

Getting started: an interview guide for consumer positions

Below are some possible interview questions. It would be unusual to use all of these – and probably somewhat intimidating. We recommend choosing several from the list and using as is or adapting to meet your particular position requirements.

General questions

1. What appeals to you about this position or committee?
2. How do you think you might best contribute?
3. How might your personal consumer experience be relevant or useful?
4. How confident are you in representing the needs of others as well as your own?
5. What is your understanding of the role?
6. Do you anticipate particular challenges or frustrations with this work?

Competency based questions

1. Communication

A part of this role involves discussing and evaluating options or ideas in a limited timeframe. Can you discuss a time when have you had to present an idea to a group of people for their feedback? How did you do it? What was their response?

What to look for: Actively listens, checks understanding, expresses ideas clearly, uses appropriate language.

2. Teamwork

What sort of teams or committees have you been involved in? What was your role?

What to look for: Encourages a supportive environment, encourages free exchange of ideas, encourages feedback.

3. Innovation and initiative

We are always looking for better processes or ways of doing things. When have you identified a new, unusual or different approach to solving a problem or facing a task?

What to look for: Generates solutions, uses novel approaches, suggests ideas for improvement.

4. Decision-making and judgement

Often we have to make important decisions with limited information or in a tight timeframe. Have you been in this situation and, if so, how did you deal with it?

What to look for: Undertakes appropriate research, applies common sense, draws on experience of others as well as self, can cope with complex problems.

5. Planning and organising

In this environment you may be faced with many important competing priorities, how do you work out what is most important?

What to look for: Formulates clear ideas, establishes realistic milestones, is flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.

6. Results orientation

Tell us about what you have achieved in similar roles, what kinds of obstacles did you face and how did you overcome them?

What to look for: Resilience, sets and achieves realistic goals, assesses quality, seeks feedback and modifies plans accordingly.

7. Dealing with conflict

Often in these environments people will have conflicting views. How do handle it when this happens?

What to look for: Seeks resolution, respects all viewpoints, does not get emotionally involved.

Before the interview

- Make sure the interview room is booked and there will be no interruptions
- Make sure the applicants have clear directions to find the interview room and a contact number for you

At the interview

Introduce yourself and anybody else who is present at the interview. Explain your role at the health service and your connection to the committee or group for which the position is available.

After the interview

- Explain any additional requirements for the role, such as a Police Check or Working with Children Check
- Give a clear indication of when the applicant will be advised about the outcome of their application
- Give the applicant an opportunity to ask questions before the interview concludes