Legal Secretary interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for legal secretary roles focus on how you handle court deadlines, document accuracy and client contact under time pressure, alongside familiarity with legal software and terminology. Firms want to see that you understand court procedure well enough to spot errors before a partner does.

- **Process:** Questions asking you to walk through how you'd handle a specific administrative or filing task from start to finish.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experience managing deadlines, workload and difficult situations, usually answered with a specific example.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations testing judgement when something goes wrong close to a deadline or during a client interaction.
- **Technical:** Direct questions about legal software, document formatting standards and file management systems.
- **Client-facing:** Questions on handling phone and email contact with clients, courts and opposing counsel professionally.

Most interviews open with questions about your background and current software skills, move into scenario or behavioural questions about deadlines and client handling, and often finish with a short discussion of your understanding of court procedure or confidentiality obligations. Some firms include a short practical test, such as formatting a document or drafting a short letter.

1. Walk me through how you'd prepare and file an urgent court document that's due by the end of the day.

Why they ask

This checks whether you understand the practical steps of court filing and can sequence tasks correctly under time pressure.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: describe the steps in order from receiving instructions to confirming the filing, noting any checks you'd do along the way.

Example answer

“I'd first confirm the exact filing deadline and which court or registry it needs to go to, since requirements can differ. I'd draft or format the document to the required style, checking headings, party names and any annexures against the file. Before sending it anywhere, I'd proofread it against the instructing solicitor's notes and confirm any figures or dates. Then I'd file it through the relevant electronic filing system or in person if required, save a copy to the case file, and confirm with the solicitor that it's been lodged and note the filing receipt on the file.”

2. Tell me about a time you had to manage several competing deadlines at once.

Why they ask

Legal secretaries routinely juggle multiple solicitors' files, so interviewers want evidence you can prioritise without dropping anything.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the task, the action you took to prioritise, and the result.

Example answer

“I was supporting two solicitors who both had matters requiring filings the same week, plus a set of contracts due for a client meeting. I listed every deadline with its actual cut-off time, not just the day, and flagged to both solicitors which task I was tackling first and why. I completed the court filing first since it had a hard registry cut-off, then moved to the contracts, checking in with the client's assistant to confirm the meeting time hadn't moved. Everything went out on time and neither solicitor was caught off guard by what was outstanding.”

3. You're about to file an affidavit fifteen minutes before the court's cut-off and you spot an error in a date. What do you do?

Why they ask

Tests judgement under pressure and whether you know when to escalate rather than act alone on a legal document.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: state the immediate action, who you'd involve, and how you'd resolve it within the time constraint.

Example answer

“I'd stop and flag the error immediately rather than file it as is, since an incorrect date in an affidavit can cause real problems later. I'd call or message the solicitor straight away to confirm the correct date and get their sign-off on the fix. If they were unreachable, I'd check the file and any related correspondence for the accurate date myself, make the correction, and note in an email to the solicitor exactly what I changed and why. I'd only file once I had certainty on the correction, even if it meant contacting the registry to explain a short delay.”

4. Which legal practice management software have you used, and how did you use it day to day?

Why they ask

Confirms hands-on familiarity with tools like LEAP or Clio, which most firms rely on for billing, file notes and document precedents.

How to structure your answer

Direct technical answer: name the systems, describe specific functions used, and note how it fitted into your daily workflow.

Example answer

“I've worked with LEAP for case file management, time recording and generating standard precedents like letters of engagement. Day to day I used it to log file notes after client calls, track matter deadlines through its diary function, and pull document templates for contracts and correspondence. I've also used Adobe Acrobat regularly for redacting and combining PDF bundles before filing or sending to counsel.”

5. How would you handle a client who calls upset because their matter hasn't progressed as quickly as they expected, and the solicitor isn't available?

Why they ask

Client liaison is a core part of the role and firms want reassurance you can de-escalate without overstepping legal advice boundaries.

How to structure your answer

Behavioural or scenario response focused on tone, boundaries and follow-up: describe how you'd manage the immediate call and what happens next.

Example answer

“I'd let the client explain their concern fully without interrupting, and acknowledge that the delay is frustrating for them. I'd check the file while on the call if possible to give them an honest update on

where the matter actually stands, without offering any opinion on legal strategy or timing that isn't mine to give. I'd take detailed notes of the call, flag it to the solicitor as a priority callback, and let the client know when they can expect to hear back directly from the solicitor.”

6. How do you approach confidentiality and file security when you're handling sensitive case material?

Why they ask

Legal secretaries have access to privileged and often highly sensitive client information, so firms test your understanding of professional obligations.

How to structure your answer

Direct answer with examples: state your general approach, then give a concrete practice you follow.

Example answer

“I treat every file as confidential by default, regardless of how sensitive the matter looks on the surface. Practically, that means locking my screen whenever I step away, only discussing file details with people who are actually working on the matter, and double-checking recipient details before sending anything by email, especially where a matter involves opposing parties who could easily be added by mistake. I also make sure physical files are returned to secure storage rather than left out on a desk overnight.”