



## STEM Placements and Internships Interviews Guide

When preparing for an interview, read the job description and person specification carefully.  
What skills/knowledge/qualities are they looking for?

This will help give you an idea of the things you might be asked about in the interview.

Think of examples of when you have **SHOWN** different skills and competencies, so you can talk about your specific experience, and give the employers the detail and evidence they want to hear

### The 'STAR' Method helps you answer interview questions

The STAR method helps you describe actual examples from your course, employment, extra-curricular activities, volunteering, leisure interests etc. of when you demonstrated particular skills.

- S – Situation** (Set the scene – when was it, and where? For example, at university, work, volunteering?)
- T – Task** (What were you tasked with, or asked to carry out?)
- A – Action** (What was your input? What did you do specifically?)
- R – Result** (What was the end result, or learning outcome?)

## STAR Method Example

**Example Interview Question:** 'Tell me about a time when you have shown leadership skills'

By using the STAR method, you could structure an answer in the following way:

**(S) : Situation:** When I volunteered over the summer last year for a national charity, the charity wanted to get more people to sign up to a newsletter which was not receiving a lot of attention

**(T) : Task:** I was asked if I could find a way of getting more people to sign up

**(A) : Activity:** I organised a meeting with other members of the fundraising team to come up with and discuss creative ideas, and I led the social media campaign to generate interest in the revamped newsletter. I also put in place a revised newsletter template and mailout function to make the process quicker and easier to manage

**(R) : Result:** Over a period of 3 months, there was an 25% increase in sign-ups to the newsletter and my approach was taken on by the charity going forward

**Example Interview Questions** (these can vary but the following are common ones asked at interviews)

- Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a complaint from a difficult customer/client
- Give us an example of working within a team environment to meet a particular objective. What was your input?
- Tell us about a time when you used your verbal communication skills to make a difference
- Describe a challenge that you have faced. How did you deal with the challenge, and what was the solution?
- What do you know about our company?
- What interests you most about the job / what do you know about the role?

- Tell us about yourself
- What skills can you bring to the job?
- Why should we appoint you?
- What skills are you looking to improve and what experience do you hope to gain from a placement?
- What are your future career plans?
- Why did you choose this particular course?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you have any questions?

## Types of Questions

### Motivational Questions

Motivational questions include ones like: **‘Why have you applied to this role and why are you interested in [company]? What are you hoping to do after you graduate?’**

What they want to see:

- Effort and research, and an understanding of business
- Your passion and interest in the company and your subject
- Find something out unique about the business if you can by researching on their company website

**Example answer: “Your company stood out when I was researching the leading electronics companies in the country. I am aware of your dedication to the development of innovative consumer products and I believe that this role would be the perfect fit considering my strong design background.”**

### Situational/Hypothetical Questions (finding out how you would react in different scenarios)

Example Hypothetical Question: **‘You are working on several projects at one time. Two of the projects have conflicting deadlines and you are not sure you have enough time to do both. How do you manage this?’**

What they want to know:

- What you would do in the situation and why? (Be realistic, in this question they are checking that you are able to ask for help from a supervisor but will also want to hear about time management)
- What skills are important that are needed for the role? Think about why they are asking about this (in this example they are asking about multitasking/asking for help)
- After you have answered, give an example of when you have done this (degree or work) using the STAR method



### Digital Interviews

You may be asked to complete an interview online; this has become increasingly common. This might take place **live**, similar to a face-to-face interview, where you will speak to the interviewer (or panel of interviewers) via a video connection using a platform such as Skype or Zoom. Or it could be **pre-recorded**, where you'll be presented with pre-recorded or written questions on screen, and you'll have to record your answers on video, often to a time limit.

#### **REMEMBER!!!**

EMAIL THE STEM PLACEMENT AND INTERNSHIP TEAM TO BOOK A MASTERCLASS ON INTERVIEWS OR A 1-2-1 MOCK INTERVIEW AT [stemplacements@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:stemplacements@brighton.ac.uk)