

**Top questions for  
Accountancy and  
Finance Interviews.**



## Accounts and Finance Interview.

You've shortlisted your candidates and now you must prepare for the interviews. Whether you're a seasoned recruiter looking for some fresh inspiration on questions to ask or you're new to interviewing and want some ideas to get you started we've pulled together some questions to choose from.

This guide will help you through the interview process and help you to get the best outcomes from your interview.

**Emma Bonfiglio,**

Managing Director, Appointments Personnel

### Getting Started

Start by using some icebreaker, general questions, these will help to settle your candidate's nerves, it's important that you help your candidate to relax and enjoy the interview. You want them to do well at the interview and not be too nervous to give their best performance.

A lot of recruiters will make an initial decision on an interviewee within 6 seconds, it's important that you don't and stay objective, but there are some things to look out for:

- **Poor body language.** Some signs to look out for, might be that they are lounging in their chair, not listening to you or not making eye contact.
- **CV Gaps or lots of short-term jobs.** You may need to probe further if they've had numerous jobs and have no real explanation for leaving.
- **Have they done their homework?** A good candidate will have done their research about the job and your company. If they haven't are they really interested in working for you?

Remember to stay within the law. It's important to perform a legally compliant interview.

### Did you know?

**It takes just 6 seconds, on average, for an interviewer to make a quick judgement on the suitability of an interviewee.**

Find out how you can make sure you don't fall into this trap.

A good way to do this is ask the same questions to each candidate, this will make sure you're treating everyone fairly. Score each candidate on their questions objectively. Make sure you avoid asking anything that is discriminatory.

If you're unsure ask a recruitment agency to give you some guidance. Our Recruitment Document at the back of this guide, will help you to make sure you're consistent with each candidate and will help you review your interviews at the end of the process.

Each interview should last around 45 minutes, give yourself 15 minutes between interviews to write up notes whilst your applicant's responses are still fresh in your mind.

Ask approximately 8-10 questions, it will be just enough to dig into the detail and establish a rapport with candidates to see if they'll be a good fit.

If you have used an agency the benefit will be that your agency will have asked some of these questions already and validated the applicant's credentials and reliability. This will leave you to use your face-to-face interview to establish whether they have the skills you need and will be a good fit for your team.

## Generic Questions

**This is where you will ask about reasons for leaving previous posts – what do they know about the company – what are they looking for in their next role – team fit – culture fit.**

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What attracted you to the company and job that made you want to apply for this job?
3. Talk me through your typical working day.
4. What do you find most challenging in your role.
5. Tell me about a situation where you worked in a team on a project? What did you think were the benefits of teamwork?

We've provided more general icebreaker questions for you to use at the back of the guide.



## Specific questions

Once your candidate is settled into the interview using a selection of specific, role related questions will help you to uncover your candidates finance industry experience, knowledge and how they approach situations or tasks.

What questions you will use will depend on the job role and the person you are looking for. So we've given you a selection for some of the popular job roles that we see companies recruiting for around the Staffordshire and Cheshire region.

If you're recruiting for another finance role that isn't featured in this guide and would like more help, your recruitment agency should be able to give you more pointers on questions to ask.

### **Purchase Ledger Questions**

1. Tell me about your experience working in a purchase ledger role.
2. What number of invoices are you used to processing?
3. How would you go about solving a dispute on an invoice?
4. What experience do you have with Excel and to what level?
5. How do you manage the repetition in the role, how do you stay motivated?
6. If I was looking to automate the purchase ledger function, what would you consider?
7. What aspect do you like about the role of purchase ledger clerk?
8. What would you do if you had a purchase ledger problem outside of your working hours?

### **Credit Control Questions**

1. What size of debtor are you used to dealing with?
2. How would you deal with a customer that kept delaying payment?
3. Can you give me an example of a difficult customer and how you managed the situation?
4. What makes you successful in your role as credit controller?
5. What is your current debtor's average debtor days?
6. What does your debt management process entail?
7. How many calls do you make per week?
8. Have you introduced any improvements to decrease the debtor days?

### **Payroll Questions**

1. What size payroll do you currently run?
2. Is it a weekly or monthly payroll?
3. Can you give me an example of how you have handled a disgruntled employee?
4. How many payroll errors have you made in the past 3 months?
5. How have you resolved payroll errors in the past?
6. What experience do you have with pension and benefits payments?
7. How long does it take to complete your current payroll?
8. Have you ever missed a payroll deadline?

### Accounts Assistant Questions

1. How do you organise your tasks especially when you have tight deadlines?
2. How do you control or minimise errors in your work?
3. Tell me about your relationship with your manager and how they give you tasks.
4. What skills do you think make an excellent accounts assistant?
5. Which of your skills would you like to develop further and why?
6. Have you prepared financial reports in your previous roles?
7. How do you prepare for an audit?
8. How would you design a spreadsheet to track receipts?

### Finance Manager Questions

1. Why did you decide to pursue a career in financial management?
2. Give me an example of how you keep track of the tasks needing attention by your team.
3. Give me an example of when you were not happy with the details of an established procedure and what you did about it.
4. What does a good budgeting process look like?
5. How would you describe EBITDA to a colleague who isn't from a financial background?
6. How do you get the best out of your Finance team?
7. Can you give me an example of when you have devised an innovate solution to a business problem?
8. Is a cash flow statement enough to tell if a company is doing well?

### Accountant Questions

1. What qualifications do you have for this role?
2. Detail your experience in preparing Management Accounts / Finance Reports.
3. What do you think are the main skills that make you a good accountant?
4. Tell me about a time you handled a complex financial project with a tight deadline that required precise data collection and analysis.
5. How do you stay current on accounting legislation, rules and regulation?
6. Take me through your latest budget preparation.
7. Can you give me some examples of where you have saved money for your business?
8. How do you manage multiple accounting projects at once?



For more support for your interview, give us a call **01782 338787**

**Emma Bonfiglio** –  
Managing Director, Appointments Personnel

**Interview Document**

**Date of Interview**

**Name**

**Position Applied For**

**Interviewer(s)**

**Summary**

	<b>Score 1-5 (1=poor 5=excellent)</b>	
Experience		
Salary expectation		
Attitude		
Appearance		
Availability		

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Score 1-5 (1=poor 5=excellent)</b>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

## More Generic questions

Looking for more inspiration and some other questions to add to your interview. We've pulled together this handy list of popular general interview questions for you to use.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Are you the best person for this job? Why?
3. What do you know about this company?
4. Are you overqualified for this job?
5. Describe a difficult experience at work and how you handled it.
6. Describe your best boss and your worst boss.
7. Describe your career goals.
8. Describe your work style.
9. Do you prefer to work alone or on a team?
10. Do you take work home with you?
11. Give some examples of teamwork you've been involved with.
12. Have you ever had difficulty working with a manager?
13. Why should we hire you?
14. How do you handle pressure?
15. Describe a time when you've made an accounting error and how you handled it.
16. What industry/business sectors have you worked in?
17. How much do you expect to get paid?
18. How would you describe the pace at which you work?
19. How would you describe yourself?
20. How would you handle it if your boss was wrong?
21. If the people who know you were asked why you should be hired, what would they say?
22. Is there a type of work environment you prefer?
23. Is there anything else I can tell you about the job and the company?
24. Tell me why you want to work here.
25. What are you looking for in your next position?
26. What are you passionate about?
27. What are your goals for the future?
28. What motivated you to establish a career in accountancy/ finance?
29. What relevant experience do you have?
30. What can you contribute to this company?
31. What challenges are you looking for in your next job?
32. What did you like or dislike about your previous job?
33. What do you expect from a manager or supervisor?
34. What do you find are the most difficult decisions to make?
35. What have you learnt from your mistakes?
36. What interests you about this job?
37. What are your greatest strengths?
38. What are your greatest weaknesses?
39. What major challenges have you handled before and how did you handle them?
40. What problems have you encountered at work previously and how did you handle them?
41. What was your biggest accomplishment (failure) in your previous position?
42. Why are you leaving your job?

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- 100 day money back guarantee on permanent placements

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## Contact us

For more details: Email [kerry@appointmentspersonnel.co.uk](mailto:kerry@appointmentspersonnel.co.uk) Call 01782 338787 Web [www.appointmentspersonnel.co.uk](http://www.appointmentspersonnel.co.uk)