

You got a callback interview! Now what? If an OCI employer calls you for an on-site interview, after an on-campus screening interview, or you receive a second full-panel interview after an initial interview with one person, this means the employer has decided you have the credentials they are looking for, and were impressed with your initial interview. Now they want to see whether you will be a good fit for their environment, and if their initial impression was correct. Respond promptly to the call, remain polite, considerate, and professional, and prepare for your next step!

What to do when you get the call:

- **Respond promptly:** Employers expect a swift acknowledgement of their callback invitation (within 24 hours). If you need time to consider the callback invitation, let the employer know. If you do not respond in a timely fashion, both your own and the law school's reputations may be affected, and you may miss the opportunity.
- **When in doubt, ask!** Make sure you understand the time, place, and expected length of the interview. If you require any accommodations for the interview, advise the employer. If a question occurs to you after your conversation with the person who extended the invitation, call either that person or the recruitment coordinator.
- **Preparing for travel:** If the interview is in another city, some employers make travel arrangements for you or will put you in touch with their travel agent to make your plans. In other cases, you will need to make your arrangements and submit receipts for reimbursement. Other employers expect you to bear the expense of interview travel. When you schedule the interview, be prepared to ask and answer questions about your travel plans, and make sure you understand which expenses are your responsibility. Employers typically do not pay for spouse/partner travel, or for stays beyond the time necessary for the interview. So, if the employer is making the arrangements, you must make your own separate arrangements for companions or an extended stay.
- **Research!** The employer may ask if you are interested in meeting with attorneys practicing within specific areas – be prepared for this question. And of course, know even more about the employer for the callback than you did for the initial interview, whether it was on campus or at the employer's office.
- **Remain polite.** If something seems to go awry in the process, either with the scheduling of the callback or the interview itself, remain professional and cordial, and contact the CDO to report your concerns and ask for guidance.

- **Declining callbacks:** It is perfectly acceptable (and indeed preferable if you know you are not interested) to decline a callback offer. If you know you will decline the interview, it is especially important to respond promptly, so that another student may be offered the opportunity. Thank the employer for their interest in you. *You must decline a callback if you already have accepted employment.*

The on-site interview:

- **Be prepared.** The callback interview can be a much more intimidating prospect than the screening interview. You likely will meet with and be interviewed by many attorneys and staff members (whether formally or informally).
- **Bring extra copies of your materials** – including your resume, writing sample, transcript and list of references – with you, in case you are asked for them. If your resume has been updated with new information, make sure you provide it. Bring your portfolio to keep papers, both those you bring and those that may be provided to you. Bring a pen to take notes between interview sessions (but keep it in your portfolio, not in your hands or in your pocket – employers notice if you are playing with your pen due to nervousness, and you don't want to spend the day with an inkblot on your clothes or hands).
- **Be polite.** Remember that each person you meet may be asked to give feedback about their interaction with you. Treat everyone with utmost respect – do not make assumptions about the person's role in the organization.
- **Impress!** Memorize the names of the people who will be conducting the interview if they are provided beforehand, and read their bios on the employer website (if available) so that you may ask questions about their work or experience. And memorize the names of any new people you meet, so that you may send thank you notes or emails to all.
- **Have questions prepared in advance.** If you are asked if you have any questions, ask one! Following up on something that one of the interviewers mentioned shows that you are paying attention and are interested. Ask questions that demonstrate how informed and prepared you are.
- **Some repetition is ok.** You may ask the same questions of different interviewers. Interviewers likely will have some of the same questions for you.
- **After your initial interview,** you may have realized there was something you wish you had said or asked, or an impression you wish to adjust – perhaps you found yourself saying “um” too many times. Now is your chance to say what you wished you'd said, or to present an even more professional demeanor – but remember to still be yourself.
- **Don't wear the same clothes!** If you have only one suit, be sure your shirt or blouse, and tie or jewelry, are different. (It's not a bad idea to bring an extra shirt, tie, blouse, pair of panty hose for emergencies!)

- **Be prepared for a meal.** Employers like to see how candidates conduct themselves in a social setting. This is your opportunity to find out more about the work setting, and to demonstrate how you might interact with co-workers if you were offered the position. Although this portion of the callback may seem less formal, it is, nonetheless, still an interview – so you still must conduct yourself carefully. Be wary of messy foods, and avoid alcohol.
- **Follow up with thank you notes!** It is acceptable to send emailed thank you notes, but whether you email or send handwritten notes, send them to each person who interviewed you. Make sure each one is individualized – they may compare notes!
- **Ask about next steps.** Ask when you should expect to hear about the employer’s decision, or if there are any intermediary steps.
- **Cancelling your interview.** If you receive an offer prior to the interview (or know that you are not interested in accepting an offer), even if it is the same day as the interview, it is courteous to call to cancel rather than waste the interviewer’s time.

### GUIDELINES GOVERNING CALLBACKS

NALP has guidelines for employers and students that govern callbacks, offers, and acceptances. There are guidelines that govern the fall OCI period, and those that govern interviews made at other times in the year. There also are different guidelines for large and small employers. These rules are intended to make the process fair for all – students and employers alike. Although they are not mandatory, if an employer does not follow them, please let the CDO know. Be aware that most employers will also alert the CDO if a student has not followed the guidelines.

#### *Guidelines regarding Scheduling:*

- It is expected that if you accept an offer for a return interview, you are participating in the interview because you are serious about the opportunity. If you do not intend to accept an offer of employment if it is extended, do not accept the callback. This wastes the employer’s time, and hurts another student’s chance to have received a callback opportunity.
- **Travel reimbursement:** Understand the employer’s reimbursement policies before making your travel plans. Know what expenses are reimbursable, what ranges are considered reasonable, and keep your requests appropriate. Your receipts should be submitted promptly. If you interview with more than one employer during a single trip, establish beforehand which organization is reimbursing you for what portion of your expenses. The employer may give you a form to submit, or use the NALP form (see “Resources,” below).

#### *Guidelines regarding Offers:*

- **Rules governing employers:** NALP guidelines specify that employers offering full-time post-graduate positions to those candidates not previously employed by them, as well as summer offers extended to candidates not previously employed by them – should leave those offers open for at least 28 days following the date of the offer letter, or until December 30, whichever comes first. Offers made after December 15 for the following summer should remain open for at least two weeks following the date of the offer letter.
- **Rules governing students:** NALP principles and standards specify that a student should not hold open more than five offers of employment at any one time. For each offer received that places a student over the five-offer limit, the student should release an offer within one week after receiving the excess offer.
  - Once an offer has been extended, pay attention to what date the employer has indicated the offer will expire. If it is different from the NALP guidelines, don't argue with the employer. If there is anything about the offer or its expiration that is unclear, it is fine to request clarification; but if you have concerns, come to the CDO to discuss what you should do.

## RESOURCES

Full text of NALP Principles and Standards:

<http://www.nalp.org/fulltextofnalpprinciplesandstandards>

NALP Standards Governing Students:

[http://www.nalp.org/fulltextofnalpprinciplesandstandards#Part\\_III.\\_Prin\\_Candidates](http://www.nalp.org/fulltextofnalpprinciplesandstandards#Part_III._Prin_Candidates)

NALP Student Professionalism Guide:

<http://www.nalp.org/studentprofessionalism>

NALP Travel Expense Reimbursement Form:

<http://www.nalp.org/uploads/2013TravelExpenseForm.pdf>