

# Preparing for interviews

Penny Longman  
Careers Consultant  
20 July 2022

LONDON  
SCHOOL of  
HYGIENE  
& TROPICAL  
MEDICINE



Your experience so far – use chat or jamboard

Many interviews?

Few interviews?

Assessment centres?

Video interviews?

Being the other side of the table – the interviewer?

Insights?

# Why are you here?

Use chat or jamboard:

What kind of interview situations do you anticipate?

What are your worst (interview) fears?



# Aim and objectives:

**Aim:** to equip you with tools to help you present yourself effectively at interview.

**Objectives:** steered by you – tell me what you want me to cover!



# What we could cover:

- What to expect;
- Types of questions;
- Questions you dread;
- Questions you hope for;
- Preparation;
- Performance;
- Reflection;
- Feedback;
- Resources;
- Anything else?

Varies with sector.

Non-clinical jobs selection process could include:

- Online tests;
- Phone or video interview;
- Assessment centre (variety of exercises);
- Face to face interview (in person or online):
  - Panel;
  - One to one;
  - Competency/strengths/situational judgement;
  - CV based.

# Types of questions

- Motivation – ‘why do you want this job...’;
- Competency-based – ‘tell me about a time...’;
- Situational judgement;
- Strength-based;
- Technical/knowledge;
- CV-based.

# The question you dread...

...and how to tackle it.

The questions you hope for?

# Motivation questions

Things to think about:

- Why this field?
- Why this organisation / project?
- Why this role?



Or think about your timeline: can you tell your story?

Demonstrate knowledge of the organisation/role:

Do you have the option to contact them for more info?  
Or your own contacts?

# Example question:

- Why are you applying for this position?
- (Tell us a bit about yourself...)

- Why are you applying for this position?

? I've always wanted to help people

? This is a great organisation doing important work

? It will get me the experience I need to progress in another field / company

- Tell your story (briefly) – key decision points/transitions, leading to this next step.

# Competency questions

Tell me about a time... when you initiated change.

Tell me about a time... when you influenced others.

Tell me about a time... when you had to work with a difficult colleague.

# Competency questions

S = Situation;

T = Task;

A = Actions;

R = Result.

Most of your answer (70%) should concentrate on A.

Break actions section into really specific steps.

(CAR – Context, Actions, Results;

CARE – Context, Actions, Results, Evaluation)

# Example question:

Think about a time when you worked as part of a successful team. What was your specific role in this team and what was achieved? (Team work and interpersonal skills)

## Example answer:

"I worked for an events company which ran events to help people understand about current health issues. We were running one of our big conferences and I was a part of the organising team. I worked mainly on the front desk and was involved in some of the pre-admin. I also worked with other members of the team during the event to make sure it was a success. After the event, we had a debrief and agreed it had gone very well."

# Example answer:

"I worked for an events company which ran events to help people understand about current health issues.

Good SITUATION

We were running one of our big conferences and I was a part of the organising team.

OK for TASK, but could you be more specific?

# Example answer:

"I worked mainly on the front desk and was involved in some of the pre-admin. I also worked with other members of the team during the event to make sure it was a success. Not enough specific detail about **ACTIONS you** took as part of the team.

After the event, we had a debrief and agreed it had gone very well."

How could you improve this **RESULT**?

# Example actions

I was part of a team of six people and I was responsible for monitoring and processing bookings, liaising with the venue and handling enquiries, then on the day I was on the front desk. Each conference had a year's lead in time in terms of planning but with most of the activity concentrated in the final six weeks. During the early planning stage we had a series of weekly meetings to establish the content of the conference and I took notes at these meetings and circulated action points promptly so all the team members had sufficient time to complete those actions and prepare effectively for the next meeting. Once the conference was publicized I established with the team which enquiries should be passed on to which team members and worked with different team members' preferences and working styles to make things as straightforward as possible for them – some preferred to receive enquiries once a week and others to receive them as they came in....

Access [eCareersGrad](#) here (Careers Moodle – Finding and applying for jobs/study – Interviews).

eCareersGrad is a modular, interactive interview coaching resource.

Coached example answers (good and bad).

Further resources in the same folder include:

[Interview stream](#) (for video interviews), links to case interview materials (for consultancy), helpsheets giving tips, materials to help with confidence.

# More online resources

Video examples of types of question with commentary on what works: go to UCL Careers Essentials Online (we have permission to use):

[Modules on Interviews](#)

[Motivation question examples](#)

[Competency question example](#)

Find on the [UCL Careers website here](#).

Select option to sign in as recent graduate (even though you are not a recent graduate of UCL) and create an account.

Select 'interactive tutorial' to access recordings.

Brief scenario:

- How would you deal with a team situation where you have to work with a difficult colleague?

Brief intro 'I would...' and can then back up with example (using STAR).

Different types:

- What energises you?
- Do you prefer the big picture or the small details?
- What would you bring to the team?

Not always right/wrong answers.

# Technical/knowledge and CV based

Technical/knowledge questions are usually the 'easy' ones – you know this stuff!

Do your research.

CV based – more common with small organisations:  
'I see you did...'

Unlikely with large organisations (same question to all candidates).

Be prepared!

- Work out your story;
- Analyse job description/person specification to identify the competencies/skills required;
- Think of examples to use;
- Think of challenges overcome;
- Think 'actions' – good examples are those where you have plenty of actions to describe;
- Research the organisation thoroughly;
- Reflect on your strengths;
- Think of intelligent questions to ask;
- Practise.

If only I had/hadn't said...AND what went well.

Try to write down the questions.

Be kind to yourself.

Ask for feedback: "what could I do differently next time to improve?"

Note it for next time – use it when you prepare.

# Takeaway action:

Questions?

What will you do now? (Use second screen of jamboard.)

Evaluation forms!