

Accounting Interview Questions

Know what to expect
in your next interview
and how to answer



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Imagine you have arrived at this PDF because you have an interview coming up for a Job in Accounting or Finance. You are probably wondering what interview questions they will ask.

This is a highly competitive sector especially in the current economic environment where there are maybe over 50 applicants chasing each opening. I have completed many job interviews within the Accounting and Finance sector helping organisations to recruit the best staff.

In this free PDF, I will share with you a sample of the types of interview questions you will encounter in Accounting and Finance jobs whether in private practice or in a corporate environment plus tips on how to answer.



Competencies Required for Accounting and Finance Job Interviews



Many interviews in the Accounting and Finance sector are now Competency Based and Behavioural. Questions will be structured so as to discover how your behaviour in a past activity can influence your performance in the job going forward.

These questions can be very tricky to answer however they can be mastered with some training and practice.

These Accounting and Finance interview questions can be very specific or can be very general however your answer will need to demonstrate a broad range of skills. This will be even more important the higher you progress on the career ladder.

While the Job Description and Person Specification will give you the exact skills required, you may find interview question exploring the following competencies:

- Numerical Ability
- Problem Solving
- Planning and Organising
- General Ledger and Computer Skills
- Attention to detail
- Ability to work to strict deadlines

For qualified accountants and senior managers competencies can include:

- Strategic and Operational Management
- Building Relationships
- Leadership and ability to manage a team
- Motivating and Developing Others
- Negotiation and Communication at Senior level
- Strategic Thinking

Sample Interview Questions for Accountant and Finance Jobs

Take a moment to see how you would answer these questions?

Interview Question 1: 'Tell me about the advantages and disadvantages of the different Accounting packages you have used recently.'

Interview Question 2: 'Describe a time when you had to build a collaborative relationship either within your department or outside in order to achieve a particular goal. What steps did you take to ensure this was a success?'

Interview Question 3: 'What do you know about recent IAS changes and to what extent have you been involved with their implementation in your organisation?'

Interview Question 4: 'Describe a time when you had to work exceptionally hard to provide great service to a customer or client. What did you do and what was the outcome.'

Interview Question 5: 'Give me an example of the different approaches you have used when persuading your team, colleagues or manager to agree with your views.'

Interview Question 6: 'Talk me through an example of how you have used data to improve your teams productivity.'

Technical Accounting and Finance Interview Questions

You may be asked to complete tests such as numeric or psychometric tests. In addition, you may have a test of your accounting knowledge and this can be in the form of a multiple test or even a case study where provide a broad overview of a set of prepared accounts or financial problem.

Having said that it's also possible that your interviewer may test your knowledge with some specific technical interview questions. The range of questions is impossible to predict however they are unlikely to ask you about something you have not been exposed to before. Sample technical accounting interview questions for example.

- Are you aware of recent tax changes and how they might affect your company?
- Can you describe for me your experience in preparing management accounts?

- Could you explain the different accounting packages you may have used recently and give me your opinion on which was most useful?
- What is your understanding of IFRS9 and how have you incorporated this into your work?

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Accounting and Finance Competency Based Questions

The interviewer will focus on questions that look for evidence of accountancy-related competencies. You could be asked to relate specific examples of when you have demonstrated the required competency.

Each specific competency will likely be explored with questioning. You can use the following examples to help formulate your own responses to such questions.

Planning and Organising

- Tell me about an example of a complex financial project you have handled with precise data analysis requirements and tight time constraints.
- How do you keep track of several on-going projects at once without overlooking deadlines?
- What work objectives have you set for this year and what steps are you taking to ensure you will achieve them?

Delivering Results

- Do you keep track of regulations that may affect both your industry and your accounting position, and, if so, how?
- How have you monitored the performance of your team, or compared your own performance with that of colleagues?
- How would you go about deciding which tasks to give to which staff members?

Problem Solving

Accounting interview questions will also focus on your ability to assess problems and arrive at logical solutions.

- Describe a recent difficult financial analysis problem you have had to deal with.
- Could you demonstrate a recent budget preparation or explain how you would go about it.

- How would you manage potential payment problems with your customers?

Judgment and Decision Making

- What would you say has been the most significant decision you made at work this year?
- Tell me how you have reacted or would respond when someone else's errors were having a knock-on adverse effect on your situation.
- Describe a situation where you have received instructions but were not in agreement, and how you handled the situation.
- Do you rely solely on your own judgement or mainly take guidance from others?

[Click here to get INSTANT ACCESS to competency based interview questions and brilliant STAR answers SPECIFIC TO YOUR JOB >>](#)

How to Answer Accounting Interview Questions

Success in answering interview questions lies in preparation, in anticipating the questions and preparing answers accordingly. Here are some useful guidelines for preparing answers to your accounting interview questions.

1. Refresh your memory of Accounting Principles:

It is all too easy to forget some of the basics especially if you do not use them daily. Refresh your knowledge of the following and this will help when you are giving your answers:

- The principles of accountancy
- The principles of auditing
- The analysis and reporting of financial data
- The management of accounts
- Understanding budgets
- All IFRS

2. Prepare examples which demonstrate the core skills required using the STAR Method

In addition to the competencies mentioned above, other skills required include Analytical ability, Numeracy, Teamwork, and Communication and you should prepare examples of situations where you demonstrated these skills successfully. In your answers use correct structures for these competency type questions being very clear about the actions you took and the results you delivered.

The accounting profession, like law, is based on honesty and integrity, so you should also prepare examples which show your attitudes and ethics, maybe based on past experiences or hypothetical situations.

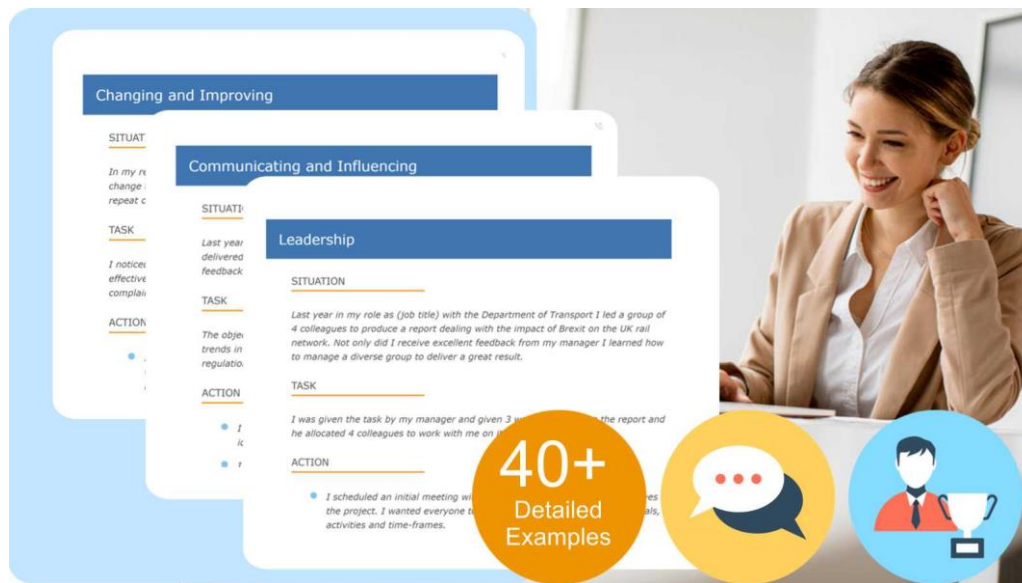
3. Research recent changes and new legislation

Your answers will be expected to show up to date knowledge. Research recent changes to accounting principles, international financial reporting standards and ethical rules concerning accountants practice and obligations. Be aware of recent changes in legislation and how it affects the accounting profession as questions are often asked exploring your awareness of these.

4. Research your prospective employer

Before getting to the interview, you want to be fairly sure in your mind that this is a good company to work for by carrying out some research. This will also help at interview if you have some background knowledge of the company, including its standing and general modus operandi. The company's website may have client newsletters, staff profiles, and other information to help.

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