

# CV and Interview

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## Skills and Competencies

Dean Hogan



# Agenda



Desired learning outcomes and objectives

The structure of your CV

Your personal profile

Key skills

Analysing job advertisements

Matching your skills to the role

Your work history

Education and qualifications

The important details

After you apply

Preparing for the job interview

Telephone interview & screening

Video interviews

Different interview formats

Non-verbal communications & cues

Interview questions



# Learning Outcomes and Objectives



- That researchers should have a good understanding of CV structure and the purpose of all information that is included.
- For job application, CV writing and interview competencies to be raised to a high competitive standard.
- Researchers should also be professionally familiar with job interview preparation, interview techniques, formats and types of interview questions.
- All researchers are welcome.



# Overview



- CV and interview skills are essentially a collection of competencies that emphasis attention to detail and progressive, complimentary steps.
- The main purpose of your CV should be to secure a specific job interview for you.
- This is part of an overall training programme, with numerous modules. Many of those modules will inform how you write your CV and approach job interviews.



# Related exercises and vocabulary



○ Where am I now?

○ Self-assessment

Values

Interests/passions/motivations

Personality

Skills audit – Skills list

○ Advice and counselling

○ Career and development plan – reality test

○ Your journey

○ Networking - Elevator pitch

○ The purpose is to secure a job you will have specifically identified



# How Many Tools?



1. My IDP – Science Careers (website).



<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

2. PsychCentral (website).



<https://psychcentral.com/quizzes/personality-quiz#1>

3. National Postdoctoral Association (website).



<https://www.nationalpostdoc.org/page/CoreCompetencies>

4. DISCOVER – Careers Beyond Academia (website).



<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/career-development/researchers/discover-careers-beyond-academia>

5. INTERACT- Academia Reaching Out To Business (website).



<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/career-development/organisations/resources-and-tools/engagement-tool>

6. Career Development Toolkit for researchers (ebooklet).



7. 10 Career Paths for PhDs (ebooklet).



8. The 5-Minute Career Action Plan (ebooklet).



Questions?



# The Bespoke or Tailored CV



- While almost everybody will have an up-to-date CV available there is really no such thing as your “standard” CV.
- Every CV needs to be tailored specifically for the role/position that you are applying for, especially if you are applying for a role that is part of your career/development plan.



# Your CV



- It is likely that your CV will be just one of many applying for a particular role.
- Large pharmaceutical and IT corporations, for example, receive numerous applications for most advertised roles. More job applications are eliminated at the CV early “sifting” stage than at any other.
- When going through applications for the first time they would probably spend no more than 5 seconds on each “first look” at a CV.
- You need to have the most important information about you and your role-matching skills in a prominent, visible position.





# CV Structure – First items



**Morgan Abara**

**438 Charlemagne Building, Wetstraat, 170, 1040 Brussel, Belgium.**

**+32 2 295 02 90**[morgan.abara@euraxess.eu](mailto:morgan.abara@euraxess.eu) [Linkedin profile](#)

## Personal Profile

A short concise paragraph outlining your personal & professional characteristics. Goals and ambitions. An opportunity for you to define yourself to an organisation that you wish to work for. This amount of words would be about right for what is required.

## Key Skills:

Communication	Attention to detail
Critical thinking	Technical skills
Data collection	Data analysis
Planning and scheduling	Interviewing
Data collection	Time management
Ability to maintain quality, safety and/or infection control standards	

## Work Experience:

### **Title of role you occupy**

**Name and location of organisation that you work currently work for.**

**Feb 2018 - Present**

Under each job title in your employment history you should list your duties, responsibilities and achievements. You also need to list the dates you started and finished each role. Ensure that your dates are correct and sequential.

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# Applying for a specific role



- The first thing to understand is what and who the employer is looking for.
- The actual job advertisement will usually provide an excellent role description or guideline.
- The skills/competencies and role profile contained in the job advertisement can be compared against the skills list you will have compiled during your own skills audit.



# CV Structure – First items



- The first item on a CV is your relevant contact information. This usually consists of your name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- Beneath your contact information you will need to include a short personal profile.
- This is a very similar (but shortened) version of your “elevator pitch” that perhaps you are familiar with from networking training. It should be a short, concise paragraph outlining your personal & professional characteristics in addition to your goals/ambitions. Approx 200 words, 250 maximum.
- Include key words that may have been in the role description.
- Your personal profile is an opportunity for you to define yourself to an organisation that you wish to work for.



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# CV Structure - Skills



- The next information on your CV will be your skills.
- The first, and most prominent, skills that you list should be your skills that are the closest to matching the required skills listed in the role description.
- Of course, you will have read the role description and company information carefully before beginning to write your CV. So let's look at some sample job advertisements.

Questions?

# Sample Job Advertisements



## **Threat Researcher (CyberSecurity)**

Acronis has pioneered the new IT discipline of Cyber Protection, which combines data protection and cybersecurity into a unique and integrated approach. The Acronis Cyber Protect solution is a groundbreaking approach with innovative technology that is revolutionizing the industry as we know it. Acronis is entering an exciting phase of rapid-growth and expansion, and has recently received a \$250 million dollar investment from CVC Capital Partners, bringing our total valuation to more than \$2.5 billion. So we are looking for more talented and hard-working individuals who are ready for a new challenge and will join us on our mission to protect the digital world!

We are looking for an experienced and driven Threat Researcher to join our CyberSecurity Team. As a Threat Researcher at the global Cyber Protection Operations team, you will be fighting against modern malicious cyber threats by reverse engineering latest threats and creating security definition for Acronis products. As an expert in cyber threats you will participate in the development of new threat detection technologies, including automation and machine learning methods.

We are looking for the next member of our “A-Team.” Are you a highly-motivated individual who thrives in a fast-paced and high-volume work environment? Do you possess a positive can-do, never-give-up attitude? Do you play nice with others on a team? Are you ready to make an impact?



# Sample Job Advertisements



## Responsibilities

- Develop, support and tune threat detection rules
- Conduct online research of latest cyber threats and ensure it can be detected with existing technologies. Share research results in blogposts and articles
- Analyze suspicious files (executables, scripts, office documents), websites, memory dumps
- Monitor automated detection pipelines to ensure high detection accuracy
- Process customer requests to analyze suspicious files, adding latest threat detections or fixing false alarms

## Requirements

- 3+ years experience in malware analysis (windows executables, exploits, scripts): static (e.g. IDAPro, Ghidra) and dynamic/behavioral malware analysis (e.g. OllyDBG)
- Extensive experience with threat intelligence tools: VirusTotal, Shodan, MISP/other feed collections, analysis with MITRE ATT&CK framework
- Software development experience: Python, REST APIs, SQL, Regular expressions. C/C++ would be a plus
- Understanding of common cyber attack techniques and methods, common types of malware, network protocols, OS internals (primarily Windows, but macOS and Linux would be a plus)
- Network traffic analysis (Wireshark)
- Flexibility and proven ability to learn new things/skills fast, unbeatable curiosity, analysis, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills
- Good reading and writing English skills

# Sample Job Advertisements



## About the company: Acronis

Computer Software 1,001-5,000 employees 1,777 on LinkedIn

Acronis unifies data protection and cybersecurity, delivering cyber protection that solves safety, accessibility, privacy, authenticity, and security (SAPAS) challenges.

Acronis offers antivirus, backup, disaster recovery, endpoint protection management solutions, and award-winning AI-based antimalware and blockchain-based data authentication technologies through service provider and IT professional deployment models. These solutions protect data, applications, and systems in any environment.

Founded in Singapore in 2003 and incorporated in Switzerland in 2008, over 5.5 million home users and 500,000 companies, including 100% of the Fortune 1,000, trust Acronis. Acronis products are available through 50,000 partners and service providers in over 150 countries and 40 languages.





# Sample Job Advertisements



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# Sample Job Advertisements



**Postdoctoral Researcher ,Tyndall National Institute, 6 x Sparkle Marie-Curie Fellowships in Photonics**

**Interested in become one of Europe's future photonics leaders?**

The Irish Photonics Integration Centre (IPIC) is today one of Europe's centre of excellence in photonics, with a mission to build the future through talent and technology. If you share this vision, and strive to become one of Europe's future research leaders, who will drive the development of ground breaking technologies to address today's societal and environmental challenges, then Sparkle could be the programme to bring your ambitions to life.

At the core of each 24 month fellowship is a research project built on your ideas and aligned to one of IPIC's four inter-disciplinary Research Themes, where we are currently investing more than €20M. This programme is designed to address global challenges, such as to build the future backbone of the internet, to develop the world's smallest integrated imaging system for guided surgery, to develop novel integration and assembly technologies that deliver integration densities never previously achieved, and to enable the development of new products, including LIDAR for autonomous vehicles and micro LED displays for AR/VR.

**We are seeking** 6 experienced researchers of any nationality, resident anywhere in the world, seeking a prestigious career development path in the field of photonics research and innovation. Fellows will be based in Ireland at one of the following IPIC academic partner locations: Tyndall National Institute, University College Cork, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland Galway or Cork Institute of Technology. Over the last 3 years IPIC's new team members have joined us from over 30 different countries and have a 41% female representation.

# Sample Job Advertisements



**You Have:** A doctoral degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience in academia or industry. As international mobility is a core element of the SPARKLE programme, you must not have resided or carried out your main activity in the Republic of Ireland for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the call deadline. There is an exception if you are reintegrating into Europe or restarting your research career: in this case, you must not have resided or carried out your main activity in Ireland for more than 3 of the previous 5 years.

**Why Join Us:** You will have a comprehensive training plan, tailored to the career path you wish to pursue. Interested in an academic career? Your training will include the identification and submission to funding opportunities to enable you initiate your own research programme upon completion of the fellowship. Interested in a career in industry? Your training will focus on translational skills, such as fabrication and commercialisation, and you will be introduced to IPIC's wide network of industry partners to explore those that best match your ambitions. Over the last 5 years over 60% of our trainees transferred to industry at locations right across the globe.

**You will be provided with the following:** An advanced training programme in a cutting-edge research environment.

Expanded set of translational skills, including prototype development & fabrication, commercialisation, communication & dissemination and project management.

Enhanced innovation and entrepreneurial awareness skills through training on subjects such as market awareness, technology transfer, entrepreneurship and industry engagement.

A career-oriented 6 month industry placement with either a global technology leader or rapidly growing SME.

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# Sample Job Advertisements



**Qualitative Researcher, Bang & Olufsen Struer, Middle Jutland, Denmark (On-site)**

## About the job

At Bang & Olufsen, we strive to be the most desired audio brand in the world. For more than 95 years we've developed products that change moods, inspire minds and instill pride in all of us. We are passionate innovators, using our deep knowledge and collaboration skills to solve and simplify complex challenges every day, each of us driven by the profound effect sound can have on the mind. We welcome others that share our passion.

Join us in Lyngby to spearhead the area of qualitative analysis, telling the stories about our current and future customers. And be our guiding light as you help us look into the future of innovation as a luxury lifestyle product and the most desired audio brand in the world.

**Your mission: Specifically, You Will** be our beacon of qualitative insight as you develop and apply research methods to address issues and objectives specified by the business. We want to know our customers better, and you will help us tell their story. You will be the one to understand their audio needs and wishes, helping us create the products and services of the future.

Spend lots of time listening to our existing & future customers

Develop frameworks and undertake research that enable us to gain deep insights into the behaviour of existing and future customers

Write reports and communicate findings, data analysis and editorial write-up

Identify opportunities or recommendations that addresses the business needs

Aid in the analysis for hybrid qualitative and quantitative analysis and reports

**Your network:** Based in Kongens Lyngby, you will join the new, international Data & Insights team in our Digital department where you will meet five colleagues who have a lot of experience with quantitative data analysis. Together, you will work to develop your area even further in Bang & Olufsen. You will also have a lot of touchpoints both in and outside the organization, e.g. our Insights team, our Product team, external consultants and retailers.





# Sample Job Advertisements



**What You Bring:** You have a degree in Anthropology, Behavioural Psychology, Psychology, Communication, Sociology, Economics or similar combined with 5+ years of hands-on qualitative research experience (surveys, online communities, focus groups, 1-1 interviews etc. from e.g. a digital agency or research institute).

Moreover, you bring: Excellent English communication skills and a knack for statistics

The ability to manoeuvre in an ever-changing organisation that is undergoing a major and exciting transformation

The driving force that will allow you to spearhead qualitative analysis in a complex organisation with many stakeholders

## **Empowerment drives our innovation**

We are a company of approximately 1000 employees and that makes us small, agile and gives room for individual flexibility and decision-making – this is how we work best. Our hierarchy is flat and our communication is open and trustworthy. We believe that constructive feedback makes us grow as individuals and as a company, and our leadership is based on a clear direction and facilitating collaboration across functions and borders. We believe strongly in mutual respect and have a genuine interest in learning from each other.

## **We are more than just a workplace**

Life is more fun when it is shared and experienced with others. We collaborate, create and innovate on a global scale every day and we celebrate and enjoy life together too. We do Musical Fridays, sports events and get together around good food and celebrate local traditions, all centered around our passion for music.

**Bang & Olufsen** is a global luxury-lifestyle brand founded in 1925 in Struer, Denmark by Peter Bang and Svend Olufsen whose devotion and vision remains the foundation for the company. The rich heritage built around the relentless determination to create products that push the boundaries of audio technology continues to place the company at the forefront of audio innovation. Today, every Bang & Olufsen product is still characterised by the unique combination of beautiful sound, timeless design, and unrivalled craftsmanship. The company's innovative and progressive audio products are sold worldwide in

Bang & Olufsen monobrand stores, online and in multibranded stores. The company employs over 1,000 people and operates in more than 70 markets and Bang & Olufsen's shares are listed on NASDAQ Copenhagen A/S



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# Required Skills and Competencies



- The Role: (descriptive words taken from sample job advert).  
What competencies, knowledge and experiences do you have that are applicable?
- Make sure you highlight these in your personal profile and your employment/education history.

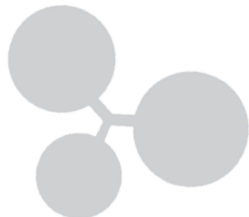


# Matching your skills to the role



- Required Skills: Look at your own skills list and highlight those that match, or are close to, the competencies required for the role.
- Next list any related skills or experiences that you feel could add value to the role. If there is still adequate space you may list any other competencies that you feel have a relevance to the role, company or organisation based on the research that you have done.

Questions?



# How well do you fit?



The Company/Organisation:

- ☐ What words do the company use to describe themselves?
- ☐ What kind of working environment is it?
- ☐ What is the company ethos and history?
- ☐ How does this organisation intersect with your own plan or journey?

This type of information should inform how you prepare for the job interview.



# The most important part of your CV



○ So, at this point we now have the top-half of the first page of your CV completed.

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○ As mentioned, this is the most important part of your CV when it comes to getting past the first, CV “sifting” stage.

# Your work history



- The next item on your CV is a chronological listing of your work history.
- This is only changed if your education history has more direct relevance to the role you are applying for. In such circumstances it would be preferable to list your education history first.





# What to include



- Under each job title in your employment history you should list your duties, responsibilities and achievements.
- You also need to list the dates you started and finished each role.
- Ensure that your dates are correct and sequential.



# What else can you offer?



- When listing your work history, be sure to highlight any competencies, roles or experiences that compliment or add value to the role you are applying for.
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# Education and Qualifications



- After your work history you will list your education history and qualifications with special emphasis on any qualifications that relate or add value to the role you are applying for.
- Once you have completed your professional and educational history you may then list your interests and hobbies. It is best to be honest when listing your interests as they are indicative of your passions and some of the topics may come up for discussion during the job interview.

○ CV Template



# Your References



- It is no longer best practice to list your references on your CV. We don't want to be sending others' personal contact information via email as your CV may be passed around without your permission. There may also be GDPR considerations.
- On your CV you may write "References (or) Excellent References available upon request".
- Usually a prospective employer will request your reference contact details after a successful interview. This allows you to contact your nominated referees to notify them that they will probably be contacted in the coming days.
- Cover Letter.



# The details of your CV



- Try to limit your (non-academic) CV to 2 pages, 3 at the most.
- Should be clearly laid out and easy to read with adequate white spaces.
- Use professional fonts and styles consistently, should be the same size (11 or 12) except when listing your name and headings. All headings should be in bold and/or italics.
- All bullet points and paragraphs need to be consistent, plain and aligned.
- CV must be accurate in content, spelling and grammar, informative but concise. This means that you need to proof-read your CV and ensure that it is no longer than necessary.
- Seven out of every ten CV's received by some high profile organisations contain spelling errors. What would that say about your attention to detail and your motivations?



## After you apply



- After you apply for a role you should be expecting a possible telephone call or email to invite you for an interview.
- Keep your phone turned on and, when you are busy, have a simple but professional voicemail. If a potential employer gets what you consider to be a “funny” voicemail message they may not get a good impression of you.
- How do you answer your phone when you don't recognise the calling number?
- What about your social media presence? Is there anything that could be slightly embarrassing or may look unprofessional?
- If an organisation is seriously considering employing you they may check your online presence while verifying your references.

Questions?

# Worrying about a job interview



- For those of us who get anxious or nervous before or during job interviews it is important to remember that the reason that you have been invited to meet with the employer is that, based on your CV and experience, the employer believes that your profile matches what is required and they want you to be the right candidate.
- They *want* to hire you.
- So when preparing for an interview you should realise that this is your opportunity to convince them that you are indeed the best candidate to fill their vacancy.



# Preparing for the interview



During an interview the employer will look for:

- ☐ Evidence of your skills/and competencies (Can you do the job?)
- ☐ Your interests, passions and your motivations (Will you do the job?)
- ☐ Your personality and values, if you match their ethos and culture (Will you fit it in?)





# Types of Interview



- The better prepared that you are for the interview, the more confident you will feel and the easier it will be to answer the interview questions. You won't always know what type of interview the employer will use so it is best to prepare for a few:
- **Traditional interview**
- **Competency-based interview**
- **Strengths-based interview**
- **Telephone/Video interview** – Can be used for a screening or preliminary interview
- **Whiteboard interview** – Some researchers have experienced this whereby they would be asked to solve problems, explain or discuss ideas using a whiteboard during an interview.



# Telephone interview or screening



## Telephone/Video interview – Phone Screening

- Sometimes, recruiters do their initial screening through telephone interviews.
- You should prepare for these as seriously as for a face-to-face interview.
- Much of the impact you make will come through your voice, so it is even more important that you sound animated and enthusiastic. In telephone interviews it can be easier to hide nerves and relax.
- If you smile, it will come across in your voice!
- Allow for possible time delays on the line, don't talk over the other person



# Telephone Tips



- Ensure you have a suitable environment where you won't be disturbed.
- Have your CV next to you.
- Practice before your phone interview.
- Prepare a smooth opening.
- Avoid distractions: Don't drink, eat or smoke.

Questions?



# Video Interviews



- Test your tech! Your camera, speakers, mic and wi-fi
- Will there be a high demand on your wi-fi at the same time as your interview?
- If your wi-fi is not dependable you could plug straight into your modem.
- If possible have a back-up computer or device in case of problems.
- You want a “do not disturb” environment.
- Ensure your interview will not be interrupted by messaging apps or software. Same with screen savers.
- Practice logging on to your phone hotspot in case of wi-fi failure.



# Video Interviews



- Use a computer instead of phone
- What platform will the interview be on?
- Practice on the platform. Screen sharing, muting etc.
- Practice looking at the camera instead of the screen.
- Smile a little more than you normally would.
- We all look more passive on video. Be energetic and animated
- Practice with an honest friend, stories, questions etc.
- Have your camera at eye level
- Avoid a cluttered or “busy” background.
- Straight on lighting.
- Ear-buds avoid audio complications but “cans” not great.
- Have your CV, cover letter and a bottle of water available.

Questions?

# Preparing for the job interview



Sometimes, in preparation, you may contact the individual who invited you to do the interview and ask them:

- How many people will be conducting the interview / on the panel?
- Have their identities been decided?
- Will the interview have a specific format?
- These questions will help you to be more prepared and, hopefully, more relaxed and confident. Having this information may also provide you with a competitive advantage over other candidates.



# Preparing for the interview



- Know your CV completely and ensure that you can clarify any gaps; you will be asked about them.
- Research the company or organisation completely.
- What is their history?
- How/why did it begin?
- Do they have a unique culture/identity?
- What are their short, medium and long term goals and ambitions?



# Preparing for the Interview



- How does the organisations plans fit with your own plan or journey?
- Think of how your personality and your interests fit.
- Think of how relevant your CV and experience is to the role and organisation.
- Prepare some related “talking points” for the interview that highlights your suitability for the role and organisation.
- While researching the organisation you should probably prepare some questions too, particularly about their processes and future plans.
- Before the interview you should turn your phone off.





# The job interview



## On the day of the interview

- Dress smart – If in doubt, wear business clothing. It is better to be overdressed than underdressed!
- Punctuality is vital – Ensure that you know where you are going and always account for extra time in case you encounter issues.
- Smile – First impressions count. Be professional and polite from the moment you enter the building. Every person you meet is a potential colleague and they may be asked for their opinion.



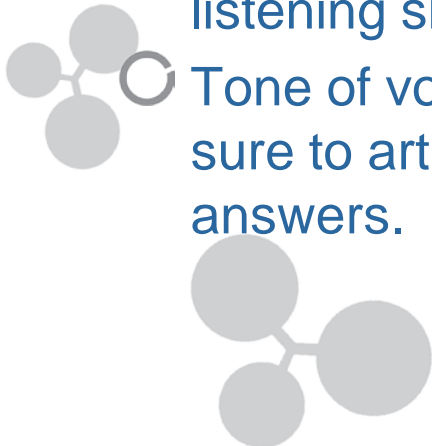
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- A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page. It features a blue banner with the words "combine" and "connect" in white, stylized font. Below the banner, there are two gray molecular structures. The one on the left is a simple three-sphere molecule. The one on the right is a more complex, branched structure with four spheres.



# During the interview



- Facial Expression and Eye Contact
- Establish rapport; always look at the person speaking or the person you are speaking to.
- Listen carefully to what they are saying/asking. It is the best way for an interview to become a conversation and this is a positive development.
- If you did not hear/understand a question be sure to ask the interviewer to repeat or elaborate on the question. Demonstrate your listening skills. Do not talk over the interviewer.
- Tone of voice; your tone should be friendly and professional. Be sure to articulate your answers correctly and avoid very short answers.



# During the interview



- Posture
- Gestures. Your body language and facial expressions. Sit straight, do not fold your arms.
- Be positive and when you are speaking about topics that interest or motivate you, let your enthusiasm show.
- Tell them about your journey. Your career plan and how working with/for them allows you opportunities to make a difference to a research area that you are passionate about, contributing to the organisations' success while expanding your own competencies and experiences.



Questions?

# Interview formats



- **“Traditional” interviews** follow the organisation of your CV and would also refer to the role description and how closely your CV matches it. The interviewer will use your CV as a guide to probe your preferences, past decisions and achievements as demonstrated through your professional, academic and other activities.



# Interview questions



## Most common questions asked during a traditional interview:

- How would you describe yourself? (Remember your Elevator Pitch?)
- Could you tell us about your present / last job? (Say only positive things about your last role and employer. Discuss the elements of the role that best relate to the role you are interviewing for)
- What do you know about our organisation? (This is an opportunity for you to show that you have done your research)



# Interview questions



## ○ Why would you like to work for (name of organisation)?

Discuss what you understand to be the future direction of the organisation and how they fit in with your own goals and plans. Explain how you can contribute to this and what you hope to gain in return in terms of new experiences, (team or group) achievements, new competencies and career progression etc. Help them to understand that you see an alignment between your own personal goals and those of the organisation.



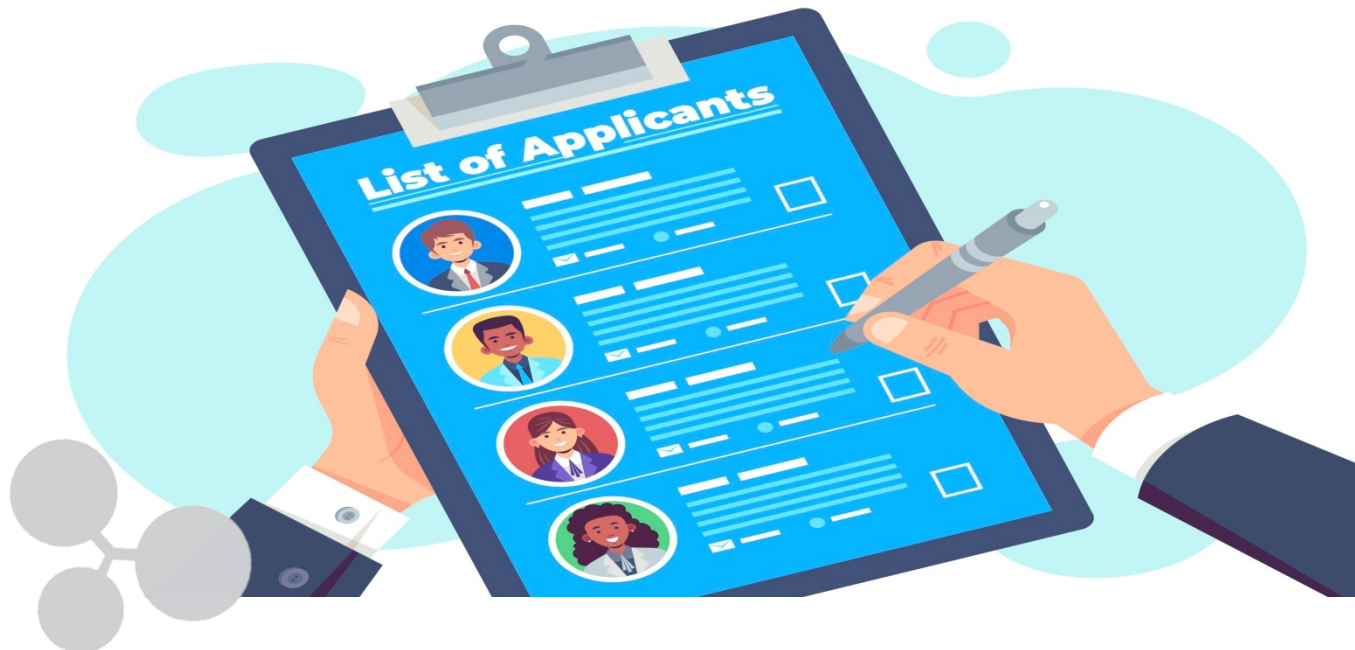


# Interview questions



- Why do you think you might be a better fit than other applicants with similar experience and qualifications?

(This is where you can discuss the positive elements of your personality that apply to this role and your values that match the stated ethos of the organisation).





# Interview questions



## ○ Why are you the best person for this role?

(Your motivations and passions. This is where your Interests assessment will give you plenty to discuss).

## ○ What is your main strength?

(If any of your motivated skills match the required skills of the role discuss these first as your motivation will come through naturally)

## ○ What is your main weakness?

(Discuss a training workshop that you recently completed or are about to take. The theme of the training could be used as an example of how you identify your own areas for development & upskilling)



# Competency-based interview



- In a Competency-based interview the questions are designed to help candidates give evidence of the competencies that are needed to perform well in the role. Usually, you will be expected to give an example of how you have demonstrated these competencies in the past.



# Competency-based interview



## Competencies that employers want or value:

- ☐ Communication (The job interview!)
- ☐ Interpersonal skills
- ☐ Teamwork
- ☐ Problem solving
- ☐ Organisational
- ☐ Multi-tasking
- ☐ Flexibility
- ☐ Adaptability
- ☐ Positive attitude
- ☐ Initiative
- ☐ IT related literacy



# Answering competency questions



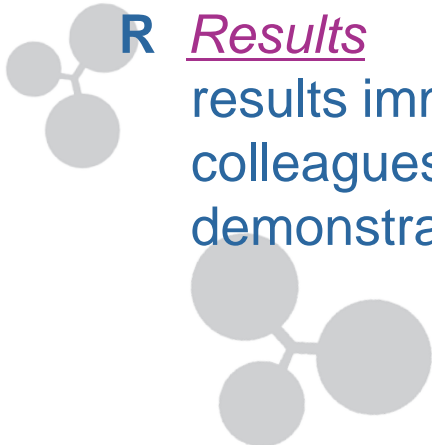
- They want to understand how you think. For instance, how you approach and solve problems, as well as how you apply certain required skills.
- The best approach for candidates to take to a competency-based interview is to use the STAR technique. They want to know whether you've actually had the experiences that prove you can handle this new position. How have you dealt with certain circumstances in the past?



# STAR technique



- S** *Situation* Detail the background. Include the context. Where and when? Then be sure to explain that you understood the possible implications and negative outcomes if this issue was not addressed.
- T** *Task* Describe the challenge and expectations. What needed to be done? (Explain your thinking and rationale. What could you do and who could you enlist to help you deal with the issue?)
- A** *Actions* Your action. What did you do and how? (What was your decision? Did you need to organise or brief others to help you or did you need to help others?)
- R** *Results* Explain the results and accomplishments. (Were the results immediate or clear? What was the reaction of your colleagues? Be sure to credit the contribution of others as it demonstrates a generosity that goes well with teamwork).



# Competency-based interview questions



## Common and frequently asked questions:

- Could you tell us about the time when you used your communication skills effectively?

(You could talk about presentations, your ability to communicate research findings, including conferences, seminars, written publications and convey scientific information to a variety of audiences, public engagement or outreach activities, team leading etc. You will have many examples)



# Competency-based interview questions



- Could you tell us about the time when you used your interpersonal skills?

(Client skills. One to one relationship with colleagues, supporting or helping colleagues or peers, positive team working experiences, dealing with sensitive issues, etc.)

- Can you provide us with an example of when you had to multi-task in the workplace?

(Use your STAR technique, we all have examples of bad days at work, time management and organisational skills, balancing research with other commitments, teaching, writing & education).



# Competency-based interview questions



- Could you tell us about a situation when your problem solving skills really paid off?

(As researchers you may have ready examples or you may use a story/dilemma from your non-professional activities or in-depth knowledge of specific topics)

- Could you describe a situation in which you used initiative?  
(Are there examples where you suggested positive changes to existing processes or practices? Did you identify inefficiencies? What good ideas have you come up with in the past and how did you act on them? Ability to apply research to real life situations, new and complex concepts)





# Competency-based interview questions



## ○ Describe a situation in which you motivated others?

(Have you had team leadership experience in any capacity? If you cannot think of any specific examples perhaps you could talk about the times that you led and motivated by example. Being a supportive colleague and contributing to a healthy and productive working environment is also motivating to your colleagues.)



# Strengths-based interview



- Some graduate recruiters use “strengths-based interviews” in their recruitment process.
- In contrast to competency-based interviews, in which employers want to understand “what you *CAN* do”, the aim of strengths-based interviews is for an employer to establish “what you really *ENJOY* doing”.
- The focus is on making sure you do more of what you are good at rather than what you are capable of doing.
- Strengths-based interviews have a simple aim:  
To find your interests, motivations and strengths.



# Strengths-based interview



## How to prepare for a strengths-based interview:

- The truth is that you can't do much preparation and we don't want overused answers candidates think interviewers want.
- Think about what energises you, both inside and outside work and be prepared to be open: Don't try to be something you're not.
- Be honest about what tasks you don't enjoy doing and think about how your preferences might fit with the organisation's culture and the job requirements.
- Strengths are innate: Talking about strengths gives candidates energy and authenticity



# Strengths-based interview questions



## Questions you might be asked:

- What are you good at?  
(All the answers are in your self-assessment)
- What do you learn quickly?  
(This is usually the topic that you are most interested in)
- What did you find easiest to learn at school or university?
- What subjects do you most enjoy studying?
- What things give you energy?  
(Working environment, colleagues, expectations, goals)



# Strength-based interview questions



- Describe a successful day you have had.  
(The STAR technique can be used again here)
- When did you last achieve something you were really proud of?  
(Speak about an achievement in which you invested a lot of time and energy. Then speak about what the achievement meant to you and how much satisfaction/enjoyment it gave you. Speaking about positive experiences will reflect in your body language.)
- Do you prefer to start tasks or to finish them?  
(Give reasons for your answer but explain that you are being forced to choose and are quite happy to do both, unless you really do have a preference.)



# Strengths-based interview questions



- Do you find you have enough hours in the day to complete all the things you want to do?

(Do you work in an organised and efficient manner? How do you organise/plan your working day? Can you delegate to or help others?)

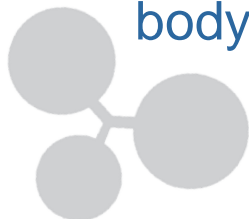
- What things are always left on your “to do list” and not finished?

(How do you prioritise your work and what criteria do you use?)

- What do you enjoy doing the least?

(Give reasons for your answer and be conscious that your body language is not too negative)

Questions?



# Ending the interview



- At the end of the interview you will almost certainly be asked if you have any questions.
- Perhaps you have some questions from your research of the company or role?
- Your first or second question should not be about topics such as salary or vacation time etc.
- If you are asked about your salary expectations you could inquire about the range of the salary scale before replying.



# Ending the interview



## On the day of the interview

- At the end of the interview thank the interviewer(s) for their time and the opportunity to discuss what you have to offer. Ask them when they expect to make a decision and when you should expect a follow-up communication.

## After the interview.

- Same tips as after the original application. Answer your phone in a professional manner and have an appropriate voice mail message on your phone.



Questions?



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Thank you for your time

