Types of Interview

Often employers will tell you what type of interview you are being invited to. This really helps as you can then prepare yourself for that. If they don't tell you beforehand, you can make contact to ask, if you wish.

Here are some interview formats you should be aware of:

One-to-one
Just you and the interviewer. This can be less nerve wracking because there is only one person for you to concentrate on and fewer people to impress. However, that person's opinion of you will determine the outcome of the interview. It can therefore be a less reliable method of selecting a candidate.

Panel interviews
These spread views about you across more people. If one interviewer doesn't feel you are a good match, their views may be outweighed by others. However, this type of interview can be very demanding for you as you need to try and keep the attention of all on the panel. It is worth mentioning some companies will also ask for a short presentation which they will let you know about beforehand

Interviews by telephone
Increasing numbers of companies are using the telephone in the first stage of the interviewing process. Telephone interviews are done in several ways:
- **Fully automated:** you are requested to call a freephone telephone number, where you will hear a list of statements/ questions and instructions to press a number on keypad to indicate your response.
- **Structured:** you will agree a time for the interview in advance. You will be taken through a series of questions that are recorded and analysed by trained interviewers. The questions are designed to establish if you have the required skills for the job.
- **Screening:** you're questioned on various aspects of your CV to decide whether you'll be invited to a personal interview.
- **A sales exercise:** you're given the opportunity to sell a product over the phone. This technique is used for recruiting sales, marketing or telesales staff.

The advice that follows about interviews later in this section applies just as much to telephone interviews, but some things are especially important:
• ensure your voice is clear and confident
• think about how the tone and pitch of your voice can help you sound motivated and interested
• smile when you're talking on the telephone, as you would when talking to someone face to face: the smile won't be seen but it can be heard
• standing up when talking can make you sound more confident.

Competency based interviews
This type of interview is popular with companies, organisations and recruiters. Competency based interviewing is based on the belief that past behaviour is the best predictor of future performance. The interviewer will be seeking information about your past behaviour in certain situations. These interviews are structured with questions that relate directly to specific skills and competencies that are required for the post you are applying for. All candidates are asked the same questions and notes are taken during the interview to evaluate each candidate's suitability.

The interviewers will base their questions on the specific needs of the post being applied for, utilising the competencies identified by their company.

Example of how a company's competency framework might look

Competancy	Performance Indicators
Individual	**Your personal attributes**
Influencing	Getting other people to take on board your ideas
Personal development	Willingness to continuously develop your knowledge and skills
Decision making	Ability to judge situations, make decisions and take responsibility for the decisions you make
Managerial	**Your ability to manage staff and situations**
leadership	Playing a leading role to ensure the future success of your company
Project management	Managing projects; setting and meeting targets, objectives and priorities
Collaboration	Working together with colleagues and partners, within and outside the company, to meet customers' needs
Forward planning	Anticipating future needs, taking appropriate action and being prepared for contingencies
Motivational	**The things that drive you and the qualities you need to succeed**
Attitude	Responding positively to change with a solution focussed approach
Motivation	Being focussed and driven to succeed
Initiative	Always looking for better ways to deliver results and improve performance
Flexibility	Open to new ideas and willing to change the way you work if necessary
Innovation	Looking for new ways to adapt products and services to met customer's needs
Analytical	**The ability to use logical reasoning**
Analytical skills	Ability to analyse situations and adopt measures that resolve problems and lead to improvements in services
Attention to detail	Making sure the work you do is thorough and accurate
Interpersonal	**How to interact with others**
Communication	Ability to communicate in a clear and concise way so others understand you
Supporting others/team work	Supporting and working in a collaborative way with other members of your team
Open mindedness	Prepared to take on board other people's ideas and opinions

These general themes are those that many companies adapt when determining competencies to meet their own specific service requirements, including aims and objectives. Once determined, companies will rank competencies – Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Depending on the nature of the duties of individual staff.

It is important to recognise that the answers you give should correspond to the level of the post that you are applying for. This involves demonstrating competencies at the relevant

level. E.g. the level and the nature of the answer should correspond to level 3 for senior/medium level management posts, level 2 for supervisory/lower level management posts and level 1 for the remainder of staff.

Scoring a competency-based answer

Normally in a competency-based interview the interviewers will measure how well you have answered each question (taking account of the level of the post you are applying for) and will allocate a score against each answer. These scores will be totalled and the candidates with the highest total score will generally be considered for the post.

Example of a scoring system

4	The candidate has shown a full awareness of the competencies required for the post and demonstrated that they have the right combination of skills, qualities, personality, qualifications and experience to match the requirements of the post.
3	The candidate has shown a **good** understanding of the competencies required for the post and demonstrated that they have **many** of the skills, qualities, personality, qualifications and experience required for the post.
2	The candidate has shown **some** understanding of the competencies required for the post and demonstrated that they have **some** of the skills, qualities, personality, qualifications and experience required for the post.
1	The candidate has **little** understanding of the competencies required for the post and has not demonstrated that they have the right combination of skills, qualities, personality and experience for the post.

For additional information on Interview Preparation and Interactive Resources to get YOU prepared click the link below to access the SDS Positive Steps Guide.

https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/45651/positive-steps_interactive.pdf