

# Science Job Interview Questions And Answers



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## Science Interview Questions And Answers Guide.

### Question - 1:

Have you any questions about science?

#### Ans:

Try to ask questions to which you really want to know the answer. There follows a few that will give you ideas.

- \* What equipment facilities would I be using?
- \* What major projects/products are being worked on?
- \* What is the typical make up of project teams.
- \* What training would I receive?
- \* How would I be kept up to date with recent developments in my field?
- \* Will I have my own bench space?

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### Question - 2:

Technical questions on science e.g. What is entropy? What does HIV stand for?

#### Ans:

Questions may start easy and get harder.

If they ask a question to which you have forgotten the answer to, tell them you have studied the topic but can't recall it - if this is true! Go on to say how you would find out or talk about the general area the question addresses. Don't just say that you don't know the answer

Many questions of a technical nature may also be posed in a hypothetical way. For example:

- \* "What procedure might be advisable if you encountered .....?"
- \* "If there were a dangerous chemical leak what would you do?"
- \* "What specialized equipment would you need for .....?"

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### Question - 3:

What benefits did you gain from your placement?

#### Ans:

If you have done a relevant placement, you may find that much of the interview will center round this - it can certainly be a major selling point for you, so think carefully back through what you did.

You could mention how much responsibility you were given, what type of team you were in, what projects, if any, you were involved with.

If you haven't done a placement you could focus on the things you learned in any vacation job you did - almost any job will involve working in a team and getting on with other people

Other benefits might include:

- \* Introduction to new techniques, materials, equipment, products etc.
- \* A network of contacts available to you for information and advice
- \* Enhanced self-confidence
- \* An opportunity to make a positive contribution to a project
- \* A more focused attitude toward your academic work.

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### Question - 4:

Give an example of where you have had to communicate effectively? Can you write reports?

#### Ans:

Writing skills are important in most scientific jobs and the ability to document your work clearly so that it can be emulated by others and to write comprehensive but concise reports are needed by most scientists. Often this question will be phrased more widely - e.g. give an example of when you have had to communicate effectively

You should give examples of your written work and also of the approach you have taken to written work. In other words, show how you:

- \* Accepted the need for them
- \* Approached their writing in a professional manner
- \* Have had successful assessments for reports you have produced
- \* Designated an appropriate amount of time for written work
- \* Co-ordinated the writing of a report from the work of a team.



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### Question - 5:

How good are your computing science skills?

#### Ans:

Computing skills are becoming important in all jobs - rather like the skill of driving. However for most jobs you do not need to be able to program although knowledge of FORTRAN might be useful for some jobs.

If you can use a database, statistical package or spreadsheet - even at a basic level tell them. You could also mention if you have used Microsoft Windows, email or the Internet. They will almost certainly not be looking for specific skills, just a general familiarity and willingness to learn

Describe where and how you have used computers. Demonstrate your awareness of the particular functions computers can be put to. Consider how your IT experience may be of benefit to the work of the organization you are being interviewed by.

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### Question - 6:

Can you work in a scientific team? with little supervision? Give an example.

#### Ans:

The days of the brilliant lone scientist are long gone, and nowadays you need to be able to work effectively with others, so communication skills are paramount.

Before your interview try to think of examples of where you have had to work in a team to achieve some goal - these could come from vacation jobs, sports, university societies or school

Describe how the team did any of the following:

- \* Identified its aims
- \* Achieved its aims
- \* Allocated responsibilities
- \* Coped with difficulties
- \* Coped with change.

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### Question - 7:

How would you go about solving a scientific problem?

#### Ans:

Here they will be looking for a logical and analytical approach.

Show evidence of careful planning e.g. define the problem, do your research, break it down into smaller units and have a contingency plan if things don't work out.

Give examples of problems you have solved in the past.

You might include in your answer:

- \* The research you will need to undertake
- \* People you will need to talk to
- \* Estimation of the time it will take
- \* External help you may have to call on
- \* Resources you will need

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### Question - 8:

How good are your practical laboratory skills?

#### Ans:

Good practical laboratory skills are important for many research jobs. Talk about the practicals you have done during your course and mention any scientific techniques and methods you have learned such as analytical methods. If you have got good marks for your practical work, do mention this.

If you have had a laboratory or similar job during the vacations or during a placement describe this in detail. You could also mention how you overcame any difficulties you may have met with. Try to show that you aim for quality and attention to detail in the work that you do as this is very important in most laboratory jobs.

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### Question - 9:

Tell us about any scientific projects you have done?

#### Ans:

They will be looking for why you chose your project, how you undertook it, what you got out of it and what you enjoyed about it. They might ask you to justify the results. Make sure that you have read through your project before the interview to refresh your memory.

If it was a team based project they will be interested in how you fitted into the team, what role you took in the team, how you co-operated with the other members - especially when there were problems.

If the project was an individual project you can talk about the discipline of having to work independently with little supervision, having to find things out for yourself, how you went about solving problems.

If you used any scientific techniques that you are likely to be using in the job you are applying for, then put particular emphasis on these.

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### Question - 10:

What do you know about our scientific company?

#### Ans:

Make sure that you've done your research on the organization before the interview - for example its main products and locations.

Don't be like the student who applied to Peugeot and when asked what cars they made replied 'Mondeo'!

The Careers Information Room will hold information on most larger companies and the Internet can be a fruitful source of information. Do not attempt to memorize



masses of irrelevant details. Rather you should focus on particular key facts. These could include:

- \* Company turnover
- \* Size of workforce
- \* Recent press coverage of the company
- \* Key activities that interest you.

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### **Question - 11:**

What parts of your course have you found most interesting and why?

### **Ans:**

Here the key thing is to show enthusiasm and a real interest in science - if you have read about things that weren't covered in your course, then tell them. Do you keep up to date with recent developments etc. Do you genuinely seem to enjoy talking about your subject?

Questions of this nature are unlikely to get highly technical, but it might be wise to revise areas of your course that are likely to be of specific interest to the company

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