

Different types of interviews

Interview
by panel

Interview by
single person

Group
activity

Psychometric
testing

Practical
tests / tasks

Presentations

Often a combination of the above may be used and referred to as an "Assessment Centre".

Interview by a panel

A panel is usually made up of three to five people. Listen when the interviewers introduce themselves and try to remember their names. This will help you make a connection when you are talking to them. Aim your answers at the person who actually asked the question and try and avoid just talking to one interviewer. Do not be put off by the interviewers taking notes throughout the interview. They use these notes to help ensure they are fair and transparent in their decision making.

Second interviews can be used to go into further depth. They may be used to look more closely at whether the candidate and role are a good match, or in order to distinguish between two or more candidates who performed well at the original interview. If psychometrics have been used, the second interview may incorporate or discuss the results.

One-to-one interview or series of interviews with different people

This approach may be less stressful than a panel interview, but you must take care to be consistent in your answers. The interviewers will talk to each other.

Telephone or Video Interviews

Organisations are increasingly using telephone or video interviews. These have been used for some time for international recruitment, to screen large numbers of candidates for initial interviews in person, or if panels are especially pushed for time. It is important to be as prepared and focused as you would be for an interview in person, and to communicate clearly and professionally. If you are using a mobile phone, Skype, Teams then make sure you are somewhere appropriate to take the call i.e. a quiet, professional-looking location with good reception and dress as if you were heading for a face-to-face interview.

Group activity with other candidates

These are frequently used to test communication, teamwork and problem solving skills. These activities can be very varied and could include such tasks as agreeing a strategy for surviving a shipwreck or devising a new advertising campaign.

Psychometric testing

This is used to gather information about predicted behaviour in different circumstances and identify individual preferences and approaches. The use of such testing has increased in recent years. It can be a very useful supplementary method but should not be used on its own. Tests need to be administered and interpreted by trained, competent individuals. You should be sent full details in advance including an explanation of how the information will be used in the recruitment process, and how it will be stored afterwards.

Practical tests/tasks

These are designed to provide information that as accurately as possible reflects an individual's ability to complete real job related tasks. An in-tray exercise (prioritising normal day-to-day tasks), producing a letter or interpreting a budget are common such tasks. Depending on the role, you may also be tested on typing skills, typing speed, or familiarity with software such as MS Office.

Presentation

This is common for sales, training or leadership roles. You are usually sent a brief a week before the interview. Make sure you read the brief carefully and keep within the time frame. If you save your most important point till the end and run out of time you may never have a chance to say it. Usually interviewers are assessing both the content of the presentation as well as the presentation/communication skills.

Note: if you intend to use technology as part of your presentation, check what equipment and connectivity will be available on the day and that it is compatible with what you intend to use. Ensure that any equipment you bring with you works well and is quick and easy to set up.

Assessment Centres

These may contain a variety of activities from those listed above, usually in a group setting. If an overnight stay is required, remember that you are still 'on show' during the evening!

Content – types of interview and questions

You know that you'll be asked about the key skills and professional behaviours, but there are 3 main types of interview which affect the ways that the questions might be phrased:

1. **Competency-based.** This invites you to showcase how you've used or developed the skills that are being sought. An example question would be 'Tell us about a time when you've had to communicate well in order to get a job done'
2. **Behavioural.** Similar to competency-based, in that it's concerned with examples of how you've done things in the past, but is concerned with your behaviour rather than your skills. An example question would be 'Give me an example of a problem you've faced in a previous job, and how you solved it.'
3. **Situational.** This is much the same as the behavioural question, but is likely to be future-focused – asking you to imagine yourself in the situation or role. An example question would be 'You're responsible for an important project which is near completion, but receive another important project that must be completed immediately. How do you multi-task and prioritise?'