

Competency based questions

These test various skills, abilities, knowledge and experience; they could relate to teamwork, leadership, time management, problem solving, communication etc.
Structure your answers using PAR: Problem Action Result.

Be specific - communicate how you played an active role and made a positive contribution to resolving the 'problem'.

Q Give an example of when you have worked on a team project. What was your particular role? What was the outcome?

What are they looking for?
Are you a team player? Did you make an individual contribution?
Analytical skills: ability to analyse and learn from the experience

A Briefly describe the project.
Explain your role e.g. motivated colleagues, kept everyone on track, gave feedback on team progress etc.
Describe what was achieved by the team and by you personally e.g. what you learned about teamwork and your performance, and what you might do differently in the future.

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Q Give an example of when you have led a group. How did you approach the situation? What was the outcome?

What are they looking for?
People skills: leadership, teamwork, motivating others
Planning and organisation, decision-making, problem-solving
Analytical skills: ability to analyse and learn from the experience

A Briefly explain the context.

Demonstrate how your leadership helped achieve the outcome and also how it had benefits for the team.

Explain your strategy: Did you empower others to help solve the problem? Did you encourage feedback? Did you make others feel valued?

Give measurable evidence or an important result e.g. prevented the club from folding, launched a successful campaign.

Positions of responsibility at work, in a team or club/society provide an ideal opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills; but even if this doesn't apply to you, think of situations where you have shown leadership in group projects, presentations, social situations etc.

Q Give an example of your ability to work to deadlines. How do you cope with working under pressure?

What are they looking for?
Time management and organisational skills. ability to prioritise.
How you behave when under pressure, probing whether you would be suited to a fast-moving environment.

A Example: 'At university I participated in a 24 hour design competition, working with people from diverse backgrounds. I enjoyed the challenge and found I thrived under pressure; I took on the role of delegating tasks in accordance with individual skills, and keeping the group focused and on track time-wise; we were delighted to secure second place in our region.'

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Q Describe a time when you faced a significant challenge. How did you respond? Given the chance, is there anything you would do differently?

What are they looking for?

Planning and problem-solving skills. Do you show initiative? How do you cope with stressful situations?

Personal attributes like tenacity, focus, adaptability, a calm disposition.

Analytical skills: ability to analyse and learn from the experience.

A Show that you can remain level-headed and react in a constructive way when the going gets tough.

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Q Provide an example of where you implemented change.

What are they looking for?

Do you exhibit a get-up-and-go attitude? Could you bring something fresh to the business?

A creative approach to problem solving, interpersonal skills that enable you to persuade and motivate others, planning and organisation.

Evidence that you're motivated, pro-active, committed to making a contribution

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Q Give an example of communicating complex or difficult information to individuals or groups.

What are they looking for?
To see if you are comfortable tackling difficult situations
Skills such as analytical, problem solving, communication, people management.
Personal attributes such as diplomacy and empathy

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Q Give an example of how you have had to research or analyse complex information. What methods did you use and how did you present your findings?

What are they looking for?
Research and analysis, problem solving and communication skills

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