

# How to prepare for interviews

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## Before your interview

Interviewing can be daunting, but good preparation makes things easier.

**These tips may seem obvious but it's worth checking them off in advance:**

1

Do you know where you're going? If it's a video interview, make sure you have the right link. If it's in person, check the address. If you don't know the area, call your recruitment consultant for directions. Give yourself lots of time and aim to arrive at least 10 minutes early.

2

Have you called your recruitment consultant ahead of time for an interview briefing to discuss the hiring manager and job description? They'll help you with the type of interview, the personality of your potential employer and any other information. Try not to leave this until the last minute.

3

Have you looked at the company website? This will give you useful background information. Check if they have a careers section and anything about their mission, values and company culture. This will tell you how they want to be seen as potential employers.

4

Make sure you know what's on your CV. Think about why you have changed jobs in the past, reasons behind your career decisions, what you enjoyed about certain jobs and any specific examples. Think clearly about what you are looking to do and why.

5

Make sure you know what information you'd like from the job interview and have a good list of questions. It doesn't do any harm to write them down as it shows you've prepared.

## What form will my interview be?

Interviews are usually CV-based, behavioural, team, technical or competency-based.

### The CV-based interview

This job interview style follows the more traditional question-and-answer format – asking for a chronological run-through of your work experience.

Common questions might include “Can you tell me about yourself?”, “Why did you leave X organisation for Y?” and “What are your career goals?”



#### How to prepare

It's important to know your answers to these common interview questions. It also helps to have an answer if the hiring manager asks about something that stands out in your CV – such as a period of unemployment or a quick job move. But try not to over rehearse and appear formulaic or ingenuine in your answers.

### The behavioural interview

Behavioural interviewing usually provides the most accurate prediction of future performance through analysis of work experience in certain situations.

The hiring manager has already identified job-related experiences, behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities (competencies) they see as desirable for the job, so pay attention to the job description as these might be referenced.

Candidates who give specific examples will be far more effective and successful than those who respond in general terms.



#### How to prepare

Read the job description properly and think of six to 12 situations when you've used strong job-related behaviours. Also look at the careers section of the company website to see if they refer to behaviours that they look for in the interview process.

### The team interview

To gain a well-rounded perspective on candidates, many companies ask multiple team members to take part in the job interview and hiring process.

This type of interview is with than one interviewer at once, or in a series of one-on-one interviews with various team members. They then follow an agreed criteria and job description to assess first impressions and feedback following the interview sessions.



#### How to prepare

Expect team interviews to be challenging. Initial exchanges are the most difficult and you'll need to be able to interact with people from different backgrounds. Be prepared to cover the same ground with various interviewers as they may want to see if your answers change.

### The technical interview

The technical interview helps your potential employer to understand your technical skillset. By sharing your thought processes, you demonstrate interview skills but also communication and analytical ability.

Interviewers are looking closely at how you think critically and solve problems. You're not expected to know everything, so don't just guess if you don't know the answer. Use this opportunity to tell the hiring manager how you would research that question. It's not about knowing everything; it's about being able to learn it.



#### How to prepare

There's no perfect way to prepare for technical interviews as there are an infinite number of technical interview questions that hiring managers could throw at you. They might involve hypothetical scenarios with no single correct answer. Just make sure you're comfortable talking through the technical areas on your CV and don't feel thrown by the obvious questions.



### The competency-based interview

Competency-based interviews are becoming increasingly common in the hiring process for many businesses. They involve a structured approach to understand how well a candidate will perform in a role. The hiring manager asks the candidate for specific examples of when they have demonstrated particular competencies (or relevant behaviours).

Hiring managers will want to explore your work experience to predict your future behaviour. For each competency, you might be asked multiple questions to demonstrate your abilities in different ways. All candidates are usually asked the same questions to ensure the interview process is fair.



#### How to prepare

Competency-based interviews can be intimidating but can run smoothly with good interview prep and a broad range of specific examples to hand. They're also a chance to stand out from the crowd. A simple interview preparation technique to help you construct a clear and concise answer is the STAR method, which stands for:

#### Situation

Set the scene and provide some context – What? Where? When?

#### Task

Explain the challenge you faced or the goal you were working towards

#### Action

What steps did you take to achieve the goal?

#### Result

What was the positive outcome of your actions? If it was negative, discuss the changes you made to ensure positive results in future



## Competency-based interviews

### How can I prepare for a competency-based interview?

#### Before attending the interview

- Think about what kinds of behaviours may be important to perform well in the job
- Think about times in the past when you have demonstrated your abilities e.g. successful projects, interactions with other people, convincing a difficult audience, analysing a large amount of information
- Think through exactly what you did in these scenarios and separate your own actions from those of any team you were a part of
- Don't be restricted to purely job related examples; you may also have good examples from school/university or hobbies

#### During the interview

- Listen carefully to the question and make sure you provide an example of what is being asked, not just telling the interviewer what you want them to know
- Talk about a specific example, not about how you generally act
- Talk about what you did e.g. "I spoke to lots of different individuals" not "We spoke to lots of different individuals"



# Attributes

## What kind of attributes are employers looking for during competency interviews?

### Action orientation

- Demonstrates a readiness to make decisions, take the initiative and originate action

### Commercial awareness

- Understands and applies commercial and financial principles
- Views issues in terms of costs, profits, markets and added value

### Creativity and innovation

- Creates new and imaginative approaches to work related issues
- Identifies fresh approaches and shows a willingness to question traditional assumptions

### Drive and resilience

- Maintains effective work behaviour in the face of setbacks or pressure
- Remains calm, stable and in control of themselves

### Flexibility

- Successfully adapts to changing demands and conditions
- Interacts with others in a sensitive and effective way
- Respects and works well with others

### Leadership

- Motivates and empowers others to reach organisational goals

### Commercial awareness

- Understands and applies commercial and financial principles
- Views issues in terms of costs, profits, markets and added value

### Oral communication

- Speaks clearly, fluently and in a compelling manner to both individuals and groups

### Personal motivation

- Commits self to work hard towards goals
- Shows enthusiasm and career commitment

### Persuasiveness

- Influences, convinces or impresses others in a way that results in acceptance, agreement or behaviour change

### Planning and organisation

- Organises and schedules events, activities and resources
- Sets up and monitors timescales and plans

### Problem solving and analysis

- Analyses issues and breaks them down into their component parts
- Makes systematic and rational decisions based on relevant information



**Quality orientation**

- Shows awareness of goals and standards
- Follows through to ensure that quality and productivity standards are met

**Specialist knowledge**

- Understands technical or professional aspects of work and continually maintains technical knowledge

**Strategic**

- Demonstrates a broad based view of issues, events and activities and a perception of their longer-term impact or wider implications

**Written communication**

- Writes in a clear and concise manner, using appropriate grammar, style and language for the reader



## Psychometric tests

These are a structured way of evaluating how someone behaves, acts and performs under a range of circumstances and are often administered online.

As with all forms of testing, practice can help you improve your performance on the day but make sure that you arrive with time to spare, well presented and calm.

Personality questionnaires are used to determine how people are likely to behave under various conditions. There are no right or wrong answers and the best way to approach them is to answer them in an honest and straightforward way.

Aptitude tests examine abilities such as numerical, verbal or abstract reasoning; they do not test intelligence or general knowledge. Often presented in a multiple choice format, the questions have definite right and wrong answers and to be successful you need to work through them as quickly and accurately as possible.

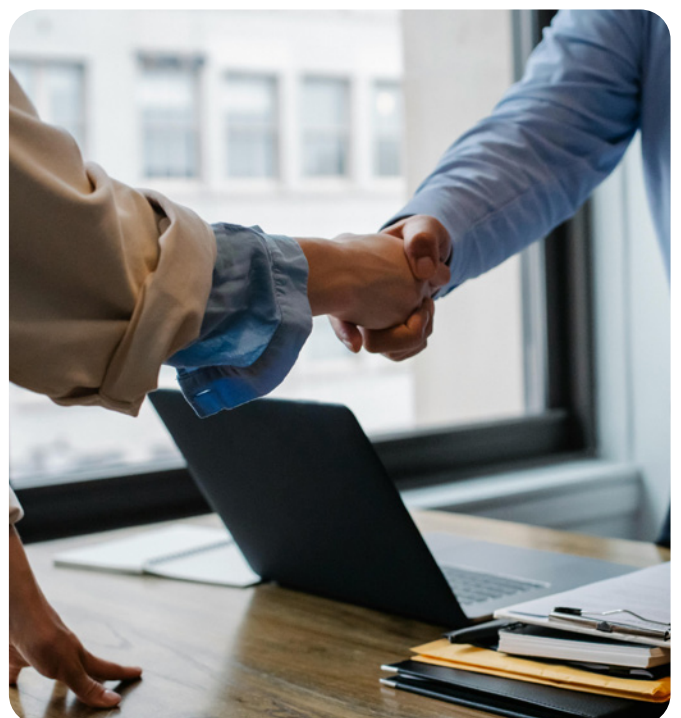


Psychometrics is the field of study concerned with the theory and technique of psychological measurement, which includes the measurement of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, personality traits, and educational measurement. The field is primarily concerned with the construction and validation of measurement instruments such as questionnaires, tests, and personality assessments.



### What should I do after the interview?

- Find out from the interviewers what the next steps are in the process
- Let your consultant know your feedback as soon as possible. It is important for us to know what you thought of the organisation, the role, the people who interviewed you and your impression of how you performed in the interview.



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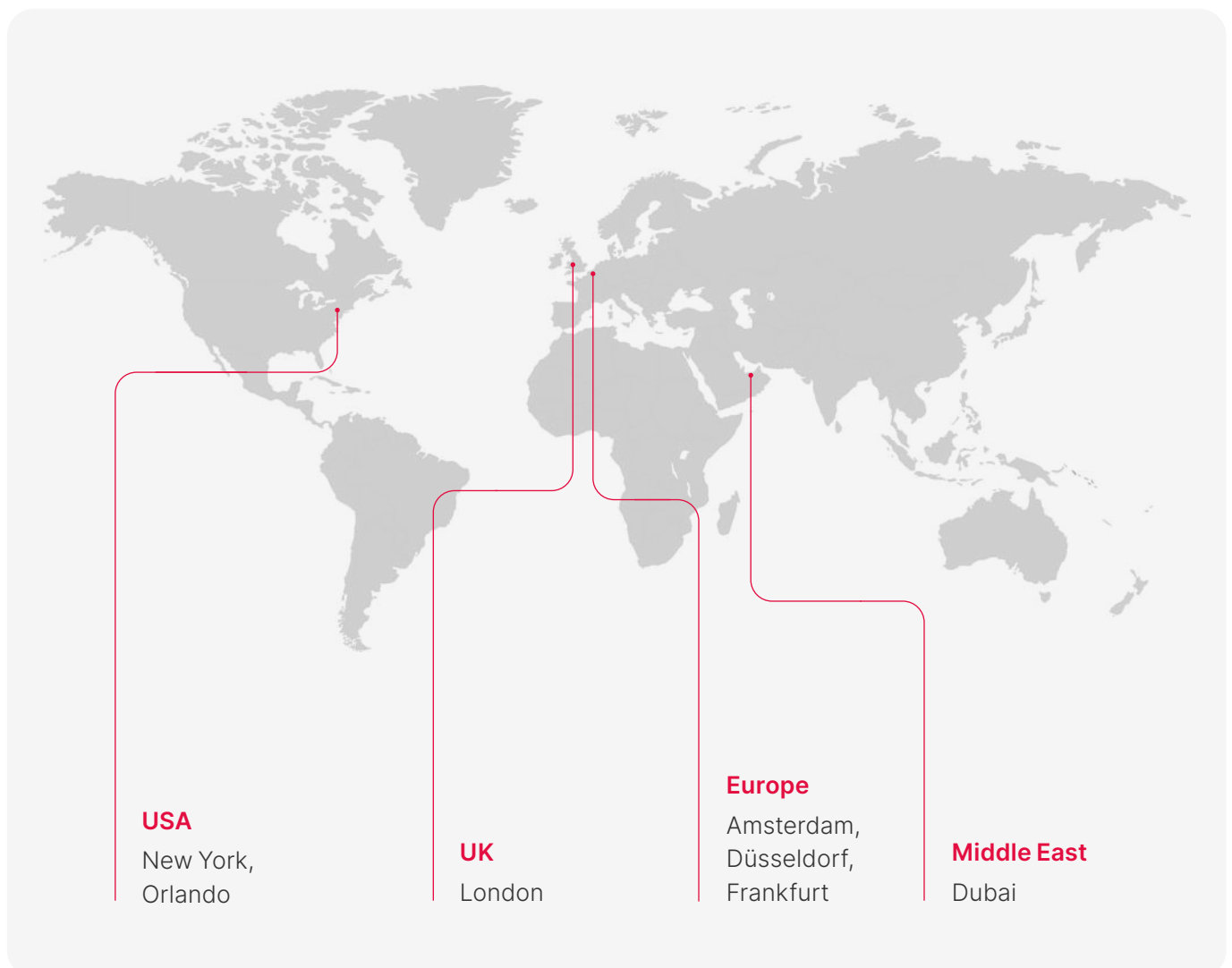
## A global market leader

We're a leading global recruiter of tax, treasury and senior finance professionals.

Through our expert teams across Europe, the Middle East and North America, we recruit all over the world – digging deeper and looking further in your search for talent.

Our global reach has also helped us to build a network of more than 25,000 tax, treasury and senior finance specialists across all continents.

So, whether you're expanding internationally or simply looking for the right specialist where you're based, we'll leave no stone unturned to ensure you get the results you desire.








## About our specialist recruitment brands

We're part of The SR Group, a global search and recruitment company that includes specialist search and recruitment consultancies Brewer Morris, Carter Murray, Frazer Jones, Keller West and Taylor Root.

With strong management, a clear vision and the recruitment, training and retention of inspiring people, we have developed successful brands synonymous with quality around the world.

Each of these brands support clients on mandates at all levels of seniority, from entry-level through to Heads of, Director and C-Suite positions on both a permanent and interim basis.

	<p>Brewer Morris is a trusted tax, treasury and senior finance search and recruitment consultancy.</p> <p>Through integrity, flexibility, specialist</p>	<p>expertise and always delivering results, we've built lasting relationships with professionals and businesses.</p> <p><a href="http://brewermorris.com">brewermorris.com</a></p>
	<p>Carter Murray is a global search and recruitment consultancy dedicated to marketing and sales.</p> <p>Through deep expertise within our</p>	<p>markets, we're consistently able to fulfil even the most complex briefs and match the best specialist to every role.</p> <p><a href="http://cartermurray.com">cartermurray.com</a></p>
	<p>Frazer Jones is a global HR executive search and recruitment consultancy.</p> <p>We help HR professionals thrive and empower HR leaders to put people and</p>	<p>culture at the heart of their business – creating a more progressive future, for everyone.</p> <p><a href="http://frazerjones.com">frazerjones.com</a></p>
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