



SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

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Here at Austin Rose we understand that interviews can be quite daunting, especially when you feel underprepared or unsure of what to expect.

Our experienced consultants have made a conscious effort to make this process as stress free as possible. However, the success of the interview is ultimately down to you and the quality of your preparation. This guide covers how to effectively prepare for your interview, as well as giving tips and tricks for both during and after the interview.

The interview process typically consists of an introductory call, a more in-depth and personal round, and then an in-person meeting.

Before the Interview

Before your interview, you will discuss the company, job role, and interview process with your consultant. They will be able to advise on:

- The type of interview
- Company specific information and preferences
- Common questions specific to the firm

The employer will be looking for evidence that you are truly interested in the position on offer, and this is often measured by your knowledge of both the company and role. Read the following suggestions for how to prepare.



Knowledge Preparation

Know the company you are interviewing for

Look into their services, history, future plans, recent milestones and their specific industry

- Read their website's 'About' and 'News' pages
- Conduct a general browser search of the firm

Align yourself with their values

Show that your own personal values align with the company. To do this, you need to be aware of the company culture and employee values

Stay updated on industry news

The interviewer may ask you about this and your knowledge can act as an impressive way to showcase your interest in that field

This includes:

- Changes in regulations
- News about competitors
- How technology is affecting your field

Know the job description

Look at what experience and qualifications are required and which skills are most important. Identify parts of your CV that directly correlate

Know your CV

They will ask you about your employment history and personal interests. Be prepared to explain any reasons for employment gaps in your history and specifics on your experience

Know the interviewer - If you are provided with the name of the interviewer, research information about them on LinkedIn & the company website such as any similarities or common ground that can be used to break the ice

Prepare answers to common questions -

Think about how you will respond and always aim to link the answer back to the job specification. Find more information on this later in the guide

Physical Preparation

These are the physical aspects that contribute to the first impression that you make on the interviewer. It is vital that you prepare in this way because the first impression sets the foundation for the remainder of the interview.

Plan your journey

- Know where the interview is located and have a prepared route. Have a backup route in case there are problems
- Aim to get there 15 - 30 minutes early to allow for any delays. However, make sure that you don't enter the building until 10 minutes before your interview time
- We recommend finding a local coffee shop nearby where you can have a chance to calm your nerves and go over any last minute prep

Physical appearance & presentation

As our consultants like to say ... 'Dress for success!!'

- Plan your outfit in advance to prevent a frenzied sort through your wardrobe the morning of the interview
- Make sure that it is appropriate and formal, even if the office is known as being a more casual environment

Rehearse with another person

Get feedback on your responses & discuss how to answer certain questions

Documentation

Make sure that you are aware of, or physically have, all the relevant information required. Your consultant will inform you about anything specific before. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Name and job title of the interviewers
- Structure of the interview
- Additional tests
- Full job description of the role you're interviewing for
- Copy of your CV (specifically the one sent to the client by your consultant)
- Other information that was sent to the employer, such as your salary expectations or notice period

Online Interviews

- Set up the meeting well before the scheduled time so that if there's any problems you have sufficient time to resolve them
- Make sure you have a good internet connection, plenty of charge on your device and access to the meeting link
- Ensure that you are in an area with a neutral and professional background, and where there will be no disturbances
- Still dress in a professional manner



[See more in depth advice in the article: Online Interviewing: Everything you need to know](#)



Just Before Your Interview

If you have arrived at the interview on time and are comfortable in what you're wearing, you'll be as relaxed as you can be. However, it is important that you take a moment to compose yourself. Nerves hide your personality, so try to remain calm and stay true to yourself.

[See more in depth advice in the article: Last Minute Interview Advice](#)

During the Interview

Your Demeanour

The interview begins the moment you enter the building, so be courteous to everyone you encounter and present yourself in a friendly and professional manner

- **Communication and interpersonal skills** - Use positive and enthusiastic language to portray a suitable level of interest
- **Body language** - Appear engaged and interested. When you meet the interviewer, maintain eye contact, be enthusiastic and use open body language and gestures
- If there is more than one interviewer present, make sure you engage with all of them individually
- Try not to be overly formal and robotic, imagine you're having a normal conversation and let your personality show

Answering the Questions

- Take your time before you answer a question, especially if it's one that you are unsure about. Clients prefer to hear a well thought out answer rather than the first thing you think of
- Remain concise in your answers, keeping them succinct and avoiding overly technical language. However, make sure they have sufficient detail
- If you don't have experience in a specific area, be honest and use it as an opportunity to display a willingness to learn and improve your skill set
- Always use examples to back-up your skills

[See some example interview questions here](#)



Competency Based Interviews

Competency based questions are designed to test a candidate's ability to perform in the role by evaluating how effectively they have performed in their past roles. All the candidates are asked the same questions, and then they are assessed and scored on a predetermined scale based on their answers.

In a competency based interview you will usually be asked to give situational examples of times in the past when you have performed particular tasks or achieved an outcome using a certain skill.



STAR Technique



We believe the STAR technique is one of the most effective ways to structure your answers to competency based questions. See the process below:

- **Situation** - describe a situation or problem that you have encountered in the past
- **Task** - describe the task that you needed to conduct, or ideas you had, in order to resolve the problem
- **Action** - describe the action that you took and any obstacles that you had to overcome
- **Results** - highlight the outcomes that you achieved and how your actions contributed to the success

Competencies to Consider

Individual competencies - Your personal attributes

- **Traits include:** Flexibility, decisiveness, tenacity, independence, risk taking and personal integrity
- **Typical question:** Tell me about a time when your work, or an idea, was challenged

Analytical competencies - The elements of decision making

- **Traits include:** Innovation, analytical skills, typical problem solving, numerical problem solving, practical learning and detail consciousness
- **Typical question:** Tell me about a time when you identified a new approach to a problem

Managerial competencies - Your ability to take charge of other people

- **Traits include:** Leadership, empowerment, strategic planning, corporate sensitivity, project management and management control
- **Typical question:** Tell me about a time when you led a group to complete an objective

Interpersonal competencies - How well you deal with other people

- **Traits include:** Communication, group impact, persuasiveness, personal awareness, teamwork and openness
- **Typical question:** Describe a situation where you convinced people to work together

Motivational competencies - The things that drive you

- **Traits include:** Resilience, energy, motivation, achievement orientation, initiative and quality focus
- **Typical question:** When did you work the hardest or feel the greatest sense of achievement?

There are many sources available online with more examples of competency questions.

Questions for the Interviewer

Once the interviewer has finished asking questions, it's your turn. Make the most of this opportunity as it conveys a genuine interest towards the role and company. However, **it should not be used as a time to ask about salary or working hours.**

Your questions should aim to showcase the research that you have conducted into the company and clarify any queries that you have about the role itself. Focus on questions that cover what you will be able to contribute to the company and that show you are interested in becoming a part of their team. By asking these questions it allows you to see if that role/company would be a good fit for your career aspirations.

[See some example questions here](#)



After the Interview

After the interview, take the time to send an email to the interviewer expressing appreciation for the opportunity and restating your interest in the position. You should also use this to send them any additional information or documentation that they requested.

You can now relax. However, don't take this as a sign to put the rest of your job search on hold - use the time to reflect and continue improving your interview technique.

Your dedicated consultant will contact you for a debrief after the interview. They will get your feedback and give their professional opinion on how it went and plan next steps.

Once your consultant has heard from the interviewer, they will pass the feedback to you. It is vital that you use this information to strengthen the weaker areas of your interview technique, improving your chances of success in the future.

They will also inform you on if you have been invited for another interview, or even received an offer for the job! If the latter is the case, and you are happy with the offer, we will then focus on finalising your placement. However, if you weren't successful in receiving an offer, you and your consultant can work together in planning the next steps in your job search and securing your dream role.



We hope this guide helps you during your next interview, and our specialist consultants look forward to being able to guide you through the remainder of your career endeavours.