**Competency questions**

**Communication**
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**
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**
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**
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**
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**
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**
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**
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