



CANDIDATE PREPARATION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

Your interview will focus on your skills, experience and motivation for the role.

You'll be asked to share specific examples of situations where you've demonstrated key skills and talk through what you did and the impact you had.

You'll also discuss your relevant technical knowledge or experience related to the role.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR AT CO-OP

Can you do the job? (Skills)

- Your skills and knowledge
- What you did
- The impact you had

AND

Will you do it in a Co-op way (Ways of Being/Ways of Leading)

- How you approached it
- How you worked with others
- How you made decisions

You'll be assessed on both your skills and how you demonstrate Co-op behaviours – using the same examples.



HOW TO PREPARE

TO PREPARE FOR YOUR INTERVIEW:

Think about recent examples where you've demonstrated the key skills.

Be ready to explain:

- what you did
- how you approached it and made your decisions
- how you worked with others
- what impact it had

We're interested in both what you achieved, and how you achieved it. We recommend using the S.T.A.R. approach to structure your answers.

You will already have been asked whether you require any reasonable adjustments for your interview. If there is anything we can do to support you, please let us know. Please click [here](#) for more information.

TIPS:

- Be as specific as possible and provide recent examples from the last two years.
- Try to make clear what your involvement was. For example, use 'I' not 'we' to highlight exactly what You did.
- Listen to the question and provide the appropriate example to suit the question. Feel free to take time to think of an answer.
- Use the S.T.A.R. approach to structure your answers. You can find more details on the S.T.A.R. methodology on page four.
- Focus on both what you did and how you approached it.
- Please be prepared for probing/ prompt questions which will be used to probe your answer further should the interviewer need to.
- Bring notes to your interview for support.

ELIGIBILITY TO WORK

You will be required to show evidence of your eligibility to work in the UK. Please bring this evidence to your interview for the hiring manager to review.

Bring proof of address to interview. This can be a utility bill, bank statement or mortgage statement from the last three months.

OUR OVERALL INTERVIEW PROCESS CONSISTS OF:

- Opening questions around your motivation to apply to Co-op and this role.
- Questions based on key skills for the role.
- Your role specific knowledge, experience or how you would respond to a particular scenario where applicable/required for the role.
- Closing questions and the opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have about the role or Co-op.



WAYS OF BEING AND WAYS OF LEADING

At Co-op, how you do your work is just as important as what you do.

Our Ways of Being and Leading describe how all colleagues work day-to-day, including:

WAYS OF BEING



SHOW YOU CARE

We do right by our people and care about our Co-op, our member-owners and our communities.

- We support each other with kindness and shared compassion
- When people speak, we listen and share honest feedback because we care about them
- We make sure we do things fairly and responsibly



DO WHAT MATTERS MOST

Delivering our vision and purpose, and making everyone feel valued and included, is what matters most.

- We put our member-owners at the heart of what we do
- We take responsibility for our own actions and do what we say we will do
- We focus on doing the right things for our colleagues, our communities and our planet



SUCCEED TOGETHER

Co-operation is our superpower, we're better and stronger when we work together.

- We are co-operators and value teamwork, believing in shared goals over individual wins
- We nurture an inclusive working environment
- We celebrate diverse thinking to create the best outcomes for our member-owners and communities



BE YOURSELF, ALWAYS

We bring our best self to work and respect others for doing the same.

- We are confident to be ourselves and embrace how diversity makes us stronger
- We build trusting relationships, and respect each other or who we are
- We are not afraid to speak up and are open to change and challenge as we welcome different people

WAYS OF LEADING



WE DO RIGHT BY OUR PEOPLE

As leaders, we know our people and do right by them every day.

We empower, develop and care for one another with kindness and compassion. We nurture safe and inclusive workplaces, built on mutual respect. When people speak, we listen. We aren't afraid to have difficult conversations, because honesty helps people grow, and we're here for that. In tough times, we provide the right support, and when things go well, we celebrate together. This is how we lead our people. No ifs, buts or maybes.



WE THINK MEMBER-OWNERS

There is no 'us' and 'them' or 'us' and 'you'.

We are all members, which makes us all owners. This is our Co-op difference. We think member-owners and put them at the heart of everything we do. We listen to understand their needs and make bold decisions that deliver for our Co-op. We challenge ourselves to seek out new opportunities. We drive ambitious but sustainable profitable growth, working simply and efficiently. This way, we create more economic, social and ownership value for our member-owners.



WE ARE TRUE CO-OPERATORS

Co-operation... It's our superpower and something we really believe in.

It's more than just team work, it's shared goals, over individual wins. True co-operators see the bigger picture and compromise for the greater good, working together towards our Co-op vision. As pioneers we are curious, innovative and courageous in everything we do. Even if we get it wrong sometimes, we use it to learn, we never blame and we hold ourselves accountable. By truly co-operating we build resilience, which helps us grow.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

Everyone is assessed against our Ways of Being. If you are applying to a People Leader or Leadership role, you will also be assessed our Ways of Leading. If you are unsure, please check your interview invite which has the advert and will confirm the work level / if this is a leadership level role. We'll look for evidence of these behaviours in the examples you share in your interview.



S.T.A.R. TECHNIQUE

OVERVIEW

The S.T.A.R. method is a simple structured manner of responding to a behavioural-based interview question by discussing the specific **situation, task, action** and **result** of the situation you are describing.

S

SITUATION

Think of it as 'setting the scene'.

Provide a bit of background and context by describing the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish.

Try focusing on a specific event or situation and make sure to provide enough detail for the interviewer to understand the context.

TIME SPENT

A small amount of your time should be spent here. It's a summary.

T

TASK

Build on the 'situation' by outlining the task at hand. Describe the goal you were working toward and the difficulties you might have encountered.

TIME SPENT

A small amount of your time should be spent here, to highlight what you needed to do.

A

ACTION

Describe the actions you took to address the situation with an appropriate amount of detail and keep the focus on you.

Make sure you describe the specific steps you took and what your particular contribution was.

TIME SPENT

Around 70% of your time should be spent talking through this part.

R

RESULT AND REFLECTION

Describe the outcome of your actions and the situation. Describe how the event ended and what you learned from it. Make sure your answer is measurable and positive where relevant.

What could be done better next time? Did you learn anything from reflecting on this?

TIME SPENT

This should be fairly summarised with key outputs and a short amount of time spent here.



MICROSOFT TEAMS ACCESSIBILITY - VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

Here at our Co-op, we use face to face interviews and virtual interviews. We use Microsoft Teams as part of our virtual interview recruitment process. We understand that as a candidate you may not have used Microsoft Teams before, so we're providing some handy tips and guidance ahead of your interview.

1. BEFORE YOUR INTERVIEW

Co-op would advise anyone new to this technology to go to the link below from Microsoft to find out what to expect when joining your interview: Join a meeting in Teams | Microsoft Support.

You may want to think about internet connection or signal ahead of your interview. This will help you decide where is best to connect to the interview from.

You will be able to use Microsoft Teams on a mobile phone, a laptop and other tablet devices that have an internet browser.

2. ENVIRONMENT

We know that the space where we interview can have an impact. There is an option to blur your background on the call. There is also an option in the audio settings to reduce the background noise.

Co-op would advise finding a space with limited background noise or interruptions where possible. Co-op would advise not interviewing in a loud public place where possible to ensure you can bring your best self to the interview.

3. JOINING THE INTERVIEW

When you join the video interview link, there will be options to blur your background and adjust the audio. You can also mute / unmute your microphone and turn your camera on / off.

After this, there may be a screen that says the meeting organiser has been notified that you are waiting to join. Please expect that you may be waiting until the start time of the interview to join the call.

During the interview, technology can sometimes go wrong. Please don't worry as we take this into account. You can re-join the call using the original Microsoft Teams invitation link.

4. ADJUSTMENTS

We would recommend reviewing guidance from Microsoft about adjustments that can be made on Teams here:

[Accessibility tools for Microsoft Teams | Microsoft Support](#)

At Co-op, we want to make sure disabled people are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. If you're disabled, neurodivergent, or have a long term health condition which might make it difficult for you to perform to the best of your ability in our recruitment process, we can adjust the process to help. To find out more about reasonable adjustments and how we could make our recruitment process fairer for you, visit our guide to reasonable adjustments in our recruitment process.

This may include asking for a face to face interview or adjustments to a virtual interview. For example, we offer transcript options for people with hearing impairments, or let us know about any adjustments you might need before interview by contacting Co-op.co.uk/adminteam at least 24 hours before your interview.