



# COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

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## Interview Hints and Tips



Know your  
experience



Demonstrate the  
required skills



Listen to the  
questions



Give examples



Ask questions

### Do your homework - know the job/organisation

Make sure that this job/organisation is for you. Read the Qualifications and Particulars of Post/Job Specification in the Candidate Information Booklet carefully before applying for the job because it could save you time and expense attending for an interview.

Application forms is where the Interview Board will receive their first introduction to you.

It is your opportunity to market yourself. Also be thorough when filling in your 'Job Description'.

Focus on the main skills you will need for the job and try to highlight these in the way you complete the application form.

### Prepare well

- If attending for interview, confirm your attendance as instructed on your interview invite.
- Visit the website to find out about the organisation.
- Familiarise yourself with the working of the organisation.
- Make sure you read the most important documents – for example Annual Reports, Corporate Plans, Annual Budgets, County Development Plan and other key strategies and documents relating to the organisation. Use the search facility on the internet to find these.
- Keep a close eye on national and local media for any relevant articles.
- If possible, contact somebody you know who works in the organisation for information on developments.
- If interview is in-person, plan your journey. Make sure that you have clear directions and are clear of time and location of interview. If you are running late make sure that you contact Human Resources (HR) to notify them. Make sure you are contactable too.
- If interview is on-line,
  - **Internet Connectivity** – it is the responsibility of the interviewee to ensure that they have suitable technology and adequate connectivity to successfully attend this interview.
  - **Microsoft Teams** – Please ensure you have downloaded this application onto the device which you will be using for your online interview - Microsoft Teams can be downloaded onto any device. You do not need to setup a Microsoft account to download the teams app or to participate in the meeting.
  - **Interview Links** – The Microsoft Teams Link will be issued to the email address you have provided on your application form. The link will be sent the day **before** your interview. Please check your Junk/Spam folder. If you have not received this link by the day of your interview, please contact Recruitment.
  - **Recording of interviews** is strictly prohibited. **Responding to interview questions** – it is not appropriate to read from any documents or notes during the interview.
- Preparing well by researching can indicate commitment and interest in the job / organisation.

### Prepare Examples

- Always have examples (at least two), of where you showed your initiative/leadership/skills/customer care and so on. Relate the examples to the work experience as outlined in your application form.
- Practice your examples: - Practice out loud and/or in front of a mirror, it does help to hear yourself.
- You should put yourself in the interviewer's position and prepare a list of anticipated questions and answers. Rehearse them – again and again.
- Preparing well will fill you with confidence and this will show at interview
- Don't forget that the most important person at the interview is you. Go through your work experience and highlight achievements. Make sure that you are able to speak about your best qualities by referring to examples.
- For competency-based interviews you should organise your answers using the STAR model to be able to fully answer the questions in an organised manner.
  - **Situation:** Use one or two sentences to describe where you worked or studied, what your role was, and any other relevant background information that provides context.
  - **Task:** Clearly describe the problem or challenge you faced and the goal you were working towards in the example.
  - **Action:** Outline what you did to either resolve the situation or contribute to the success of the example. Describe in detail the steps you took, any challenges you faced, and what specific skills you used.
  - **Result:** Describe the result of your actions and what you accomplished from the situation. It is important to relate the skill or competency you are illustrating back to the position you are applying for and explain what you learned from the experience.

### **Consider the following**

- Dress smartly and professionally – this is part of presenting yourself positively.
- Maintain regular eye contact with all Interview Board Members.
- Speak slowly, confidently, and clearly. Think before you answer - don't be afraid to ask for clarification on any question you do not understand.
- Focus on communicating the main points of what you want to say in your answer. Avoid giving answers that are very long and complicated. Use real examples in your answers where possible.
- Try to avoid folding your arms or fidgeting because it can affect your speech and distract from what you want to say.
- Do not cover your mouth when speaking.
- Try to ask some questions that display interest in the organisation.
- Avoid yes or no answers – always elaborate on your “yes” or “no”.
- If you hit a blank wall while in your interview don't panic. Take a drink of water because it will give you time to compose yourself. The interview board understand that you will naturally be nervous, and they will take that into account.
- Don't criticise former or current employers during the interview.
- Don't forget to switch off your mobile phone.
- Do not discuss terms and conditions with the Board.

### **After the interview**

- It is useful to think about your interview performance and identify where you think you underperformed. This can help focus your attention on weaknesses for the next time, for example speaking too fast, not giving relevant answers and so on.
- Make note of the questions you were asked for future interview preparation.

### **For more information**

Further general information and advice on Interview Preparation is available at the [publicjobs.ie](https://publicjobs.ie)