

Types of interview

Competency-based interviews

At a competency-based interview, the interviewer will ask questions that are designed to help you give evidence of the personal qualities needed to perform the role. Usually, you will be expected to give an example of how you have demonstrated these qualities in the past. Questions might be along the line of:

Describe a situation where you had to.....

- ▲ deal with an unhappy customer
- ▲ prioritise work tasks
- ▲ work as a member of a team
- ▲ show initiative
- ▲ work to a tight deadline
- ▲ overcome a difficult situation
- ▲ go above and beyond the normal duties of your role
- ▲ work with others to solve a problem

In competency-based interviews you are presenting information from previous experiences so there are no right and wrong answers.

The trick is to give the interviewer relevant information that shows how you will be able to perform the job in future, not just tell a story.

The questions are always open ended to allow you to provide as much relevant information as possible. So in your answer make sure you have explained the situation fully, reached a conclusion about how you handled the situation, and linked to a particular competency that you know is relevant for the role.

Biographical interviews

These interviews will probably be based largely around your application form or CV. The interviewer will probe more on what you have done in previous roles, schools etc and focus on areas of particular interest or relevance - such as projects or duties.

Don't be too brief in your answers - this is your opportunity to show the interviewer that you are the right person for the job due to your previous experiences.

Telephone interviews

Interviews over the phone may involve biographical or competency-based questions.

Before the interview try to find a quiet location where you won't be disturbed and where background noises are at a minimum. Have pen and paper ready for instructions of next steps.

Assessment Centres

Assessment Centres differ greatly depending on the employer. They are designed to test your capabilities to do the role. The employer will set tasks aimed at testing your strengths and abilities. In turn, you will learn more about the role, culture and company.

Assessment Centres normally take longer than interviews and often have multiple candidates attending. How you interact with your fellow candidates will be part of the assessment.

Types of interview

The following elements are covered:

Group Exercises

The key to performing in a group exercise is to have the right attitude from the start.

You must be positive and enthusiastic and respectful of your group members thoughts and contributions. Not considering others, being dismissive or rude can contribute to a less favourable outcome.

Contribution to the group is vital - if you do not speak you cannot be marked.

Role Playing

In this task individuals will be assigned roles. The scenario will usually be related either to a typical day on the job or a particularly stressful, awkward situation which must be managed with quick thinking.

Always role play from the perspective of how you would like to be treated in that particular situation.

Presentation Exercises

Few people enjoy public speaking. Before the Assessment Centre you may find it useful to practice talking aloud about a general topic.

At the Assessment Centre you should be provided with sufficient preparation time. Ensure your presentation is structured to include:

- ▲ An introduction where you explain what you are going to talk about
- ▲ The main body of the presentation where you go into the detail of your topic
- ▲ A conclusion summarising the key messages

It's useful to make very brief notes, which you can refer to during the talk.

Testing

For psychometric testing there is little that you can do to prepare.

Always answer honestly. Most testers can tell if your answers have been truthful.

For numeracy testing, don't be afraid to ask if you can use a calculator.