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INSIGHT

The Facilities Management Interview Guide

Introduction

Securing an interview is an achievement.

Your CV has done its job.

The employer can see relevant experience.

They want to know more.

But the interview is where hiring decisions are actually made.

And in Facilities Management, interviews are rarely decided by experience alone.

Most shortlisted candidates have similar backgrounds.

Similar qualifications.

Similar sector exposure.

Similar responsibilities on paper.

What separates them is preparation.

The strongest FM candidates arrive understanding the role, the organisation and the pressures behind the hire. They explain their value clearly. They connect their experience directly to the employer's needs.

Strong preparation gives candidates:

- confidence
- structure
- composure under pressure
- and the ability to show exactly why they are the right appointment

Experience does not speak for itself.

It has to be explained.

This guide sets out how Facilities Management professionals can prepare properly, perform well and leave a lasting impression.

Why Preparation Matters

Many capable FM professionals underperform at interview.

Not because they lack ability.

Because they assume their track record will carry them.

Interviewers cannot assess what they do not hear.

A candidate who has managed a complex multi-site portfolio but describes it vaguely will often lose out to a candidate who explains a smaller remit with clarity and evidence.

Thorough preparation:

- demonstrates genuine interest in the role and organisation
- allows answers to be tailored rather than generic
- helps anticipate questions and prepare credible examples
- creates space to assess whether the opportunity is genuinely right
- and provides composure when the conversation becomes challenging

Preparation is a mark of professionalism.

Employers notice it immediately.

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Know the job before you judge the people

Understanding the Role Properly

Job titles in Facilities Management vary enormously.

A Facilities Manager in one organisation may run a single building. In another, a regional portfolio, a supply chain and a multi-million-pound budget.

The title tells you very little.

The job description tells you more.

Read it carefully and identify:

- the core responsibilities
- the service delivery model — in-house, managed or outsourced
- the scale of the portfolio and budget
- compliance and statutory obligations
- stakeholder and client relationships
- and any skills gaps the employer highlights

Then think beyond the document.

Why is the organisation hiring now?

What problem needs solving?

What would success look like after six to twelve months?

When you understand the real reason behind the hire, every answer becomes more relevant.

Researching the Organisation and the Interviewers

Well-researched candidates demonstrate motivation and commercial awareness.

Before the interview, look at:

- what the organisation does and who it serves
- its property portfolio and operating locations
- recent news, contract wins, changes or challenges
- its values, culture and market position
- and how Facilities Management fits into the wider business

Research the people you will meet as well.

A Technical Director may focus on systems, compliance and delivery.

A Finance Director may focus on cost control and value.

A Managing Director may prioritise commercial impact and long-term leadership fit.

Understanding each perspective allows you to shape your answers accordingly.

It also transforms the question every candidate is asked:

“Why are you interested in working here?”

A specific, informed answer is always stronger than a generic one.

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Experience shows in the questions people ask

Preparing Your Examples Using STAR

Many candidates struggle at interview not because they lack experience, but because they have not thought through their examples in advance.

The STAR technique provides structure:

- Situation — the context and background
- Task — what needed to be done and what you were responsible for
- Action — what you personally did, including decisions and approach
- Result — the measurable outcome

Every example should also show relevance.

Why does this example matter to this employer?

Prepare examples covering:

- operational delivery and service improvement
- compliance and risk management
- budget and cost control
- contractor and supply chain management
- leadership and team development
- stakeholder and client management
- and resilience during difficult situations

Rather than saying you are a strong communicator, describe a moment when your communication changed an outcome.

Employers want to understand how you think.

Not just what happened.

Answering Common Interview Questions

Common questions can appear straightforward.

They are often where candidates lose focus.

Prepare for:

- “Tell me about yourself” — a concise, relevant, forward-looking summary
- “Why are you interested in this role?” — linking motivation to the employer’s needs
- “What are your key strengths?” — specific, with evidence
- “What is your greatest weakness?” — self-awareness and a growth mindset
- “Why are you leaving your current role?” — honest and professional, never negative
- “Tell me about a challenge you have overcome” — structured using STAR
- “Where do you see yourself in five years?” — ambition aligned with the organisation

These questions assess clarity of thought, self-awareness and cultural fit.

Practise answers aloud.

Not to memorise a script.

But to make sure your thinking is structured and your key points land naturally.

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The strongest shortlists are usually the shortest

Preparing for Technical and Scenario Questions

FM interviews increasingly test judgement as well as knowledge.

Candidates are often presented with realistic scenarios:

- a critical system failure during business hours
- a contractor consistently missing service levels
- a compliance issue discovered during an audit
- a budget reduction without a reduction in expectations
- or a senior stakeholder unhappy with the service

Interviewers are rarely looking for a single correct answer.

They are assessing:

- prioritisation
- risk awareness
- communication
- composure
- and decision quality under pressure

Talk through your reasoning.

Explain what you would do first, who you would involve and how you would keep people informed.

Calm, structured thinking is exactly what employers want to see in Facilities Management.

Handling Difficult Questions

Every career contains elements that need explanation.

Employment gaps.

Short tenures.

Career changes.

Redundancy.

Missing experience in a particular area.

Employers do not expect a perfect career history.

They do expect maturity and honesty.

Prepare clear explanations for:

- employment gaps — the reason, and what you did during that period
- short tenures — why the decision was considered
- career changes — why the move was intentional and how it adds value
- redundancy — factually and without apology
- skills gaps — acknowledging them, explaining how you would address them and highlighting transferable strengths

Never be defensive or evasive.

How you handle a difficult question often tells an interviewer more about your character than the question itself.

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Experience is not the same as judgement

Communicating Your Value

Strong candidates can explain clearly why they are the right appointment.

This means identifying the three or four strongest reasons your experience is relevant to this role.

These might include:

- sector or technical knowledge directly relevant to the portfolio
- leadership experience aligned with the level of the hire
- a track record of measurable results in a similar environment
- commercial awareness and budget responsibility
- stakeholder and client relationship skills
- and personal qualities such as resilience, judgement and calmness

Once identified, weave them naturally into your answers.

Do not wait to be asked directly.

Look for opportunities to reinforce your value at relevant moments.

The interviewer should leave in no doubt about why you belong in the role.

Questions to Ask Your Interviewer

An interview is a two-way process.

It is also your opportunity to assess whether the role and organisation are right for you.

Good questions demonstrate interest, commercial awareness and seriousness.

Consider asking:

- “What would success look like in this role after six months?”
- “What are the main challenges facing the FM team at the moment?”
- “How is Facilities Management viewed by the wider business?”
- “What are the priorities for the department over the next year?”
- “What qualities have made people successful in this role previously?”

Avoid focusing on salary, benefits or holidays at first interview unless the employer raises them.

Strong questions leave a strong impression.

They also give you the information needed to make a well-informed decision if an offer is made.

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Standards are set by what leaders accept

Presentation, Communication and Mindset

How you present yourself matters as much as what you say.

Dress appropriately for the organisation and the role.

When in doubt, it is better to be slightly too smart than too casual.

For online interviews, check your technology, connection, background and lighting in advance.

During the interview:

- maintain eye contact — or look directly into the camera online
- listen carefully and avoid interrupting
- give considered, focused answers
- stay on topic — quality matters more than volume
- and keep your tone professional, warm and engaged

Treat the interview as a professional conversation, not an interrogation.

Confidence comes from preparation.

If you are unsure whether you have answered fully, it is perfectly acceptable to ask:

“Would you like me to expand on that?”

Self-awareness is a strength.

Closing Well

The final moments of an interview matter as much as the opening.

You will often be asked whether there is anything else you would like to add.

Use it.

A strong close:

- restates your interest having learned more about the role
- briefly summarises one or two reasons your experience is directly relevant
- and confirms that you would welcome the next step

Candidates who close with clarity and conviction are remembered.

Those who simply say “No, I think we’ve covered everything” often are not.

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The brief decides the outcome

After the Interview

The process does not end when the interview does.

Send a brief follow-up message thanking the interviewer and reaffirming your interest.

Then take time to reflect honestly:

- what went well
- what could have been answered more clearly
- what you learned about the organisation
- and whether the role is genuinely right for you

If you are working with a recruiter, share your feedback promptly.

Good recruiters use this insight to support you through the next stage, manage expectations on both sides and help secure the right outcome.

Conclusion

Interviews in Facilities Management are increasingly competitive.

Experience alone is rarely enough.

The candidates who succeed are those who:

- understand the role
- research the organisation
- prepare clear evidence
- communicate their value
- and remain calm and composed under pressure

You should not simply list your experience.

You should show how your experience solves the employer’s problem.

The more prepared you are, the more natural and confident you will feel.

And the stronger the impression you will leave.

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Evidence beats instinct in every interview

Key Takeaways

- Preparation separates candidates with similar experience.
- Understand why the organisation is hiring, not just what the job title says.
- Research the organisation and the people interviewing you.
- Prepare specific examples using the STAR technique.
- Expect scenario questions and talk through your reasoning calmly.
- Address difficult questions honestly and without defensiveness.
- Know the three or four reasons you are the right appointment.
- Ask intelligent questions that show commercial awareness.
- Close with clarity and follow up promptly.
- Confidence comes from preparation.

About Maxwell Stephens

Maxwell Stephens is a specialist Facilities Management recruitment consultancy supporting organisations and FM professionals across the UK.

We recruit across:

- Facilities Management
- Estates
- Workplace Management
- Property Operations
- Building Services
- and FM Executive Leadership

Our approach combines deep sector understanding with long-term, relationship-led recruitment. We support candidates at every stage of the process — from preparation to offer.

For more information visit www.maxwellstephens.com

What the Data Says

What candidates should know before interview: how UK employers interview, competition for interviews, job-seeking intentions and why structure matters.

- 77% of UK candidates say it's harder to get an interview than a year ago.
  Source: Totaljobs Hiring Trends Update, 2026
- 90% of UK organisations use some form of selection interview; 52% use competency-based interviews.
  Source: CIPD, Resourcing and talent planning report 2024
- 53% of UK professionals are planning to look for a new role before the end of 2026 or have already begun searching.
  Source: Robert Half, The September reset: More than half of UK professionals plan a job move before year-end, 2026
- 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
- 92% of the 497 FM vacancies Maxwell Stephens advertised from 2023 to 2026 showed a salary figure, giving candidates pay clarity up front.
  Source: Maxwell Stephens analysis of 497 advertised vacancies, May 2023 – September 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

Office & Systems Manager Recruitment for The Royal Foundation

The Royal Foundation appointed Maxwell Stephens exclusively to recruit an Office & Systems Manager for its offices within Kensington Palace. After detailed briefings with senior stakeholders, we presented a shortlist of six; all progressed to first-stage interviews, and several completed further interviews and presentation exercises. A candidate testimonial describes thorough interview preparation, excellent coaching and regular communication throughout.

It shows how multi-stage interviews and presentations reward candidates who prepare thoroughly.

Read the full case study at maxwellstephens.com/case-studies/the-royal-foundation

Related Reading

- Interview Preparation for Facilities Management Candidates
  maxwellstephens.com/blog/interview-preparation-what-you-need-to-know-in-facilities-management
- How to Prepare for a Facilities Management Interview
  maxwellstephens.com/blog/preparing-for-an-interview-in-facilities-management
- 10 Common Job Interview Mistakes and How to Avoid Them
  maxwellstephens.com/blog/top-ten-interview-mistakes-in-facilities-management-recruitment

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A FINE POSITION TO BE IN

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