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# The Ultimate Interview Guide



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# 01 The Interview

We've all been there. For generations, the interview has been one of the most anxiety ridden events anyone will encounter in their adult life. And depending on your situation, a lot can be riding on the outcome of an interview.



What so many of us find difficult about the interview process is that it's impossible to know the outcome. No matter how well you prepare or how perfect of a fit you think you might be for the role, you never know who or what you're up against.

That will always be the reality of interviewing. But that's not to say that there aren't a number of things you can do to better your chances at landing yourself the job offer you're holding out for. If you're in the market for a new job, thinking about making a move or getting ready to attend your next interview, you're in the right place. Our Ultimate Interview Guide has plenty of ideas and support to help you make a lasting impression on your potential future employer.



# 02 Interview Types & Structures

Interviews come in many different shapes, sizes and formats. No two organisations will conduct an interview in exactly the same way. And even when you go through the interview process, you might have to work your way through multiple different formats. Here, we break down the most commonly encountered types of interviews and what to expect.



## 2.1 The Telephone Interview

Many organisations start the process with an informal telephone interview. This is a very effective way to get a first impression of applicants and weed out those who can be immediately identified as non-suitable for the role.

A telephone interview is typically 10-15 minutes long and serves as a way for the employer to get a feel for who you are. Expect questions about why you're looking to change jobs, why you're interested in the role, and potentially answer some basic questions about your work history. You should spend a few minutes preparing before your phone interview, but it's unlikely that it will require the level of preparation as a face to face interview.



## 2.2 The Face to Face Interview

This could be a second stage interview following an initial phone conversation, or it could be the first step altogether. A face to face interview is usually quite formal, especially at the first stage.

Expect to spend a good few hours preparing for a face to face interview. Potential employers are likely to ask detailed questions about experience or responsibilities listed in your CV, ambitions, skills and qualifications.

At this stage, you're also going to learn a lot more about what the role entails and what will be expected of you, so it's important that you can communicate how your skills and experience will translate nicely into the role. Have those examples ready!



## 2.3 Group Interview

The group interview setting is less common than other interview formats, but it's in no way unheard of. A group interview puts applicants in a setting where they're actually interviewed together, at the same time - as a group. This can feel like a very unnatural situation for many applicants because, in essence, you're competing with other applicants on the spot to stand out.

This can test applicants in many ways, but the rule of thumb for a group interview is to be outspoken enough to be noticed, but not so much that you are seen as rude or overpowering. Find a way to make your answers unique and valuable, and have a variety of answers prepared ahead of time, just in case another applicant says it before you can.

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## 2.4 Panel Interview

Panel interviews are very common in larger organisations and are essentially advanced level face to face interviews. In this type of interview, you'll meet with multiple people from within the organisation who will all ask you questions. You might meet with the panel all at once, or meet them one at a time.

A panel interview can sometimes be important when a role will be interacting with many people across an organisation meaning that multiple individuals will need to have input on potential applicants. The important thing to remember in a panel interview is to stay calm and take it all one question at a time.

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## 2.5 Competency-Based Interview

When an interviewer meets with you, they want to get a firm understanding of your skills and how those skills will allow you to be a success in the role. Competency-Based interviews are a very effective way of achieving this and they have become a very popular way to conduct an interview.

If you know you're going to be attending a Competency-Based Interview, it's vital that you spend some extra time preparing. Take the time to think about explaining not only your skills but also how you'll give examples of where you've demonstrated these skills. In this interview setting, the questions are designed to test your specific skills.

# 03 How to Prepare for Your Interview

One of your most powerful tools at the interview is making sure you're fully prepared. Here are our top 5 interview preparation tips:

## STEP 1



Know your CV - be fully prepared to answer any questions about career gaps, specific skills and qualifications

Do a test run - scope out the interview location the day before if you can, so you don't get lost or have any surprises that could make you late. First impressions are everything.

## STEP 2



Have your references in order - always be prepared with a few written references and contact details so that the employer can verify them.

## STEP 3



Examine the job specification in detail - make sure you really study the job description for the role you'll be interviewing for. Be prepared to answer why you think you're qualified for the role and why your experience is relevant.

## STEP 4



Do your research - invest time in researching the company, its goals and its history. You should also research the industry, especially if it's new to you. Finally, research commonly asked interview questions relevant to the industry to give yourself a bit of an edge.

## STEP 5



## Questions to Expect & Prepare For

Even though each interview will be slightly different, there are a handful of questions that you can expect to encounter. And if they don't pop up in the interview because the company has a unique style of questioning, sharpening answers to these questions can still be helpful as you may be able to apply some of what you've prepared to other questions.

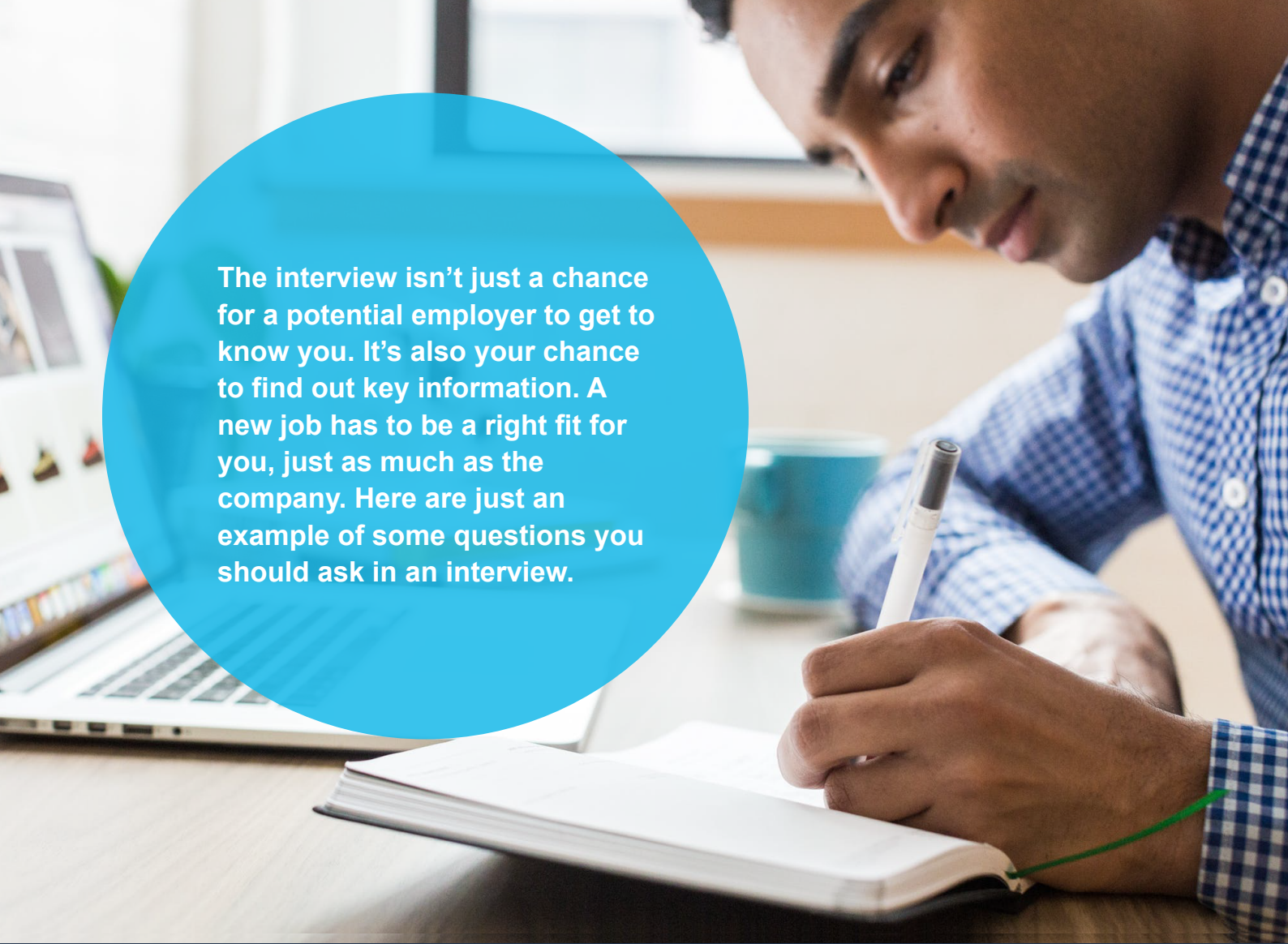


### Questions about...

- Your strengths and weakness
- Your goals and visions for the next 5 years of your life
- Any gaps in your CV
- How you would tackle challenges specific to the role you're applying for
- Your skills and experience
- Your salary expectations







The interview isn't just a chance for a potential employer to get to know you. It's also your chance to find out key information. A new job has to be a right fit for you, just as much as the company. Here are just an example of some questions you should ask in an interview.

## 05 Questions You Should Ask in the Interview

- How has the role come about?
- What is the culture of the organisation like?
- What are the plans for the business in the next 1/2/5/10 years?
- Going forward, will there be opportunities to grow and develop within the organisation?
- What are some of the key goals/challenges of the organisation?
- What are some of the specific challenges I'm likely to face in this position?





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## Interview Dress Code

How you present yourself says a lot about you, and an interview is no time to lapse in your personal presentation.

The main rule of thumb when attending an interview is that it's always better to overdress than underdress. But you'll already know that it's important to put your best foot forward and put on your Sunday best for the big day. What you may not know is that there is actually a psychology to colours.



It's true. Different colours communicate different things to the people meeting you and can make a marked difference in how they perceive you. Colours send messages about your character, personality and even your attitude, believe it or not.

Light colours are perceived as more open and friendly, but they lack power. Traditionally, power colours, or those that send a strong and appealing message to interviewers, are blue, black and dark grey. This is because these colours are considered to be the most business-like, so they are safe options for an interview.

However, if you know you're interviewing with a hip and trendy organisation, throwing in some fun and youthful colours like green and orange can help you add some flair and individuality.



# What to Bring With to Your Interview

You may not be asked to bring anything along to your interview, but it's always a good idea to bring a few key items. This shows the interviewer that you are prepared, proactive and thinking ahead.

**Passport / proof of right to work and live in the UK**



**Degrees and certificates**



**A copy of your CV**



**Something to make you stand out**



For many interviews, you'll be asked to complete a task after the first face to face interview. This is to see how you put your skills in action and how quickly you take to the type of work you'd be carrying out in the role.

If you want to make yourself stand out, it's worth bringing something with you to the interview that shows you've thought about the role in great detail and what you could bring to the table. What you prepare will depend on the role and the challenges described in the job advert, but here are a few ideas:



## Marketing Roles:

A plan for using social media more proactively within the organisation



## Design Role:

Examples of how you would push the branding moving forward



## Finance Role

Objectives for cutting costs within the organisation

Putting together a brief plan like this can easily put you a step ahead of the competition and really make you stand out. From the interviewer's outlook, you've already applied yourself and over-delivered - without even being offered the role.



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## Contact Details

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