

---

## Prioritization interview questions and answers

Use these prioritization interview questions to evaluate candidates' time management skills and identify potential hires who organize their workload and follow deadlines.

### Why ask candidates prioritization interview questions

The ability to prioritize tasks is an essential skill in all roles. Employees with good prioritization skills are able to:

- Meet deadlines
- Manage their workload effectively
- Use their time wisely and avoid distractions
- [Adapt to changes](#) and re-evaluate their priorities
- [Control their stress](#) when dealing with multiple tasks
- Deal with the most important projects first and put secondary tasks aside

Here are some sample interview questions to evaluate candidates' prioritization skills:

### Examples of prioritization interview questions

- How do you organize your work when you have to juggle multiple projects/clients at the same time?
- If you're reporting to more than one manager, how do you prioritize your duties?
- Describe a typical day at work. What's your morning routine?
- How much time do you spend per week on X task?
- You return to work after a two-week vacation and find fifty new emails in your inbox. How do you choose which emails to open and answer first?
- Have you ever missed a deadline? If so, what happened? If not, how do you make sure you're not falling behind?
- What productivity tools (e.g. time-management or project-management software) have you found useful?
- Describe a time you successfully delegated tasks to your team.
- How would you reply if your manager suddenly asked you to complete a challenging task on a tight deadline? (e.g. make fifty cold calls to potential customers in one day)
- Have you ever felt overwhelmed at work? What did you do?

### How to assess prioritization skills in interviews

---

Here are signs of candidates with good prioritization skills:

- **They make to-do lists.** People who are organized and break large projects into smaller, doable steps are more likely to complete their work on time.
- **They separate important from urgent.** Most job duties are important, but only some of them are time-sensitive. Look for people who understand the difference and follow deadlines.
- **They estimate the time, effort and resources needed for each task.** To properly prioritize tasks, employees need to prepare themselves. They should evaluate a project's requirements before digging into work.
- **They don't hesitate to re-evaluate tasks.** Employees should be able to identify inefficiencies in their workload and suggest ways to improve processes. And managers should frequently re-assess regular duties to determine what works and what doesn't.

## Red flags

- **They micromanage.** Employees who want to control every part of a project find it hard to delegate tasks. They're more likely to wind up with more tasks than they can handle.
- **They lack communication skills.** Managers who can't clearly communicate requirements cause team-wide misunderstandings regarding priorities and deadlines.
- **They lose the bigger picture.** Employees who view projects as individual tasks aren't likely to consider how they add value to the company. This makes them less likely to prioritize projects based on their importance.
- **They procrastinate.** Poor concentration and lack of a "can do" attitude are red flags. Also, people who are easily distracted by trivial issues struggle with focusing on their most important job responsibilities.