

Interview questions at PWC, Deloitte, KPMG and EY. The definitive list



by [Sarah Butcher](#) 13 December 2016

/you're interviewing with one (or all) of the Big Four accountancy firms. Based upon the experiences of those who've been before you and the advice of the firms themselves, you need to be prepared to talk about yourself. – A lot.

If top banks like technical questions, brain teasers and 'fit questions', top accountancy firms like competency questions. – They will grill you from every conceivable angle to check you possess the behaviours they're looking for. They will want to know why that firm, why that job, why, why, why.

If you're going into an interview with a Big Four firm, this means three things. Firstly, make sure you know the exact competencies they target (most produce a list on their careers sites). Secondly, be prepared to answer using the ['STAR' \(Situation/Task/Action/Result\) technique](#) and to go into the interview prepared to talk in detail about situations that show the competencies being targeted. Thirdly, expect all interviews at Big Four Firms to be pretty similar.

The one exception to this rule is EY. Rather than straight-up competency interviews, EY runs something called ['strengths interviews.'](#) The EY strengths interview is fairly similar to competency interviews elsewhere, although the questions are a little more leftfield, as per the list below...

The interview questions of PWC

PWC really, really, *really* likes competency interview questions. The company lists the [competencies it works for here](#). It also provides a few [transcripts of past interview questions and answers here](#).

And these are all the questions that candidates (and PWC itself) says it likes to ask:

1. Tell me about a time you had to correct someone's mistake
2. What do you think this role involves?
3. Describe a time when you had to improve a piece of work after criticism?
4. What have you read about PWC in the news?
5. Can you describe a time when you have worked in a team to deliver a piece of work? – What was your role in the team? What did you do exactly?
6. Describe a time when you've successfully managed a project for example coursework or organising an event. What challenges did you overcome? Who supported you? What was the outcome?
7. Can you tell me about a piece of recent financial news you've read? Why did you find it interesting?
8. Give an example of a time you failed to accomplish something.
9. Give an example of a time you built a relationship.
10. Why audit?
11. Give an example of a time you worked with someone with a different style. How did this differ to your own?
12. Give an example of a time you said something unethical.
13. Give an example of a time when you weren't given enough guidance.
14. Why PWC?
15. Give an example of a time you overcame conflict.
16. What do you know about the ACA exams?
17. Give an example of a time when you worked with people outside your usual network.
18. What's the most difficult thing about working with you?
19. Give an example of a time you solved a complex problem.
20. Give an example of a time when you had to complete multiple different projects to a short deadline.
21. What would you do if you heard one of your co-workers releasing confidential client information?
22. Tell me about a time when you were given vague instructions for a task and had to figure out what to do.
23. Give an example of a time you dealt with a team member who didn't pull his weight.

The interview questions of Deloitte

Much like PWC, Deloitte loves competency interviews. You can see the firm's [seven key competencies listed here](#). Be prepared to answer very detailed questions about times you've demonstrated these competencies in the past.

Below are the questions that previous candidates and Deloitte itself say you should expect in an interview with the firm. Brainteasers appear to crop up from time to time.

1. Describe your role in a piece of work you're particularly proud of.
2. Describe a time you collaborated with others to achieve a goal.
3. Give me an example of when you have dealt with a difficult character
4. How would people describe you in three words?
5. Why Deloitte?

6. Why audit?
7. Talk me through a long term project you've been involved in.
8. Why did you study a university degree if you want to work in accountancy?
9. What's good about you?
10. Describe a time you defended a friend.
11. How would you sell yourself?
12. Which other companies are you applying to?
13. Describe a time when you had to settle upon the right course of action. What were your thought processes when you made this decision?
14. How do you try to be the best you can be?
15. Tell us about a time you led a team.
16. What can you bring to Deloitte?
17. How do you handle stress at work?
18. Tell me about a time you adapted to an unfamiliar situation.
19. Why are pot holes round?
20. How many pens can I fit in this room?
21. Why should Deloitte invest in you?
22. What is your leadership style?
23. What are you reading right now?

The interview questions of KPMG

What will you be asked in an interview at KPMG? The short answer is more of the same again. KPMG lists its [nine behavioural competencies](#) here. When you interview with the firm, you'll be asked **a lot** of questions about when you demonstrated them.

For example....

1. What makes KPMG different from the rest of the Big Four? Why do you want to work here?
2. What's the difference between an internal auditor and an external auditor?
3. What do you think this job will involve exactly?
4. Talk about a time you've managed multiple tasks to finish a project for a deadline.
5. Talk about a time you worked in a team where there were communication problems. How did you help resolve them?
6. Can you talk about a time you've had to deal with a difficult customer? How did you diffuse the situation?
7. What's good about you? What's not? What do you need to learn?
8. Can you give an example of a time when you've had to communicate an idea persuasively in writing?
9. Can you tell me something interesting you've read about KPMG in the news?
10. Can you tell me about a time when circumstances changed? How did you adapt?
11. Can you tell me about a time when you've had to overcome a setback? How did you overcome it?
12. Can you talk about a business that's doing well? Which three things do you consider key to their success?
13. Can you talk about a business that's doing badly? Which problems does it face?
14. Can you talk about a time when you've motivated a team to work together? What did you do exactly?
15. What are you most proud of?
16. Which opportunities can you see now for KPMG to develop new business?
17. Which skills do you think you'll need in the role you're applying for at KPMG?

18. Can you tell me about a time you felt bored at work? How did you make the job more interesting?
19. Can you talk us through the way you evaluated a challenging situation in the past?
20. A company wants to relocate overseas. Talk us through the problems it faces.
21. How do you manage your time?
22. What are your two biggest accomplishments in life?

The interview questions of EY

Finally, EY has those '[strengths' interviews](#). Strengths interviews are all about finding out your interests and what you're good at. The interviewer wants to know what you're really like. In recruiter parlance, they want to know your 'authentic self.'

To this end, candidates and the firm itself say you should expect the following questions when you interview at EY.

1. What are you good at?
2. What do you most enjoy studying?
3. What gives you a buzz?
4. Are you a starter or a finisher?
5. Are you into big picture or detail?
6. Describe a successful day you had recently.
7. What do you love doing in your spare time?
8. When are you happiest?
9. When you do you feel most like yourself?
10. Do you find there are enough hours in the day?
11. Have you ever done something differently the second time around?
12. Tell me about your friends.
13. Which three words would your friends use to describe you?
14. What's your biggest weakness?
15. Have you ever wanted to stop doing something?
16. Do you think you need to be an expert to lead a team?
17. Would you say you're organized? Would your friends?
18. Do you enjoy hard work?
19. Why do you want this job?
20. Give an example of a time you asked for more responsibility.
21. If there was a family member or friend sitting next to you, what would they tell me were your top 3 strengths and top 3 weaknesses?
22. Which books do you read?
23. Tell me about something that's not on your resume.