

How to prepare for Interviews

Here is a summary of the different interview question types that might come up:

Type	Description	Example
Motivational / Values	Why this role, organisation, and public health as a field; often probes genuine understanding of the specific population or context rather than generic humanitarian sentiment.	"Why do you want to work on maternal health programmes specifically in East Africa, rather than global health more broadly?"
Competency / STAR	Evidence-based questions on skills like partnership management, working under ambiguity, and influencing without authority, drawn from past experience.	"Tell me about a time you had to get buy-in from a government counterpart or partner organisation when you had no formal authority over them."
Situational Judgement	Ethical or practical dilemmas (data privacy, safeguarding, resource allocation, conflicting priorities) testing decision-making frameworks rather than memorised answers.	"You discover that a community health worker has been falsifying data to meet targets. Walk me through how you would handle this."
Technical / Subject-Matter	Epidemiology, biostatistics, MEL frameworks, relevant tools (R, Stata, DHIS2, Power BI), and knowledge of policy frameworks (WHO, SDGs, national strategies).	"How would you calculate and interpret the attack rate in a suspected cholera outbreak, and what would you do next?"
Policy / Current Affairs Literacy	Awareness of recent developments, funding changes, or debates in the field, showing the candidate follows the sector beyond the job description.	"What impact do you think recent cuts to USAID funding will have on TB programmes in the countries we work in?"
Organisational / Systems Knowledge	Understanding of how the specific organisation fits within the wider system (donors, government,	"How would this organisation's role differ from that of the Ministry of Health or a UN agency in a disease outbreak response?"

	other actors), distinct from general motivation.	
Data / Numerical Reasoning or In-Tray Exercises	Live interpretation of datasets or dashboards, or timed written exercises, common in civil service and MEL-adjacent roles.	"Here is a dashboard showing vaccination coverage by district. What patterns stand out to you, and what would you recommend investigating further?"
Presentation Component	A structured presentation task, often required for senior or technical roles, needing separate preparation from Q&A.	"Prepare a 10-minute presentation on how you would design a monitoring framework for a new nutrition programme."
EDI / Inclusion	Cultural competence and inclusive practice, often woven into situational judgement rather than asked as a standalone category.	"How would you adapt a health promotion campaign to be accessible and appropriate for a community with low literacy levels?"
Closing / Candidate Questions	The questions a candidate asks the panel, read as a signal of genuine programmatic understanding and interest.	"How is the team currently balancing donor reporting requirements with community-led priorities?"

Here is a bit more info on two of the most common types:

Motivational Interview Questions

- Focus on positive motivation
 - Align your answers to the job description
 - Incorporate your life history and personality
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- Tell us about yourself
 - Why this role?
 - Why this organisation?
 - Why now?
 - Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
 - How do you define success for yourself professionally?
 - What are you most proud of?
 - What are your weaknesses?
 - What are your strengths?
 - How do you deal with pressure/stress at work?
 - What management style best supports your work habits?
 - When have you exceeded expectations at work and what was your approach?

- When have you failed, and what did you learn?
- What are your hobbies/interests outside of work?

<https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/motivation-interview-questions>

Competency Interview Questions (STARR)

- Tell me about a time when...
- Give me an example when...
- **Situation** (10%) - setting the scene, giving context
- **Task** (10%) - goal, aim
- **Actions** (60%) - specific actions that you took
- **Results** (10%) - outcomes, achievements
- **Reflections** (10%) - what you learnt, would do differently next time
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Working under pressure
- Managing workload and multi-tasking
- Meeting deadlines
- Negotiating/influencing
- Managing conflict
- Leadership
- Problem solving

<https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/most-common-competency-based-interview-questions>

Preparing for the Interview step by step:

1. RESEARCH

Fully understand the organisation you will be interviewing at, organisational deep-dive

- How they measure success
- How they shape up against their competitors
- What language/phraseology they use
 - Understand what matters to them e.g. strategy doc, accounts. Where is the org headed, what initiatives are they excited about, where are they spending/getting money from - why you want to work there. Copy/paste the report into a word cloud generator to see what stands out. Look for Youtube videos, webinars, news articles.
 - Read equivalent documents from top 2 competitors
 - What are their employees saying on Glassdoor

- Summarise the above 3 things into a SWAT analysis

2. PREDICT

Based on your research create a table with expected questions and bullet point answers.

Expected Interview Questions	Answer Summaries
Tell me about yourself / walk me through your CV / experience	
Why are you interested in the position?	
Why are you interested in working here?	
Tell me about a time when you [Competency 1 from Job Description Person Spec]	
Tell me about a time when you [Competency 2 from Job Description Person Spec]	
Tell me about a time when you [Competency 3 from Job Description Person Spec]	
Tell me about a time when you [Competency 4 from Job Description Person Spec]	
What do you think you'll find easy and most difficult in this role?	
Where do you see yourself in 3 years time?	
Do you have any questions for us?	

Note: You can use GenAI (e.g. Claude, ChatGPT, Copilot) to generate practice questions based on the job description.

3. PRACTICE

Practice speaking your answers through

- Use structure in second column to practice verbalising your answers
- Do this 4-6 times until bullet points and answers stick in your mind
- Start with notes in front of you, then in front of a mirror, then in front of people
- Dance with answers, be fully present, fluid, adapt to the question asked

For additional interview resources see LSHTM Moodle [here](#).