maxwell stephens
Recruitment

INSIGHT

Facilities Manager Interview Questions Guide

Introduction

Hiring the right Facilities Manager can significantly influence operational performance, workplace stability, employee experience, and long-term business resilience.

Yet many organisations still approach Facilities Management interviews too narrowly.

Some focus almost entirely on:

- technical capability,
- compliance knowledge,
- or systems experience.

Others rely on informal conversations without properly assessing:

- leadership,
- communication,
- operational judgement,
- or behavioural fit.

The result is often inconsistent hiring decisions.

Strong Facilities Managers do far more than manage buildings. They:

- solve problems under pressure,
- create operational stability,
- communicate across multiple stakeholder groups,
- manage risk,
- and maintain confidence when complexity increases.

This guide outlines some of the most effective Facilities Manager interview questions organisations can use to assess both technical competence and long-term leadership capability.

What Makes a Strong Facilities Manager?

Before interviewing candidates, organisations should first define what success actually looks like in the role.

Strong Facilities Managers often demonstrate:

- operational calmness,
- leadership maturity,
- communication skills,
- commercial awareness,
- adaptability,
- and decision-making under pressure.

Technical expertise matters. But many failed FM hires happen because organisations over-prioritise technical experience while underestimating behavioural capability.

The strongest interviews assess both competence and operational leadership behaviour.

maxwell stephens
Recruitment

Leaders are remembered for the teams they build

Questions About Operational Experience

> ***"Tell us about the most complex site or operation you have managed."***

This question helps assess:

- operational scale,
- complexity handling,
- and communication style.

Strong candidates usually explain:

- operational challenges,
- stakeholder management,
- decision-making,
- and outcomes clearly.

Listen for ownership, structure, and calm operational thinking.

> ***"How do you prioritise competing operational demands?"***

Facilities Management often involves:

- multiple stakeholders,
- time pressure,
- compliance requirements,
- and unexpected issues.

This question assesses:

- judgement,
- prioritisation,
- and pressure management.

Strong candidates usually discuss risk assessment, communication, escalation processes, and maintaining operational stability.

> ***“Describe a major operational problem you had to resolve.”***

This question helps reveal:

- problem-solving capability,
- emotional control,
- communication quality,
- and accountability.

Strong answers typically include clear explanation of the issue, leadership under pressure, stakeholder management, and lessons learned.

maxwell
stephens
Recruitment

Great teams start with one good decision

Questions About Leadership

> ***"How would your team describe your management style?"***

This helps assess:

- self-awareness,
- emotional intelligence,
- and leadership maturity.

Strong Facilities Managers often lead through:

- calmness,
- consistency,
- communication,
- and trust.

Listen carefully for blame, ego, or lack of accountability.

> ***"Tell us about a difficult team situation you've had to manage."***

This question reveals:

- conflict management,
- emotional control,
- leadership behaviour,
- and communication quality.

Strong candidates usually discuss understanding the issue, listening, structure, fairness, and maintaining professionalism.

> ***"How do you maintain standards across your team?"***

Facilities Management requires operational consistency. This question helps assess:

- accountability,
- leadership structure,
- and management discipline.

Strong answers often reference communication, clear expectations, regular reviews, and leading by example.

Questions About Stakeholder Management

“How do you manage demanding stakeholders?”

Facilities Managers frequently work across:

- leadership teams,
- employees,
- suppliers,
- contractors,
- and external partners.

This question assesses:

- communication,
- professionalism,
- emotional intelligence,
- and diplomacy.

Strong candidates often discuss expectation management, transparency, calm communication, and solution-focused thinking.

“Describe a time you had to influence senior leadership.”

Modern FM roles increasingly involve strategic communication. This question helps assess:

- confidence,
- communication clarity,
- and commercial understanding.

Strong candidates usually explain the challenge, their reasoning, stakeholder concerns, and how they built alignment.

maxwell
stephens
Recruitment

The office did not disappear Expectations around it changed

Questions About Compliance and Risk

> ***"How do you approach health and safety leadership?"***

Facilities Management carries significant compliance responsibility. Strong candidates should demonstrate:

- ownership,
- proactive thinking,
- and leadership responsibility.

Look for answers discussing:

- culture,
- training,
- communication,
- and operational discipline.

Avoid candidates who treat compliance purely as paperwork.

> ***"Tell us about a situation where you identified a serious operational risk."***

This assesses:

- awareness,
- operational judgement,
- and proactive thinking.

Strong Facilities Managers often identify issues before they become crises.

Questions About Workplace Strategy

> ***"How do you think Facilities Management is changing?"***

This question helps assess:

- strategic awareness,
- commercial thinking,
- and future capability.

Strong candidates increasingly discuss:

- hybrid working,
- employee experience,
- sustainability,
- workplace analytics,
- and operational resilience.

The best FM leaders usually think beyond maintenance alone.

> ***"What role should Facilities Management play within a business?"***

This question reveals how strategically the candidate views the function. Strong answers often include:

- operational support,
- culture,
- productivity,
- wellbeing,
- employee experience,
- and business continuity.

The strongest candidates articulate FM as a genuine enabler of organisational performance, not simply a support function.

maxwell
stephens
Recruitment

Specialist recruitment is not about volume

It is about understanding

Questions About Communication

> ***"Describe a situation where communication prevented a larger operational issue."***

Communication quality is one of the biggest differentiators in FM leadership. Strong candidates usually demonstrate:

- clarity,
- calmness,
- anticipation,
- and stakeholder awareness.

The best answers reveal structured thinking and an ability to read situations before they escalate.

> ***"How do you communicate difficult operational news?"***

This assesses:

- professionalism,
- emotional intelligence,
- and leadership maturity.

Strong FM professionals communicate honestly, calmly, and clearly under pressure.

Questions About Contractor Management

> ***"How do you manage contractor performance?"***

Strong contractor management requires:

- structure,
- accountability,
- communication,
- and relationship balance.

Strong candidates usually discuss:

- KPIs,
- service standards,
- communication,
- escalation processes,
- and operational visibility.

Look for candidates who manage contractors with both professionalism and clear commercial accountability.

> ***"Tell us about a contractor relationship that became difficult."***

This question assesses:

- professionalism,
- conflict management,
- and operational judgement.

Strong candidates focus on resolution, standards, communication, and maintaining operational continuity.

maxwell stephens
Recruitment

Strong workplaces are built by strong operational leaders

Questions About Culture and Behaviour

> ***"What type of working environment brings out your best performance?"***

This helps assess:

- cultural alignment,
- leadership fit,
- and long-term compatibility.

Strong candidates often value clarity, trust, structure, communication, and professionalism.

> ***"What frustrates you most in poorly run operations?"***

This question can reveal:

- standards,
- mindset,
- professionalism,
- and operational expectations.

Strong candidates often reference poor communication, inconsistency, lack of accountability, or reactive leadership.

Questions About Retention and Motivation

> ***"What makes you stay long-term in an organisation?"***

This helps organisations understand:

- retention drivers,
- career motivations,
- and leadership expectations.

Strong FM professionals increasingly prioritise leadership quality, operational stability, trust, and meaningful work environments.

> ***"What would make you leave a role?"***

This question often reveals:

- cultural expectations,
- management standards,
- and behavioural fit.

The most self-aware candidates answer honestly and demonstrate that they have thought carefully about long-term fit.

maxwell
stephens
Recruitment

We take pride in what we do and are renowned in the industry for our integrity and honesty

Common Interview Mistakes Organisations Make

Some of the most common FM interview mistakes include:

- focusing purely on technical skills,
- failing to assess behaviour,
- unclear questioning,
- too many interview stages,
- inconsistent evaluation,
- and poor stakeholder alignment.

Strong interviews should assess capability, leadership, communication, judgement, and long-term organisational fit.

What Strong FM Candidates Usually Demonstrate

The strongest Facilities Management candidates often demonstrate:

- calmness,
- clarity,
- professionalism,
- operational discipline,
- strategic thinking,
- and communication quality.

They rarely appear chaotic or reactive. Instead, they usually create confidence through:

- structure,
- composure,
- and operational maturity.

The best candidates leave interviewers with a strong sense of what it would feel like to work alongside them — and what operational stability they would bring to the organisation.

maxwell stephens
Recruitment

Exceptional candidates look for clarity, stability, and trust

Conclusion

Facilities Management interviews should go far beyond technical checklists.

Strong Facilities Managers increasingly influence:

- operational stability,
- workplace performance,
- employee experience,
- compliance,
- and organisational confidence.

As the FM sector continues evolving, organisations must increasingly assess:

- leadership,
- communication,
- adaptability,
- and behavioural capability alongside technical competence.

The strongest hiring outcomes usually come from organisations that interview clearly, evaluate consistently, and understand what high-performing operational leadership actually looks like.

Maxwell Stephens — Facilities Management Recruitment Specialists

Maxwell Stephens specialises in Facilities Management recruitment across the UK, supporting organisations with:

- Facilities Management hiring,
- Estates and Property recruitment,
- Workplace leadership appointments,
- strategic FM search,
- and long-term talent acquisition support.

We work with organisations seeking high-performing Facilities Management professionals capable of delivering operational excellence and long-term value.

For more information visit: www.maxwellstephens.com

What the Data Says

The evidence behind better FM interviews: how UK employers interview, how structured questions predict performance and where assessment skills fall short.

- Structured interviews have the highest mean validity of common selection methods (.42) in the Sackett et al. meta-analytic update.
  Source: Sackett et al., Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2023
- 90% of UK organisations use some form of selection interview; 52% use competency-based interviews.
  Source: CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024
- Four in ten UK employers (39%) admit their staff's interviewing and assessment skills should be improved.
  Source: Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC), Hiring mistakes are costing UK businesses billions each year, 2017
- 41% of UK organisations that selected candidates in the past year said new recruits always, mostly or sometimes resigned within their first 12 weeks.
  Source: CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024
- 95% of candidates placed by Maxwell Stephens remain in role one year after appointment.
  Source: Maxwell Stephens, 2026

Sources were checked in September 2026. Select a source to open the original research. Maxwell Stephens figures are drawn from our own published vacancies and placement records.

See It in Practice

Facilities Manager Recruitment for Egon Zehnder

Egon Zehnder, the leadership advisory and executive search firm, engaged Maxwell Stephens to recruit a Facilities Manager for its Grade A office in Victoria, London. After a targeted search, shortlisted candidates were assessed against technical, commercial, service and behavioural competencies, from compliance and supplier management to stakeholder communication, problem-solving and cultural alignment. The appointee quickly established themselves as a trusted member of the organisation.

Its four-part competency framework mirrors the balanced question set a Facilities Manager interview should cover.

Read the full case study at maxwellstephens.com/case-studies/egon-zehnder

Related Reading

- Facilities Management Interview Questions for Employers
  maxwellstephens.com/blog/101-questions-to-ask-in-a-facilities-management-interview
- Competency-Based Questions Explained
  maxwellstephens.com/blog/competency-based-questions-explained
- Interview Questions to Determine Emotional Intelligence
  maxwellstephens.com/blog/interview-questions-to-determine-emotional-intelligence

Talk to Maxwell Stephens

Planning an FM, estates or workplace appointment? Contact us for a confidential conversation, or browse more case studies.

A FINE POSITION TO BE IN

maxwell stephens
Recruitment

Maxwell Stephens Recruitment is registered in England and Wales No. 02660883

CONTACT
t: 0207 118 4848

w: www.maxwellstephens.com
e: info@maxwellstephens.com

LONDON
Golden Cross House
8 Duncannon Street
Strand
London
WC2N 4JF