

Interview Questions*



Typical interview questions to expect

Interviewers will ask you many different questions. The key to answering them successfully is simple: be prepared. Look at the job description, advertisement and the organisation's website. What are they looking for from their people? Then consider your relevant skills and experience and how you can demonstrate them in the interview.

Why have you applied for this role?

- Explain your motivation for applying for the role,
- What you know about the company and why you think you're suitable for the position.
- Your answer should reinforce why you are a good fit for the job and convey your enthusiasm for the role.
- You can mention the good match between your skills and what the job requires - including what you will bring to the company; your interest in the organisation's area of business/products; and the job being an exciting challenge for you.

What attracted you to this organisation?

Show you're interested in the organisation and that you've researched them. E.g.

- Do you know the locations they operate in?
- Who their competitors are? Knowing details like this is important when applying for HR roles.
- To make a difference, you really need to understand the organisation.

Tell me about a time you had to work under pressure?

- Your interviewer is encouraging you to talk about a project or piece of work that you found quite stressful.
- How did you deal with the pressure? Did you give up and walk away? Or, did you find a solution and get the job done?
- They want to learn about your resilience when under stress and how you cope when things go wrong.

Tell me about a time you had to resolve a conflict in a team?

- The interviewer wants to know if you can deal with issues within a team.
- Describe briefly the structure of the team and your role within it. If there was conflict, did you deal with it or ignore it? What was the outcome?

Interview Questions cont.*

Can you give me an example of when you've had to give feedback to someone?

- They're asking if you can show your coaching skills and ability to develop others.
- Do you shy away from giving feedback or are you good at tactfully giving positive and developmental responses?
- How did they take your comments and what was the result?

Tell me about yourself?

- Don't be tempted to give a short response - use this time to introduce yourself to the employer in the best possible light.
- Your response to this should be well rehearsed, confident and relevant. It's not necessary to reel off your life history - instead, focus on things that relate to the job you're going for.
- What are your key skills/strengths? Focus on what you know they are looking for, even if it has only been a small part of what you have done to date.
- Take another look at the job advert and download the job description from the company website, work through it carefully and think about how your experience and skills meet their requirements.

What are your weaknesses?

- Nobody is perfect and everyone can identify areas for improvement. However, when thinking about yours, make sure they are relevant to a professional context.
- Remember to acknowledge that improving on your 'weaknesses' is important to you and, where possible, show how you are working to develop them. For example, you might be someone who is shy, but you purposefully make an effort to talk to people as you recognise this is an issue.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Your interviewer might want to know how the job you are going for fits in with your long-term plans.
- It's okay if you haven't worked out the next 20 years in your head - very few people have. However, you should have a general idea about what your interests are, what kind of areas you would like to work in and even perhaps where you see yourself in the next few years.
- Tell the interviewer how the job and their organisation fits in with these ideas - perhaps they offer lots of training and development, which in time will help you progress.

* Information as provided by CIPD