issue?”**

*Look for proactive measures to promote inclusivity.*

## Diving Deeper

* “How do you ensure that your own biases do not affect your legal work?”
* “Can you discuss a time when you advocated for diversity and inclusion in the workplace?”
* “What does an inclusive workplace look like to you, and how do you contribute to it?”

## Evaluation

| Rating 1 | Rating 2 | Rating 3 | Rating 4 | Rating 5 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Unaware of diversity issues | Recognizes diversity issues but takes no action | Supports diversity initiatives | Actively promotes diversity and inclusion | Leader in creating and sustaining an inclusive environment |

# Case Study / Role Play

Candidates will be presented with a case study that simulates a real-world legal scenario relevant to Maxwell Fairview’s practice. They will be asked to analyze the case, develop a legal strategy, and present their approach to the interview panel. This exercise will test their legal expertise, analytical thinking, and communication skills.

The evaluation will focus on the candidate’s ability to apply their knowledge in a practical setting, their strategic thinking, and their ability to communicate complex legal strategies effectively. It will also assess their ability to work under pressure and their commitment to client-centric service.

# Candidate Q&A

At the end of the interview, candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions. This is an important part of the process, as it allows candidates to demonstrate their interest in the role and Maxwell Fairview. It also gives the interview panel insight into the candidate’s priorities and values.

**Q. What are the growth opportunities for a Real Estate Litigation Attorney at Maxwell Fairview?**

A. Maxwell Fairview offers a range of professional development and advancement opportunities, including mentorship, continuing legal education, and leadership roles within the firm.

**Q. How does Maxwell Fairview support work-life balance for its attorneys?**

A. The firm is committed to supporting work-life balance through flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and a supportive culture.

**Q. Can you tell me more about Maxwell Fairview’s commitment to diversity and inclusion?**

A. Maxwell Fairview actively promotes diversity and inclusion through its hiring practices, professional development programs, and community engagement initiatives.

**Q. What types of clients does the Construction and Real Estate Litigation practice group typically represent?**

A. The practice group represents a diverse client base, including property developers, landlords, tenants, and construction companies.

**Q. How does Maxwell Fairview stay ahead of the curve in legal innovation?**

A. The firm invests in technology and encourages a culture of innovation to enhance client services and streamline legal processes.

**Q. What is the firm’s approach to alternative dispute resolution?**

A. Maxwell Fairview advocates for alternative dispute resolution methods when appropriate, to achieve efficient and effective outcomes for clients.

# Candidate Evaluation

Complete the following scorecard for the Real Estate Litigation Attorney role at Maxwell Fairview. Refer to the evaluation guides for each competency to determine the candidate’s score.

| Competency | Rating (1-5) | Interviewer Comments |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Legal Expertise |  |  |
| Analytical Thinking |  |  |
| Communication Skills |  |  |
| Client-Centric Approach |  |  |
| Collaborative Work Ethic |  |  |
| Diversity and Inclusion |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |