# The Real M&A Interview: What Actually Gets Asked

Real interviewers don't ask abstract textbook questions. They meet you where you are - asking about what YOU have actually done or can demonstrate.

Here's what actually happens in M&A interviews at top firms:

- **Phase 1**: Personal Story (Questions 1-3) - They assess if you're someone they want to work with
- **Phase 2**: Finding Common Ground (Question 4) - They identify your area of comfort
- **Phase 3**: Testing Depth (Question 5) - They assess your understanding in your chosen area
- **Phase 4**: Exploring Experience (Questions 6-9) - They understand what you've worked on
- **Phase 5**: Career Fit (Question 10) - They assess long-term alignment

This guide shows you the actual 10-question flow. We won't give you the answers - because good answers come from genuine understanding and not premediated answers

## THE 10 QUESTIONS

### Phase 1: Personal Story & Fit

1. **Tell me something about yourself.**

   **What they want**: 2-3 minute story connecting family background → education → other interests (basically, how you landed-up to this point in life)

2. **Why did you decide to take up law?**

   **What they want**: Genuine reason unique to you, not generic platitudes

3. **What is your experience in the legal field so far?**

   **What they want**: Specific internships, projects, coursework, moot courts - with concrete details

## Phase 2: Finding Your Comfort Zone

4. **Out of the Companies Act, Contract Act, and NDI Rules - which enactment are you most comfortable with?**

   **Why this matters**: The interviewer wants to have a meaningful technical conversation. These are the legal enactments which apply to most M&A deals and are covered in your coursework. By letting you choose your strong area, they can assess your depth. Be honest - this helps both sides have a productive discussion

## Phase 3: Testing Your Depth

5. **Based on your answer to Question 4:**

   **If Companies Act:** Walk me through the share issuance provisions

   **If Contract Act:** Explain the difference between damages and indemnity

   **If NDI Rules:** Explain the pricing guidelines

## Phase 4: Understanding Your Experience

**Note**: If you have internship experience, expect these questions. If you're a fresher, interviewers may pose hypothetical scenarios to test your legal reasoning and analytical ability



6. **Walk me through one of the interesting M&A deals you've worked on**

   **OR** if fresher: "Here's a hypothetical deal structure - what legal issues do you see?"

7. **What made it interesting and what was your learning from it?**

   **What they want**: Reflection and analytical ability, not just description

8. **What were some of the interesting legal aspects covered in the deal?**

   **What they want**: Can you identify what matters legally? Regulatory approvals? Structuring challenges? What were the legal positions which were taken based on the fact pattern?

9. **Which chapter of due diligence are you most comfortable handling and what are some interesting aspects about it?**

   **What they want**: Can you go deep on at least one DD area? It helps them assess which work area you are capable of picking up immediately after joining

## Phase 5: Career Alignment

10. **Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years and what are your goals?**

    **What they want**: Realistic understanding of M&A career path and genuine commitment to the practice area

## WHAT INTERVIEWERS ARE REALLY ASSESSING

**Remember**: Interviewers are as invested in finding good candidates as you are in getting hired. They structure questions to help you showcase your strengths

### Questions 1-3: Communication & Cultural Fit

- Do you communicate clearly and confidently?
- Is your interest in M&A genuine?
- Can you tell a coherent professional story?

### Question 4-5: Technical Foundation

Question 4 isn't a trap - it's an opportunity. By choosing your comfort area, you're directing the conversation to where you can have a substantive discussion. Be honest about your strengths

- Do you have genuine depth in at least one area?
- Can you engage in technical discussion beyond surface-level definitions?

### Questions 6-9: Experience & Analytical Ability

For experienced candidates: These questions explore your practical exposure to deals and your ability to learn from experience

For freshers: Interviewers will pivot to hypothetical scenarios to test your legal reasoning, analytical skills, and ability to spot issues

- Can you reflect on experience (or analyse scenarios)?
- Can you identify what matters legally in a transaction?
- Do you show curiosity and initiative in learning?

### Question 10: Long-term Commitment

- Do you understand what an M&A career actually involves?
- Are your goals realistic and aligned with firm culture?
- Will you stay long enough to justify training investment?