

Interview Evaluation Report for Accountancy positions

Date	Name interviewer
2011	

PERSONAL INFORMATION CANDIDATE

Name	
Date of Birth	
Nationality	
Home location	
Highest Education	

APPLIED FOR

Position	
Manager	
Department	
Work location	

PROFILE CANDIDATE

If the candidate presents the following qualities ➡ cross the corresponding box & motivate !

Rational	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Low :
Procedural	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Low :
Practical	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Low :
Analytic	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Low :
Relational	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Low :
Process orientated	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Average <input type="checkbox"/> Low :

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Client service <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of loyalty to a company <input type="checkbox"/> Listening skills <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous learning <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability <input type="checkbox"/> Result orientated <input type="checkbox"/> Business development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic skills <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity and confidence <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to find solutions <input type="checkbox"/> Management skills <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation and knowledge sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Team player <input type="checkbox"/> Technical expertise |
|---|---|

SOCIAL ABILITIES & CHARACTERISTICS

Personality & Presentation	
Verbal capabilities	
Aspects of behaviour & Attitude	
Flexibility	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This is a suggested format for your interviewing session. In an attempt to be sure we gain all of the required information from each candidate, and yet insure the individual isn't asked the same question three times, we are providing this guideline. Please structure your sessions in the manner most comfortable for you. The expert interviewing questions are helpful for HR staff to conduct an initial screening. For better results we advise to tailor these questions with the hiring manager.

Trainee Accountant (stage one exams)

What is your understanding of management accounting v financial accounting?

Why: Accountancy is such a wide field that many candidates who are just starting out do not appreciate what it covers. A young candidate should have done their research and know what each involves.

Example of a good answer: "Management accounting is the preparation and review of figures of a company or a division of a company from a financial perspective. It involves collating figures into periodic reports that senior management can then use to make strategic decisions. Financial accounting concerns tax, statutory reports and day-to-day areas such as payroll."

Example of a bad answer: "They cover anything financial concerning a company." This answer is much too vague and non-descript.

When presented with a box containing invoices, cashbook, chequebooks and bank statements, which would you look at first to establish a trial balance and why?

Why: Our objective with this question is twofold - to test how logical and methodical they are, and to probe their actual accounts preparation knowledge.

Example of a good answer: "It depends if it's cash or credit business, but generally I would start by coding the cashbook, as all transactions must be recorded here."

Example of a bad answer: is one where they show any signs of panic or muddled thinking, or expecting to be shown.

Explain the difference between a p&l and a balance sheet, and how the two relate.

Why: This question tests the candidate's knowledge of financial accounts from a technical perspective. The answers we are looking for should, therefore, be the answers of an accountant, and not the answers of a lay business person.

Example of a good answer: "The p&l is a detailed summary highlighting the operating and trading performance of a company over a certain period of time, whereas the balance sheet shows the net worth of the company focusing on its assets and liabilities. The relationship between the two is that the p&l is a representation on the balance sheet."

Example of a bad answer: "The p&l shows the profit of the business, and the balance sheet shows the company accounts. The relationship between the two is that the p&l is calculated from the balance sheet."

Part-qualified accountant

What can you tell about a business from a cash flow forecast?

Why: There is a difference between understanding cash flow theory as taught in exams, and actually applying it! This question probes how candidates relate cash flow to the practicalities of the business.

Example of a good answer: "Level of overdraft required, peaks and troughs in sales, gearing levels, p&l etc."

Example of a bad answer: "Cash flowing through a business." This shows no understanding of why this exercise is carried out.

Can you give an example of work that you have carried out away from the audit side, in which you've had to liaise with senior managers?

Why: With this question we are looking to gauge the levels at which the candidate has worked - eg finance directors, managing directors, or chief executives. If so, how much confidence have they displayed in doing so. If they have only worked with the audit manager, then they are less marketable than if they have had direct senior-level contact.

Example of a good answer: "I worked to design a new company structure for a fast-growing telecommunications company. The process included meetings with client employees and workshops with senior management."

Example of a bad answer: "I have worked with the audit manager, who acts as client liaison."

Do you have first-time passes in the exams you have taken?

Why: This, for us, is a good indication of their ability and commitment to date.

Good answer: "Yes."

Bad answer: "No." (Accountancy students take note!)

Senior accountant (fully qualified to financial director level)

When have you had to design new financial processes in a hands-on role?

Why: With this question we're looking to establish how much hands-on work the candidate has done, and how open they are to doing more of it, despite their seniority. A lot of candidates feel they have paid their dues, so to speak, when they reach financial controller or financial director level. They want roles that oversee accounting activities rather than those that actually get involved. Sometimes, however, clients ask us to recruit senior-level candidates with a combination of hands-on skills plus senior-level liaison, hence the question.

Example of a good answer: "In my current position the brief when I started was to re-engineer the finance function, redesigning and simplifying the chart of accounts while also designing and implementing a bottom-up budgeting process. I shortened the month end by 10 days to enable focus on process design and analysis of results."

Example of a bad answer: is one that shows they've delegated the work and overseen the result rather than doing it themselves.

What exposure have you had to the more strategic/commercial/non-finance areas of your business?

Why: Experience outside of the straight finance function gives a good indication of the standing and ability of the person in the company. We also like to see what other capacity they've been involved in. A lot of accountancy roles require little people management, for example, so it is valuable and necessary to identify their skills and experience beyond pure accounting at this level.

Good answer: "I have been involved in numerous commercial projects, for example..." Weak answer: one that shows they are still in a straight number crunching role without significant responsibility outside of management accounting.

Can you talk us through a recent change to the Statements of Standard Accounting Practice, and how it will affect businesses in your industry?

Why: Senior level accountants are expected to keep up to date with SSAPs - especially in the light of recent scandals.

Example of a good answer: Any description of any change, as these are ongoing. It shows they keep themselves informed.

Example of a bad answer: Not being able to cite a single example! Senior candidates are expected to keep abreast of developments.



SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe a typical project you have managed, or were a team member on.
2. Describe a possible “first meeting” scenario with a potential client. What tools/techniques would you use to assess the situation and diagnose the client’s needs.
3. Tell me about an idea/project you have presented to upper management or client and “sold.” What was your approach? Why do you think you were successful?
4. What has been your greatest/most satisfying professional accomplishment- Why was it and what did you learn from it?
5. What are the most significant business decisions you have made? What was your decision making process? Why?
6. What kind of company culture/environment do you work best in?
7. What is your availability to travel?
8. Give me an example of a difficult client/situation and how you handled it?

