

Interview Preparation Guide

Updated March 2025

Sainsbury's
Good food for all of us



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Our Purpose And Priorities

Offering delicious, great quality food at competitive prices has been at the heart of what we do since our first store opened in 1869. And, today, inspiring and delighting our customers with tasty food remains our priority.

Our focus on great value food and convenient shopping, whether in-store or online is supported by our brands – Argos, Nectar, Habitat, Tu, Sainsbury's Bank and Smart Charge.

With an updated purpose – **making good food joyful, accessible and affordable for everyone, every day** – our strategy focuses on four key outcomes:

- **First choice for food**
- **Loyalty everyone loves**
- **More Argos, more often**
- **Save and invest to win**

Purpose

We make
good food

**joyful, accessible and affordable
for everyone, every day**

Outcomes

**First
Choice
For Food**

**Loyalty
Everyone
Loves**

**More Argos,
More Often**

**Save &
Invest
To Win**

Valued Behaviours

**Own
It**

**Make It
Better**

**Be
Human**

[Click here to read more about our strategy](#)

Sainsbury's



Tu



Smart Charge

Interview and Assessments Overview

At Sainsbury's, *Individual Contributors* are assessed using a combination of competency and behavioural based questions focused on our Valued Behaviours. *People Managers* are assessed against our Leadership Performance Expectations to ensure candidates demonstrate Next Level Leadership. *This is so we can assess all candidates fairly and consistently.*

Individual Contributors and ALL ROLES in Sainsbury's Bank

If you are applying for an individual contributor role (i.e. a role with NO line management responsibilities), you will be interviewed against our **Valued Behaviours (see slide 5)**. You will be asked a set of competency-based questions aligned to these behaviours and asked how you would respond to hypothetical scenarios. During the interview, you will also be asked a role specific technical question. You can expect to be asked two questions per each Valued Behaviour.

People Managers (excluding Sainsbury's Bank)

If you are applying for a People Manager position (i.e. a role which has line management responsibility), you will be interviewed against our **Leadership Performance Expectations (see slide 6)**. You will be asked a set of competency – based questions aligned to these expectations and asked how you would respond to hypothetical scenarios. During the interview, you will also be asked a role specific technical question. You can expect to be asked two questions per each Leadership Performance Expectation. *Depending on your grade there might be more than one interview.*



Our 'Valued Behaviours'

Our 'Valued Behaviours' reflect how all our colleagues need to show up each day for us to deliver against our purpose and priorities. We call them 'Valued Behaviours' as they're focused on the actions we all need to take, and to highlight that we're each responsible for making a difference for our customers and colleagues. The Valued Behaviours are a common DNA that everyone should live by.



set the outcomes and hold ourselves and others to account; remove the blockers

Accountability

say it in the room and when we make a decision, stand by it

Courage

put the "bigger picture" first and continually prioritise

Decision making & prioritisation



encourage experimentation and fast failure, finding opportunities to simplify and save

Experimentation & fast failure

adapt to changing demands

Change agility

be curious and look for diverse input

Curiosity

seek and give honest feedback early and often; as leaders, coach with care and directness

Feedback & Coaching



show vulnerability and make everyone feel welcome and heard

Empathy & vulnerability

create connections built on trust

Building relationships

walk in the shoes of our customers

Customer connection

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Leadership Performance Expectations

Our **Leadership Performance Expectations** are the building blocks for Next Level Leaders.

Leadership Performance Expectations

Obsessed with the customer

Next Level Leaders are the champion for customers

You must:

- Use data and insight to understand customer needs and solve customer problems
- Use our Purpose to support decision making everyday
- Role model living our customer commitments and guide teams to do the same

*(Customer: anyone who buys, or could buy, our products)

Obsessed with performance

Next Level Leaders move mountains to deliver results that matter

You must:

- Know and be accountable for your part to play, delivering it brilliantly
- Align team goals and ruthlessly prioritise resources to deliver the 8 commitments
- Assign clear A's, hold people accountable (in your team and out) and act on performance both good and bad

*(Performance: our ability to deliver efficiently & profitably on our Next Level Sainsbury's plan)

A Next Level Leader is consistently ambitious, driving all four of these expectations, all the time

Lead beyond boundaries

Next Level Leaders connect the dots across the business and the market

You must:

- Actively share and seek to understand the big picture, both internal and external
- Story tell Next Level Sainsbury's to drive end-to-end thinking
- Build productive partnerships inside and outside our organisation

*(Boundaries: not only inside, but also outside the organisation)

Lead fearless teams

Next Level Leaders unleash courageous teams that outperform expectations

You must:

- Create the environment for diverse perspective and challenge, where we are always looking to raise the bar
- Grow everyone around you (up, down & across) through adult-to-adult feedback and coaching
- Know yourself (strengths, weaknesses & impact on others) and continuously develop

*(Team: two or more people coming together to deliver something)

Sainsbury's



Smart Charge

Interview Preparation Tips

Here are some things you may wish to consider when preparing for your interview with us:

Research our brand

Check out the corporate and careers sites, social media and even the news. Learn about our history, values and reputation – this will help to guide your answers and to reflect your interest and industry knowledge. You'll find some useful links at the end of this guide.

For Individual Contributors think about our Valued Behaviours

Think about situations you've been in that demonstrate positive behaviours, especially involving work experience, team effort, leadership, initiative and service delivery.

For People Managers think about our Leadership Performance Expectations

Think about situations when you have championed the customer, moved mountains to deliver results, connected the dots across the business and markets and led fearless teams, which have outperformed expectations.

Follow the STAR method and be prepared

Create short descriptions for each situation and be prepared to share specific details following STAR method – be specific about events and avoid generalising. Be confident in your responses. Avoid embellishing upon or omitting any important parts of the story.

Think of different examples


Think about all your skills and previous experience. This will help you to provide various examples and try not to recount the same situation over multiple questions.

Re-read your CV

Make sure you can talk confidently about your career and experience as the hiring manager might want to discuss some of the things on it in more detail with you.


Using The STAR Method

For the competency-based interview questions, we recommend using the **STAR** method. This approach creates a simple, engaging story that brings out all the relevant details in your example. Here's what each part means:

Situation 


Set the scene by giving **context** and **background** to the situation. What was happening, where did it happen, who was involved, why does this relate to the question?

S

Task 


Describe what **your role** was and what you had to achieve. Talk about what you were specifically assigned to or decided to do, rather than what everyone did. Think 'I' not 'we'.

T

Action 

Explain what **you** did and how **you** handled the situation or problem. Say whether you did it alone or with others. Convey your response to the situation as well as how you got others involved. Share as many details as possible but avoid jargon.

A

Result 

No story is complete without an ending: what was the **outcome** of your actions, what lessons did you learn? Did you save time, or money? Did you improve service? What was achieved?

R

Hints & Tips



Give yourself enough time to log on or get to your location

We use Microsoft Teams to hold our virtual interviews, so make sure your device can access this before your interview. If you're interviewing at one of our business locations, make sure you know where you're going and plan your travel.



Turn up ready

This means being practiced and well prepared. Trust us, you'll feel confident and more at ease if you do.



Take your time

Breathe. Relax. Listen to the questions you're asked and then take a few moments to think about what you want to say or what example you're going to use. Try to answer the questions fully and don't be afraid to ask for clarification.



And finally, be yourself

This is the big one. We want to meet the real you! And we really want you to do well.



What support is available for applicants with a disability/long-term health condition?

We want to be a truly inclusive employer, where every colleague can fulfil their potential. So, if you need support, please get in touch with your recruiter.

What happens next



After the interview

We'll get back to you as soon as we can, to let you know how it went and what happens next.



Final stage assessment

You might be invited for a second interview or a further assessment stage. This tends to be for corporate roles and could include an exercise like a presentation or a case study.



Decision time!

Our recruitment team, or the store you've applied to, will quickly let you know the outcome. If you've been successful.

Useful Information

You can learn more about us by exploring the links below:

			
Corporate website	Brand website	Brand website	Brand website
Careers website			
Brand website			
Sainsbury's LinkedIn page	Brand website	Brand website	
Sainsbury's Tech LinkedIn page			

Sainsbury's    habitat **Tu**  **Smart Charge**