



Next Phase
Life Science Solutions

Advanced Interview Tips





First of all, congratulations on securing an interview through Next Phase! You have worked very hard to get to this point and it is well deserved. Some points in this guide may seem obvious at first, but in our experience it is still highly advisable to read this document in plenty of time before your interview, even if you have had lots of interviews before. It is our job to ensure that you feel as confident and knowledgeable as possible, so please call us any time on 01403 216 216 if you have any questions. We also regularly post useful information on [nextphaserecruitment.com](https://www.nextphaserecruitment.com) and our social media platforms including [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), so we would recommend that you follow us on these platforms to receive updates and ideas.

HOW DID YOU GET THIS FAR?

Before you begin to prepare for your interview, you should first consider how you got to this position in the first place. You may have applied to an advert, or a Next Phase consultant may have contacted you about the vacancy. Either way, you made the choice to apply for this job, having discussed and thought about the opportunity and what it would mean for the next phase of your career. You have taken the time to write a CV that represents you in the best possible way, alongside which you may have also written a cover letter. In other words, you have already invested a lot of time in getting this far. Then, having reviewed your application, the company has decided they want to meet you. It is likely that there are many other people who want this job but have not managed to get as far as you have. We typically receive 50-100 applications per advert we post online. A lot of people take these above points for granted, but the reality is that you have already done very well to get to this stage and have already invested time and energy into the whole process. You now owe it to yourself to do the best you can in the interview. Seek advice, take the time to prepare, and challenge yourself on how you might tackle difficult questions – you will thank yourself for it in the future.

WHY ARE YOU BEING INTERVIEWED?

This guide highlights some of the questions you might be asked and suggests strategies to help you answer them as persuasively as possible. Always remember that every interviewer will be thinking:

1. Are you right for this job?
2. Are you going to work hard and make the job a success?
3. How well will you fit in?
4. Are you manageable?



BEFORE THE DAY

Do your research. Make sure you have read as much information about the company and the position as possible. Use the company's webpage as a starting point and see what recent updates they may have shared online, particularly on sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Recent news articles and blogs will be particularly relevant.

Basic information to learn and ensure that you understand:

- What are the company's core products / services?
- How big are they?
- Who are their main competitors and how do they compare to them?
- Have there been updates, events or changes within the company recently?

You may wish to look the interviewers up on LinkedIn, so you can learn about their backgrounds before the interview. Do remember that they will be notified that you have looked at them (unless you amend your privacy settings), which means they will probably look at you in return. Therefore, make sure your own LinkedIn profile is up to date and consistent with what is written on your CV. Also ensure that all information that is accessible publicly (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) is something you are happy to share with a potential employer.

Read the job description thoroughly. Make a note of each of the duties listed and consider the areas in which you have relevant experience. Take note of items you are most (and least) excited about, and why. Ask us about anything on the job description that is unclear or ambiguous. Are there any questions you are dreading being asked? If so, why? The best thing to do here is to assume that you will be asked them. What will your response be? Talk to us if you are worried - we can coach you through it.



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Remember that you may be watched out of the window after you leave the building. Save the jumping for joy until you are out of sight! Call us on 01403 216 216 while everything is still fresh in your mind to tell us how it went. We will then pass on your feedback to the interviewers; it will reflect well on you if we can do this promptly, without us having to chase you for your feedback.





THE INTERVIEW

SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

DO NOT BE LATE!

Allow plenty of time to get to the interview. Ensure you know exactly where you have to go and exactly whom you should ask for. Make sure that you have every last detail on location, time, date, and contacts. If you are running late, please call us at the earliest possible opportunity so we can inform the interviewers.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY.

Ask us about the company's dress code to ensure you neither underdress nor overdress. Ensure that you look neat and clean and that you are dressed conservatively. It is preferable to wear clothes you feel confident in (i.e. not necessarily ones bought for the interview). Remember that you only get one chance to make a first impression, so do not take anything you do not need.

BE COMPOSED AND WELL-MANNERED.

Do not get impatient if you have to wait. Smile, shake hands firmly and remember the names of the people you meet.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY LANGUAGE AND POSTURE.

Maintain regular eye contact, smile warmly, sit upright and keep your hands still. Avoid fiddling with your hair, covering your mouth with your hands and staring out of the window - easy mistakes to make if you are feeling nervous. If you should be asked to complete an application form, do so neatly and thoroughly, ensuring it tallies with what you wrote in your CV. If you are unsure of how to answer any particular part, then ask. If you are going to have an official test of any sort, we will have made every effort to prepare you for this in advance.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND INTERESTED.

Remember that the position your prospective employer is talking about is important to them, and they want someone who is genuinely excited by their company and this specific job opportunity.

NEVER SPEAK BADLY OF A FORMER EMPLOYER.

State your reasons for leaving your last role(s) calmly, briefly and truthfully. Hopefully you left/are leaving your last role(s) under positive circumstances; but if this is not the case, consider ways in which you can make it sound positive while remaining honest.

TRY TO AVOID DISCUSSING SALARY DETAILS UNLESS YOU ARE ASKED DIRECTLY.

Under normal circumstances we will have told you the package on offer. As a rule Next Phase will have informed the company of both your current (or previous) salary and your salary expectations. It is our job to fine-tune salary offers (and it is in our interest to obtain the maximum remuneration for you).

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewers for their time and shake hands warmly. If you are interested in the job, say so.





RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS

Whether this is more of a general competency-based interview or a highly structured technical discussion, the following advice is important to keep in the back of your mind at all times:

- Listen carefully to all questions.
- Understand exactly what is asked before answering - if you are unsure, ask for clarification.
- Give yourself time to think before answering.
- Answer precisely and to the point - do not waffle.



ASKING YOUR OWN QUESTIONS

A key part of any interview is usually towards the end, when you are asked, "Do you have any questions?" (hopefully you will be given this opportunity). There is nothing wrong with saying "No thank you, you've covered everything"; but it shows initiative and interest in the position if you can ask something that portrays you in a positive way. It is a good idea to think about this in advance. If you want, you can write a pre-prepared list which you can put on the desk and run through, even if all your questions have been answered during the main interview. Good questions include:

- Why has this vacancy arisen?
- What happened to the previous job holder?
- What is the company's management structure and management style?
- What will the job actually involve, both initially and further down the line?
- How are targets set and how is performance measured?
- What can I expect to be working on during my first month?
- Could you tell me more about the team structure?
- What facilities and support are available?
- What opportunities are there for training and development?
- What are the company's long and short-term objectives?
- Are there any structural or organisational changes in the pipeline?
- What are the key issues the company is now facing?
- When would I be expected to start work?
- How soon will you make your selection?





POTENTIAL QUESTIONS HOW MIGHT YOU RESPOND?

ACHIEVEMENTS AND MOTIVATIONS

- Why do you want this job? What attracts you to this company?
(This is a key question. The manager will be looking for someone who wants this specific position, not just something that will get your foot in the door or just pay the bills while you wait for something better!)
- Why are you looking for another job? (NB: if you give a vague answer, you will not be convincing)
- Where do you see yourself in five years? How do you see your career developing?
- What achievement are you most proud of in your career to date?
- What has been your proudest achievement in the last 12 months?
- What are you looking for in a role?
- What do you know about this company?
- How do you feel about your career progression so far?

ADAPTABILITY / MANAGING CHANGE

- How do you respond to change? How do you cope with change?
- What changes would you make to your current position?
- What is the most difficult change you've encountered in your career?

BEHAVIOUR

- Describe a conflict and how you handled it.
- Describe a recent situation in your role that you felt you could have managed better.
- How do you deal with criticism?

COMMUNICATION

- Describe a situation that illustrates your communication / teamwork / management skills.
- Describe a particular problem you faced and how you resolved it (make sure you use the word "I" as much as possible, instead of "we". The interviewer wants to know what you are capable of; so make sure you can substantiate your answer)
- How would you help to develop your team?
- Describe how you might handle rude, difficult or impatient people.

ORGANISATION

- How do you typically plan your day?
- How important are details?
- What is more important in your line of work: speed or accuracy?
- Describe a time when you were responsible for organising something
- How do you prioritise tasks?



SELF-AWARENESS / EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- What do you consider to be your weaknesses? What might you do to work on improving these?
- What do you consider to be your strengths?
- How would you describe yourself? How might a colleague describe you? Tell me about yourself... (Be factual and specific, it is not an invitation to ramble on. If it seems too broad to answer, ask the interviewer to clarify the areas on which they would like you to focus your answer on)
- Describe your career to date / talk us through your CV
- How do you handle conflict?
- What frustrates you in your work?

ANALYTICAL THINKING

- Describe a time you had to make a quick decision.
- Describe how you solve difficult problems.
- How do you make important decisions?
- What kind of decisions are difficult for you?

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THOUGH YOU
SHOULD NOT
NEED IT, GOOD
LUCK!

