



INTERVIEW TIPS

Plan and prepare to put your best self forward!

Congratulations on securing an interview for a role with Psychological, Mental Health and Disability Services at QCS! Our applicant pools for roles are often very competitive, so you've done well to reach this next stage.

The key to a successful interview is planning and preparation. If you've never attended an interview for a government position, you'll find them very structured and specific in their format. They're called '**behavioural**' interviews and they ask open-ended questions of you in a way that helps the interview panel draw out information about your past behaviour – which is a good predictor of how successfully you might initially perform in the role.

The questions will be either hypothetical ('how would you deal with situation X?') OR based on historical examples from your current or previous experience ('when situation X arose, how did you deal with it?').

It's not meant to be a tricky or overly difficult interview, but by doing some research, planning and preparation ahead of your interview, the more confident you'll feel and the better an impression you'll have on the panel. Follow these tips to present your best self to the interview panel.

TIP 1

DO YOUR RESEARCH



Prior to your interview, get to know Queensland Corrective Services and the role you are applying for by doing some research. Visit the [QCS internet page](#) and familiarise yourself with the position description, available on either the Smart Jobs online job ad or our [careers website](#). This will give you a sound understanding of our agency and the role you are applying for.

TIP 2

MATCH UP YOUR SKILLS



Match the skills you've gained from other jobs or through life experience with the requirements of the role you are applying for. Think about the tasks you completed as part of other jobs and how they might be like the essential requirements of the role (you can find these on the position description). Writing out your tasks and skills you possess may help with this self-assessment. The more familiar you are with your skills and abilities, the more confident you'll feel in your interview. Be ready to talk about these tasks and skills at your interview, if asked.

For more tips on preparing for a government interview, visit:

myfuture.edu.au/career-articles/details/job-interview-tips

TIP
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USE THE 'STAR' APPROACH



During your interview, the panel will ask you behavioural-based questions. These questions designed to explore how you responded and acted previously in a specific situation, as an indicator of future behaviour in a similar scenario. When giving your response, think of it like you're telling a story. Your goal is to give the panel all the background and information they need to understand what happened while still answering the question clearly and concisely.

Use the following acronym as a guide for how to structure your story/response so the panel gets the information they need to fully gauge your abilities and potential:

S

Situation – firstly describe the circumstances or scenario, including the objectives

T

Task – next, describe what you were expected to do

A

Actions – describe the actions you took to meet that task, including planning you had to do or processes you had to consider

R

Result – what was the overall result of your actions. Be as specific as you can and use measurable results where possible, e.g. *'as a result of my work, we were able to achieve 100% compliance amongst users'*; *'as a result of my actions, we achieve all our objectives.*



Here is an example of a behavioural question and a response that follows the STAR method.

Q: *Tell us about a time when you handled a challenge in the workplace.*

Response:

Situation: Around the time I started working at Company X, the team in which I was working was finishing up a very important project on a tight deadline. They had to review everything before submitting the work to the client, and my manager didn't have a lot of time to pay attention to me to bring me up to speed.

Task: Everyone around me was constantly working and because of the timing, they didn't seem very approachable. So to make sure I didn't get left behind, I had to prove myself and take initiative.

Action: My plan was simple. I wanted to talk to my manager and a few of my colleagues whenever they had time (e.g. over lunch, getting coffee together). Then I would try to get to know them in a different environment and also learn about the company better too. In the meanwhile, I would always go over my onboarding material and resources to get better at my job.

Results: In the end, I'm glad to say everything worked out and I actually made a few good friends too. By the time my manager came around to review my work and talk about the next steps - I already knew most of it and the company's main clients in detail. And I also knew my colleagues who I'd be working with too. If anything, he was a bit surprised, but ultimately, happy I didn't fall behind. This saved him a lot of time, something he was very grateful for.



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PREPARE FOR A WORK TEST



If the interview process requires you to complete a work task, we will let you know and tell you how much time you have to complete the task. If you have any questions about the task, please ask us

- ✓ Consider how much time you have been given to complete the task
- ✓ Read the instructions to the task carefully and ensure you understand how you are to respond
- ✓ Read the scenario all the way through
- ✓ Briefly determine how much time you need to plan your response, write your response, proofread and complete/save your response.

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BE PREPARED



Once you've prepared content for your interview, it's time to make sure you attend your interview looking and feeling confident. Avoid unnecessary anxiety on the day of interview by getting ready a day or two before.

- ✓ Plan what you are going to wear. Professional business attire is recommended
- ✓ Print out any notes you wish to refer to during your interview i.e. CV, cover letter, copy of the position description, examples of your previous work etc.
- ✓ If you are having an online interview, test any technology before the day
- ✓ Review the location place and time and determine how you are going to get there, leaving yourself time in case of traffic delays.

TIP
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BE PATIENT



The hiring process for a government job can take longer than roles for other organisations. That's because government agencies have a lot of checks and balances to complete before making our final hiring decision. Please stay patient after your interview. We will be in touch and communicate with you as soon as we can. You can expect to hear from us within 10 working days of your interview.



Need more information? Visit these websites to find out more about QCS and Psychological, Mental Health and Disability Services careers.

[Queensland Corrective Services | Psychology careers](#)

