



Clockwork Recruitment
Permanent & Temporary Recruitment

UNDERSTANDING COMPETENCIES & COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS

Competencies are **skills, abilities, and behaviours** that help you succeed in a job. Employers use them to assess whether a candidate is the right fit for a role.

Common Competencies Employers Look For:

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Problem-solving
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Planning & organisation
- ✓ Customer service
- ✓ Decision-making
- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Commercial awareness

What is a Competency-Based Interview?

In these interviews, employers ask **situational questions** to assess how you've demonstrated key competencies in the past. Your **past behaviour** is often an indicator of your future success.

Common Competency-Based Questions:

- *Can you give an example of when you worked in a team?*
- *Describe a time you showed initiative.*
- *Tell me about a time you handled conflict at work.*
- *Have you ever taken on a leadership role?*
- *How do you manage tight deadlines?*

How to Answer: The STAR Method

Use this structured approach to keep your answers **clear and impactful**:

S – *Situation*: Describe the context of the challenge.

T – *Task*: Explain what you needed to do.

A – *Action*: Outline the steps you took.

R – *Result*: Share the outcome (ideally a positive one).

Example Answer (Teamwork Question)

"Can you give an example of when you worked in a team?"

S: I worked on a group project to relaunch a brand as part of my marketing course.

T: We had to conduct research, write a report, and present findings to an expert panel.

A: I coordinated team discussions, set interim deadlines, and facilitated regular check-ins to ensure smooth collaboration.

R: Our report was submitted on time, we won the **Best Presentation** award, and I learned how to adapt to different working styles.

What About Hypothetical Questions?

Some competency interviews also include **scenario-based questions** to see how you would handle future challenges.

Examples:

- *What would you do if a client was unhappy with your work?*
- *How would you handle a colleague underperforming?*
- *What would you do if a work deadline clashed with a mandatory training session?*

Tip: Relate your answer to **past experiences** whenever possible to provide credibility.

Final Tips for Competency-Based Interviews

- **Prepare by practicing** common competency questions.
- **Use a variety of examples** (work, studies, extracurricular activities).
- **Focus on actions you took**, not just the situation.
- **Keep responses concise** and to the point.

Mastering competency-based interviews can significantly **boost your confidence and increase your chances of success** in landing your desired job