

MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY CONSULTING

Quick guide to recruitment

**CAREERS
SERVICE**



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A guide to recruitment in Management & Strategy Consulting

This guide is an overview of what to expect in the recruitment process, with some useful links to help you research the sector. It is not intended to replace your own research and attendance to events and briefings.

Before applying.

Before you commit to the recruitment round for Management & Strategy Consulting it is useful to consider your motivation for applying. It is key to remember that the recruitment process is not just about whether a firm or industry 'likes' you but if you 'like' it! Paying attention to how you feel when you read about a firm or undertake their tests and interviews is important.

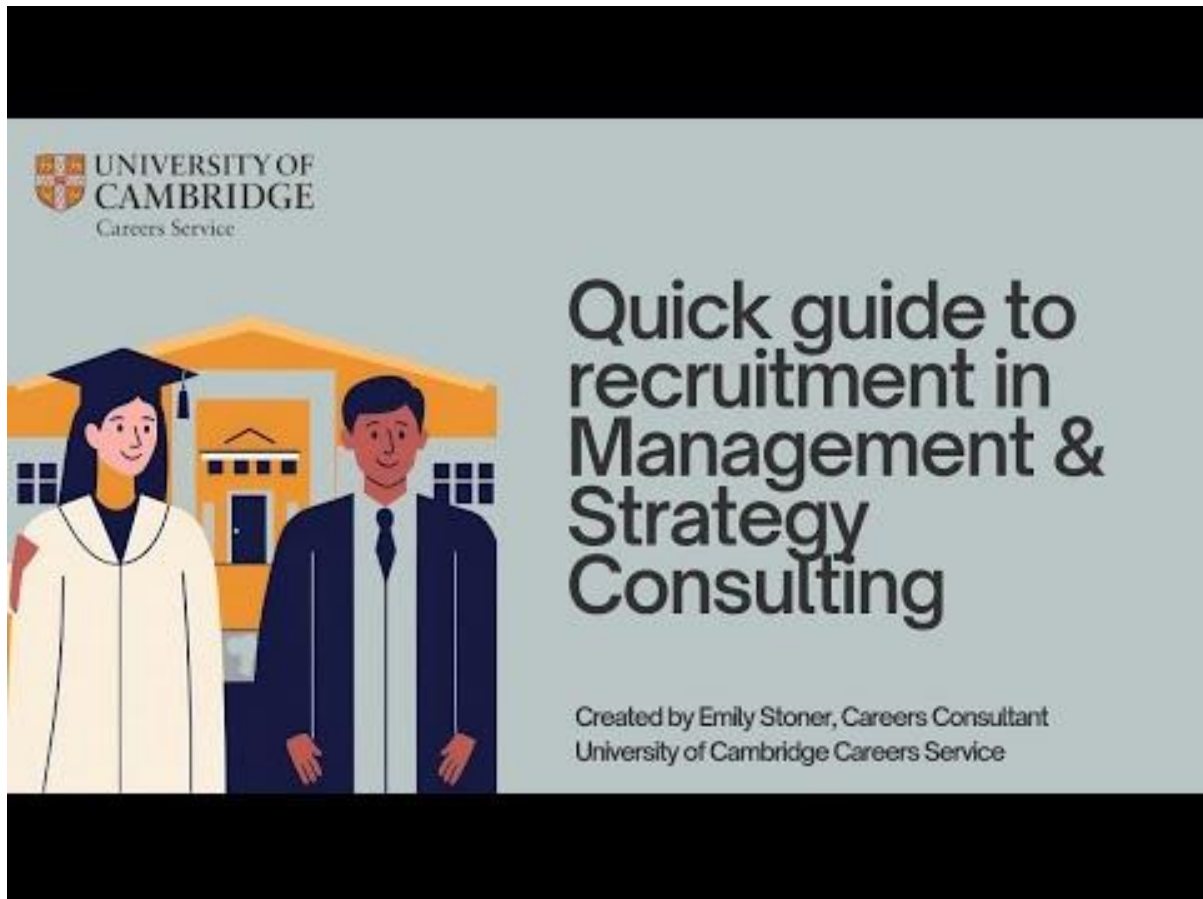
There are many positives to working in this sector: innovation, being at the centre of deals, applying skills directly from your degree, working with interesting and sometimes powerful clients, becoming an expert in sectors and geographies related to your field and many, many more. However, it is always useful to consider all aspects of the sector, such as:

- The pressure and rigor of the recruitment process
- Your drivers to enter the industry – salary motivation will wear off over time.
- The nature of the work – longer hours, high pressure targets
- Your values, your interests, your skills – do they align with the sector, and will you fulfil your potential?
- Who are the firms' clients and what sectors do they work in?
- The lifestyle and working hours – will longer hours, travel, and weekend projects impact on your life and perhaps your wellbeing?
- Being the change, your contribution, your long-term plan – are you planning to progress to a senior position or stay for a short period? How will that planning be supported.
- Cultural fit – does the firm have a supportive working environment? Is it diverse and inclusive? Do their operational values align to yours?

Timeline of recruiting

- Roles are competitive and supply outstrips demand, so ensure this is right for you before embarking.
- You will be applying for insight opportunities, internships, graduate programmes, experienced roles, advanced degree roles or off-cycle roles.
- Recruitment in this sector, particularly in graduate schemes and internships, is Summer – Michaelmas (MT) heavy and so early preparation is important.
- You will find roles throughout the year – so keep looking after the MT rush. Lent is the key time for roles that are off-cycle or for more experienced candidates.
- Globally, offices recruit at different times to the UK – so if you are looking at applying to your home or international offices, check their dates.
- Some graduate roles are filled by interns– and that's why it can be tough to get a role directly from university without experience.
- Expect short deadlines and a lengthy recruitment process for well-known names that run graduate schemes.

- For consultancy roles in world-leading firms, you can expect only a few roles to be given out of 1000s of applications, with London and US offices being the most sought-after.
- Boutique firms will have less vacancies and are more likely to hire ad-hoc, so after you have made applications to the more formal routes you can keep looking at other opportunities.



This is a short video by Emily Stoner (Careers Consultant) explaining the recruitment process for Management & Strategy Consulting. You can view this video on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/KY69AekLHmE> . You can also view the 'My Journey to a Consultancy Offer' series, which highlights the journey of Cambridge Alumni into consulting.



Timetable for recruitment													
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	
Penultimate year			Busiest period for internships advertised				Internships						
All		Recruitment events and workshops					Recruitment events and workshops						
				Recruitment assessments, video interviews, case interviews and assessment centres									
1 st Year		Insight programmes											
Finalists & Advanced Degree	Graduate programme recruitment cycle – early for large firms					Graduate recruitment continues				Recruitment assessments, interviews			
						Advanced degree events							
						Direct entry roles advertised							
						Roles at boutique firms							
Careers Service Careers Fairs and Festivals			Consulting Fair*	Economics Fair			Research Careers in Consulting Panel SciTech Consulting Panel Creative Careers Festival Life Sciences Festival International Development & charities festival Tech festival Green careers festival				Graduate jobs fair		

This chart indicates the peak times for various recruitment activities – in reality, recruitment is more relaxed and happens throughout all months of the year. In banking and financial markets, roles can be filled on a ‘first-come, first-served’ basis so early application is useful. Firms might then fill empty roles in a second cycle. Graduate roles are often filled by previous interns and those who have been on development programmes. If you are looking at a ‘direct entry’ or experienced role, hiring is fluid and demand-driven, so you need not focus on specific cycles, but do register your interest with firms, even when they are not hiring. *Other CS Fairs running in October: Graduate Schemes & Internships, Banking & Finance, Maths & Quant Finance, Engineering, Tech, Life Sciences, Law.

10 things to know first

1. You may be surprised at the diverse array of roles available in Consulting, including options for those without prior experience. Research potential institutions thoroughly to identify opportunities that align with your career goals, especially if you're taking a non-traditional entry path.
2. While not always required, having a well-prepared CV is advisable. Compile your qualifications, skills, experiences, and achievements in one document to effectively communicate your profile to employers. Aim to have your CV ready by mid-August and update it with any new experiences gained over the summer.
3. Visit the websites of firms you're interested in for information on internship openings, events, graduate roles, advanced degree roles and mentoring programmes and express your interest directly to them by signing up for newsletters and alerts.
4. Check the Careers Service events calendar for skills sessions, recruitment events, and networking opportunities, including career fair dates.
5. Be mindful of later Cambridge term dates; recruitment processes can begin as early as September. Apply early, as some opportunities operate on a first-come, first-serve basis. Note that specialist roles, direct entry positions, and experienced roles may have recruitment timelines outside the usual cycle. Continue monitoring opportunities throughout the year, including into the summer.
6. Research your preferred department, division, and role to tailor your applications effectively. You typically can only apply to one or two positions at a time per firm, so demonstrate why you're a strong fit for each chosen area.
7. Start practicing online tests now to familiarise yourself with them ahead of receiving test invitations during the recruitment cycle. Use online portals offered by the Careers Service and some firms to support your preparation for online tests. Check their student and graduate recruitment pages for these resources. The Careers Service offers free access to Graduate First and Case Coach.
8. Advocate for any necessary accommodations you might need throughout the recruitment process.
9. Maintain an updated LinkedIn profile with relevant keywords highlighting consultant-related skills to bolster your applications. For smaller specialist firms, expect potential employers to review your profile.
10. Have backup plans ready; consider preparing applications for other schemes and opportunities in case your first choice doesn't pan out.

Resources not to miss from your Career Service (free!)

1. Sector overview page: [Consultancy Sector Overview](#)
2. [Case Coach](#) (everything you need for Fit and Case interviews)
3. [Graduate First](#) (online tests, games and assessments)
4. Consulting Directory: [Consultancy Directory](#) (scroll down to 'Consultancy')

The application landscape.

- The Consultancy sector received around 8,200 applications per employer and average of 76 applications per vacancy in the 2021 – 2022 cycle (2023 entry). No data for 2024 entry available.
- In terms of successful candidates, there was a decrease of 0.4% on 2022 who were recruited in the 2023 cycle, expect a 24.2% decrease in consulting vacancies for 2024 entry (avg. for all sectors was +1.5%).
- Starting salary in 2024 for Consulting is expected to be £47,500 median, same as 2023.
- **After more detail?** Visit [High Fliers Research](#) for further insights.
- **Access the Times Top 100 Employers:** Explore the list at [Times Top 100 Graduate Employers](#).

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Events

Leading consultancy firms are taking a more inclusive approach to recruitment – supporting those from underrepresented backgrounds to apply to roles. Events will often target specific groups.

If you believe you belong in a group underrepresented by the industry, before applying via traditional routes, consider:

- Does the firm have programmes or schemes that you can be involved in if you are in a target group?
- Do they have roles outside their graduate scheme that you can apply to? *Mentoring, internships, insight programmes*
- What are the student societies doing at Cambridge in partnership with employers that you can tap into? (Networking evenings etc)
- Are there mentoring programmes or special internships you can apply to?
- Find a list of Cambridge specific events on the event diary <https://app.joinhandshake.co.uk/edu/events> and be sure to see what societies at Cambridge have organised.

Supportive networks for underrepresented candidates

- Careers Service list of '[Disability resources and funding](#)' resources
- Check firm career pages for Equality Diversity & Inclusion specific recruitment pathways, internships, and mentoring programmes.

Digging deeper into an employer

- You can use Windo to check the corporate social responsibility (CSR) priorities of firms and see how they are progressing on issues important to you <https://my.csrwindo.com/>
- [Visual Capitalist](#) is an example of a site which can help differentiate organisations using a variety of criteria, using infographics.

- Access many more premium business data sources, which give you an oversight of the sector (they can also help with interviews) – including Bloomberg, Marketline and JP Morgan research at <https://libguides.cam.ac.uk/cjbsdatabases/industry>

10 things to know: Application Process

1. To apply to a role in Consulting you will usually need a CV, cover letter, complete online testing and undertake interviews, including case interviews.
2. Assessment centres are not typical for all firms but do expect them for large firms.
3. Consultancy firms are keen to get to know their candidates – so you can also expect dinners and networking events held by firms as part of their process.
4. Experienced roles or hires at smaller, boutique firms don't always require these steps (perhaps just an application and interview/case interview). They are usually very keen on your fit to their firm and your specialist knowledge.
5. You may also be invited to complete an application form where you have to write a short statement about why you are applying for the role – this will often take the place of a cover letter. Your application will be read by a human or by an applicant tracking system (ATS). In both cases they will be looking for key attainment criteria (grades) and key words that mirror the skills required for the role (found in the role description). It is valuable to revise the core operating values of the firm – usually found on their website.
6. You will then be passed through some online testing, either Pymetrics (games) or psychometric tests (situational judgement) and/or numerical and verbal reasoning ability.
7. For technical roles you may be asked to undertake a timed technical assessment, for example a coding test, usually in a language of your choice. This could also include mathematics related to Data Science roles.
8. You may then be asked to undertake a digital interview, using interview software that gives you a question on-screen to answer in an allotted amount of time – this will be recorded and reviewed by an assessor.
9. If you make it past these stages, you will be invited to an interview with a consultant or senior partner who will give you a fit and case study interview (you can expect more than one of these rounds).
10. Generally, in the later stages you will encounter multiple tasks, some alone and some collaborating with other people.

10 success factors in recruitment

1. Knowing who you are applying to and when.
2. Understanding the role you are applying to.
3. Know who you are, your strengths and why they should hire you.
4. Contextualise your role into the firm (understanding the bigger picture)
5. Practicing tests and interviews
6. Start early – summer is ideal.
7. Do not make too many generic applications – you are wasting your time and energy.
8. Consider applying to an office in your home country or where you speak the language to a professional business level. You can often apply to multiple offices at one time.
9. Attend firm events, networking, workshops and skills sessions to learn more and have more content for your applications – they will have a record you attended too and likely use this to contact you about future opportunities.

10. Follow firms on social media and on LinkedIn to keep up to date with their recruitment timelines and news/events.

Further Tips:

- Always use key words from the job or role description
- Include your understanding of the firms operating values and how you meet them.
- Articulate why you are applying to that specific division and that specific role.
- Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar – this is important for the sector (as with banking - think pitch-decks, research reports, presentations)
- Imagine yourself writing a report for a client – your accuracy is the firms' indicator of trustworthiness and quality of service.

The application cycle - individual components

Application forms

- You may not be asked for a CV or cover letter straight away, or at all. Instead, you may be asked to complete an online application form.
- Application forms usually require your personal details, education and qualification details as well as asking you to complete a few short statements on your suitability and interest in the role.
- Using key words and including core values aligned to the role will help any recruiter or piece of software to pick-out your application as suitable for selection. Use a range of your experiences to evidence your suitability.
- Be precise and direct in evidencing your knowledge and suitability for the role.
- Be clear with any grades and exam marks you have achieved – if you have extenuating circumstances, you can usually include these in a supporting statement or 'additional information' box.
- This may also be a time that you will be asked to indicate any adjustments you will need throughout the recruitment process.

CV

- For roles in the UK/USA your CV should be on 1 page and arranged to highlight your specific accomplishments in relation to the role you are applying to.
- If you are an advanced degree student or someone with a lot of experience, 2 pages is *okay* – just ensure everything on there is selling you for the role. You'll be surprised how much you can cut out. In other countries the format can be different and longer.
- In the UK you will not add a picture to your CV
- You will need to highlight academic success, extra-curricular interests and achievements and any work experience/internships.
- Group your skills in clusters (technical, leadership) so that any scanning software can find them easily (and a human!) and mention as many as you can, as long as you actually do have them.
- For consultancy, headings such as 'Leadership/Project Management' 'Research' 'Employment' 'Extra-curriculars' are clear and concise. See [Case Coach](#) via the Careers Service for CV templates and CV guidelines.
- For your achievements and experience, mention your exact personal responsibility for that task or project and the outcomes from it – quantify your outcomes (e.g., Decreased the waiting time of guests to enter the May Ball by 10%)

- Extra-curriculars are important but be specific and evidence your contributions. E.g., If you are a recreational runner, then state how many times you train a week, if you compete and your achievements/personal bests. If you have travelled – how many cities, countries, total miles?
- As you progress through your education, perhaps up to PhD level, you will need to be less specific about earlier educational achievements and focus on the now (they don't need a paragraph about your GCSE or A Level choices)
- Focus on key achievements and be very clear in the outcomes.
- Your grades are important, so be clear about your standing in your class if you know it and any specific high module grades.
- If you do not have grades for any reason at all, then you can add a note to extenuating circumstances or put in a prediction with an asterisk.
- You should use bullet points.
- Be action oriented, outcome driven and quantitative.
- Experience comes from anywhere – don't be put off by lack of direct experience in the sector. Volunteering, entrepreneurship, leadership roles and more are all valued.

In summary

- Tailor your CV to the role(s) you're applying for.
- Highlight your achievements and relevant experience.
- Share details about past projects and any evidence of their success.
- Highlight any leadership roles and the ways you supported your team to work collaboratively.
- Include relevant course projects, details of internships and any projects that demonstrate your skills.

Cover letters

- Your cover letter should be no more than one page.
- It should directly address the key criteria for the role, including your experience, attributes, study and your values in relation to the role, as well as some justification for the role/division you are applying to.
- Stay away from a 'copy and paste' approach to your letters – any scanning software will be looking for key words and phrases that are directly related to their own roles.
- Do mention anyone you have met at the firms' events and any initiatives you have taken part in. If you have been in contact with someone directly then ask them if you can mention their name in your letter.
- Go into more detail regarding the key achievements in your CV, especially those that highlight your ability to meet the recruitment criteria – be specific about what you did and the outcomes.
- Include genuine information about what attracts you to the firm. This could be details from a recent report, an event you attended or a workshop. You might have met an alumni or staff member that share useful insights, for example.
- Don't be tempted to tell the firm about themselves (you are the largest Consultancy firm focusing on tech in Europe) instead focus on areas of professional interest; how they align with your interests and values.

In summary

- Your cover letter is a chance to develop points on your CV.
- It should be tailored to the firm and to the role you are applying to.

- Be specific about your own actions in your examples and provide outcomes.
- Mention anyone you have met with from the firm in your rationale for applying.

Online tests and assessments

- Online tests and assessments are designed by firms to examine skills, attributes, technical abilities, and value behaviours suitable to the role you are applying to, as well as your cultural fit with the firm.
- They are normally completed early in the recruitment cycle to cut-down the number of unsuitable candidates from large talent pools.
- You can be sent a link to complete your assessments very quickly after making an application, so keep a close eye on your inbox and the deadline you have to meet (sometimes only 5 days to complete).
- Assessments and tests take on several different formats, commonly through tasks, questionnaires, technical tests and gamification.
- Common types of tests and assessments for consultancy include: gamified assessments, verbal reasoning tests, numerical reasoning tests, situational judgement tests.
- For technical roles you will be expected to undertake tests specific to the skills needed in the role, such as coding and programming problem-solving tests. It is usually useful to revisit some of your basic degree content.
- Some firms will give you access to their own preparation platforms in the lead-up to you taking the real tests, others will not, as they want you to take the tests using your instincts and inherent knowledge.
- You can practice a variety of assessments online and get insight into the specific games firms use via Graduate First, which you can access through the [Careers Service](#).
- It is rare that you will be able to practice an exact test beforehand and tests tend to change from candidate to candidate to stop any cheating – though the online practice tests that are available will get you used to the pressure and feel of taking an online assessment.
- Tests that focus on your judgement, core values and behaviours are not easy to practice as they encourage you to answer based on your instinct – however, understanding the core values of the firm and their standards regarding behaviours and operating values are worth revising and usually openly available on their websites.

Understanding Gamified Assessments

Certain firms, especially large ones, use online games as part of their recruitment process. These games resemble virtual platform games and involve solving abstract problems that reflect the firm's core values such as creativity, problem-solving, and working under pressure. These exercises are designed to assess candidates' logical thinking and their ability to demonstrate relevant qualities rather than specific knowledge.

Common Features

- **Tasks:** Tasks may include puzzles, memory games, pattern recognition exercises, and situational judgement scenarios.
- **Scoring:** Performance is usually scored based on accuracy, speed, and strategic decision-making.

- **Adaptivity:** Some assessments adapt in difficulty based on the candidate's responses.

Tips for Success

1. **Familiarise Yourself:** Practice with sample gamified assessments available online to get comfortable with the format.
2. **Stay Focused:** Pay attention to instructions and stay focused throughout the assessment.
3. **Practice Speed and Accuracy:** Many gamified assessments require quick and accurate responses, so practicing under timed conditions can be beneficial.
4. **Be Yourself:** These assessments often aim to gauge natural behaviour, so respond authentically rather than trying to game the system.
5. **Technical Preparedness:** Ensure you have a stable internet connection and a quiet environment to avoid distractions and technical issues.

Preparation for these games isn't straightforward as they often can't be directly practiced. However, using simulation games or solving puzzles under pressure can be beneficial. Platforms like *Graduate First* offer application guides for consulting firms like McKinsey & Co, BCG, PwC, and LEK, recommending suitable games for preparation.

While there is advice available online, it's important to be cautious, especially regarding those asking for payment. The firms periodically change their games to ensure candidates respond naturally without over-preparation. Specific games like McKinsey's Solve Game are commonly discussed online, but it's advised not to rely solely on external resources which may become outdated or disappear.

McKinsey's Solve Game online, overviews (external content)

- Solve, McKinsey's assessment game <https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/mckinsey-digital-assessment>
- CaseCoach 'How to ace McKinsey's Digital Assessment' <https://casecoach.com/b/how-to-ace-mckinseys-digital-assessment/>
- McKinsey Problem Solving Game & Redrock Study – YOUinconsulting [McKinsey Problem Solving Game \(PSG\): Ecosystem Game & Redrock Study | COMPLETE "SOLVE" WALKTHROUGH \(youtube.com\)](#) (Accessed: July 2024)
- McKinsey Problem Solving Game: Full Game Reveal – Prepmatter [McKinsey Problem Solving Game \(Solve\): Full Game Reveal \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [PSG Blog on the McKinsey Solve Game \(2024\)](#) (accessed: July 2024)
- Strategy.case Guide to the 'Imbellus' Test [McKinsey Solve Game \(2024\): How to Prepare and Ace the Imbellus \(strategycase.com\)](#) (accessed: July 2024)

Asking for adjustments

Your recruiter will usually invite you to ask for any reasonable adjustments that can be made to your assessments/assessment environment before you take the test. Inform your recruiter if you require any adjustments to ensure you can take the assessments on a level playing field. Please ask for advice and support if you need it – the Careers Service can support you.

In summary

- Online tests and assessments are a way for an employer to measure your suitability against key criteria for the role and your suitability to the firm.

- Online tests and assessments are designed to move large numbers of candidates through the recruitment process at a time and are a method to cut-down the number of applicants at scale.
- You will usually take a number of different tests and assessments suitable for the role.
- Tests are usually timed, and you have a certain number of days to complete them.
- You can practice most tests online through the Careers Service or the firm's own recruitment platform – this is recommended, even if to get used to the test environment.
- Ask for adjustments if you need them.

Interviews

Overview

Fit interviews, case interviews, video interviews, in-person interviews and assessment centres.

- Interviews are a chance to hear directly from the candidate about their experience and skills in relation to the role they have applied to. It is also an opportunity to find out about your fit and interest in the firm.
- In Consultancy the types of interviews are usually split into a 'fit' interview (your fit to the firm) and a 'case' interview (your aptitude to analyse a problem, usually about market entry or increasing profit, and suggest a strategy for progression)
- It is also chance for you to ask questions and explore whether the firm is right for you, too.
- Prepare to share specific examples of previous experience that directly represent transferrable skills to the role you are applying for – review the skills needed for the role prior to the interview.
- Prepare questions for the interviewer in advance. This will show genuine interest in the role and the culture of the firm.
- Read and understand the firm's annual report. You won't be expected to know all the details, but you should have a general understanding of they performed in the last year. This is usually found on the firms' website, alongside other publications and insights to help your understanding of their clients and expertise.
- Commercial awareness is important. Keep up with the news – this can be in relation to the firm, the sector or the industry(s) the role focuses on. This will help you speak from a place of knowledge and confidence.

Fit interviews

- Fit interviews focus on your suitability to the firm, its culture and how you will fit with other employees.
- Consulting is a social and collaborative career, meaning you will need to work productively with others as well as socialise, travel, and solve complex problems together. Your fit interview will assess how well you will 'fit' with the team.
- To prepare for fit interviews it is useful to have studied your CV and application form and have specific examples ready to talk through your key achievements and things you are proud of.
- It is usual for an interviewer to 'dig' into your answer, so don't worry if you are challenged. They want to know exactly what your part in the activity or achievement was.
- It is important that you have reviewed the core operational values of the firm (e.g., inclusive leadership, collaboration, results driven) so that you can think about how your actions and behaviours in previous tasks have displayed these core values.
- Case Coach are experts in supporting preparation for fit interviews. You can access this platform for free via the [Careers Service](#).

Case Interviews

- Case interviews are a chance for the firm to gain insight into your strategic thinking based on 'real-life' case scenarios – essentially, they replicate the work of an actual consultant.
- The interviewer, who is usually a consultant themselves, will give you an overview of the 'case' in hand (introduces the client, any useful details, and their problem)
- You will then get a chance to ask any clarifying questions (to ensure you are dealing with the problem correctly)
- You will then offer a structure to the interviewer on your approach to resolve the problem – this will include breaking the problem down into smaller chunks (size of customer base etc)
- The interviewer and you will work through the case, using information as it is supplied to undertake analysis. The interviewer will either allow you to 'get on with it' and ask questions when you need to or will interrupt you and ask you further questions/suggestions and considerations.
- Good communication with your interviewer is important, silence is okay for short periods, but you are best 'letting them in' to your thought process.
- In the end, you must summarise your findings and make a recommendation (i.e., should A company merge with B company)
- You are usually assessed on 5 core elements of a case: structuring, numeracy, judgements and insights, creativity, synthesis and case leadership.
- Case Coach are experts in supporting preparation for case interviews, as well as providing information on the recruitment process, they provide math drills and a case library to practice. You can access this platform for free via the [Careers Service](#).

Interview questions

Interviews usually focus on six types of questioning:

- **Behavioural questions** - *how you behave in certain situations.*
- **Competency questions** - *how you have evidenced skills relatable to the role.*
- **Situational questions** - *how you would respond to a scenario encountered in the role or more generally in a professional situation.*
- **Analytical questions** - *how you evidence your ability to apply analytical thinking.*
- **Case studies** *how you interpret real-life scenarios and offer judgment, including structuring your answer and discussing with an interviewer.*
- **Technical questions** – *technical applications/concepts you apply to projects and evidence your understanding of their application and limitations.*

Video interviews

- Not all firms use video interviews as a stage in their recruitment process, but it is useful to be familiar with the process.
- Video interviews take place on virtual platforms such as Hirevue. You will be expected to record your answers to questions on a screen, over 2 – 5 minutes. You can rehearse beforehand, and you can normally re-record your answer once.
- It is important to practice for these interviews, which you can do via the Careers Service's platform 'ShortlistMe'.
- These interviews will be looking for you to mention key skills, attributes, experiences and values that match the requirements of the role. It is through these elements the software and the reviewing team will be able to shortlist you based on your suitability.

- Normally you will be asked strengths-based or competency questions, which you can prepare for and practice, using the [STAR model](#).

In person interviews

- In person interviews in consultancy are likely to be 'fit' or 'case' interviews, but you may have an additional step in the process to help with sifting candidates – especially when there are very large numbers.
- In larger firms, in-person interviews will come nearer the end of the recruitment process.
- In smaller, boutique firms, interviews will be earlier in the process – though you may still have multiple rounds.
- If you make it to an in-person interview you are likely a strong candidate that they have genuine interest in. They will be aware of your skills and experience from your CV/application and will now be wanting to know more about you and your thought processes/approach to work at their firm.
- In-person interviews usually include a member of the department you will work for, a senior figure and a member of HR. You can be interviewed by one person or a panel, who will take it in turns to ask you questions.
- Rapport and body language are important factors in in-person interviews, so consider how you are going to greet everyone, sit and hold yourself. Think of it as a professional conversation – you have done the hardest part to get there, so try and enjoy talking about yourself and your experiences.
- Have questions prepared to ask the interviewers – focus on topics you really want to know the answer to and not on anything you can find out on the website.

Assessment Centres & recruitment days

- Assessment centres are not common for consulting roles, but in larger advisory firms you may find you are invited to one. Some firms may just like to get their potential candidates together to see the office and have lunch, with small group activities.
- Assessment centres will normally take place nearer the end of the recruitment process, when you have completed your applications, tests and video interviews.
- Essentially, they are opportunities for firms to bring candidates together and observe your behaviours and skills via a series of tasks.
- There is usually a social element to assessment centres to enable candidates to network with current employees, take an office tour and socialise with other potential employees. This is an important element of the day as it helps you to find out if the firm is right for you, so don't skip these.
- Assessment centres tend to focus on group tasks that enable the recruiter to observe your interaction in a team and undertake tasks that relate to the role you have applied to.
- You will need to bring your knowledge of the role and the aims of the firm to this activity, but you don't need to be an expert – group tasks are usually a way of monitoring your behaviours and attitudes and not specific knowledge. This is different for very technical roles, where your expertise is often under the spotlight too.
- You can prepare for assessment centres by understanding the role you are applying to, revising the core values and aims of the firm, keeping up to date with news and reports relating to the business of the firm and reviewing your application as a reminder of your key achievements (for the interview section).

- You may be asked to prepare a presentation for the interview. Ensure you have understood the topic, prepared the presentation well in advance and practiced it for timekeeping.

In summary

- Interviews are a way for you to expand on the information in your application.
- You will likely experience both virtual and in-person interviews, depending on the stage you reach in the process.
- Interviews are a chance for the firm to observe your behaviours in relation to the role, gather the scope of your interest in the sector and their firm and to hear more about your skills and interests.
- You can prepare for interviews by understanding the role you are applying to, revising the core values of the firm and being aware of the context(s) in which your firm does their business.
- Storytelling is an important part of the interview process, so preparing to talk about your experiences in more depth, whilst being specific about what you have accomplished; in relation to the job role is a key success factor.
- At the latter stages of the recruitment process, you can expect to be invited to the firm's office(s) to meet other candidates and interviewers in person, unless the role doesn't require it, or the process is taking place in another country.

Example recruitment information from firms you can find on their websites:

- McKinsey & Company – interview process: [McKinsey Interviewing](#)
- Bain & Company – hiring process: [Bain Hiring Process](#)
- BCG – interview process: [BCG Interview Process](#)
- Oliver Wyman – interview preparation: [Oliver Wyman Interview Preparation](#)
- OC&C – application tips: [OC&C Application Tips](#)
- LEK – preparing for the recruitment experience: [LEK Preparing for Recruitment](#)
- Kearney – a guide to your interview: [Kearney Guide to Your Interview](#)

Additionally:

- Usually, all firms will have a section on their website on the recruitment process – you can also use sites like 'Glassdoor' to get an overview of what other candidates have experienced.

Data Science & AI roles

- Data, analytics and AI are changing the work of consultants and the services they can offer to clients.
- In this emerging field, clients need support to leverage the opportunities of AI and Data to their advantage – this includes understanding jargon and the possibilities of AI & Data in an understandable way.
- Firms increasingly hire data scientists, data engineers, machine learning engineers and software engineers – these roles range from translating complex data experimentation into clients' solutions, to designing and developing systems to enable business transformation.

Useful links

- Article on generative AI (Source Global): [Generative AI - A Consulting Market Worth Investing In](#) (Source Global Research)

Example AI/Data Science project & recruitment information from large firms (there are many small specialist firms too):

- Applied intelligence careers at Accenture: [Accenture AI and Analytics Careers](#) and [video](#)
- Quantum Black careers (McKinsey & Company): [McKinsey Quantum Black Careers](#)
- Deloitte AI&D: [Deloitte AI and Data Careers](#)
- BCG GAMMA: [BCG GAMMA Overview](#)
- BCG X: [BCG X](#)
- Capgemini Analytics & AI Entry route: [Capgemini Analytics & AI Entry Route](#)

Useful resources

Recruitment resources from the Careers Service

1. Access the 'Consultancy Directory' with over 300 firms listed to help your research ([Cambridge Careers Service](#)) (scroll down to consultancy)
2. Case Coach – expert preparation resources for MBB fit, case interviews and CVs (access via the Careers Service)
3. Search for roles in consulting via the Careers Service (Handshake) ([Handshake](#)) - in Handshake you can filter via 'Management Consulting' in the employer industry, or use keywords (e.g. Consultant, analyst)
4. Use the CV guide and Career Set to start, refine and check your CV ([Cambridge Careers Service](#))
5. Practice virtual interviews on ShortlistMe ([Cambridge Careers Service](#)) - you can choose from a range of different interview types, including consulting
6. Practice personality and psychometric tests online, including verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, gamification and situational judgement tests. You can also access information about the individual tests firms use via ([Cambridge Careers Service](#)).
7. Support for group tasks (assessment centres) ([Cambridge Careers Service](#))
8. FAQs about post-application offers ([Cambridge Careers Service](#))
9. Read our blogs, including this one from a former Cambridge student on getting through the recruitment process ([Cambridge Careers Service Blog](#))
10. TargetJobs guide to Consultancy (in Handshake Graduate Digital Publications > Banking)
11. Career & Recruitment Essentials Playlists (applications, interviews, job searching) ([University of Cambridge Careers Service YouTube](#))
12. 'My Journey to a Consultancy Offer' web series via the Careers Service YouTube, which tracks Cambridge students and Alumni as they successfully gain spots at top firms ([YouTube Playlist](#))

Overview of the Management & Strategy Consulting Sector

Useful resources *please note we are not responsible for 3rd party content and external sites.*

- Strategy Skills Podcast ([Spotify](#))
- Best places to work ([Consultancy UK](#))
- Source Global Research (sign-up to newsletters or read blogs) ([Source Global Research](#))
- Search a range of 'Day in the life' videos on YouTube from vloggers who work in the industry.
- Case Coach blog ([Case Coach](#))
- Vault.com sector guides ([Vault](#))
- Forage – online virtual internships ([Forage](#)) offers programs with SAP, Accenture, Deloitte, KPMG, PwC, BCG.
- Overview of the 'consultant' role at McKinsey & Company ([McKinsey](#))
- What do management consultants do? Bright Network ([Bright Network](#))
- The consulting industry – consultancy.org.uk ([Consultancy UK](#))
- Consultancy.org consulting firm's directory ([Consultancy UK](#)). Consultancy.org has regional sites:
 - [Consulting.us](#)
 - [Consulting.ca](#)
 - [Consultancy.uk](#)

- Consultancy.in
- Consultancy.nl
- Consultancy.co.za
- Consultancy.eu
- Consultancy.asia
- Consultancy-me.com
- Consultancy.lat
- Consultancy.africa
- Consultancy.com.au
- Management Consulting Association (**trade association for the UK**) ([MCA](#))
- Young MCA – Shaping the future of the industry ([MCA, YouTube](#))
- MCA – The UK Consulting industry ([MCA](#))
- Canadian Association of Management Consultants ([CMC Canada](#))
- Institute of Management Consultants USA ([IMC USA](#))
- International Council of Management Consulting Institutes ([ICMCI](#))
- European Federation of Management Consultancies Associations ([FEACO](#))

This document was last updated July 2024 by Emily Stoner, Careers Service.