

Preparation for interview for external applicants

The interview is designed to gain evidence of things you have done in your life that show you have the competencies to be able to work effectively in DWP. You will be interviewed by two or three people who will be taking notes during the interview.

The interviewers will ask you questions to assess your competence in areas, which we believe are essential for our jobs. The competencies will be listed in the vacancy details.

You will also be assessed on your communication skills.

You will be asked a question or series of questions about each of these competencies. To ensure that we are fair in our selection, we will use the same format for everyone and will ask everyone similar questions.

You can prepare yourself for the interview in two ways. First, you can familiarise yourself with how we in DWP define these competencies. Secondly, you might think about situations where you have (perhaps without knowing it) used these competencies in your work or personal life. Think about the context, what you did, how you did it and what the outcome was.

The important thing to remember about the interview is that you can give examples from any aspect of your life. The examples do not need to be based on previous work experience. DWP recognise that many people may apply who do not have work experience, or who have not worked for a while. You can therefore give examples based on your home life, social life, experiences in education, voluntary work or other areas of your life.

You should also talk specifically about things you have done. The interviewers are interested in your skills and experiences. When responding to their questions, be sure to provide a specific example and be prepared to talk about it, detailing what you did and how you achieved your objective. The interviewers will prompt you if they require more detailed information. If you have made notes prior to the interview about your competencies you can take these into the interview with you and are allowed to refer to them during your interview.

Many people get nervous before an interview but there are a few 'golden rules' that will help you:

- The interview questions do not have right or wrong answers. The interviewers are interested in your experiences and how you dealt with them;
- It is not a memory test. If you struggle to remember an example, it is OK to take your time to think. Ask the interviewers to give you a moment, or ask them if you can come back to that question later on. Doing this will not count against you. You can take notes or a copy of your application form into the interview with you if you feel this would be helpful; and
- If you do not understand a question, ask the interviewers to repeat it or rephrase it. Again this will not count against you.