

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

and How to Answer Them

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Career Advantage Programme (ECAP)



The EduAdvisor Career Advantage Programme is a premium initiative exclusively available to students who have enrolled in university through EduAdvisor.

Tailored to prepare you for the demands of today's job market, this programme offers early access to career resources that will help you navigate internships and enter the workforce with confidence.

The programme provides personalised guidance, including internship search support, expert career tips, networking events, and one-on-one mentorship. Our goal is to ensure you're not just academically ready but career-ready as well.

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COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

and How to Answer Them

Landing a job today takes more than just a sharp resume and a thoughtful cover letter — it's about nailing the interview, too.

Knowing the types of questions you might face can make all the difference in showcasing your unique skills and creating a strong impression.

In this guide, we'll break down the STAR method, common and unexpected interview questions, and share tips on how to leave a lasting impact.

STAR technique – What is it?

The **S.T.A.R.** technique is a structured method used to answer competency-based interview questions. This approach helps you provide clear, concise and impactful responses while providing all the essential details. It comprised four steps:

- S Situation:** Describing the background or context of the situation
- T Task:** Explain your role and responsibilities in that situation and if you had to solve any problems
- A Action:** Describe the steps taken to solve the problem or complete the task
- R Result:** Share what happened as a result of your actions

When to use the **STAR** technique?

The **STAR** technique can be used anytime you're asked questions that concerns your competency. These questions are to see how you handle real-life situations in the past, as this gives the interviewers a good indicator of how you'll perform with their organisation. Here are some examples of questions you can use the **STAR** method:

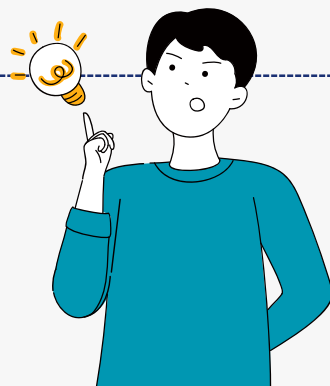
1. *Tell me about a difficult decision you made at work. What did you do?*
2. *Describe a time when you faced a difficult moment at work. How did you sort the problem?*
3. *Share about a time you set a specific goal and achieved it.*

The **STAR** method lets you create a simple and easy-to-follow story that brings out the difficult situation and resolution.

PRO TIP

How to prepare for competency-based questions?

- Think about recent experiences that show your strengths, such as teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, or taking initiative. These can come from internships, part-time jobs, or university projects.
- Prepare short stories for each situation and remember the key details so you can explain them clearly during the interview.
- Structure your story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Explain what the situation was, what needed to be done, what you did, and what the outcome was.
- Focus on how you handled the situation and what you learned, even if the final result wasn't perfect.
- Use different examples for different questions to show a variety of your skills and experience



How to answer a question with the STAR technique?

Though you never know what questions the interviewer will ask, most behavioural interviews tend to focus on workplace challenges. The interviewee is expected to demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, the ability to work under pressure, resolve conflict and have experience in leadership situations.

Regardless of what stories you choose to share, ensure that you apply the STAR method and that your answers relate to the skills and competencies asked for in the job posting.

Below is an example of a competency-based question with an answer using the STAR method.

“Tell me about a time you faced a challenge while working in a team.”

Situation — During my university group project for a marketing class, one of our team members suddenly stopped contributing halfway through the semester. This caused delays in our research and created tension within the group.

Task — As the team leader, I was responsible for ensuring we met the project deadline and maintained a positive team dynamic.

Action — I decided to address the issue directly but respectfully. I reached out to the team member to understand what was happening and found out they were struggling to balance part-time work and classes. I then reassigned some of their tasks among the rest of us and offered to help with parts they found difficult. I also set up weekly check-ins to keep everyone aligned and motivated.

Result — By redistributing the workload and improving communication, our group was able to complete the project on time. We received an A grade and positive feedback from our lecturer for teamwork and problem-solving. Personally, I learned the importance of empathy and communication in resolving conflicts effectively.

HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

1

"Tell me more about yourself?"

This question helps the employer get a clearer picture of your skills, achievements, and why you believe you'd be a strong fit for the role.

Dos

- Mention key accomplishments that align with the job description
- Include examples of your successes from previous positions, project experiences, or roles in clubs and societies
- Keep your responses short and to the point

Don'ts

- Mention the same things that are in your resume
- Ramble about things unrelated to the position

Example:

"I recently graduated in Marketing, focusing on digital strategy and social media. During my internship at a startup, I boosted their online engagement by 30% through content and campaigns. I'm passionate about brand-building and connecting with audiences, and I believe my digital marketing skills and experience align well with this role. I'd love to bring my ideas and energy to your team!"



HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

2

"Why do you want to work for this company?"

Interviewers ask this question to gauge whether you've researched the company and thought about how you'd fit within its culture.

Dos

- Research their website and social media pages to understand their products, services and values.
- Consider how your values and career goals align with the company's mission and culture.
- Identify projects or initiatives from the company that resonate with you to reference during the interview.

Don'ts

- Give generic answers like "Because it's a great company". It shows a lack of research
- Focus only on salary, benefits, or location as your main motivation
- Make it all about what you want. Show how you can contribute to the company's goals

Example:

"I'm impressed by your company's leadership in Malaysia's finance sector, particularly with the recent launch of your digital banking platform. As a finance student, I'm excited about the chance to work with a team pioneering such innovations and gain hands-on experience in digital banking."



HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

3

"How do you see yourself in 5 years?"

Employers ask this question to gauge your ambition, long-term vision, and commitment. They want to know if your career goals align with the company's direction. Be specific about how you hope to grow and what skills you want to develop while staying flexible about your path.

Dos

- Clearly articulate your career goals and growth plans to show ambition and commitment to personal development.
- Focus on specific skills or roles you'd like to develop that align with the company's objectives.
- Share both short-term and long-term goals to demonstrate realistic planning and adaptability.

Don'ts

- Say you haven't thought about your future as it may come across as unmotivated
- Mention goals unrelated to the position or company
- Give overly ambitious or unrealistic answers that sound insincere

Example:

"My goal is to join a tech-focused company where I can contribute to creative projects while developing my design and project management skills. Over the next few years, I hope to take on leadership responsibilities, lead design initiatives, and deepen my expertise in [specialised area] through certifications and hands-on experience."



HOW TO ANSWER COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS DURING INTERVIEW

4

“What’s your greatest strength?” and “What are your weaknesses?”

Should you boast or talk yourself down? While these questions can feel awkward, they’re meant to assess your self-awareness and honesty. This is the best time to highlight your key strengths and the areas you’re actively working to improve.

Dos

- Share one or two strengths and back them up with specific examples
- Choose a professionally relevant weakness that you’re actively improving, with clear examples
- Relate both your strengths and weaknesses to the position you’re applying for

Don’ts

- Only highlight your strengths. This may come across as overconfident.
- Say you don’t have any weaknesses. It shows a lack of self-awareness.
- List too many weaknesses. It can make you seem unsure of yourself.

Example:

“My greatest strength is my adaptability. During my time at university, I had to juggle multiple responsibilities, including coursework, part-time work, and extracurricular activities. For instance, when my group project faced unexpected challenges, I quickly adjusted our plan and helped my teammates brainstorm new ideas to meet our deadline. I believe this strength will help me thrive in an internship environment where flexibility and quick thinking are essential.”

“As for my weakness, I tend to be naturally introverted, which means I often prefer working independently. In my first internship, I did well with minimal supervision and enjoyed tackling tasks on my own. However, when I was assigned to a team that had to give monthly progress updates, I realised I needed to improve my collaboration skills. To overcome this, I made a conscious effort to engage more with my teammates, asking for their input and sharing my ideas. This experience helped me grow and communicate more effectively with others.”

HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

5

"What is your salary expectation?"

When discussing salary expectations, it is important to conduct thorough research to determine a fair range based on your skills and industry standards. Present your figure confidently while remaining flexible.

Dos

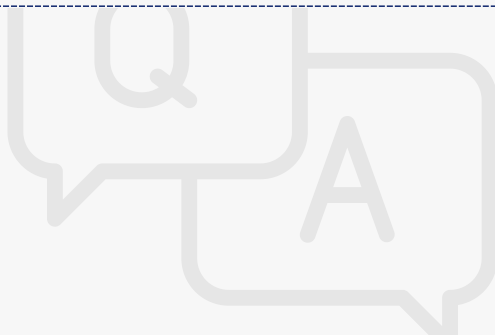
- Research industry salary standards and know your worth. Use platforms such as Indeed Salaries or JobStreet to find a realistic range for the role you are applying for
- Present a salary range slightly above your desired amount but stay open to negotiation
- Communicate your expectations confidently and back them up with your skills and potential contributions to show the value you bring

Don'ts

- Avoid saying "I'll take whatever you offer," as it may suggest a lack of confidence or preparation
- Do not quote a figure without research or context
- Avoid focusing only on salary; show that you value learning and growth opportunities as well

Example:

"For this internship, I'm looking for a salary in the range of RM1,500 to RM2,000, which reflects the average for similar roles in this industry. I'm open to discussing this further based on the job responsibilities."



HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

6

“What do you hope to accomplish here?”

Employers ask about your goals to gauge alignment with the role and company vision. Show how your personal aspirations connect to the position's objectives and potential to contribute meaningfully.

Dos

- Research thoroughly to understand the company's objectives and culture
- Relate your personal goals your personal aspirations to role and company's objectives
- Express enthusiasm and a clear desire to learn and make an impact

Don'ts

- Don't make it sound like the position is just a stepping stone to something else
- Avoid vague answers that lack a clear connection between your goals and the company's objectives

Example:

“I'm passionate about creating positive environmental change, whether on a small or large scale. I admire how your company integrates sustainability into its business practices, and I hope to contribute to initiatives with my [specific skills] that drive both business growth and community impact.”



HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

7 ***"Why do you believe that you're the most qualified candidate to fill this role?"***

This question helps employers gauge how you perceive yourself and what makes you unique. It also reveals self-awareness, passion for the role, and how well your skills align with the company's goals.

Dos

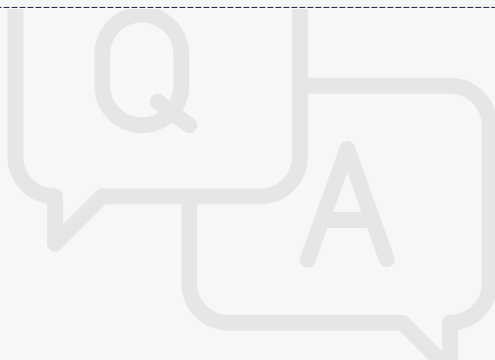
- Highlight skills and experiences that match the job description and explain how you can add value to the company's objectives, using clear examples
- Emphasise unique strengths or qualities that differentiate you from other candidates
- Focus on achievements or experiences that demonstrate your readiness for the role

Don'ts

- Avoid giving vague answers such as "I'm a hard worker" without evidence
- Do not compare yourself directly to other candidates
- Avoid overconfidence or exaggerating your skills

Example:

"I excel in data analysis and have successfully applied these skills in my coursework to draw meaningful insights from complex datasets. I'm confident that my abilities can contribute to your company's growth."



HOW TO ANSWER **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS** DURING INTERVIEW

8

"Do you have any questions for us?"

This question is often asked at the end of an interview to gauge your interest in the company and the role. It is your chance to show curiosity, enthusiasm, and initiative.

Dos

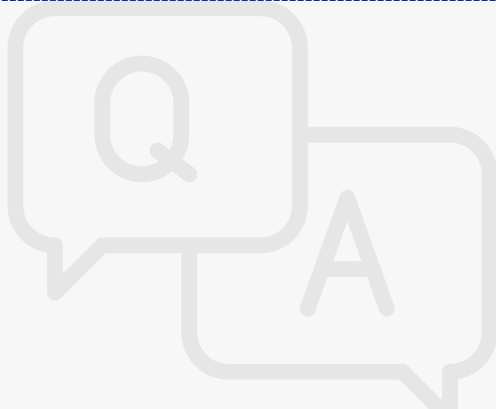
- Prepare two or three questions in advance that show genuine interest in the company or role
- Ask about opportunities for learning, growth, or career development
- Use this moment to clarify details about the team culture, expectations, or the next steps in the hiring process

Don'ts

- Do not say you have no questions; it may seem like you are uninterested
- Avoid asking about salary or benefits at this stage unless the interviewer brings it up first
- Do not ask questions that can easily be answered by reading the company website

Example Questions:

- *"Can you tell me more about the team I would be working with?"*
- *"How do you measure success for this position?"*
- *"How does the company support professional development or career growth?"*
- *"What is your biggest challenge in your work currently?"*



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

HANDLING UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS DURING INTERVIEW

Unexpected moments can arise during interviews, but how you handle them reflects your adaptability and professionalism. Here are some commonly asked questions students have about job interviews:

1 What to do if the interviewer answer my question in advance?

Some interviewers provide comprehensive answers during the discussion, which might unintentionally address your planned questions.

What to do:

- Acknowledge politely — *“Thank you for covering that earlier. It was something I was curious about.”*
- Transition smoothly to another question — *“In addition to that, I was also wondering...”*
- If the topic sparked further curiosity, ask a related follow-up question — *“You mentioned [specific detail]. Could you elaborate on how that impacts the team or this role?”*

2 What to do if I'm asked an unexpected question?

The interviewer might pose an unexpected problem-solving question to assess your ability to think on your feet and gauge your creativity beyond standard answers. They don't necessarily want a correct answer, but to see how you think your way through a problem.

What to do:

- Pause briefly and buy yourself a moment to think
- Clarify what they're asking. Ask focused questions to narrow the scope and get useful details — *“What other information can you tell me about this problem?”*
- Make an informed guess. Explain your thought process and propose possible solutions — *“I haven't encountered this directly, but if I have to make an educated guess, I would approach it by...”*
- Create a conversation by subtly seeking guidance to keep the interviewer engaged — *“Is that what you're looking for?”*

3 What to do if I don't know how to answer a question?

So you're stuck at a question you don't have an answer to. Whether it's about an area related to the position or not, the last thing you want to do is shrug. The interviewer likely want to understand the capacity of your knowledge and skill. Keep your cool and answer with honesty, curiosity and interest.

What to do:

- Stay calm and be honest that you're not familiar with the area. Avoid making up a lie to impress the interviewer — *"Frankly, I'm not familiar with that yet. I'd need to research more for me to offer an accurate input"*
- Segue to a related skill or knowledge you do know to highlight your capabilities despite — *"While I haven't worked with [specific tool], I do have experience with [related skill], which I believe could be relevant"*
- Keep the conversation rolling by expressing interest — *"Though, that's an area I'm keen to explore further. Could you share more about how it applies to this role?"*

4 How to handle awkward silence or pauses?

Awkward silences or unmanaged pauses can be caused by several factors, but it doesn't mean the interview is heading south. The interviewer might be pondering on your answer, taking notes or got distracted by an internal thought.

What to do:

- Don't panic and rush to fill the void. Silence isn't necessarily negative. Use it as a chance to compose yourself.
- Ask a bridging question if there's a long pause after your answer — *"Would you like me to elaborate further on that point?"*
- Stay confident. Smile and maintain good posture, signalling you're comfortable with the pause.

5 What to do if the interviewer asks if I have questions at an unexpected time?

Interviewers typically ask if you have any questions midway to catch your attention, gauge your interest, and give you a chance to clarify what they have explained.

What to do:

- Pay attention throughout the interview and take note of points you want to clarify. When prompted, refer to what was just mentioned instead of introducing unrelated questions to maintain a natural flow.
- Adapt your timing. Ask role-focused or general questions early, leaving company or team-related questions for the end.
- Show that you're prepared — *"I have a few questions prepared, but I'd love to ask them after learning more about the role and team."*

6 How to deal with a distracted interviewer?

A distracted and unengaged interviewer can throw even the most prepared candidate off balance. They're either checking their emails, avoiding eye contact or showing a general lack of interest. This can be uncomfortable but it's important that you stay professional and take control of the conversation.

What to do:

- Don't take it personally. Maintain your focus and enthusiasm, even if their attention seems divided
- If they're constantly getting interrupted by external things (e.g. phone calls, emails, etc), consider a reschedule — *"Is this still a good time for us to do this? I'd be glad to reschedule if it's more convenient."*
- Ask engaging questions related to the company to reel their attention — *"I understand this role involves [specific detail]. What's the biggest challenge for this role currently?"*

7 What to ask if I've run out of question?

If you've run out of questions to ask, flip the script instead. Take the opportunity to learn more about the company and the management you'll be working with. After all, you're also figuring out if this is the right place for you.

What to do:

- Show interest in the company's future — "Are there any upcoming projects or initiatives that the team is particularly excited about?"
- Engage the interviewer personally — "What do you find most rewarding about working here?"

8 How to end the interview?

How you close the conversation leaves a lasting impression. End the interview confidently, express gratitude and

What to do:

- Thank the interviewer for their time and express appreciation for the opportunity — *"Thank you for making time to interview me for the position."*
- Express enthusiasm and remind the interviewer of your most important skill — *"It's been great speaking with you and understanding more about how this role supports the company's direction. I'm very excited about the opportunity and confident that my skills in [specific area] can add value to your team."*

Pro-Tips

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERVIEWS

Non-verbal communication plays a critical role in how you are perceived during an interview. For Malaysian students and fresh graduates with limited experience, paying attention to these aspects can enhance their confidence and professionalism.

Body Language Tips

1. **Maintain eye contact** — Eye contact conveys confidence, attentiveness, and honesty. Avoiding it can make you appear disinterested or unsure. In a panel interview, address your responses to all interviewers, briefly making eye contact with each
2. **Appropriate Gestures** — Use open hand gestures to emphasise your points. Avoid tapping fingers or fidgeting, instead rest your hands lightly on the table or your lap when not gesturing
3. **Posture** — Sitting upright projects confidence and professionalism. Do lean forward slightly when the interviewer is speaking to show engagement. Slouching or leaning too far back may suggest disinterest or nervousness.

Tone of Voice

1. **Speak clearly** — Speak at a moderate pace, enunciate key points and avoid mumbling. Clear articulation demonstrates your communication skills and professionalism.
2. **Professional Tone** — Avoid slang or overly casual expressions unless the interviewer sets an informal tone. To be safe, use a polite and respectful tone throughout. A calm voice conveys confidence and self-assurance.
3. **Enthusiasm** — Enthusiasm shows your genuine interest in the role and company, and it adds warmth to your personality. Instead of sounding monotonous, vary your tone to emphasise accomplishments.

Understanding Cultural Expectations

1. **Workplace Norms** — Local norms can impact the tone and formality of interviews.
 - Use respectful language. Address interviewers as “Mr.” or “Ms.” unless invited to use their first names.
 - Arriving 5–10 minutes early shows respect for the interviewer’s time.
 - Modesty in tone and gestures is often appreciated.

Quick Tips

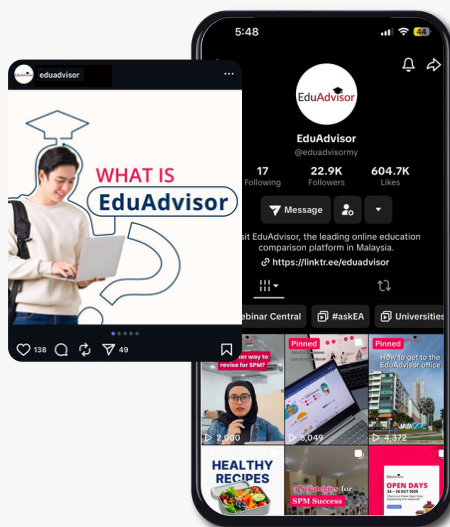
How to best prepare yourself for professional interviews?

- Record yourself answering questions to observe your gestures, tone, and posture.
- Practise in front of a mirror or with a friend to receive constructive feedback.
- Pay attention to how professionals communicate during video interviews or presentations online.



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