

## Interview Questions

Once the introductions and welcomes are completed the interview questions will begin. This usually consists of:

- Warm up/general question(s)
- Series of questions or tests relating to competence or behaviour and the job role, focusing on the person specification criteria
- Opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions

### Warm up/general question(s)

There may be one or two questions at the start that encourage the interviewee to relax and provide some general information. It might include questions such as:

- What attracts you to this job? *Tip: Make sure you show enthusiasm and knowledge, even at this stage – know why you want the job!*
- Give us a summary of your experience to date – especially noting those aspects relevant to this post.

### Series of questions or tests relating to competence, behaviours and the job role

If you have prepared well for this interview, you will have thought about the questions that the interviewers are likely to ask and will have some key points and a good examples at your fingertips. This is the material you know - now is the time to use it.

Here are some points to remember:

- Listen carefully to the question.
- If you don't understand the question – ask them to repeat it or re phrase it.
- Give yourself time to think before starting to answer – you can always ask the interviewer for a few moments to think.
- If you are not sure you have answered their question – there is no harm in checking with them.
- Interviewers may be nervous too, or have badly worded questions, so it may not be your fault the question is not that clear.

### Opportunity for the interviewee to ask questions

This is your opportunity to ask questions about the post/organisation. Use this as another opportunity to create a positive impression so:

- Make sure your questions are genuine and you really want to know
- Only ask a maximum of 2 or 3 – be aware of the time pressures that the interviewers will be under
- Don't ask questions that imply you haven't read the information you have been sent or done any research about the organisation
- Role-specific questions are usually good, as they show that you are attracted to that particular job rather than just wanting to work for that organisation
- Don't ask questions about salary and pay – this is appropriate after you are offered the post, not before. The sorts of questions it might be appropriate to ask include:
  - Can you describe a typical day?
  - What development opportunities/training do you offer?
  - What kind of opportunities are there for growth in this company?
  - What's happened to people who did this job before?
  - What are the best things about working here?
  - What are the challenges facing the organisation?

Finally, round off with:

- When can I expect to hear your decision?

### Opportunities to develop

All interviews – whether you are offered the job or not – provide great opportunities to learn about and improve your interview skills and to see inside other organisations.

On the way home think objectively about the interview and consider what you would like to do differently or better next time:

- 1 Did you feel as well prepared as you could be?
- 2 What went well? Were there any answers that you were particularly pleased with?
- 3 In what areas could you improve?

It may be worth writing this down, as your recollections later may be less reliable (in retrospect, there may be a tendency to concentrate too much on a particular positive or negative aspect of the interview rather than the interview as a whole). You may even wish to keep an interview log – recording the information on each interview you attend. This can help you see the areas you still need to work on, and the areas where you've made progress.

### After The Interview

If you are offered the job, consider the following before deciding:

- Are they someone you want to work for?
- Does the job live up to your expectations?
- Will it move your career in the direction you want?
- Does the package on offer meet your criteria, or are there areas for negotiation?

If you decide not to take it, let the employer know as soon as possible.

If you don't get the job make sure that you ask the employer for feedback. Note it down and together with your own post-interview reflections, use it to improve and strengthen your performance at the next interview.

It is a good idea to keep a record of the feedback you receive from practising, and log what action you can take to improve.

### Learning from practice

Feedback from practice

Actions I will take to improve

## Appendix 1 – Sample interview questions

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<b>Opening questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you tell me more about your previous role in...</li> <li>○ Can you talk me through your CV/experience?</li> <li>○ What do you understand to be the most important areas in this new role?</li> <li>○ What do you think are the challenges that you may face in this role?</li> <li>○ Why are you interested in this role?</li> </ul>
<b>About you</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are your reasons for wishing to leave your current role?</li> <li>○ Where do you see yourself progressing/what are your career plans/how does this role fit with your career plans?</li> <li>○ Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?</li> <li>○ What qualities do you bring to this role?</li> <li>○ What skills have you learned in your current or previous roles that could apply or be useful to this new role?</li> <li>○ Can you give me an example of where you have shown initiative?</li> <li>○ What are your strengths/weaknesses?</li> <li>○ What are the main lessons you've learnt in your career so far? How have you applied what you've learnt?</li> <li>○ How would the 'Equalities and Diversity' policy influence the way you work?</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In your opinion, what makes a good manager?</li> <li>○ How can you demonstrate that you interact and communicate effectively with staff at all levels?</li> <li>○ What is the key to effective delegation?</li> <li>○ What experience do you have of working with or managing budgets?</li> <li>○ Have you had to deal with a difficult situation recently and can you tell me how you managed this?</li> <li>○ Can you give me an example where you have provided a report or statistical information for wider use?</li> <li>○ How would you ensure the effective coordination of staff development, providing effective guidelines and support for staff?</li> <li>○ What experience do you have of setting staff performance objectives and ensuring the demands of workload and operational priorities are met by your team?</li> <li>○ Can you describe a situation where you have had to excite and engage people? (or motivate)</li> <li>○ How would you describe yourself as a leader?</li> <li>○ 'Supporting the development of a strategy, being innovative and having vision are things that are mentioned in the job description. How might you demonstrate these?</li> <li>○ What do you understand 'change management' to mean and where might these skills be used in this job?</li> <li>○ Can you describe a situation where you have had to influence and persuade? Use diplomacy?</li> <li>○ How would you go about resolving the following problem (interviewer gives example related to role – what would you do, how would you solve?)?</li> </ul>

<b>Customer service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What factors make for good customer service? Any examples of where you have provided it?</li> <li>○ How do you ensure that customer service levels are maintained – personally and within the team?</li> <li>○ How would you deal with a complaint?</li> <li>○ Who do you think are the ‘customers’ in this role?</li> <li>○ Can you tell me more about your experience in supporting and training end users?</li> <li>○ What would you do if you found you were not able to advise someone on their particular query?</li> <li>○ Can you tell me a little bit about your previous work in a customer – focussed environment?</li> <li>○ How would you go about resolving the following problem (interviewer gives example related to role – what would you do, how would you solve?)?</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork/flexibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How can you demonstrate that you have a flexible approach to your work and a willingness to adapt to change?</li> <li>○ What sort of team player are you? What makes a good team?</li> <li>○ Have you had to deal with a difficult situation recently and can you tell me how you managed this?</li> <li>○ How can you demonstrate that you interact and communicate effectively with staff at all levels?</li> <li>○ Can you tell me more about your experience in supporting and training colleagues?</li> <li>○ What do you understand ‘change management’ to mean and where might these skills be used in this job?</li> <li>○ Can you describe a situation where you have had to influence and persuade? Use diplomacy?</li> <li>○ As you leave your current job, what do you think people will miss about you? What would they say you brought to the team?</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you describe a situation where you have had to influence and persuade? Use diplomacy?</li> <li>○ How would you define good communication?</li> <li>○ This job involves some presentation work. What experience have you had making presentations?</li> <li>○ How can you demonstrate that you interact and communicate effectively with staff at all levels?</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational skills/processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do you manage your workload and prioritise your work? Can you give an example?</li> <li>○ How do you deal with pressure?</li> <li>○ Give an example where you’ve had to work to tight deadlines. What issues were there? How did you cope?</li> <li>○ Can you give an example of where you have set up a new procedure? How did you devise and implement it?</li> <li>○ What is your experience of project management? Is there a particular project that springs to mind where you have added value?</li> <li>○ What are the benefits of having good processes? How do you devise and ensure that you have them?</li> </ul>

<b>Administration/ICT skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What work have you completed recently that demonstrates good attention to detail and an ability to meet deadlines?</li> <li>○ Talk me through the IT software that you've used and your level of expertise</li> <li>○ Can you tell me about your previous experience with handling and analysing data and ensuring that records are kept up-to-date and accurate?</li> <li>○ How do you manage a high volume of diverse tasks (multi-tasking)?</li> <li>○ How would you go about resolving the following problem (interviewer gives example related to role – what would you do, how would you solve?)?</li> </ul>
<b>General finance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you tell me a little bit about your previous work in the area of finance and in particular your knowledge of handling financial payments?</li> <li>○ How would you ensure that all income and expenditure is being reported accurately?</li> <li>○ Can you tell me about your previous experience with handling and analysing data and ensuring that records are kept up-to-date and accurate?</li> <li>○ What experience do you have of working with or managing budgets?</li> </ul>