



# How to Succeed at: Interviews

## Examples of competency based questions

### Teamworking

#### Question

Give an example, from outside of your studies, of when you have worked in a team. What was your role and what did you contribute to the team's performance?

#### Answer

As a committee member of the Drama Society I recently worked with the other members to organise a community event. Our aim was to run some workshops for local primary school children. The group met initially to plan and allocate tasks. My role was to generate the funds for the event. I established a plan for this task with a time-line of what I had to do and by when. I contacted the local Chamber of Commerce who put me in touch with local companies and I managed to generate £200 sponsorship money which covered our costs and enabled us to have money to be used for prizes. Our group met weekly to discuss progress and stayed in touch in the interim via Facebook. This ensured that if one team member was having problems completing their tasks on time then others could provide additional support.

The event was a great success with very positive feedback from the pupils and teachers. The team members said that they appreciated me taking on the task of raising funds, as this was something that no one else wanted to do, and that the prizes had significantly contributed to the success of the event.

#### Analysis

- It answers the question and focuses on team working
- It uses the STAR structure
- Clearly explains her individual role and how it contributed to the team
- Gives clear details of the outcome

### Planning skills

#### Question

Describe a challenging project or activity which you have planned and taken through to a conclusion. What was your objective, what did you do and what was the outcome? Include any changes you made to your initial plan.

#### Answer

As a member of my College Theatre Society I helped organise a visit to the West Yorkshire Playhouse for twenty five people to see Hamlet.



My role was to arrange travel and accommodation for anyone wishing to take part. I promoted the event by using posters across the campus and emailing Society members, emphasising the main benefits of the visit. I also set a deadline for payment to create an efficient cash-flow. Based on this I arranged a mini-bus and negotiated a reduced rate booking at the Leeds Youth Hostel.

As an additional ten students expressed an interest after the deadline, I decided to change my plans. To cope with this, I ordered a larger bus and secured extra accommodation with the Hostel. The visit was a huge success receiving positive feedback and staying within our budget, while generating £25 revenue for the Society from a raffle held on the trip.

### **Analysis**

- Uses STAR format; answers all elements of the question
- Uses positive / action words in places
- Includes specific information such as figures for revenue generated, and the number of members involved

## **Time Management**

### **Question**

Describe a situation where you have had to manage your time to achieve your goals. How did you achieve this?

### **Answer**

In my first year, I joined the University Football club and was selected for the First Team. We decided that in order to be fully competitive we would need to train twice a day and every weekend. I realised that in order to achieve this goal and not adversely affect my studies I would need to be disciplined and focused. At the beginning of each semester, I scheduled every training session, match, lecture, seminar and essay in my diary. When the morning sessions ended at 9am, I went to lectures or the library. The fact that I had to finish at 5pm in order to return to training meant that I was far more focused. If we were away at weekends I learnt not to waste any time and took my work with me and read whenever I could.

I was very successful in adapting to this schedule. I found that under pressure I studied more effectively, and my work was of a higher quality. In addition I learnt the value of time management and developed the discipline to stick to a routine. I discovered that it was possible to succeed at both my studies and my sport. I sometimes had to say no to other social activities in order to achieve my primary goals but I felt that this was worth doing. In my second year we won the Inter-University First Team Trophy at a national competition and I achieved over 65% in my course work.

### **Analysis**

- It answers the question and focuses on time management and achieving goals
- Uses the STAR structure
- It is positive and the candidate indicates that he/she understands what is meant by time management