Example Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

Introductory Questions

- Tell me about yourself (align your skills and experience to the role)
- Why did you choose your degree?
- Why did you choose the University of Leeds?
- Why have you applied for this role? (align your skills and experience to the role)

Questions relating to knowledge/understanding of the company and the role

- Why have you applied to this organisation? (align your career aspirations and values to the organisation's)
- What do you know about the role that you have applied for?
- Tell me about your work experience (relevant – align to role)

Competency/skills

- What are the 3 most important skills for this role? (be able to give personal examples)

Communication

- Tell me about a time when you had to communicate with a wide range of people?
- Give me an example of when you communicated complex data to a non-technical audience?

Interpersonal

- Give me an example of when you dealt with a difficult customer?
- Tell me about a time when you diffused an argument?
- Give me an example of when you have built an effective client relationship?

Team working

- Tell me an example of when you worked effectively in a team. What was your role and what was the outcome?

Organisation

- Tell me about an event that you organised. What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?

Time management

- How do you organise your day/week?
- How do you prioritise your work when you have several tasks to do?

Flexibility

- Give me an example of your adaptability in a work environment
- Tell me about a time when you had to change your schedule at short notice.

Decision making

- Give me an example of when you made the wrong decision? How did you deal with it and what would you differently next time?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make an instant decision. What was the outcome? Would you have made the same decision if you had more time?

Innovative

- Give me an example of your innovation? What difference did it make?

Creativity

- How has your creativity made a difference?

Strength-based questions

- What are your strengths/weaknesses? (relevant to role)
- What do you see yourself doing in 5 years? (show that you have research career progression)
- What are you career aspirations?
- What motivates you?

Behavioural

- What do you do when your schedule is interrupted? Give an example of how you handle it.
- Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem.
- What is the riskiest decision you have made? What was the situation? What happened?
- What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in guiding and maintaining successful business relationships?

Commercial awareness

- What issues are currently facing this industry?
- How do you keep up to date with changes in this sector?
- How do you keep up to date with industry news?
- What do you know about our competitors?
- Why would a client choose us over our competitors?

How to answer competency and behavioural questions

Give specific examples when answering competency and behavioural questions.
The STAR model –Situation, Task, Action, Result can help by giving structure to your answers:

Situation – Give some background detail, to give context to your explanation.
Task – Explain the task you were given.
Action – Describe what **you** did, highlighting the skills you used to complete/handle the task.
Result – If you do not have a tangible result, you can explain what you learnt.

Example 1:

Question:
"Give me an example of communicating complex data to a non-technical audience."
Answer:
Situation – "When I was an intern at AAA
Task – I had to collate the results of a survey of 2000 people and report back to a working group. I had just 2 weeks to complete the task.
Action – I divided the task into chunks and created a timetable which included some extra time for any problems. I created a spreadsheet which allowed me to split the data so that I could produce many variants of the results. I then used the task objectives to produce both a PowerPoint presentation and written report. I used pie charts and graphs in both reports, to make the data easier to understand. I allowed lots of time for questions in my presentation.
Result – The working group was pleased with my report and presentation and asked me to do another similar project a few months later."

Example 2:

Question:
"Tell me about a time when you worked effectively in a team. What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?"
Answer:
Situation – "As part of a careers module, I took part in a skills challenge competition. I was put into a team with 4 other students I did not know.
Task - We had 3 weeks to prepare a 10 minute presentation on an organisation of our choice.
Action – At our first meeting we allocated tasks and agreed that we would have 4 meetings. Part of my role was to arrange the meetings. This was challenging because we all had different timetables, sports commitments and part-time jobs to work around. I created a Facebook page so that we could share our ideas and arrange meetings more easily. This worked well and we managed to meet up as planned. Another challenge I faced was one team member did not participate in our discussions. I decided to speak to her alone and discovered that she was very shy and worried about presenting in front of others. I offered to arrange extra practise sessions for her and this really helped to build her confidence.
Result – We achieved a First for our presentation which we were really pleased with. It also helped boost my confidence in my communication skills."