

GUIDE TO PREPARE FOR JOB INTERVIEWS



By knowing what to look out for in different kinds of interviews and preparing for challenging questions, you will be better equipped to ace the interview. Here are some types of job interviews and questions, and ways to tackle them.

Types of Interviews

- **One-on-one interviews**

Such interviews may be conducted virtually or in-person and involve the interviewer asking a series of questions to evaluate your suitability for the job. Some companies may conduct several rounds of one-on-one interviews for different department heads to meet the potential candidate before deciding on the outcome of his or her job application.



Interview tips:

- Show your interviewer that you are interested in the job by asking relevant questions. Some simple ones include asking about the role's day-to-day tasks, the work culture, or the role's career path.
- You should also talk about how the job role matches your aspirations, career plans and relevant interests. Enthusiasm is key.
- Demonstrate specific examples of the skills required for the role you are applying for and discuss relevant transferable skills you obtained from any school or work experience.
- Body language is as important as verbal communication. Maintain a decent level of eye contact throughout the interview. Sit upright to exude confidence and remember to smile.

- **Video interviews**

Such interviews may take place "live" (e.g. through Zoom or Teams) or in pre-recorded format (e.g. video submissions).



Interview tips:

- Practice getting used to appearing on-screen. Switch on your computer webcam and record yourself as though you are running through a practice interview.
- Set the scene by dressing smartly and making sure the area where you will be carrying out the interview looks like a professional workplace.
- If you are using Wi-Fi connection, make sure you have good signal strength so that the video conference does not drop midway through your interview. A good way to check this is to stream a video over YouTube.
- Try to establish rapport by appearing friendly and display a higher level of energy to compensate for the loss of personal connection brought on by this format of interview.
- If you are taking the call using a laptop, remember to plug it in to a power source - you may be online longer than you expect.

- **Panel interviews**

Such interviews typically involve three to eight interviewers - a mix of HR personnel, business managers and departmental specialists.



Interview tips:

- Maintain direct eye contact with the interviewers. If your interview is taking place in-person, answer them while making eye contact. If the interview is done over video, talk to the camera instead of the on-screen video feed.
- Address the interviewers by name when speaking to them. If your interview is taking place in-person, one little trick is to get their name cards at the beginning of the session, then arrange them in front of you according to the interviewers' sitting arrangement.
- Stay calm if any of the interviewers looks bored. Given their different backgrounds, not everyone on the interview panel would be interested in your

response to every question.

- Sometimes, you could be asked the same question twice. Do not second-guess yourself, and always keep to the same version of your story.

- **Phone interviews**

Such interviews are often used as a screening exercise where employers check for basic information before an in-person or virtual interview. It is also used to filter suitable candidates early in the recruitment process.



Interview tips:

- Most of the impact is through your voice, so it is important to sound attentive and enthusiastic.
- Take note of the keywords in the questions asked when responding to your interviewer.
- Do not be distracted by your surroundings or lose track of what you want to say next. Avoid filler words such as "umm" and "uh- huh" or constantly requesting to repeat the questions.
- Have your resume and completed application form with you in case you need to refer to them during the interview.
- Choose a conducive, quiet environment for the phone appointment to prevent background noise from ruining your session.

Types of Questions

- **Competency questions:** Such questions are usually open-ended and used to gauge candidates' personalities. They help recruiters evaluate if you are suitable for the role and company culture.

Interview tips:

- Interviewers will ask you to draw on examples from your life during which you have demonstrated a particular skill or ability. They may also ask you to give an opinion on specific topics.
 - Come prepared with a list of your experiences in facing difficult situations, and how you managed to overcome them using your skills, talents and abilities. Tie those experiences to how they can meet your potential employer's needs and job requirements.
- **Situational questions:** Situational interview questions usually involve hypotheticals. Your interviewers are trying to assess how you might react in a real-life workplace scenario. The scenario is usually something you have not experienced or is more complex than you can realistically prepare for.

Interview tips:

- The goal here is not to give the "right" answer, because often, there is none. What your interviewers really want to see is your thought process when tackling ambiguous scenarios with limited information.
- The STAR Method is a great way to help you organise your thoughts and structure your response to this type of questions.
 - Recap the context of the Situation.
 - Describe what you believe is your Task.
 - Describe the Actions you would take in this situation.
 - What are some desired outcomes and Results?
- **Technical (or industry-specific) questions:** If you apply for jobs with a heavy technical bent (such as in the STEM sectors), you can expect questions that test your technical skills and proficiencies, and about your chosen industry sector at large.

Interview tips:

- Brush up any knowledge related to the field you are pursuing, particularly specific areas mentioned in the job listing. Be prepared for questions posed to test your logic and reasoning capabilities. Again, it is not about giving the "right" answer, but about walking the interviewer through your thought process.
- Read up on emerging trends or current news in the industry sector you aim to get into. These questions are meant to test how well you know the industry beyond what your textbooks cover, as well as how commercially aware you are (i.e. do you know how your work will help the company make or save money?).

This guide is created by NBS Academy for Career Excellence.