



# Preparing you for success.

A Guide to Interviews

# Preparing you for success.

**Congratulations!** You've got through the first hurdle and made it to the interview stage. This is great news, but now the hard work starts - nail the interview and get the job!

Depending on the type and size of organisation the format of the interview will vary. It could take on several stages, including virtual and in-person interviews, a presentation to a panel, and even an informal chat over a coffee.

No matter what style of interview, it is likely you will encounter several styles of questioning techniques including:

- behavioural / situational interview questions
- competency-based interview questions
- technical interview question questions

Whatever form the interview takes the most important thing to do is **prepare**.

This guide has been put together by our expert recruitment team and aims to provide you with all the information you need to help with your preparation and ease those inevitable pre-interview nerves.

**Good luck!**

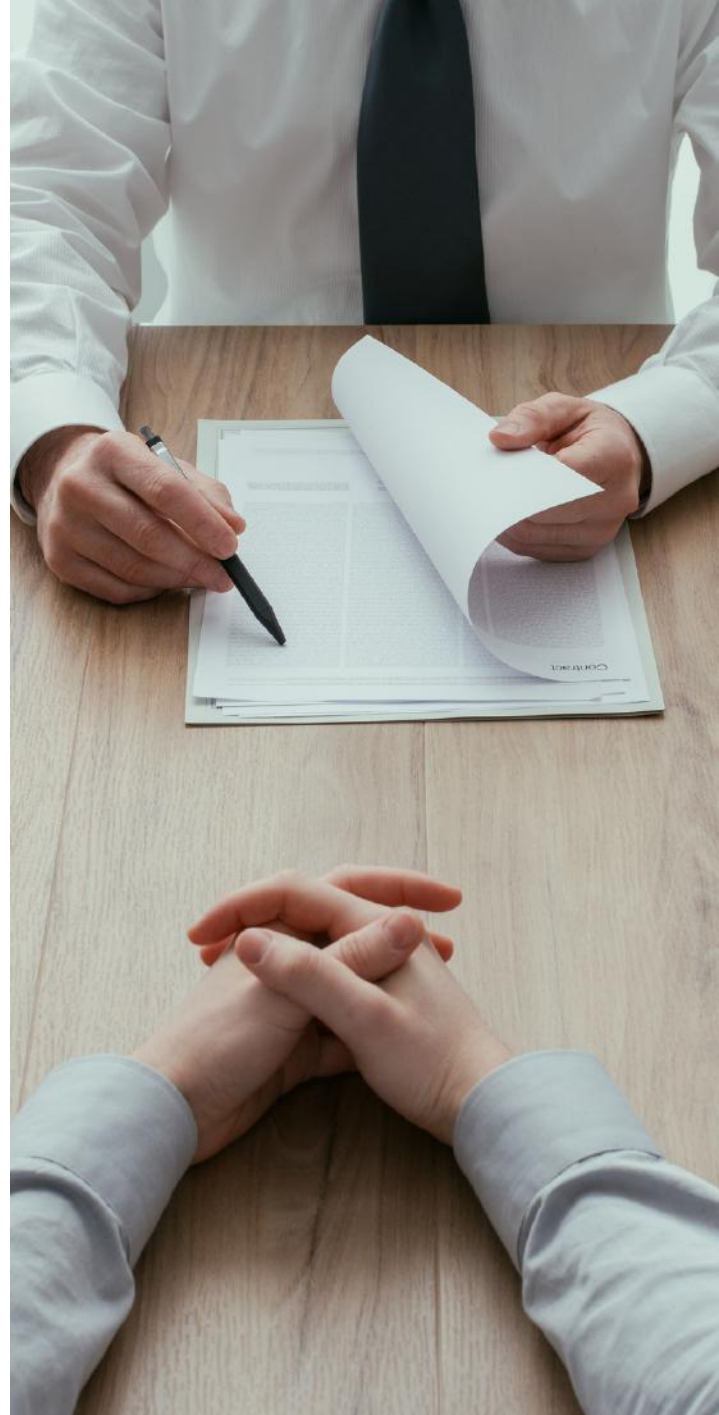


## Ahead of Your Interview.

Your dedicated Gerrard White consultant will arrange to speak to you ahead of the interview to discuss any last-minute questions you may have and to run through some typical questions you may be asked.

Our consultants want to ensure you are as prepared as possible, so make sure you get as much information from your consultant about the company and the role ahead of your interview date, this is vitally important not only to calm your nerves but also to show the interviewer from the outset that you have done your research.

Don't hesitate to ask your consultant about the interview format, the interviewers' backgrounds, and any other details that can help you feel more prepared.



Rose from Gerrard White has been exceptional! Having recently located to the UK she supported me all the way through the hiring process - making me feel confident at each stage. Whilst busy she made sure to check in promptly with news or feedback, and she was able to provide great resources for interview prep. It has been great having the same contact throughout the whole process! I would recommend Gerrard White to job seekers.

Candidate Trustpilot Review  
October 2023

## Remember.

**Interviews are not designed to trick you.** An interview is simply a way for hiring company to assess your skills, your attitude and your aptitude to do the role they are looking to fill. If you have made it to interview stage it means that your CV has passed the initial screening and that your skills on paper are a good fit. The interview will help the hiring manager get to know you better and understand how you deal or react with certain situations. An interview is an opportunity to go into more detail about your skills and showcase what you can't on paper.



### Five Top tips.

- 1** Ask for a glass of water, this can give you chance to think and prevent a dry mouth caused by nerves.
- 2** Have a notepad and pen to take down any notes you might want to refer to later, allowing you to focus on the questions being asked.
- 3** Take a copy of your CV with you.
- 4** Smile and listen carefully to what the interviewers are saying and asking.
- 5** Most importantly, be clear, concise and honest in your answers.

# STAR Method.

Interviews are usually a series of questions, designed to find out more about you, your skills, experience, attitude and aptitude to perform the role. Whatever the format of interview or style of questioning, you will be asked to talk through your skills and experience that you detailed on your CV. The interviewer will then likely ask a series of competency-based, technical and behavioural type questions specific to the role to help explore your skills and experience further as well as your ability to approach certain situations.

To help you answer these type of questions, consider using the **STAR** method as a way to help structure your answer:

## Situation >>

**Briefly describe the situation.** Set the scene and give all the necessary background. Add enough information so that the interviewer understands enough of the context of your example, they do not need to know every detail! **(20%)**

## Task >>

**Explain the task.** What was your responsibility in this situation? What needed to be achieved? Talk about the task that you took responsibility for completing or the goal of your efforts. **(10%)**

## Action >>

**Outline the steps you implemented to resolve/complete the task.** Detail the specific actions you undertook to accomplish the task or achieve the desired outcome. Emphasise the skills or personal qualities relevant to the situation. **(60%)**

## Result >>

**Describe the impact of your actions.** Share the positive results or outcomes achieved through your efforts, focusing on measurable results. Additionally, reflect on the lessons learned or key insights gained from this experience. **(10%)**



## Types of questions.

### General Interview Questions.

These questions are designed for the interviewer to get to know you better, to understand your interests, your motivators and passions.

- *Tell us a little about yourself and why you are here*
- *What is one of your career highlights/successes?*
- *Why are you interested in this role?*
- *What most interests you about our firm?*
- *What are your strengths?*
- *What are your weaknesses?*
- *What do you like most about your current role?*
- *What do you dislike most about your current role?*
- *Why are you looking to leave your current firm?*
- *Where would you like career to be in 5 years time?*

### Competency-based Questions.

These questions are designed to test specific skills required to perform the role and also aim to understand how you have dealt with certain situations previously.

- *Can you tell us about a time you worked as part of a team?*
- *What is your preferred management style?*
- *What would you do if you feel a senior member of staff has given incorrect advice?*
- *What is the biggest mistake you have made and how did you deal with it?*
- *How do you prioritise/manage your workload?*
- *How do you motivate yourself when the pressure is off?*

## Behavioural Interview Questions.

The purpose of behavioural interview questions are to get a greater understanding on how you act/react in certain scenarios and used to predict future behaviours.

- *Give us an example of a situation where you had to persuade another party to see your way of thinking*
- *Tell us about a time when you had to deliver a particular project in a very short time frame*
- *How have you gone about conforming with policies or directives that you do not agree with*
- *Talk us through a difficult situation when you have had to deal with conflict*
- *Is there a time when you foresaw potential issues with a piece of work or a project and how did you mitigate or prevent these issues?*
- *Tell us about a situation where you demonstrated real initiative*
- *What has been the most difficult challenge you have faced, and how did you solve it?*

## Technical Interview Questions.

These questions will vary greatly depending on the industry, company and role you are interviewing for. In these questions the interviewer is seeking a deep understanding of the subject matter and test your technical capabilities. If you are interviewing for a specialist role or role that requires previous experience, you will be expected to expertly and confidently answer these questions using real life examples from your own experience.



## Questions to ask.

As much as the interview is for the hiring company to find out more about you, it's also your opportunity to find out more about the company, the role and whether the company and role will be a good fit for you.

It's good practice to make sure you have some questions prepared, by asking questions, it shows a genuine interest in working for the company.

Think about questions around:

- **The organisation:** 5 year plan, strategic goals, challenges, why interviewers like working there etc...
- **The role:** what will first week look like, size of team, priorities etc...
- **Professional development:** career advancement opportunities, training, performance evaluated etc...
- **The interview process:** next steps, how many other people being interviewed, when will you get feedback etc...

Avoid asking questions that have already been answered either before or during the interview process, unless you need further clarification.



## Example questions.

- *If I were to start working in this position today, what sorts of tasks / projects would I be working on?*
- *What will be my biggest challenge in this role?*
- *What are the opportunities for growth within this role?*
- *How would you describe the firms culture and working environment?*
- *What is your time frame for making a decision on this role and what are next steps?*
- *What do you like about working for this company?*



# More tips for excelling at the interview.

## Make your first impression count

- **Dress appropriately:** Always err on the side of formality - Smart, well presented and well groomed.
- **Greet with a firm handshake:** A firm handshake and a smile can create a positive first impression.
- **Maintain eye contact:** Show confidence and engagement by maintaining eye contact and positive body language.
- **Be positive and enthusiastic:** Display enthusiasm about the role and the company.

## Communicate clearly

- **Be concise and relevant:** Answer questions clearly and concisely, staying relevant to the topic.
- **Avoid jargon:** Use simple language to ensure your points are understood.
- **Listen carefully:** Listen to the questions carefully and ask for clarification if needed.

## Follow up

- **Send a Thank-You Email:** Send a thank-you email within 24 hours, expressing gratitude for the opportunity and reiterating your interest in the role.
- **Reflect on the Interview:** Assess what went well and areas for improvement for future interviews.

## Additional tips

- **Be Authentic:** Be yourself and let your personality shine through.
- **Stay Calm and Collected:** If you don't know an answer, it's okay to admit it and discuss how you would find the solution.
- **Showcase Soft Skills:** Highlight your communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

Turn the page for your pre-interview checklist >>

# Your Pre-Interview Checklist.

Here's a handy pre-interview checklist to ensure you are as prepared as possible for your interview:

## Do your research.



- Understand the Company:** Visit the company's website and read about its mission, vision, and values.
- Know Their Products/Services:** Familiarise yourself with the main products or services the company offers.
- Industry Knowledge:** Stay updated on the latest news and trends in the company's industry.
- Company Culture:** Look into the company culture and work environment through employee reviews on platforms like Glasdoor.

## Understand the Role.



- Job Description:** Re-read the job description and understand the key responsibilities and required skills.
- Match Your Skills:** Identify how your skills and experiences align with the job requirements.
- Prepare Examples:** Think of specific examples from your past work that demonstrate your qualifications and achievements related to the role.
- Prepare questions:** Prepare some questions to ask the interviewer - about the company, the role, the interview process.

## Plan Your Journey.



- Know the Location:** If the interview is in-person, know the exact location and how to get there.
- Back up plan:** Make sure you have a backup plan in case of traffic or delays that may impact your journey.
- Travel Time:** Plan your travel to arrive at least 15 minutes early. If you have time, practice your route.
- Online Setup:** For virtual interviews, test your internet connection, and ensure your webcam and microphone are working.

## Talent. Delivered. Fast.

Gerrard White is a recruitment specialist with over 20 years experience working with clients across the Insurance, Legal and Technology markets and transforming businesses across the UK, Europe and North America through exceptional talent.

We are redefining recruitment by prioritising genuine relationships and personalised engagement over transactional processes. We see recruitment as a collaborative journey where trust, communication and understanding form the foundation of every interaction.

Our expert recruiters go above and beyond what clients and candidates expect from a traditional recruitment agency. Through our transparent and reliable approach, we build relationships that last.

Our personalised approach means more than just matching skills to job requirements. We take the time to understand every candidates career aspirations, motivations, and preferences, guiding them towards opportunities that resonate with their professional goals and personal values and help open doors to a diverse range of opportunities.

## Specialists in delivering transformational talent.

Jess was amazing throughout the whole process of me finding a new role. She answered every question I had and made sure I was well prepared at every interview stage. I couldn't recommend her enough to anyone seeking to find a new/different legal career and felt so supported throughout the entire process.

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