

How to prepare for an interview and skills assessment

It is important to keep a copy of your application form so you can review it and be familiar with what you have written prior to interview. You should save your answers separately, for example on a word document, as you will not be able to save your application from Smart Survey once it is complete.

Review the advert, job description (sometimes referred to as a job profile) and person specification for the post.

Prepare for some questions from the job description and person specification that you are likely to be asked at interview and your responses. For example, what strengths and experience will you bring to the role?

During an interview, the main questions will be driven by the Key Performance Outcomes for the role and organisational values. Be prepared and have relevant examples of situations you have been in before and tell your stories.

Using the STAR method can help you keep your examples focused:

- Situation – set the context of your story
- Task – what was required of you
- Activity – what you did
- Result – how well the situation played out

There are lots of useful videos and resources available online that give more information on the STAR method or alternative approaches.

Prepare a list of your own questions to ask at the end of your interview.

If you have to complete a skills assessment or exercise, read the instructions carefully and highlight what you need to do and the most essential points. Take the time to clarify your thoughts before proceeding with the task.

During the exercise, tackle the most important and most complex issues first. Make sure you have enough time at the end to review your work and that you have not missed anything.

If you have to do a presentation, prepare your presentation in advance, structure it and have a clear message. For your own reassurance, it is good practice to bring a printed copy (to an in person interview) or to send it to the recruitment mailbox in advance of your online interview.

Rehearse your presentation to manage time and prepare for any follow up questions that the panel might ask.

Interviews can either be carried out online via Microsoft Teams or in-person.

It is always a good idea to arrive for an in person interview earlier than you need to, to review last minute information and reflect and compose yourself. For interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams, please join the meeting no earlier than the time requested.

Prior to an in-person interview, check you have everything you will need to present while you are at reception. For an online interview, ensure you have sent the relevant items to the recruitment mailbox in advance of the Teams meeting interview. This includes copies of the job description, person specification and your application form, proof of ID, certificates of qualifications, previous disclosure/PVG certificate, presentation back-up and any hand-out materials you need.