



# *Interview Guide* for Companies & Rubric form template

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A PRACTICAL, MODERN GUIDE TO RUNNING INTERVIEWS  
THAT ATTRACT AND SECURE THE RIGHT TALENT.



# Introduction

In today's hiring landscape, candidates assess companies just as critically as companies assess candidates. With competitive salaries, flexible working, and strong employer brands becoming standard expectations, your interview process is no longer administrative; it's strategic.

A well-designed interview experience can:

- Strengthen your employer brand
- Reduce time-to-hire
- Improve offer acceptance rates
- Increase the quality of hires
- Reduce candidate drop-off

This guide gives you a clear, structured approach to interviewing, and ensures every candidate leaves with an accurate, positive, & professional impression of your organisation.

## What Candidates *Really Want From* Interviews

# 01

Most candidates decide how they feel about a company within the first 10 minutes. Across thousands of candidate debriefs, the same expectations appear:

- ✓ Clarity - Candidates want to understand the role, responsibilities, structure, and expectations.
- ✓ Consistency - Mixed messages across interviewers weaken confidence.
- ✓ Transparency - Realistic insights into culture, challenges, and performance targets.
- ✓ Professionalism - A well-prepared interviewer signals a well-run organisation.
- ✓ Respect - Timely communication, punctuality, and a fair process matter.

A strong interview process communicates who you are as an employer.

# The Most Common *Interview Mistakes* Companies Make

02

Many organisations unintentionally disadvantage themselves by:

- Asking unstructured or questions that lack depth
- Focusing on interrogation instead of conversation
- Overselling or underselling the role
- Allowing bias to influence decisions
- Providing little or no feedback
- Letting interviews run too casually or too formally
- Forgetting that candidates are also evaluating you
- Failing to use a consistent set of core questions across candidates which makes the process less fair and harder to compare
- Not being clear on what they want to learn from each stage of the interview, leading to repeated or unfocused questioning

*A poor interview process can cause top candidates to withdraw  
– even if the job is perfect.*

03

## How to Structure a *High-Quality Interview*

*A strong interview structure creates confidence and consistency.*

### 1. Opening (2–3 minutes)

- Set the tone
- Introduce interviewers
- Provide a quick overview of the session

### 2. Company Snapshot (3–5 minutes)

Share concise, real information:

- What you do
- What makes the team unique
- What the role contributes
- (Keep it factual — avoid jargon and long monologues.)



### 3. Deep Dive Into Experience (15–20 minutes)

Ask behavioural and situational questions to reveal:

- Capability
- Decision-making
- Stakeholder management
- Ownership and impact

### 4. Use Standardised Questions for Fairness

Consistency is essential for a fair and meaningful assessment.

- Prepare a core set of questions that every candidate will be asked
- Ensure each question links to a specific competency or requirement of the role
- Avoid ‘winging it’ — it creates inconsistency and unconscious bias
- Make sure every interviewer understands what good looks like for this particular role (skills, behaviours, outcomes)

### 5. Culture & Working Style (5–10 minutes)

Explore:

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Leadership style
- How they handle pressure
- Values alignment

### 6. Role & Expectations (5 minutes)

Clarify:

- Objectives
- Measures of success
- Key priorities in the first 6 months

### 7. Candidate Questions (5–10 minutes)

Always allow time — their questions tell you who they are.

### 8. Closing

Explain:

- Next steps
- Expected timelines
- When they can expect feedback





# 04 Interview Questions *That Actually Work*

Here are high-quality, insight-oriented questions for employers to use.

## *Experience & Delivery*

- “Tell me about a project you’re most proud of and what made it successful?”
- “Walk me through a time you solved a difficult problem without direction.”
- “Talk me through a project that didn’t go to plan. What did you learn from it?”
- “Describe a time you had to deliver something under tight deadlines and how did you approach it?”
- “What’s the most complex project you’ve worked on, and what made it complex?”
- “Give an example of when you had to manage multiple workstreams at once. How did you prioritise?”

## *Stakeholder Management*

- “How do you handle conflicting priorities across different stakeholders?”
- “Describe a time when expectations changed suddenly. How did you manage it?”
- “Tell me about a difficult stakeholder relationship you successfully turned around.”
- “How do you approach situations where senior stakeholders disagree with your recommendation?”
- “Give an example of how you’ve managed up, influencing leaders or decision-makers.”
- “How do you keep multiple stakeholders aligned on progress, risks, and changes?”

## *Communication & Collaboration*

- “What role do you naturally take in group work?”
- “How do you adapt your style depending on who you’re speaking with?”
- “Tell me about a time you helped improve team communication.”
- “Describe a situation where miscommunication caused an issue, what did you do to resolve it?”
- “How do you approach giving feedback to peers or team members?”
- “Share an example of successful cross-functional collaboration and what made it work?”

## *Commercial & Strategic Thinking*

- “Tell me about a decision you made that had a measurable impact.”
- “How do you ensure long-term thinking while managing day-to-day pressure?”
- “Describe a time when you identified an opportunity that others missed.”
- “Walk me through a decision where you had to weigh cost against value and what did you prioritise?”
- “How do you approach risk assessment when planning a project or strategy?”
- “Tell me about a time you challenged an approach because it didn’t make commercial sense.”

## *Values & Culture*

- “What kind of environment enables you to do your best work?”
- “What behaviours do you expect from a strong leadership team?”
- “Describe a time when you upheld your values, even when it was difficult.”
- “What does a healthy team culture look like to you?”
- “Tell me about a time you helped create a more positive or inclusive work environment.”
- “What motivates you most at work and what demotivates you?”

# How to Evaluate *Candidates Fairly*

05

Having structure reduces bias and improves outcomes.

Use a scoring rubric

Score candidates on:

- Experience & skills
- Communication
- Cultural alignment
- Problem-solving
- Leadership potential
- Motivation for the role

A scoring framework helps you compare candidates objectively and prevents decisions being made on “gut feel” alone.

Make sure someone is taking notes

Clear, accurate notes are essential for:

- Fair assessment
- Consistency across candidates
- Justifying decisions
- Providing meaningful feedback

The best interview setup is two people:

- One interviewer leading the conversation
- One dedicated note-taker

If only one interviewer is present, ensure they pause between questions to take structured notes.

Consistency matters:

- Ideally, the same person should take notes for all interviews to avoid variability.
- Where possible, bring HR into interviews as the designated note-taker — freeing hiring managers to focus on the conversation and reducing bias.

Avoid biased questions

Examples to avoid:

- “Where are you from originally?”
- “Do you have children?”
- “Do you plan to stay in the area long term?”

Focus on evidence, not impressions

*Strong hiring is about patterns of behaviour and not personality preference.*

# 06

## Creating a Positive *Interview Experience*

Small details have a huge impact.

Before the interview

- Prepare and review the CV in advance
- Align all interviewers on the brief and what you're assessing
- Send a clear agenda
- Share interviewers' names and titles
- Provide location or video-call instructions
- Ensure internal alignment on what the role actually is
- If the interview is on-site, include any access instructions — e.g., how to enter the building, security check-ins, lift access, reception details, or a number to call if they need assistance

Do's

- Ask questions that reveal behaviour and capability
- Give space for thoughtful answers
- Share realistic expectations of the role and workload
- Respect the candidate's time

Don'ts

- Wing it — preparation matters
- Ask illegal or biased questions
- Over-talk or dominate the conversation
- Make snap judgments
- Ghost candidates or delay communication
- Present a role that doesn't match internal reality

During the interview

- Start on time
- Avoid interruptions
- Keep questions relevant and purposeful
- Engage — don't let it feel like a box-ticking exercise

After the interview

- Follow up when you say you will
- Give meaningful feedback
- Keep the process moving

*Candidate experience is Employer Branding.*



# *How to Sell the Role Without Overselling*

07

Candidates withdraw when:

- The role sounds unclear
- Expectations change over time
- The picture painted doesn't match reality

Be honest about:

- Challenges
- Team dynamics
- Workload
- Ambitions and constraints

*Great talent values truth over perfection.*

## *Interview Scoring Rubric*

A structured interview process is essential for fairness, consistency, and strong hiring decisions. While conversations can feel natural, decision-making must be grounded in evidence, and not impressions or personal bias.

To support this, we've created a clear and practical Interview Scoring Rubric Form that helps interviewers assess candidates on the same criteria, using measurable scoring and structured behavioural evidence.

*You can download the full Interview Scoring Rubric Form [here](#)*



# *Interview Scoring Rubric*

The downloadable form is designed to be used during live interviews or immediately afterwards. Here's how to get the most value from it:

## 1. Use the standard competencies and sub-criteria

The form assesses candidates across the core areas that predict performance:

- Experience & Technical Capability
- Behavioural Evidence (STAR)
- Communication & Collaboration
- Stakeholder Management
- Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking
- Commercial & Strategic Awareness
- Values, Culture Fit & Work Style
- Motivation & Long-Term Fit

Each competency in the form has its own sub-criteria and its own scoring line.

## 2. Score each sub-criterion using the 1–5 scale

Tick one score per row:

- 1 = Poor
- 2 = Below Expectations
- 3 = Satisfactory
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Excellent

## 3. Complete the Overall Summary

At the bottom of the form, you'll find:

- Total Score (out of 40)
- Overall Recommendation
- Final notes

*This keeps your decision-making clear and consistent across the hiring team.*



## Best Practices for Using the Rubric

- ✓ Use two interviewers  
One leads, one takes notes — this improves fairness and accuracy.
- ✓ Use the same rubric for every candidate  
This allows the hiring panel to compare like-for-like.
- ✓ Score immediately after the interview  
Do not wait — details fade and biases grow.
- ✓ Keep notes factual  
Write what the candidate did, not how you felt.
- ✓ Refer to the rubric in panel discussions  
It keeps conversation grounded in evidence, not personality.
- ✓ Store completed forms securely  
Rubric forms contain sensitive data — keep them confidential.

Score	Meaning	Indicators
<b>1 – Poor</b>	Not suitable	No evidence, hypothetical answers, poor fit
<b>2 – Below Expectations</b>	Gaps exist	Vague answers, lacks clarity or relevant experience
<b>3 – Satisfactory</b>	Meets expectations	Adequate experience, generally competent
<b>4 – Good</b>	Strong performance	Solid examples, confident communication, evidence of capability
<b>5 – Excellent</b>	Outstanding performance	Clear STAR examples, measurable results, strong ownership, above level

# Final Thoughts

Your interview process is one of the most powerful tools you have for attracting and securing exceptional talent. It signals your culture, your professionalism, and the quality of your leadership.

A great interview process isn't complex, it's consistent, human, structured, and respectful. When done well, it strengthens your employer brand, improves hiring outcomes, and ensures candidates walk away thinking:

*"That's a company I want to be part of."*

