

## Competency questions

### Communication

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Tell me about a time when you have had to use written communication to successfully influence someone.  
Give us an example of a time you had to adjust your communication approach to suit a particular audience.  
Have you ever needed to present to a (large) audience? How did you prepare for that?

*How did you structure your communication? How successful were you?*

### Teamwork/Collaboration

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Tell me about a time when you were part of ... a team ... an effective team ... a team where something went wrong.  
Can you give me an example of how you helped someone else to improve?

*How did you make a contribution? How do you help build good team spirit? What makes a successful team?*

### Leadership

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Tell me about a time when you were part of a project and you needed to change something – tell me what you did.  
Describe a situation when you assumed the role of leader ...any challenges? ...how did you address them?

*How did you manage conflicting ideas? What do you think makes a good leader?*

### Organisation and planning

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Tell me about a time when you have had to balance or juggle a number of (conflicting) priorities  
How do you approach managing your academic workload with your extra-curricular commitments and interests?

*How do you decide what to do first? What kind of goals did you set?*

### Self-management and resilience

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Tell me about a time when you have been faced with resistance or negativity - how did you respond?  
Give an example of a time when you had to cope under pressure - any examples from outside of your studies?  
What's the most difficult problem you have faced and how did you sort this out?

*What was the solution - who suggested it? If others were involved, how did you persuade them to your point of view?*

### Initiative and problem-solving

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Tell me about a time when the project you were working on went wrong or faced difficulties.  
Can you tell me about a time when you were faced with a problem you could not solve (straight away/alone)?

*What did you do to resolve things? What did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently in future?*

### Commercial awareness/seeing the big picture

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I'd be interested to hear about a time when you created a new approach to an issue or started something new.  
How does your degree make you a better candidate for this role?

*Why was change needed? How did you approach this?*

### Focus on delivery/drive for results

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Give me an example of a time when you were particularly successful/delivered over and above expectations.  
Give an example of a time when you had to make a difficult decision.  
Can you think of a time when you were not able to deliver what was expected of you, or a promise you had made?

*How did you approach the problem? Did you seek help or advice? What was most important in making that decision?*

## Motivational questions

- Why are you interested in working with us?
- Why should we hire you?
- What do you know about our ...sector? ...company? ...the role?
- What makes us stand out as a company (compared to our main competitors?)
- What are your long term career goals?

## Strengths-based questions

- When are you at your best?
- What do you love to do in your spare time?
- What are you most proud of achieving?
- What would your friends say are ...your strengths? ...your weaknesses?
- Describe a successful day you've had.
- What aspects of your course have you most enjoyed?
- Do you enjoy starting or finishing a project most?
- If you had a to-do list, what are the tasks that get done first? ...which are left until last?
- What motivates you to put in your greatest effort?

## Academic interviews - additional questions

- Tell us about your research.
- Can you describe the value of your research to a layperson?
- How does your research fit with the department's research objectives?
- Does your research have any potential to serve the wider community and how do you propose to measure impact?
- What ideas do you have for further funding your research, and what are the possible sources of future funding?
- How can you contribute to administration in the department?
- How does your teaching experience fit you for this post?

## Case study & technical interviews – general examples

- How would you choose the optimal balance of economy /business class seats on an airline?
- What strategy should a new world wine producer use when seeking to enter a European market?
- How many petrol stations are there in Paris? Suppose a friend of yours wants to open a petrol station in Paris. What aspects should he consider?
- How much water flows past a point in the River Thames in 24 hours?

## Example evaluation scheme – competency questions

Rating

- 5 – demonstrates positive evidence of a high level of competence with no substantial negative evidence.
- 4 – demonstrates positive evidence of competence with little negative evidence.
- 3 – demonstrates similar amounts of positive evidence and negative evidence of competence.
- 2 – demonstrates some positive evidence of competence, but with significant negative evidence.
- 1 – demonstrates little or no positive evidence of competence, along with considerable negative evidence.

*From: Civil-Service-Resourcing-Best-Practice-Recruitment-Guidance.pdf*