



# Interview Preparation

## Preamble

One of the core components of the recruitment process is an interview. Interviews are a formal-and-structured discussion in which the employer seeks to find out more about the shortlisted candidates, and establishes who (if any) of the candidates is the best fit for the vacancy.

During the interview an Interview Panel will explore the candidate's:

- Technical skills
- Transferable skills
- Personality and interests

Although each interview is unique and each employer will have their own approach, the format of interview is fairly standard. In fact, although phrased differently, at different interviews you are likely to be asked questions similar to those you have been asked at other interviews.

Given the standard structure of an interview, and to help you prepare for the interview, these notes offer a few thoughts on the interview structure and provide some example interview questions. These notes are likely to be more useful to those of you who have not had an interview before, or those of you who are wanting to freshen-up on likely interview questions.



## Interview Structure

An interview can be viewed as a professional discussion between the Interview Panel and the applicant. The Interview Panel (likely two – five people) will include current employees who will interact with the 'prospective' employee; such might include the candidate's prospective line manager, the candidate's prospective peers and, (if the company is large enough) a representative from the employer's Human Resources department.

The Interview Panel will often (formally or informally) designate someone to be the Chair of the Interview Panel. That person (the Chair) will be responsible for i) welcoming the candidates to the Interview, ii) setting the scene and describing the format of the interview, iii) ensuring each panel member asks questions in turn and, iv) ensuring the interview sticks to the allocated time.

Interview durations vary but are likely to be around 30 – 60 minutes in duration.

For some interviews you might be asked to provide a short presentation. If this is the case you will be advised of that requirement in advance. Such advice will include the topic you are required to present on, the format of the presentation and the duration.

In terms of interview format, the following is typical:

- Welcome, introductions and overview of interview structure (led by the Chair of the Interview Panel)
- Presentation from candidate (if required). You will be advised in advance if this is required.
- Opening and settling questions (from Panel to candidate)
- Detailed questions (from Panel to candidate)
- Opportunity for candidate to ask questions (see note 1)
- Closing statements (from Chair of Interview Panel) (see note 2)

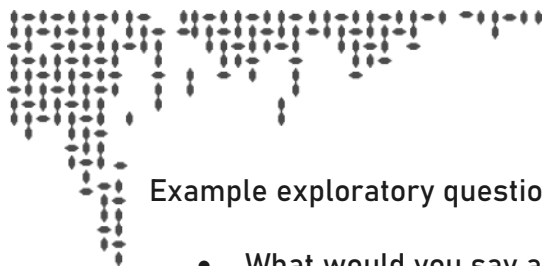
Depending on the duration and the number of panel members, you are likely to be presented with around eight to ten questions.

### Note 1.

The classical perspective of an interview is for *the employer to see if you meet their needs*. Indeed, this is at the core of an all interview. However, you should also use the interview to *see if the employer appears to suit your needs and is likely a good fit for you, and your professional growth*.

As such, at the end of the interview when the Chair of the Panel asks "*if you have any questions for them*". Be prepared for this question. Do not say "*you do not have any questions*". Equally, do not ask many questions. One or two is sufficient.

Use this opportunity to find out a little more about them.



Example exploratory questions from you, to them, might include:

- What would you say are the main attributes of an ideal employee for this role?
- I am keen to continually develop and enhance my skills. Does the company provide any opportunities for professional development of its staff?
- How do you see the successful candidate developing over the next 12 months?
- What projects / tasks do you see the successful candidate working in the first six months?

At this stage, you are strongly encouraged to focus the interview on helping them know more about you, and you finding out more about them. Do not ask questions about salary at this moment in time. Salary and employment conditions can be discussed afterwards - if and when they want to make you an offer.

#### Note 2.

It is likely the Panel Chair will advise on next steps. Typically, this will be something like...

*"We have some important decisions to make and we anticipate getting back to you within the next ? days / ? weeks".*

Listen carefully to when they will get back to you. This will be useful for you to keep a look out for an email / telephone call. Do not contact them immediately after that deadline has passed. Sit patiently for a few more days (perhaps a week) after their suggested date. If you have not heard anything from them it is okay for you write and see if they have any updates on their recruitment decision.



## Sample Interview Questions

The following offers a few questions for you to think about and plan a response. Whilst the questions are likely to be asked slightly differently, they should still prove useful for you to prepare yourself for the interview. It is true also that rehearsing a response to the questions will help you respond to other questions that are not listed below.

As before, you are only like to be asked around eight to ten questions. Hence, do not expect to be asked all the following questions. The set below (more will be added) are presented to help you understand the types of questions you may be asked and to help you prepare. Simply put, over-preparing is much better than under-preparing.

### Opening Questions:

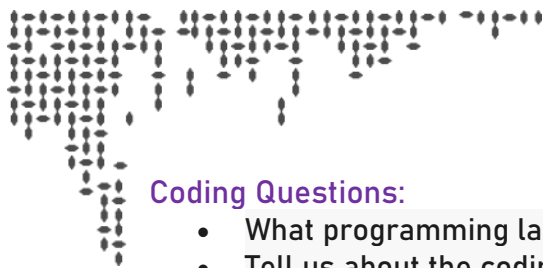
- What do you know about our company and the work we undertake?
- Why do you want to work with us?
- What aspect of the job description intrigued you the most?
- What experiences and skills do you have that demonstrate you meet the job description?
- Tell us about your background and what you have been doing the last 12 months
- Tell us about your previous employment and experiences
- What skills did you gain from your last employer?
- Tell us about your experiences at 42 Abu Dhabi
- What skills did you gain from studying at 42 Abu Dhabi?

### Self-Aware Questions:

- What made you become interested in coding and computing?
- What do you see as your biggest strength / weakness?
- How would your colleagues / friends describe you and your strengths / weaknesses?
- What skills do you particularly want to develop / strengthen over the next 12 months?
- Where do you see yourself in five years from now?
- What skills / behaviors would an ideal manager display to get the best from you?
- What do you think are the attributes of an ideal company or workplace?
- What activity or project have you worked on that you are most proud of?
- What personal characteristics do you have that you most proud of?

### Failure Questions:

- Give us an example of a situation that was going less well, that you managed to turn into a positive.
- How do you deal with failure?
- How do you tackle challenges that seem difficult for you to handle, or are outside of your expertise?
- Given a specific problem or challenge, what steps would you take to solve the problem?
- How do you deal with stress / stressful situations?



### Coding Questions:

- What programming languages are you confident in using?
- Tell us about the coding on some of the projects you've worked on.
- What is object oriented programming?
- How does a For loop differ from a While loop?
- What are some of the common features across different programming languages?
- What is meant by Pseudocode and how it is used in software development?
- What considerations are needed when you develop software as a team?

### Process and Project Management Questions:

- How would you begin a new software development project?
- What are the various stages of software development?
- What techniques would you apply to gain the user requirements for a new software product?
- What are the typical testing regimes and how would you deploy them?
- Tell us about how you would manage a software development project
- What are the key differences between agile and waterfall project management?
- Let's assume you are required to work on multiple project, how would you prioritize your workload?

### People Questions:

- How could you convince us that you work well with other people?
- Give us an example to show you can work effectively with people from different backgrounds and cultures.
- How would you manage conflict (within a team / on a project)?
- If you needed help, how would you approach your colleagues for that help?

### Philosophical Questions:

- What would you say has been the biggest contribution that coding / computing / technology has made to society?
- What's your view on artificial intelligence?
- What do you think are the ideal skill sets and attributes of a software developer?
- What do you think is the next biggest opportunity for coding / the technology sector?
- What do you think is the next biggest threat for coding / the technology sector?

### Closing Questions:

- Is there anything else you wish to tell us about your suitability for the vacancy?
- In summary, tell us why you believe you are suitable for the vacancy.
- Thinking about your own capabilities and experience to date, why do you think you are well suited to the role?