

HOW TO GET CALLED FOR A TRAINING CONTRACT INTERVIEW

The elusive TC. A prize to be seized amidst the competitive legal market. Follow this helpful guide (and avoid the common pitfalls) to maximize your chances of getting called up for an interview:

1. The Why

Before you embark on any concrete steps, you need to be sure about your *why*. Know who you are, what you want and where you want to go.

Do ample research on the firms, speak to friends, seniors or a lawyer in practice about the different fields of practice, firm culture and conversion rates (how many trainees the firm takes in and how many they actually retain).

If you do not have any seniors you can speak to, you can drop us a note at info@successgogo.com and we will link you up with a lawyer from our network.

2. The Ask

If you have followed the first step above, you should have narrowed down the pool of firms that you wish to apply to. This is important. Firms *can* tell that you are just blindly applying to all firms, and that you are not genuinely interested (or have done sufficient research) about their firm. Which leads us to the next point, your Cover Letter and CV should be *tailored* to each individual firm.

Your CV is perhaps the most important document in the application process. It forms the bedrock of the firm's decision-making process. As a general guide, law firms look primarily for (i) academic excellence; (ii) prior legal experience (internships, mooting, pro-bono etc); and to a lesser extent (iii) leadership and/or volunteering activities. As a general guide, your CV should not be more than one page long (if you really have to, 2 pages is fine), and there should be NO formatting, grammatical or spelling errors. Attention to detail is a prerequisite of any successful lawyer, and you need to demonstrate that you have such basic skill-sets from the get-go.

Ensure that your CV is tailored to the firm *and* the department you are applying to. Corporate and Litigation are different and the skill-sets and relevant experience that you wish to highlight for each are different. For instance, mooting experience is important for future litigators but less so for corporate lawyers.

Your cover letter should be concise, and tailored to the firm in question. Give a brief introduction about yourself and your motivations for wanting to be a lawyer, and write about why you want to join the firm and that department. It's okay to add a personal touch, maybe you want to join WongP's ECM practice because of your hobby in stock trading, or maybe you want to join R&T's Commercial Litigation team because of your love of substantive law. Whatever you write, do know that you will be asked about it at the interview, so please paint a consistent picture.

Write your Cover Letter and CV for the partner who will be your future boss, and not for the HR department. It is the practitioner who ultimately decides whether to call you up for the interview, and whether to offer you the elusive training contract.

Lastly, a shameless bump, please do submit your Cover Letter and CV to us. We are a social enterprise that includes a large panel of volunteer lawyers from Big 4 and international firms. An appropriate practitioner will review your Cover Letter/CV and provide comments to improve. Submit your application and take a look at more resources tailored for law students at www.sucessgogo.com.

3. The Result

Law firms take anywhere between 3 days to 3 months to get back to you. If you are extremely eager for a response, you may call HR to politely enquire if they have *received* your application or in your cover email, include the line “*kindly acknowledge receipt of this email*”. Be optimistic, don’t stress and let the process take care of itself. Try not to pester or demand a response from HR, as that usually elicits a negative response.

HR will schedule an interview likely within a week from the date that you are contacted. In this regard, we strongly recommend preparing for the interview in advance. You may access our list of commonly asked interview questions for a training contract on the next page.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions on the above or if you have any queries on the practice of law in Singapore generally. Best of luck with applications!

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS: LAW INTERVIEWS

These are the essence of commonly asked interview questions by law firms.

About you

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you decide to do law?
- What are your hobbies / interests / what do you do in your spare time?
- Tell me more about your CCAs / Mooting Experience / any leadership position(s) you have held.
- Take me through your CV.
(Note: Be prepared to address tricky questions about a bad grade or gap in your CV).

Employer

- Why did you apply to this firm?
- Why do you want to work in this department?
- Why are you a good fit for our firm culture?
- Which other firms have you applied to?
(Note: A candid answer is recommended because the legal circle is particularly small. A good answer would be one that illustrates a clear strategy in your application.)

Experience

- Tell me about this module / area of law?
- What do you think about this recent change in the law / news event?
- Tell me about your internship with XYZ.
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why do you think you are suited to be a corporate lawyer / dispute resolution lawyer?

For more experienced candidates:

- Why did you leave your previous job?
- What was your job scope at your previous job?
- What was the reporting structure at your previous role?
- What skills / experience makes you suitable for this new role?
- What was your last drawn salary? What is your expected remuneration?

Working Style

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you work well in a team?
- Can you work independently?
- What are your expectations as to mentorship / working hours / working environment?

Parting Words

- Do you have any questions?
(Note: This is an opportunity to show that you have researched the firm. Do ensure that you ask at least a question or two. Good questions will include questions about firm culture, a recent piece of news concerning the firm, or broad industry trends.)

SuccessGoGo

By Professionals, For Professionals



About Us

- **What is SuccessGoGo?**

SuccessGoGo provides a personalised CV and Cover Letter review service. We match you with a legal professional in your desired practice area (E.g. Litigation, Corporate/M&A), who will review your application and provide comments to improve.

- **Who are your reviewers?**

Our Panel includes lawyers from Big 4 Law Firms in Singapore and International Law Firms. They have kindly partnered with us out of goodwill to provide mentorship to law students in the current competitive climate for training contracts.

- **How?**

Submit your CV at www.successgogo.com

- **Why?**

We are a social enterprise with the goal of levelling the playing field in the competitive job market, helping motivated students secure their dream jobs. As a social enterprise, we only charge an administrative fee of **S\$6.99**.

How to Submit

- **Step 1**

Submit your CV at www.successgogo.com

- **Step 2**

SuccessGoGo Review™ includes proof reading, formatting and high-level substantive comments to make your application stand out.

- **Step 3**

Receive comments on your CV by email (approx. 3 to 5 working days).

- **Other Services**

If you have secured an interview or need career advice generally, we will put you in touch with a practitioner in your dream department who can advise accordingly.