# Legal Executive interview questions

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## What to expect

Legal executive interviews usually assess your drafting accuracy, research skills, matter management and client communication, as well as how you handle competing deadlines and regulatory obligations. You may be asked to complete a short drafting exercise or respond to a scenario based on a realistic file.

- **Process:** Questions about how you open a file, manage costs disclosure or prepare a brief to counsel.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask you to describe how you have handled competing deadlines or difficult clients.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical matters that test your judgement on disclosure, conflicts or court deadlines.
- **Technical and drafting:** Questions on how you draft or review a contract, lease or court document, or how you use LEAP, Smokeball or iManage.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about explaining costs, delays or legal processes to clients.
- **Regulatory:** Questions on your understanding of costs disclosure, trust accounting basics or the Legal Profession Uniform Law.

The process often starts with a phone or video screen with a recruitment consultant or office manager, followed by a panel interview with a senior solicitor or practice manager. Some firms include a short drafting test or a file management exercise. You may also meet the supervising solicitor or a partner. Interviews usually run for 45 to 60 minutes and may include a tour of the office.

## 1. Walk me through how you manage a new client matter from initial instruction to file opening and costs disclosure.

**Why they ask**

This checks your process discipline and understanding of costs disclosure requirements.

**How to structure your answer**

Use a step-by-step walk-through: instruction, conflict check, engagement and costs disclosure, file opening in your practice management system, and setting review dates.

**Example answer**

*“When a new client instructs us, I start with a conflict check and confirm the scope of work. I then prepare the costs disclosure and engagement letter, explaining our hourly rates and likely disbursements in plain language. Once signed, I open the matter in LEAP, set up the file structure in iManage, and diarise key dates for the solicitor. I also send the client a welcome email with their reference number and our contact details.”*

## 2. Tell me about a time you had to manage competing deadlines across several files.

**Why they ask**

Employers want to see how you prioritise when every matter feels urgent.

**How to structure your answer**

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on how you assessed risk, communicated with solicitors, and kept clients informed.

**Example answer**

*"In my current firm, I was managing a commercial lease review, a contested Local Court matter and two wills at the same time. The court matter had a filing deadline that could not move, so I blocked out the morning to prepare the brief to counsel and disclosure schedule. I told the solicitor on the lease matter that the draft would come after lunch and gave the client a realistic time. I also delegated the wills file opening to a junior assistant with clear instructions. I met the court deadline and the lease draft went out the same day."*

## 3. A client asks you for legal advice on whether to accept a settlement offer. What do you do?

**Why they ask**

This tests your understanding of the legal executive role boundaries and your ability to redirect appropriately.

**How to structure your answer**

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: acknowledge the request, explain your role, escalate to the solicitor, and confirm next steps with the client.

**Example answer**

*"I would thank the client for raising it and explain that I am not admitted to give legal advice, but I can make sure the solicitor sees their question quickly. I would note the details and ask the solicitor to call the client. I would follow up with the client to confirm the solicitor has been in touch and that they understand the next step. I would also record the exchange on the file."*

## 4. How do you approach drafting a special condition in a commercial lease?

**Why they ask**

This probes your drafting accuracy and attention to detail.

**How to structure your answer**

Use a technical explanation: clarify instructions, review precedent, check relevant legislation, draft the clause, and have a solicitor review it.

**Example answer**

*"I start by checking the solicitor's instructions and the agreed commercial terms. I review our precedent bank to see if we have a similar clause, then check the relevant state legislation for any mandatory wording. I draft the condition in plain English, making sure it sits consistently with the rest of the lease. I then send it to the solicitor for review and note any issues in the file."*

## 5. How would you explain a delay in court proceedings to a worried client?

**Why they ask**

This assesses your client communication and empathy.

**How to structure your answer**

Use a client-facing structure: acknowledge the concern, explain the reason in plain terms, outline what you are doing, and give a realistic next update.

**Example answer**

*"I would call the client rather than email, because tone matters. I would apologise for the worry and explain that the court registry has a backlog and we are waiting on a listing date. I would tell them exactly what I am doing to follow up, and when I will next contact them. I would also ask if they have any questions and confirm I am available if they need to talk before then."*

## 6. What do you understand by costs disclosure, and why does it matter?

**Why they ask**

This checks your knowledge of a core compliance obligation for non-admitted legal staff.

**How to structure your answer**

Use a definition, purpose, and practical application structure.

**Example answer**

*“Costs disclosure is the requirement to tell clients, in writing, how we will charge them, what the likely total cost will be, and their rights if they are unhappy. It matters because it is a professional obligation and it protects both the client and the firm. In practice, I prepare the disclosure at the start of a matter, update it if the scope changes, and keep a record of when it was sent and any client response.”*