

Interviewing at Guinness

Types of assessments

There are general tests and assessments that appear in many of our selection processes at Guinness in addition to an interview. Here is a list of some of the most common along with some tips and guidance:

Written tests

If the position you're applying for involves writing reports or communicating with clients over email, then it's likely there will be a written task.

This could be something like writing an e-mail response or letter to a customer, having to read a case study and then offer ideas for the next course of action or summarising the content for a colleague. In this exercise, you're being tested on your ability to communicate and assess the most important data in a document, so make sure you understand what the task requires and pick out what content you want to include.

You should present your answer in a logical manner, concentrating on the most important issues first and ensuring the tone is relevant for the intended recipient. Finally, leave yourself time at the end to check for spelling and grammar errors.

In-tray exercises

Imagine you turn up for a job to be met with an inbox full of urgent tasks. How would you cope? That's the point of this task – to see how you manage your time and deal with prioritising your daily workload.

You'll be expected to prioritise content such as emails, phone messages and reports, and then explain how you would deal with each task.

Swiftly read through all of the information and tasks you have been provided with, identify the ones that require immediate action, those you would delegate and then any that could be delayed. Then run through the immediate tasks and highlight what you would do and how quickly you would do it. For the delegated tasks, say who you would hand it over to. For the tasks you would delay, explain why and what you would do when you got to it.

Presentations

Presentations are used to assess a candidate's communication and information skills.

Sometimes we will ask you to create the presentation beforehand, while sometimes we may ask you to prepare a presentation within a specific time frame on the day – which you will then later present to your interview panel. The presentation topic will be related to the job you have applied for so it's likely you will have the experience and knowledge to prepare.

Whatever the scenario, there are steps to take when approaching a presentation. Here are our top tips:

- Every story needs a beginning, middle and an end and so does every presentation
- Start with a short intro, move onto the main content and then finish with a summary
- Keep the content precise
- Make eye contact with the audience
- Be mindful of how long the presentation is and who you will be presenting to

Nerves cause people to speed up when they talk, so make sure you take deep breaths and pause between slides.

Role play

Depending on the position you are interviewing for, you may have a role-playing task. This could be something like handling a dissatisfied customer or trying to solve a problem in a meeting. This assessment is used to test your problem-solving abilities and communication skills.

The trick is to remain calm in whatever situation is presented, keep a logical mind and be confident that you can tackle the issue. Think up some possible scenarios and practise what you would say. Even if the actual subject is like nothing you thought of, you would have got in the habit of forming arguments. It may also be helpful to research the company's mission statement, behaviours and culture. This could give you an idea of how they operate and what behaviours they expect their employees to display.

Psychometric tests

These are used to get an idea of your culture fit and psychological state. The best course of action with these is to answer honestly. If you second-guess what you should say, it will quickly become apparent. If you are nervous about these tests, take part in some of the online ones to get used to the kinds of questions you'll be asked.

Group exercises

This task shows your communication skills and that you can work productively in a team. There are various types of group tasks, from discussing a topic or running a meeting to having a specific problem to solve.

Regardless of the actual task, there are some key considerations to keep in mind. Firstly, this is a group exercise, so you're being viewed within the context of a group. You need to show you have ideas and a contribution to make but that you can also do this in a calm and considerate manner. You can demonstrate leadership skills by taking ownership of tasks but also in other ways such as keeping everyone on topic or ensuring the task is completed on time.

Preparing for interviews

Your performance in an interview depends, to a significant extent, on how well you prepare. Don't leave your preparation until the last minute. In the days leading up to the interview, focus your research on the:

- **Employer** – We have lots of information on the Guinness website to help you get a better understanding of what we do and how we do it. You can also access our overall organisational strategy, people strategy and diversity & inclusion strategies via our website alongside our latest news and updates.
- **Role** - read the job description again and, if you completed an application form, go over it to refresh your memory of how your skills and qualifications match the role you're applying for. If you are asked in the interview, it's important that you can clearly explain why you want the job and that you understand the role.
- **Questions** - you should consider how you'll answer common interview questions, as well as preparing some questions you'd like to ask the interviewer.

There are also some practical things to plan such as when and where is the interview taking place? Have you planned your journey and checked the timetables for any public transport you need to take? Where is the best place to park? How long will it take to get there? What will you eat before the interview?

Avoiding alcohol the night before and having a healthy breakfast on the morning of your interview will stand you in good stead. If your interview is scheduled for just after lunchtime, make sure you eat something even if you're feeling nervous - you won't put in your best performance on an empty stomach.

You should also ensure you have everything you need on the day such as:

- Pen and notebook
- Your CV and interview invitation
- Copies of any qualifications/licenses (if required)
- Right to Work documentation (for more information, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk>)
- A bottle of water
- Money for transport and food

You should also ensure you have suitable interview attire ready. When deciding your interview outfit, you should do so in consideration of the interview dress code. If you're unsure on the dress code, you can ask your recruitment advisor before attending the interview.

Practice job interviews

It's a good idea to do at least one mock interview before the real thing. You can also write and practice answers to common interview questions with someone you trust – possibly even recording yourself and then reviewing your performance.

Although you cannot know the questions you will be asked on the day, you should look at the job description's key responsibilities/essential criteria and use it to create some mock interview questions.

It would be useful for your mock interview questions to reflect different questions styles. The most common types of interview questions are 'behavioural' and 'competency based'.

Behavioural based questions - are used to see how you would respond to a scenario e.g. 'Tell me what you would do if...' or 'How would you approach...'

The point of these questions is to understand what behaviours you're naturally inclined to display in particular scenarios and give the employer a sense of how you handle unknown situations.

Competency based questions - target a specific skill or competency. You will be asked questions relating to your previous behaviour and approaches to specific circumstances, which you will need to back up with clear examples. These questions can be phrased as:

Tell me about a time when...

Describe a way in which you...

Tell us about a situation when...

Can you give me an example of when...

The examples you provide can be from your current or a previous role; they can also be drawn from your education or even relate to an extra-curricular pastime, such as sports teams or groups you may be a part of.

The strength of the examples is also important so please ensure you think of the most challenging, complex or stretching examples of when you have demonstrated the behavioural/skills indicators. Remember to choose real life examples which best demonstrate your experience and skills.

STAR method

When thinking about how you would answer interview questions, you may find it helpful to use the STAR approach as your template. Following the STAR method (detailed below) will help provide structure and focus to your responses during the interview:

Situation – briefly describe your context and your role

Task – the specific task, challenge or job that you faced

Action – what you did and why you did it

Result – what you achieved through your actions

Extra guidelines to succeed at an assessment centre:

- **Be aware of body language** - You are observed throughout the day during an assessment centre, so it may be a good idea to do some research on body language and make sure you perform throughout your time there. Don't fidget, sit up straight, make eye contact and smile. Show you are a confident and nice person to be around.
- **Be enthusiastic** - Approach all the tasks with an open mind and show interest in your fellow candidates. You will be surprised at how many people don't act themselves at an assessment centre, so you can make yourself stand in a positive light just by smiling.
- **Be prepared** - Just as you would prepare for an interview, prepare for the assessment centre. If you are prone to nerves, being prepared will help alleviate some of the jitters. But assessment centres can actually benefit people who get nervous in interviews, because you are assessed on various tasks, not just how well you interview.
- **Be yourself** - It may sound trite, but be yourself on the day. Assessment centres are far more involved than normal interviews, and it is more difficult to put on an act.

Remote/Video interviewing Tips

Ways of working have rapidly evolved due to COVID-19, meaning more recruitment activities have moved online. Here are some additional tips for completing video interviews:

1	<p>Preparation – the company should provide you with information about how to access the video interview and any relevant supporting guidance to help you prepare. This might include interview tips, information about the format of your interview and copies of the organisational and people strategies.</p>
2	<p>Check your tech! - Don't let technical issues get in the way of a great online interview! You should test and get comfortable using your tech prior to the interview taking place – ensuring that your choice of device to complete the interview is compatible with the employer's chosen video interview software and that your camera and microphone are in working order.</p> <p>Often, your interviewers will admit you into the meeting space at your allotted interview time, so you should also consider accessing the video interview 10 minutes before your scheduled time to ensure that there are no connectivity issues. This allows time to address any potential problems before the interview starts.</p>
3	<p>Consider your environment – think about the environment you will be completing your interview in. Make any members of your household aware that you you're completing an interview and you'll be unavailable during this time. Where possible, ensure you are in a quiet place where you will be undisturbed by other members of your household, household appliances or outdoor noise.</p> <p>You should also either turn off your phone or put it on silent to minimise any surprise interruptions. If you are using your phone or a tablet to complete the interview, it's recommended to use the 'Do not disturb' setting.</p> <p>Ensure that the space you are using to complete the interview is free of clutter and/or distractions that may get in the way. You should also try to ensure that the room you are video interviewing in has a strong enough Wi-Fi connection and is well lit.</p> <p>If you are anticipating possible interruptions or disturbances, please let your interviewers know.</p>