

Preparing for your interview with Main Roads

Main Roads uses a structured "behavioural" interview. This fact sheet discusses this type of interview in detail, so that you may prepare adequately for your appointment.

What is the purpose of the behavioural interview?

The behavioural interview is a technique built on the theory that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. The behavioural interview probes a candidate's behaviour in past situations and identifies the skills and abilities utilised on these occasions. The interviewing panel are then able to base their hiring decision on your responses.

What type of questions will I be asked during the interview?

The panel will ask a series of structured questions related to the competencies addressed in the Position Description. Additional questions may be asked to further explore your responses.

The Position Description will state the competencies required to be successful in the advertised role. To assess you against these competencies the Panel will ask questions about your behaviour in previous roles/situations.

Examples of some questions are:

- "Give me an example of a time when you used good judgement and logic in solving a problem?" This question explores competence in problem solving.
- "Describe a time in which you faced a change at work that was stressful and tested your coping skills?" This question explores competence in adapting to change and being resilient.

How do I effectively answer these behavioural questions?

When answering a behavioural question, the panel will be looking for you to tell them about a *specific* example that informs them of *your* personal involvement, decision making ability and achievements. They do not want hypothetical examples (how you believe you would respond in a certain situation) or examples of what a team you were a member of achieved.

In the interview, your responses need to be specific and detailed. Tell the panel about a specific situation that relates to the question, not a general one. When answering a question it is suggested that you frame your answers using the STAR approach:

Situation:

- Describe the situation.
- Explain what happened and relevant background on where, when and how it occurred.
- Remember to use the most recent suitable example.

Task:

- Outline the task you had to complete.
- Describe your roles and responsibilities.

Action:

- Detail the steps you took to resolve the situation or explain the decisions you made.
- Be prepared to explain the thinking behind your decisions.

Result:

- Outline the benefits or the consequences of your actions.
- Be prepared to explain what you learnt from the experience.

Be prepared:

- Arrange spare copies of your resume and the originals of any relevant certificates or awards that you can take to the interview.
- Research the business unit before going to the interview in order to ascertain its purpose, projects, and current challenges.
- Think about the questions you are likely to encounter, and prepare your responses.
- Discover and memorise the names and titles of each person on the selection panel.
- Analyse and familiarise yourself with the role requirements, responsibilities and key competencies. Use these to determine what type of questions will be asked and identify particular situations in the past that will illustrate your skills in these areas.

If you are unsuccessful:

Use each interview as a valuable learning tool and gradually you will build a list of "tricky questions" and be prepared with stronger answers for the next time. We also recommend that you seek feedback on areas where you may have been lacking in order to improve your skills and abilities to meet the requirements of the role.

Remember, not all positions you apply for will be right for you. The purpose of the interview is to help you, as well as the selection panel, determine if the role is a suitable one.

Good luck!
