



University College London Law Society



***CLIENT INTERVIEWING
COMPETITION 2015
PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK***

SPONSORED BY MACFARLANES

WELL DONE

You have picked one of the finest competitions that UCL Laws has to offer! The Client Interviewing Competition has always and continues to be one of our premier internal competitions; it enables you to learn a brilliant skill and it is part of your LPC, so participating in this competition is already putting you ahead of the game!

This handbook is designed to set out the structure and format of the competition itself, as well as explain our judging criteria, and covers the timeline for this year's competition; furthermore it includes tips and guidance. It is not intended to be an exhaustive overview of the competition and so please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or for any further information.

We are confident that you will enjoy this competition immensely.

Ryan Chu

President

ryan.chu.13@ucl.ac.uk

Roshni Mehra

Vocational Officer

roshni.mehra.13@ucl.ac.uk

Structure

The Competition is run over a period of seven weeks. The first round consists of three parts, for which a set number of participants shall progress to the second round. Teams will be eliminated each week until two teams are left for the Final.

The timetable for the Competition is as below:

Round 1A	Thursday 15th October 2015
Round 1B	Tuesday 20th October 2015
Round 1C	Thursday 22nd October 2015
Round 2	Tuesday 17th November 2015
Quarter Finals	Tuesday 24th November 2015
Semi Finals	Tuesday 1st December 2015
Finals	Tuesday 8th December 2015

Format

How long does each interview last?

Each interview that you will judge lasts for **20 minutes** with a **10-minute post-interview reflection period** at the end. You may notice that on the Schedule each interview is in fact allotted a 40-minute window. This is to allow for a smooth transition with minimal delay and provide you with an opportunity to give feedback.

Who times the interview?

It is on the part of the participants to ensure good timekeeping.

Who starts the interview?

Once the client and the team are sat at the table you will be invited by the judge to start the interview.

What does the 'post-interview reflection period' consist of?

Once the client has vacated the session, the following ten minutes provides the participating team an opportunity to discuss the client's legal situation more frankly. You should outline

what their plans of action will be as a result of the meeting, highlight issues that concerned them or that require further research and mention if there is a need to contact any third parties. Also, you should try as far as possible to mention any legal authority that may support their findings.

Judging

The interview is judged on eleven areas of the participating team's performance just as in the Regional and National Competitions. They are:

1. Establishing an effective professional relationship.

The lawyers should establish the beginning of an effective professional relationship and working atmosphere. At an appropriate point, they should orientate the client to the special nature of the relationship (confidentiality, fees, mutual obligations and rights, duration and plan of interview, methods of contact etc.).

2. Obtaining information.

The lawyers should draw out relevant information about the problem from the client. They should develop a reasonably complete and reliable description of the problem and reflect this understanding to the client.

3. Learning the client's goals, expectations and needs.

The lawyers should learn the client's goals and initial expectations and modify or develop them as necessary, giving attention in doing so to the emotional aspects of the problems.

4. Problem analysis.

The lawyers should analyse the client's problem with creativity and from both legal and non-legal perspectives, resulting in a clear and useful formulation of the problem.

5. Legal analysis and giving advice.

Legal analysis and the consequent legal advice given should be both accurate and appropriate to the situation and its context. Any non-legal advice given should be pertinent and relevant.

6. Developing a reasoned course of action.

The lawyers, consistently with the analysis of the client's problem, should develop a set of potentially effective and feasible courses of action, both legal and non-legal.

7. Assisting the client to make an informed choice.

The lawyers should develop an appropriate balance in dealing with the legal and emotional needs of the client. They should assist the client in his or her understanding of problems and solutions and in making an informed choice, taking potential legal, economic, social and psychological consequences into account.

8. Effectively concluding the interview.

The lawyers should conclude the interview skilfully, leaving the client with:

- *A feeling of reasonable confidence and understanding,*
- *Appropriate reassurance, and*
- *A clear sense of specific expectations and mutual obligations to follow.*

9. Teamwork.

The lawyers as collaborating counsellors, should work together as a team, with flexibility and an appropriate balance of participation.

10. Ethical behaviour

The lawyers should recognise, clarify and respond to any moral or ethical issues which may arise, without being prejudicial in judgements.

11. The 'post interview reflection period'.

The lawyers during the post-interview reflection, should give evidence of:

- *Having recognised their own and the client's feelings,*
- *The strengths and limitations of their interviewing and counselling skills,*
- *Their handling of the substantive aspects of the client's problems (both legal and non-legal), and*
- *Provided for an effective follow up.*

Each criterion is marked out of five.

Prizes

Opportunity to attend an Open Day at Macfarlanes in January, this may secure you a place on one of their Vacation Schemes.

Winner receives £100 and the runners-up will receive £50.

Top-Tips

Sarah Baldwin
UCL 3rd Year Law Student
Client Interviewing Competition Winner 2014

1. Familiarize yourself with the assessment criteria
 - It provides the best indication of what the judges are looking for
2. Resist giving advice too early in the interview
 - Instead focus on gaining a thorough understanding of the client's problem
3. Think of a clear and simple way to articulate legal technicalities to the client
4. Consider non-legal solutions as well as legal solutions
5. Support your partner, but avoid interrupting or talking over them

Roshni Mehra, Vocations Officer 2015/16

1. Teamwork is what often distinguishes the very good teams
2. The law is not the most important part of the interview, the competition is about interviewing skills
3. Do not be afraid to go over a point with the client more than once
4. Be prepared to break bad news to a client - sometimes there is no good outcome to a scenario
5. Be flexible
 - Do not reach conclusions too early, be prepared to depart from any plan you have if required

Thank you for reading this booklet. I hope you enjoy the competition!

Roshni Mehra

Vocational Officer,

Roshni.mehra.13@ucl.ac.uk

07947763392