

# What questions should I ask in an interview?

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Thoughtful questioning is a must in interviews. Smart questions prove that you can quickly identify information gaps and begin to fill them. They demonstrate your intelligence, sensitivity and show that you're serious about a role and its responsibilities. Interviewers will expect them - so make sure you've come prepared.

## Questions to ask decision makers:

- How and why the interviewer joined/founded the company.
- What values are they building on? (Or: what the exercise was to formulate them if they already exist?)
- What does "excellent" look like with this role?
- How would they describe their top employees?
- Who do they view as their competitors? Followed by...
- What are they doing differently/what do they think separates them from the rest?

## Questions to ask non decision makers:

- Why and how they joined the company.
- What they find especially compelling about the company.
- One thing they'd change about the company.
- What should you do/focus on in in order to be a truly valuable colleague to them?

Topics you need to know more about (but are generally advised not to by Recruiters):

- Money
- Flexibility
- Next steps

## Why do Recruiters typically advise you not to ask about these topics?

Recruiters are normally acting in good faith here. During an interview you'll likely only have time for a few properly explored questions. Best practice is to concentrate on questions that reflect well on you as a candidate and spend only one (or none) on "housekeeping" questions - as these are generally handled by a Recruiter.

At Juggle, we believe these questions should be tackled by **you** and not left essentially to chance at the hands of a third party. Your needs and situation are unique, and the ability to navigate these issues is important.

The benefit of using a digital platform like Juggle is that these *should* be firmly outlined and clear when you start. Technically you shouldn't need to spend any time on them. But in case things aren't 100% clear (or circumstances change during hiring)...

[DO NOT have these conversation with anyone but the decision maker. It's a waste of time and could harm your chances.]

### Raise the "money" topic when:

- It's not clear what the budget is.
- Your salary expectations are significantly above their budget.
- You already have another offer on the table (so it really is worth starting the "money" talk now.)

### Raise the "flexible working" topic when:

- Flexibility is a big priority for you and their attitude to it isn't clear/you've heard reports that they're poor at creating/delivering flexible arrangements.

### Ask about next steps when:

- You have other opportunities moving at pace (either at final or offer stage).

The art form here - and it is an art - is to *get* information and not *give* too much. You certainly shouldn't withhold information, but the purpose of asking these questions is to get you enough information to be truly thoughtful and then compelling in your negotiation. Interviewers at this level are smart, and have probably been in this situation several times recently. They will read cues if you provide them. Play your cards close to your chest so you can make a decision on your own terms.

It's also worth remembering that you're not looking to *finish* the negotiation right now. Just get the information that will let you proceed to the next stage with confidence.

## Suggested questions/conversation openers:

### **Money questions:**

*"You've listed this opportunity as £X to £X: how do you decide what offer to put together?" (ie: where on the range one candidate sits compared to another.)*

OR

*"How do you go about gathering the data/information to set salaries across your company?"*

### **Flexibility questions:**

*"You've listed this opportunity as having the potential for flexible working. Can you explain to me how flexible working currently works in your organisation?"*

(By explaining how it works in real life, you get an honest assessment of reality and not how they *hope* things might work. If there is any question about them listing flexibility as part of the role then you know they're less mature/ready for flexibility than was originally advertised - useful information.)

### **Next step questions**

*"How long from this stage to offer stage do you guys typically take to hire someone at this level?"*

(...then "cheat" a bit with this follow up:)

*"And how fast have you been able to move when you've really liked someone?"*

## Conclusions

Don't treat asking questions as a box-ticking exercise. They're as valuable to you as they are to the interviewer. You need to get a sense of the role, your responsibilities and the culture of the business just as much as they want to get a picture of your skills. Treat them as an opportunity, and don't be afraid to be bold - if they can't answer one of your questions (potential red flag) it's much better to discover so early.

## Questions you'll take to your interview

Prepare a list of 8 and you can then choose the most appropriate ones depending on context:
