

PREPARE FOR YOUR FUTURE CAREER!

A GUIDE TO INTERVIEW SKILLS



WE'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU FOR AN INTERVIEW

Congratulations! You've applied for your dream job and we've invited you for an interview. So what happens now?

An invitation to interview is a clear indication that you've got the skills we are looking for and are being considered as a potential candidate. This is your chance to convince us that you're the right match for Sweco and the role. A chance to let your knowledge, skills and personality really shine.

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail...

You've no doubt done some research into Sweco prior to applying. Well now is the time to go even deeper with your research into the organisation, the job, and the skills and qualities you need to fulfil the role. We've designed this guide to support you throughout the interview process. It covers every stage starting with thorough preparation, the types of interview you may encounter, what to expect on the day and what happens next.

We wish you the very best of luck!



INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

WHO ARE SWECO?

Look into the organisation, research our competitors, clients, and our service offering to understand what we do. Let us know why you would like to work for us.

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE

Ask for a copy of the job description and think about why this is the right job for you.

INTERVIEW FORMAT

We will let you know on your invite email who will be conducting the interview. We will also confirm the interview format (i.e. interview or presentation and interview) and where you need to go and what time to arrive. If you're unfamiliar with the interview location, perhaps do a trial run to see how long it takes you to get there. We will also ask you to bring your 'Right to Work in the UK' documentation with you so that we can take a copy for our records.

QUESTIONS

Think about the skills, experience and knowledge you can bring to the role and how you might bring these to life in the interview. Think about examples you might have to support your answers. Talk about work experience or achievements that make you stand out.

PRACTISE

Ask friends and family to help you by carrying out a mock interview and ask them for their honest feedback on your performance. Think about your body language. Remember to give eye contact and smile.

PREPARE SOME QUESTIONS

Think of a few questions to ask the interviewer/s. These shouldn't just be about salary and benefits. Consider questions that demonstrate your enthusiasm for learning, your eagerness to know more about Sweco or your willingness to take on additional responsibility.

ON THE DAY

Wear something that makes you feel comfortable, but most importantly it should make you feel confident and look professional.

REMAIN CALM

It's natural to feel nervous. Leave plenty of time to travel to your interview so that you have time to sit and take a few deep breaths before you go in.

TAKE A NOTEPAD AND PEN

A good idea if you want to jot down any notes and questions during the interview.

YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

Be polite and professional with everyone you meet. Even in the reception area. Ensure your phone is switched off. Take some time to read through your notes.

SHAKE HANDS

When you meet your interviewer, smile, introduce yourself and offer them a firm handshake. Always wait to be offered a seat before sitting down. Be conscious of your body language and what this says about you e.g. folded arms may look defensive.

BE CLEAR AND DON'T WAFFLE

When answering questions, look your interviewer in the eye and be clear, concise and positive.

Try and relate your answer back to one of the skills the role requires, so that the interviewers can see the link and how it will be a benefit to Sweco.

IT'S OK TO TAKE A MINUTE

Pause whilst you consider your answer or think of a relevant example. Your interviewer would rather you take your time and give a well-thought out response than struggle or say the first thing that comes into your head. It is ok to ask the interviewer to come back to the question later if you need more time to think about an example. You could also ask the interviewer to rephrase the question if you do not understand.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

The most common type of interviews we do is either a one-to-one or panel interview. However, we may also add in other types so here's what to expect from each one.

COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS

These are structured to reflect the competencies or capabilities that we are looking for in a job or role, and are often part of the job description so you should already be familiar with them. Competencies are specific skills, knowledge and abilities that are essential to perform certain tasks.

TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS

If you've applied for a job or placement that requires technical knowledge, it's likely you'll be asked questions based around technical issues or hypothetical scenarios to test your knowledge. Alternatively, you might be asked to demonstrate how you've applied your technical knowledge already through your studies or work experience.

CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

Often taking the form of a group exercise, case study interviews could be based on a business problem that needs resolving or a straightforward brainteaser. You'll be evaluated on your analysis of the problem, how you identify the key issues and how you seek to resolve them.

PANEL INTERVIEWS

You'll encounter the panel interview most frequently at large organisations in both the public and private sector. The prospect of being 'grilled' by several people at once can be daunting. You'll often find interview panels contain the direct line manager of the role in question, a representative from HR and/or one other representative. They are designed to ensure the interview process is balanced and fair. There may be one person in the room whose role is to be scribe and document all your answers.

GROUP INTERVIEWS

Often based around a task, a group of applicants will be placed in a room and their interactions observed. The interviewer/s may ask the group questions which they must discuss as a unit. This scenario will allow Sweco to assess teamwork, communication and personal leadership skills.

TELEPHONE/SKYPE INTERVIEWS

These can sometimes be carried out to find out some more information about you to help with the shortlisting. Always have a paper, pen and a copy of your CV or application on hand.

THE STAR TECHNIQUE

Using the STAR technique to respond to interview questions will give structure to your answers and prevent you from waffling. Interviewers will generally mark you on demonstrating the four elements of STAR in your answer.

S **SITUATION** (*Set the scene*)

Give some general background to the situation in which you found yourself.

T **TASK** (*Describe the purpose*)

What was the brief or project? What was the problem you had to solve or the task you faced?

A **ACTION** (*Explain what you did*)

Describe the decisions you made and why you took them. Talk about the key skills and qualities you demonstrated and how they were applied to the situation.

R **RESULT** (*Share the outcome*)

Describe the outcome of the project or situation. What did you achieve? Were there any tangible or statistical results you can share? Reflect on what you learned, how you felt at the end and if you would do anything differently if you were presented with the situation again.

REMEMBER AN INTERVIEW IS A 2-WAY PROCESS. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

ASK QUESTIONS

Don't worry if any of your pre-prepared questions have been answered during the interview. If this happens, just be honest and tell the interviewer that any questions you had have already been covered.

OFFER TO FILL IN ANY GAPS

Ask if there is anything else you can provide to help convince the interviewer that you're the right person for the job, such as references or samples of your work.

SHOW YOUR ENTHUSIASM

State your interest in the position and why you think you are right for the role.

FIND OUT WHETHER YOU GOT THE JOB

Ask the question "Based on my background and the skills and experience we discussed, how well do I fit the profile of the candidate you're looking for?" It's an open-ended question and it gives you the chance to have a conversation about any reservations they may have about hiring you.

NEXT STEPS

The interviewer will make it clear when the interview is over and will usually tell you when you can expect to hear the outcome. If this doesn't happen, it's acceptable to ask what the next steps are and when you can expect to hear back.

CREATE A LASTING IMPRESSION

Remember, your interview doesn't end until you leave the building. Thank your interviewer/s for their time and continue to remain professional and polite as you are being shown out. You did it! You got through the interview and now it's time to relax and reflect on your performance.

REFLECT ON THE POSITIVES

If you got tongue-tied or couldn't answer a question, don't dwell on it. It happens to all of us. Stay positive and think about how differently you might have answered the tricky questions, so you're more confident if faced with them in the future.

SAY THANK YOU

If you obtained the direct contact details of your interviewer/s, it's polite to send them an email to thank them for their time. This shows appreciation for their interest in you and serves as a reminder that you are committed and interested in the role. It could also be your opportunity to share supporting information to back up an example you gave during the interview.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Whether you were successful or not, it is acceptable to ask us for feedback on how you performed during the interview. The feedback you receive will help you to improve during future interviews.

WE WISH
YOU THE
VERY BEST
OF LUCK.