

Interview Questions

When interviewing for an in-house position, remember to focus on how your skills will help the firm rather than the benefits that you will get from the firm. Below are some common interview questions. Both the bad and better answers are based on actual interviews with prospective Legal Nurse Consultants

Question	Bad Answer(s)	Why Another Answer Would be Better	Better Answer(s)
Tell me about yourself.	I went to high school in New York and then got my nursing degree. I married my first husband when I was working at Memorial Hospital. No wait, it was right before I started working at Memorial. I moved here when I was pregnant with my daughter Jamie. She's the one I have with my second husband, Jim. I worked at City Hospital for awhile and then, oh, I forgot to tell you that I got a divorce from my first husband, Eddie. I also got divorced from Jim, but that was later... <i>(In the real interview, the nurse continued in this vein for several more minutes.)</i>	This is way too much personal information. Focus on your professional experiences and how they will help you perform the job.	I've been a nurse for 26 years. In that time, I've worked in several settings, including hospitals, homecare and hospice. I've worked as a staff nurse and most recently I've reviewed medical records as a member of the quality assurance committee at my organization. I found that I liked this aspect of the work so much that I decided to take a legal nurse consulting course. I know that this firm does insurance defense and I feel that my broad nursing background would benefit the firm when reviewing medical malpractice cases.
Why do you want to work at this firm?	I want to get some experience so that I can become an independent LNC.	No one is going to want to train you so that you can leave in the future. In addition, you need to address why this particular firm is appealing to you.	I've researched your firm and it seems like a (put appropriate adjective here such as solid, progressive, innovative, etc.) firm. I feel that my background and skills would be a good fit here.

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<p>Why did you decide to become an LNC?</p>	<p>I wanted to see if I would like it.</p> <p>I wanted to get out of bedside nursing.</p>	<p>Again, an employer isn't going to want to train you because in the future you may decide that you don't like the legal profession. The firm would be much more willing to train someone who is eager to learn and wants to stay in the position.</p> <p>The firm depends on your nursing expertise so it's better not to denigrate that experience. Plus, "getting out of" a position doesn't sound very positive.</p>	<p>I've always been fascinated by the legal profession. I feel that my nursing background would be an asset to your firm.</p> <p>I am interested in a new challenge and an opportunity to use my nursing skills and experience in a different way than I have in the past.</p> <p>There isn't room for growth in the hospital setting, except for management positions which I'm not interested in. I'm ready for a new challenge.</p>
<p>Where do you see yourself in 5 years?</p>	<p>I don't know.</p> <p>I want to own my own business.</p>	<p>Any answer that doesn't help the firm for which you are interviewing is a bad answer.</p>	<p>I see myself working here in 5 years but I would hope to have grown in my position and perhaps to have taken on additional responsibilities.</p>
<p>What kind of person do you like to work for? What kind of person do you hate to work for?</p>	<p>My old boss was the best boss I've ever had. He let me do whatever I wanted. I hate working for people who nitpick everything I do.</p>	<p>While you need to be honest with your answer, you also need to be careful about how you phrase it. These questions may be trying to discern if you're a team player or a maverick, if you assess blame or take responsibility.</p>	<p>I can't say that I've hated anyone that I've worked for. However, my preference is for a supervisor who knows that I will come to her or him if I have questions but knows that otherwise I'll complete assignments on or before the deadline. Of course, I recognize that there will need for more assistance when I first start but I would see that need for assistance tapering off after I get to know how the firm functions and individual preferences.</p>

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<p><i>(Continued)</i> What kind of person do you like to work for? What kind of person do you hate to work for?</p>		<p>Or, the firm might have some strong personalities and the interviewer wants to know if you will be able to work with these personalities.</p>	<p>Some bosses that I've enjoyed working with have taught me how to do handle difficult situations. The more challenging bosses have taught me how NOT to do things. However, I can say that I've learned from every boss that I've had.</p>
<p>What are your weaknesses?</p> <p>Variation: We all have areas that could use some work when it comes to our jobs. What are your areas?</p>	<p>I don't have any weaknesses.</p>	<p>Everyone has strengths and weaknesses although it's OK to say that there's no ongoing criticism about your work performance. Not recognizing weaknesses shows poor insight into your own behavior and, without that insight, the ability to correct weaker areas of performance. Whatever weakness you mention should be countered with a way that you are working to overcome that weakness. See examples at right.</p>	<p>I haven't had any experience in a law firm before. However, I have reviewed numerous medical records in the past and I've brought a portfolio of the type of work that I can do for you. May I show it to you?</p> <p>I'm a reformed perfectionist. I've learned that I can still produce an impeccable review or report without it being "perfect."</p> <p>I've never missed a deadline but when I first started working, I had trouble with deadlines because I wasn't as familiar with the legal process as I am now. I now use a tickler system that has kept me on track and I've had no problems since I starting using it.</p>

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<p>How would you handle it if you were working for two attorneys and they both wanted something done right away?</p>	<p>I would tell the second one, "It's first come, first served." If that didn't work, I'd ask the administrator to step in to decide whose assignment I should do first.</p>	<p>This answer indicates that there might be problems with prioritization and working with people. Plus, administrators usually prefer that co-workers solve their own problems whenever possible.</p>	<p>There are a couple of ways that I might approach that problem, depending on the specifics. I would want to know what "right away" means because I might be able to juggle the assignments if one assignment could really wait a bit. In the past when I've had similar situations, I found it helpful to get together with the two attorneys and explain that the two assignments overlap. Often, the attorneys were unaware of the overlap and usually one changed their time frame. If that failed, I got help from other LNCs or paralegals in the firm and reciprocated when they needed help. I've found those approaches worked well for me.</p>