



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're excited to have ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones here with us to talk about getting ready for OCI. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, and typically, I'm with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're excited to have ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones here with us to talk about getting ready for OCI. Welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. Well, if anyone's familiar, what is OCI? And this may go by some other names – EIW, all kinds of different things in different schools. But what is this, fundamentally?

Sadie Jones: It's basically just a set interviewing process that the school organizes that connects the employers with the students. I think most of them are still remote. So, you probably go to a location or potentially, I think you could do it from where you are. And you get connected with different employers over, let's say, a two-week period, and do the initial interviews, just to make it all organized and in one place.

Alison Monahan: And to be clear, when you say "employers", you're really basically talking about large law firms, right?

Sadie Jones: Generally, yes. There might be some kind of government and public interest organizations, I think, that do participate in OCI sometimes. But generally, it's going to be the mid-size, larger law firms.

Alison Monahan: Right. And sometimes schools have two sets of things – they'll have the BigLaw OCI and then they'll have a different sort of recruiting. So I think you just want to understand what you're getting into, but typically when we're talking about OCI, we're talking about you want to get a summer associate position in a law firm.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.



Alison Monahan: Alright. So, for people who are planning to participate in OCI this year, what do you think they need to be thinking about or doing right now to get ready for that?

Sadie Jones: Well, first of all, we're in the early part of the summer, so you're just starting to get ready for it. No one needs to panic that they're too late or anything, but you do want to be getting all your ducks in a row. The first thing I think is to look at information you've gotten from Career Services or seek it out, so you know what all the important dates are – so, when you need to have your bids in, which is your choices of which employers you want to interview with, when you need to have your documents sent to them, when you get your schedule, when the actual interviewing is taking place. So I highly suggest putting reminders on your calendar with, let's say, however much lead time you need – a week or two – to remember that that's coming up so that you don't miss any important dates.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, that's absolutely critical, because if you neglect to put your bids in and don't get any bids – well, that's going to kind of bomb your chances. So, some of this just seems, "Oh, of course, I wouldn't miss that", but if you're working this summer or you have other things going on, it's pretty easy to miss minor dates, basically. And so you really want to make sure, I think that's right, that everything... You know when it needs to be submitted, you've given yourself time to do it, you're not rushing at the last second, because some of this stuff does take often more time than you think. Even putting together bid lists is not something that you should really do probably the night before, right?

Sadie Jones: Exactly. I mean, you can if somehow you've forgotten you just need to get it in, but it's not going to be the most well thought out or strategized list that way. And something to keep in mind is, most of these systems are all sort of automated. So if you forget and then you call Career Services, they can't just be like, "Oh, okay, we'll fix that for you." It's like if the lottery has been run, everyone's been assigned schedules, they can't just fit you in. Maybe you could get on people's schedules, but it's not something they have any control over, so just remember that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And also if it's all online, you want to make sure that you do it early enough that if the system crashes the night before because everyone else is trying to get their bids in, that you're not involved in that. Just don't give yourself the stress of doing it at the last second; it's really not worth it. I think this is probably how I ended up with bids at places I really wouldn't have wanted to work, that I wasn't really sure why I was interviewing at, or in one case, the wrong city – because I checked the wrong box and I didn't realize until I had the interview. And they asked me, "So, why do you want to be in DC?" And I kind of looked blankly at them. I was like, "Umm, DC?" They were like, "Yeah, you do know that you're interviewing with our DC office right now." And I'm like, "Huh."



- Sadie Jones: Awkward.
- Alison Monahan: Really awkward. So don't be that person. Get your bids in early and think about them.
- Sadie Jones: I think that's such a good point. And double check. Like you said, it's really easy to just make a little mistake that can affect it. And really, this is a great opportunity to get all these interviews, so you want to do it right.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. It's like a lot of firms do have a lot of offices, and you want to make sure. Just triple-check that you're actually selecting the one that you think you would want to work in. It might not be the one it defaults to, just make sure. This is a great opportunity to use your legal skills, to be really careful and detail-oriented, and make sure that you're getting hopefully the interviews you would like to have.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: Alright, so what else should people be doing?
- Sadie Jones: So, I suggest setting aside time each week or each day, whatever works for you, to do these sorts of tasks. I think we've talked about this before, but I always think if you put time on your calendar that's for this, you're more likely to really do it. So, maybe it's half an afternoon, a weekend, or maybe it's 15 or 20 minutes every day before dinner or something, I don't know, whatever works for you. But I say put that in your calendar with reminders, follow it, and have it be sort of a regular thing that, "Oh, okay, it's job search time or career time, and I'm going to do something that needs to be done during that time", because there's always stuff you could be doing. And I think it just gets you into the mindset of, this is important and it's something you need to devote time to.
- Alison Monahan: That makes sense to me, because I think sometimes it's easy to push these things aside. A friend of mine asked me yesterday, "How do you think I can motivate myself to do things I don't want to do?" And I think something like this can actually take off that pressure, because again, if you procrastinate and then you're in a situation where you have to get it all done at the last minute, it's much more stressful than if you just put 30 minutes on your calendar three or four times a week. And then you're like, "Oh, now it's the 30 minutes. And instead of being on TikTok, I'm going to work on my resume."
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And I think all those things we procrastinate, when we actually do them, we realize that the procrastinating was the hardest part, and actually just doing it wasn't that big of a deal.



- Alison Monahan: No, totally. I finished something last night at like 8:00 PM that I'd promised someone I would get to them in last week. And literally part of my brain the entire week was working on this document. And then I finally sat down and wrote it, and I think it took maybe 30 minutes.
- Sadie Jones: And I bet you feel really good to have it out of the way. And you wish you'd just done it like five days ago.
- Alison Monahan: I feel so accomplished, exactly. I should have just written this down instead of just thinking about it for the whole week. So I think giving yourself that time to do things is just going to make it easier in the end.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely.
- Alison Monahan: What are you using this time on?
- Sadie Jones: So first, most important is make sure all the documents that you need to turn in are done, finalized, the best version of themselves. That's usually resume, cover letter, writing sample. I'm putting them in those order on purpose. Resume is the most important, I would say cover letter second, writing sample's third. Your resume is really the thing that most people are going to look at and spend the most time on. And so, that's the order of that. And we've talked before about how to do a resume and how to re-check it. So I just think it's important to have your final version, and once you know it's finalized, don't keep playing with it. I think people mess things up doing that. It's like, that's the last version. Maybe you need to add something – you got an award or your GPA went up or whatever – and that's fine. Make sure it's in PDF form, it's saved under a neutral, normal name, like your name, resume, this summer or whatever.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I wouldn't put something like "BigLaw Resume" on it, because then it makes people wonder, "Well, what else are they interviewing for?" Just make it "Resume".
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. Or the city, because you have one that's focused on this market and one that's focused on the other market. They don't need to know that you're looking at two different markets. You can figure out a way to know which is which.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. I wouldn't make it too obvious. I do think it's useful to have separate resumes for different cities and different types of jobs, but try not to make it too obvious that's what you're doing, because then people just start to question your actual commitment to what you're applying for.
- Sadie Jones: Because as the employer, I actually look at the names of files.
- Alison Monahan: Oh yeah.



- Sadie Jones: It's just something I do. Maybe not everyone does.
- Alison Monahan: Probably not. But we definitely care about file system. Partly, it just tells me, is this person organized? Because if you're in a law firm, working with someone, an unbelievable amount of the time and energy you spend working with someone is usually about how they're naming their files and where they're putting them in the document management system. So yeah, I think that's actually a big red flag if I see somebody's resume and it has some insane name that you can tell is like version 4.2 of New York versus writing resume. You're just like, "Oh my God, are you kidding me? I could never work with this person."
- Sadie Jones: Or even a typo – that to me counts. Or you wrote the year wrong or something like that. So, just keep that in mind. Basically, the most important thing is to get those completely done and finalized, because you're going to need them to submit, and it's sort of the first level of what anyone's going to see from you. So, it's the first task I would spend time on.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think people can get tripped up on the writing sample too, because people either think it's more important than it is or less important than it is, and can spend a lot of time and energy on this. The writing sample is kind of pro forma. It needs to be probably around five pages, nothing longer, nothing shorter – I mean, significantly longer or shorter. It needs to be absolutely clean, it needs to be totally perfect, your citations need to be perfect. This is not something that you just take what you turned into legal writing and submit it as your writing sample. You are allowed, and should, clean it up and make sure it's absolutely as perfect as you can make it, no typos. Because again, these are actually the things that you might be working on as a summer associate or even as a young lawyer. You might be the one doing the cite checking. So, this is something lawyers actually care about, and they will look at more than the quality of your reasoning, necessarily, which I don't think most people are frankly reading it.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. I think they're very rarely read, but they are kind of looked at for mistakes, especially if maybe you're on the bubble, so they think, "Oh, we'll take a look at it." But I don't think there's going to be any writing in it that they think is ground-breaking, that is going to get you the job. And so that's where people spend too much time.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you don't need to be making a super creative argument. What we're looking for here is a basic level of competence that, "Could I give this person a legal writing assignment that they could do competently and present to me in a logical manner?" And that's about it.



- Sadie Jones: Oh, and also that there's nothing in there that you're not allowed to turn in, that someone else can't see. If you needed someone to sign off on it, it has confidential information, you had to redact something – 100% make sure that there's no issues there.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And make sure that if you're using something that's not a piece of writing from school, if it's from an actual job, you definitely want to clarify in writing with the people you worked with that, a) you have permission to use it, b) is there anything that needs to be redacted? And if there was, c) they've signed off on the redacted version. Because in case anything ever comes back, you need to have that chain of writing, basically.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. So I think that's kind of the big deal that can come up with it. But yeah, I would spend time making sure it's perfect and there're no mistakes. But don't overthink it. You just need one.
- Alison Monahan: Right. It just needs to look good, basically.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly.
- Alison Monahan: Alright, what else?
- Sadie Jones: The next thing I would do is come up with your employer list. And since we're talking about OCI, it's probably a list of law firms. And that's kind of where I would spend the most time during this period. I would probably do a spreadsheet or however form you want to do it. And something that has the name where their main office is, some vital information about them and some comments, maybe something about them that's important to you. I like a spreadsheet because you could move things around or sort it in different ways, because that's what you can use for figuring out how you want to do your bidding. Maybe this list includes places that aren't coming to your campus, so you're going to have to apply separately. So you should do a thoughtful list about what's important to you. There may be some that are reaches and some that seem like you could definitely get in – the same way you do a list when you're applying to law school. It should have a mix. And so, I think you should be thoughtful about that.
- Alison Monahan: I agree. And oftentimes a school, depending on the school itself, will provide you information about what type of student these firms are looking to interview with, what GPA requirements they might have. And I think the advice to be realistic here is really important. It's fine to have what you might consider some reach firms, but you don't want to end up in a position where you don't have interviews or you don't have any follow-up interviews because your GPA is significantly lower than everywhere that you're looking told you they wanted. Maybe someone will make an exception, but you can't count on that.



- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. Another thing to remember is, a lot of times, OCI is either all lottery or partial lottery. So the firm didn't pick you, they don't know your GPA, but you'll be unable to get past the first round maybe because of it, if you're way out of their criteria. So then it's sort of a waste of time for everybody, if they can't do anything about it. That being said, I think some students sort of take themselves out of the mix because they're right below whatever the firm put as their GPA cutoff. I will say that I've put GPA cutoffs that aren't actually our GPA cutoffs, because we don't have one. It's sort of like we know when you fit our criteria. So I will say if you're close, I wouldn't necessarily take yourself out of the running, because you feel like you don't have a chance. But I agree, it shouldn't be a lot of reaches and you should be close. If they wrote at 3.5 and you're a 2.98, you're not close.
- Alison Monahan: Right. But if you have like a 3.45, it's like alright, you can throw your hat in the ring on that one. Just don't do it for everyone. And everybody's got individual characteristics too, so you can evaluate in terms of that. But basically, you just want to be realistic and set yourself up for some things that seem like they would probably be a good fit on both sides. And then hopefully, you can progress through the process and sort of figure out, "Does this seem like a great place for me to work or not?", versus, "Oh, is there any possibility anyone's going to give me a call back based on my GPA?"
- Sadie Jones: Right. Because just because you got a bunch of interviews, like I said, if it's lottery, if you don't meet any of their hiring criteria, you might get zero callbacks. So what was all that effort worth?
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. You had to dress up and do all this stuff for what? For nothing.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly.
- Alison Monahan: Alright, yeah, you mentioned briefly, some people might want to apply to firms that are outside of OCI. Is this something people should be thinking about now?
- Sadie Jones: I think so. I think if their hiring is open, there really isn't a time that's too early to submit. But I also think you don't have to put a lot of pressure on yourself to do it immediately. You want to make sure you have all your documents ready. But I think once you have your documents ready and you have your list of firms, if you see that a quarter of the list is firms that aren't coming on campus, I would start sending your application out to them. You should just do it through their online system – that is the way they evaluate you. So, emailing the recruiter directly will just lead them to be annoyed and tell you to submit your application through the online system. I've probably written one million emails that say that. That's separate from networking. So, maybe you're emailing a lawyer there because you're networking – that's different. But if you're officially



submitting yourself, please do it through their online system – that's how you get in somebody will review you there. So, I would definitely start doing it. I would be running parallel job searches through OCI and outside of OCI.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely. And once you've submitted it through the website, you don't need to then email the recruiter to tell them that you submitted it; they know.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. It's just you're juggling up their email box and they're going to remember that you're annoying.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, don't be an annoying person. If somebody's given instructions, follow the instructions. If they've asked you to submit X, Y, and Z, make sure you submit X, Y, and Z. Do not argue with them about what they're asking you to submit. If you don't like what they've asked for and you don't think it's worth your time to apply, then there's a really simple solution – you don't apply for that job.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And that's completely on you and fine, but there's a reason they do it that way, because they're not going to manually put your stuff in for you. It just makes it easier.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. If people have a process that's probably because part of what they're asking you to do is they want to see if you're going to follow the process or not.

Sadie Jones: Exactly, it's a test.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so maybe you didn't realize they were actually being annoying on purpose.

Sadie Jones: But I just like to tell students that I promise that someone will look at it. We get a list every week or you can check it, however it works at that firm, that shows all the people that submitted their applications online. And if they are hiring people, they want to look through all that because they want to see if anyone's worth bringing in. So, I highly suggest doing that, and there's really no need to wait to a certain time or anything.

Alison Monahan: Right. If they're looking now and they're not coming to your school and you're interested, you may as well get on that radar. Why not?

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Alright, well, now I've turned all my stuff in, I've done my bids, I've gotten some results from my interviews. What else do I need to do?

Sadie Jones: So then I just start thinking about the actual interview – what we've talked about before – what you're wearing, that all your tech's set up, you know how



it's going to work. Make sure you know what your schedule is, because it may be over a two-week period. Be really organized, put stuff in your calendar. Just know how that whole situation is going to work, that you're going to be hydrated and have eaten and have energy, and getting good sleep and all of that. And then preparing for an interview, sort of like what I said about the writing sample – I think you can over-prepare and under-prepare, so you kind of want to hit a middle ground. You want to feel like you know what your story is and why you want to be at that firm, whatever it is. And the story might be different for different firms or different markets, but get that straight, any issues that you think might come up – have your answer. Just kind of do some prep. Maybe you want to do some mock interviews if they're available, or get some outside help or ask friends and family to help. But I will say I don't suggest practicing answers word-for-word or writing them out word-for-word. You can write out some key points you want to remember, but sounding really rehearsed, I never think is a good idea. And you can practice lots of questions, but they could ask you totally different questions that you didn't practice for. So, just kind of get comfortable with the environment, but there's no way that you're going to know exactly what's going to happen. You've got to just roll with it.

Alison Monahan: Definitely. And I think that is about hitting that balance. There are certain things you're probably going to be asked fairly frequently that you should have some reasonable answer for, like, "What interests you about this firm? Why are you excited about working in location X? How do you like law school? What are your favorite classes? What have you really enjoyed?" These types of things – they've got to kill some time, they're making conversation. And I will say anything on your resume is absolutely fair game, so if there are things... At one point, I think it was in a clerkship interview, someone started asking me detailed questions about my undergraduate honors thesis.

Sadie Jones: Wow.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it was pretty intense. I was like, "Let me think about that." But anything that you've put on there... And I've had this happen when I was the interviewer and I asked someone about one of their hobbies, and they kind of looked at me blankly, and I'm like, "You've put this on your resume." I was just making conversation.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. And the thing with hobbies is, I think everyone probably over-exaggerates how much they do that hobby. You work out in this form, you don't really do it all the time. But you should feel comfortable enough to talk about it; otherwise, don't put it on there.

Alison Monahan: I literally think this was something like this person had put baking, and I'm interested in baking, so I was like, "Oh, what do you like to bake?" Pretty soft



ball question, and he looked at me blankly and I'm like, "Baking, it's on your resume." He's like. "Oh, I guess more accurately, I should have said I like to watch cooking shows."

Sadie Jones: Well, that's why I always tell people to be really specific.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, he's like, "I don't really bake." I'm like, "Then this shouldn't be on your resume."

Sadie Jones: Should have said "Watching cooking shows."

Alison Monahan: Right, and I would have talked to him about cooking shows, like, "Oh, which ones do you like? I'm really into The Great British Baking Show." That would have been totally fine.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: You don't need to lie. You just need to have something that you can talk about for a couple of minutes.

Sadie Jones: Exactly, or a job you had. Exactly, if you put something from college in there, you should be able to talk about it; otherwise don't put it in there.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so make sure that you just reviewed everything. And like you said, you're going to get some weird questions. People may ask you all kinds of stuff, but with my resume, it was a weird resume. When people looked at it, they were kind of like, "Huh, sociology to architecture to programming to law. Explain that to me." And I kind of had my answer ready to go. But anything that's weird, or one bad grade on your transcript – you've got to be prepared to talk about that in a way that it's not like you're not upset about it, like, "Oh yeah, first semester was a little rough in that class, but as you can see, I recovered and I did really well second semester. So, it was a great learning experience." No problem, next question. If you start to cry, then that's going to be a different scenario.

Sadie Jones: I was going to say, stay positive. It's a good idea maybe to think of some innocuous thing in the world. If they ask you what you did over the weekend, or you're having just some kind of conversation about nothing, and things in the world are kind of crazy right now – just try to keep it positive and neutral. There's no need to talk about anything controversial. So, think about something that could just be neutral.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, you went on a walk in the woods and it was really lovely, or whatever.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, you baked something.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you baked some bread. "Oh, what type of bread?" Some of this is just seeing if you can kill time with someone for 15 or 20 or 30 minutes, or however long it ends up being, because partly they just want to see if you are a safe person to put in front of a client if you're all stuck at the airport or something on a layover for three hours. Could you chit chat about the weather, and a movie that you saw recently, or a book that you read, or whatever it is? Just have something, and also have questions. That's another one where having no questions is definitely a no-go.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And that is something that should be set, you should know going into it. You could run out of time and not be able to ask them, but you should definitely have them. And if they ask you, "Do you have any questions?", you should never say "No" – that's bad.
- Alison Monahan: Frankly, your questions don't really matter, you can ask them later. You just want to have something ready to go. Alright, well, let's talk about a few specific scenarios that people might be wondering about, before we run out of time.
- Sadie Jones: Okay.
- Alison Monahan: Alright. I am doing OCI, but I also want to look for jobs in other locations, and these firms don't really interview at my school much or at all. We kind of talked about this before, but this is the big location thing. What should people do here?
- Sadie Jones: Well, like we said, you should be reaching out outside of OCI to apply to those places. So, don't get too stuck on OCI as the only way to get a job, or kind of think, "Oh, if it's not happening here, it can't happen at all." Because the reality is most people get jobs outside of OCI. It's just a certain percentage of people that get it that way. So I think you should be running a parallel search. I think if it's in other locations, you should be upping your networking game there, whether it's in-person or just you're making calls or emails or reaching out. But if it's in a different location, you want to try to be making connections and have your story about why you want to be there. But I would definitely make sure that you're actively spending time applying to those jobs while also doing whatever you need to do to get ready for OCI. Don't neglect one or the other.
- Alison Monahan: Right. And I think you might consider, moving forward, whether it makes sense for you to plan to be in that location at some point or whatever. But you can kind of play that by ear. Alright. I'm not 100% sure I want the type of job that is offered at OCI. Should I still do it?
- Sadie Jones: I'm going to give a very lawyer answer – it depends.
- Alison Monahan: I think it's a really hard question.



- Sadie Jones: Yeah. I think it depends because, okay, if you are 100% sure and there is no way you would take any of these jobs if they were offered to you and you couldn't find another job and you were just totally committed, then maybe you shouldn't do OCI, because you will get nothing out of it unless you want some practice interviewing, is the only thing I could think of. That being said, I feel like there're very few people that 100%, know for sure that they wouldn't take that job or be interested, especially if they can't find something else. So, to me, you most likely should be doing OCI to some extent. You don't need to do as many interviews as other people who really, really want those jobs, and I don't want you to take a slot away from someone else who really, really wants those jobs. But I think it's just a really nice thing that it's all organized and you get all those employers there, and it's all set up for you. So, to me, it would be a pretty high bar to just say, "I'm not going to do it at all."
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think what happens sometimes is people are kind of on the fence and they think, "Oh, I'm not really interested", and then they get sucked into the process. And the reality is, once you have an offer, it's much harder to turn that down than just never to have it to start with. So, if you're 100% public interest, resist the pressure to do OCI, just go and do your thing. Because I know so many people who are like, "Well, I'm not going to do it." And then they were there the first day and it's like, "Oh well, I decided to give it a try. I'll just do some interviews." And then they got offers and then somebody's dangling their salary in front of them, and at some point it becomes very hard to turn that down. So, I think you just want to think carefully. If you're open to it, do it; if you're not open to that type of job, then don't bother.
- Sadie Jones: I will say in a personal side, that happened to me with sororities, where we didn't really want to do it, and then I did the process and then someone liked me and invited me, but then I immediately deactivated after I was in, because I didn't really want to do it. So, I completely agree that you don't want to end up in a situation you don't really want to be in and not on the path that you were on. But if you're unsure, it's a nice way to get some interviews.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree. Alright, well, let's switch gears a little bit and talk about this virtual environment and then the perennial question of what to wear to OCI interviews. So, assuming I'm going to be virtual. If you're not virtual, you wear a suit, end of story. If you are virtual, do you think you still need to be at least in the top half of the suit. How should people handle this?
- Sadie Jones: I think you should still be in a full suit, because what if you have to stand up? That would make me nervous. I actually think you should dress exactly the same virtually as you would have in-person.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's probably good advice. And if you don't know what to wear and you're not sure what a suit should look like, this should be pretty conservative, this is not a time to get super creative. You want something boring – your Brooks Brothers, Ann Taylor type of thing is totally fine. Nobody expects you to be a fashion plate, but just something that is in the ballpark of what people are looking for. And obviously there are certain people who may have more issues with this, but I think this is something to talk with Career Services about, talk to various people about, make sure that you're going to feel comfortable wearing whatever it is that you're wearing. And then ideally you just have the outfit that's ready to go, maybe you have a couple of different options for it, but something that you don't have to think about.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. I guess the only difference is some things might look different on camera than they would have in-person. I was thinking you could have a piece of jewelry, maybe that catches the light in a weird way on the camera. So, whatever you're wearing, maybe test it out with somebody on video to make sure it looks okay.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and let's talk a little bit about looking good in interviews. Sometimes you might be able to go to your school or whatever, they might provide you spaces for these interviews, but you might be doing them also from your house, which maybe is not huge. One thing I think is really important is thinking about your background. And for me, what I found often works best is I have the most blank wall in wherever I am behind me, and then I sit, and then I have a table or something with the camera on it. And you want your camera a little higher, preferably, than your head. Particularly if you can find a place that has a window in front of you, then you get fantastic light, you don't have to worry about lighting yourself up. If you're in a small place, I think that's often your best option.

Sadie Jones: I agree. And the reality is, you can be, let's say in your bedroom, as long as they can't tell it's a bedroom.

Alison Monahan: Right, you want to make sure the wide angle is not capturing the edge of your bed or anything.

Sadie Jones: So I think that's important. I agree with you, the height of it is really important, and I think some people don't test that out and make sure that you're going to be looking at them and they're going to be able to see you. And I totally agree about lighting. If you do have something like a ring light – some of them are fairly reasonably priced – they can make people look brighter, it can kind of make a difference. I'm not saying you need to invest in that, but it's just something to think about.



- Alison Monahan: Yeah, if you know you have poor natural lighting, I think you do need to think about how you're going to be lit. Currently, I'm recording this from inside of my closet, because that's where I record podcasts. But I probably wouldn't do a video interview from inside of my closet.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly. And I guess you want to make sure that the Wi-Fi works fine. Sometimes there's one spot where it's not good, so you want to make sure that's all good too. Whatever the person on the other end is going to see and hear, should just all be really decided ahead of time.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, last week I was having a lot of trouble because I thought my phone was dropping calls, but it turned out actually my headphones had stopped working well. Yeah, it turns out anything you're using, you want to test with somebody else, probably before you're using it. And make sure you know exactly how they're going to call. Is it a Zoom link? Is it something else you're using? Whatever you're using, just make sure you've got that information beforehand so that you're not kind of stumbling around at the last minute trying to figure out how to connect to the call.
- Sadie Jones: Oh, and make sure it doesn't need a certain browser. We've had that issue before – this browser works better – so make sure you have that. So, just all your ducks in a row. It should never be five minutes before the interview and you're still trying to figure this out.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, you want to be there. And then I assume having video interviews that you can have notes and things in front of you in a way that you can't necessarily do in a live interview. So you can have your basic question, your reminders about why you're interviewing with this firm, all of these things like, "Oh, I'm really interested in your bankruptcy practice." You want to make sure they do bankruptcy before you say that.
- Sadie Jones: Also, if they give you a place to go, that might be the better option, so think about that too. Just because it's convenient to be in your home... There're a lot of advantages if you can do it from a place on campus; that might be the better option.
- Alison Monahan: Well, because if nothing else, if something goes wrong and you're not the one to blame.
- Sadie Jones: Exactly.
- Alison Monahan: It's not great, but at least you can be like, "Oh, I'm at my school and I don't know what's happening, they're calling the IT person", versus, "I'm in my house, my Internet is not working, sorry."



Sadie Jones: Yeah, that's going to be a no-go. There are some things you can't control, but you should try to have everything you can control, like pets or other people. You can't help if your neighbor chooses to mow their lawn.

Alison Monahan: Chainsaw their tree.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. I mean, you can acknowledge it to the person on other end, but hopefully...

Alison Monahan: I mean, if things like that do happen, you just kind of have to roll with it, like, "Oh, I'm so sorry. Of course they've started chainsawing their tree exactly at the time of this interview. Gosh, what a mess." But then move on.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, you can laugh about it. But if it was something that you could have fixed or kind of handled, I don't think that's a good look.

Alison Monahan: No, exactly, you want to make it as competent as possible and just make sure that you've done what you can to make this kind of weird experience go as smoothly as possible. Alright, well, any final thoughts before we wrap up?

Sadie Jones: Just that I think this whole process can be something that's easy to procrastinate, that we sort of talked about at the beginning. So, my advice is really, there's always something you can be doing. It's not too early to start whenever it is. So, I would really just keep that in mind, that the sooner you start, the more it's not rushed and it's always going to turn out better.

Alison Monahan: I think that's right. I think just putting it off is not going to help anything, so just go ahead and get started. You might find out that you need help from someone, you might need somebody to read things. You want to make sure that you have time to get that help and get your questions answered and figure out your best, so you can really put your best foot forward – I think that's really what this is about. Your grades are whatever they are, but you're trying to put your best foot forward and present the best version of yourself. And the more time you give yourself to work on that over an extended period, probably the better it's going to go.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Alright, well, thank you so much for joining us.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. With that, we are out of time. For more career help and the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, including on your OCI materials, you can check out [CareerDicta.com](https://www.careerdicta.com). If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School



toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app, because we'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to Lee or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

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