

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Most interviews have a set of questions that the interviewers ask each candidate. These questions can be categorized generally as three main types: general/strength-based, behavioural/competency-based, and situational/hypothetical.

1. Strength-based (General) Questions

These questions give the employer a **general** idea of who you are and what your motivation is.

- **Goals:**
 - Confirm understanding of why you've applied.
 - Get to know you and your personal values.
 - See how much preparation you've put into the application and interview.
- **Examples:**
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - Why should we hire you?
 - What do you know about us?

Answering General Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me about your professional background.

- Introductory statement
- Experience
- Education, certifications
- Skills

Answering General Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me about your professional background.

"I'm currently completing my diploma in Application Development and Delivery at Red River College Polytech, where I've gained practical experience in building web and mobile applications using programming languages like JavaScript, React, and Python.

During my program, I worked on a team project to develop a task management app, which helped me strengthen my skills in front-end development and agile collaboration. I also completed a certification in cloud computing, which sparked my interest in scalable app deployment.

I enjoy problem-solving and continuously learning new tools and frameworks. I'm currently looking for a junior developer role where I can contribute to real-world projects and grow within a supportive development team."

2. Competency-based (Behavioural/Descriptive) Questions

These questions connect your skills to your education and experience by asking you to describe how you have dealt with a **specific** situation.

- **Goals:**
 - Establish your skill set.
 - Use past performance as a predictor for future performance.
- **Examples:**
 - Tell me about a time you had a conflict at work.
 - Give us an example of a project you completed with a team.

For behavioural questions, you need to tell **a specific story about an actual experience that you had**. To do this, you want to use an organizing method like SOAR, STAR, or BAR, which all help you to remember to describe the details of when, where and why you were doing something, what happened, and how you handled it.

Behavioural / Competency-Based Questions

- Tell a true story from your work, school, volunteer work, Capstone project, or elsewhere.
- Highlight your contributions, even if you are talking about a group project.
- Use the SOAR, STAR, or BAR formula

S Situation • Position, employer, work to complete	S Situation • Position, employer	B Background • Position, employer, work to complete
O Obstacle • Challenge, problem, barrier	T Task • Work to complete	A Action • Steps taken, process, tools/tech used
A Action • Steps taken, process, tools/tech used	A Action • Steps taken, process, tools/tech used	R Result • Outcome, impact, achievement
R Result • Outcome, impact, achievement	R Result • Outcome, impact, achievement	

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Behavioural & Situational Questions

Example 2

- Share an example of a time you used one of your strengths.

S Situation

I would say one of my greatest strengths is my communication skills. During my industry project at RRC Polytech,

T Task

I needed to collaborate with a group of 5 classmates, as well as an employer client, to update an Android app.

A Action

Using the Scrum methodology, I led sprint planning, daily stand up and sprint review meetings to ensure each 2-week sprint is focused on delivering the next iteration. First... Second.. Third...

R Result

In the end, we were able to deliver a finished application to the employer, who implemented it right away. Looking back, this project really helped me develop my communication skills.

3. Situational/Hypothetical Questions

These questions determine if your values align with the company's values by putting you into **hypothetical** situations.

- **Goals:**

- See how you problem-solve.
- Understand how you collaborate with others.
- Learn about your values.
- **Examples:**
 - What would you do if a co-worker wasn't pulling their weight?
 - How would you respond to a customer who isn't happy with a product or service?

To answer a hypothetical question:

- State the problem and frame your solution.
- Describe exactly what steps you would take.
- Relate the situation to an actual experience you have had.

For example:

Q: "How would you make a great impression with a client during a meeting?"

A: "It **is** so important to make a great impression with a client. And you **can** do that by being prepared. Before the meeting, I **would** make sure I organized details about this person, their company and the purpose of our meeting. During the meeting, I **would** make time for a little small talk, but I **would** stick to the agenda to respect everyone's time. After the meeting, I **would** follow up with clear action items and a thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

I **had to** do this a lot in my communication courses at RRC Polytech, where we practised the practical side of collaborating with people. Planning and organizing a meeting with a clear purpose, roles and responsibilities can make a good impression on anyone."

Notice how the aspect of the verb changes in each part of the answer

- Use present tense (it is; you can) to state the problem and frame the solution.
- Use the 2nd conditional (I would) to explain how you would handle this hypothetical situation.
- Use the past tense (I had to) to connect this hypothetical situation to an actual experience that you have had.

FOLLOWING UP AFTER A JOB INTERVIEW

Once your interview is complete, RRC Polytech's Career Services department recommends:

- writing down the questions that you were asked, so that you can use them to prepare for future interviews.
- continuing your job search until you have secured a suitable offer.
- sending a thank you letter.

1. Thank-You Note

Consider sending a concise, polite thank-you note one business day after your interview in order to show your enthusiasm for the position. This message can include a mention of one personal highlight from the interview—for instance, something you learned that made you even more excited about the position. Email is usually appropriate for a thank you note.

Here's an example:

Dear Ahmed,

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to meet yesterday about the Junior Project Manager position. I sincerely enjoyed speaking with you and was particularly interested to hear about Horizon's shift towards including a solar and/or geothermal component on every new build, which aligns with my interest and experience in LEED construction.

Thank you again for your time yesterday. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jordyn LaRue

2. Follow-Up Note

A follow-up note is ideal when the hiring team let you know when they would make a decision, and that date has passed. Markman recommends waiting a week after that date to follow up. A follow-up note can:

- share your enthusiasm for the role.
- reiterate your interest in the employer.
- ask if they require any further information.

3. Feedback Note

A feedback note is appropriate when you feel that you performed well in an interview, but were not offered the job. This note can:

- thank the interviewer.
- share a personal highlight from the interview.
- ask for feedback about what you can do to improve your suitability for the role.