

Preparing for a Job Interview in New Zealand

A practical guide for migrant jobseekers

Introduction

Interviewing for a role in New Zealand can feel quite different from interviews in India. While technical skills and experience are important, New Zealand employers place strong emphasis on communication, cultural fit, problem-solving, and attitude.

This document is designed to help jobseekers from India understand the typical interview process in New Zealand, what employers and recruiters are looking for, and how to prepare confidently and professionally.

The Typical Interview Process in New Zealand

In most cases, interviews follow a **two-step process**.

Step 1: Interview with a Recruiter (if applicable)

If you are working with a recruitment agency, your first interview will usually be with a **recruiter or consultant**, not the employer.

Purpose of the recruiter interview: - To understand your skills, experience, and career goals - To assess communication skills and cultural fit for New Zealand workplaces - To confirm visa status, availability, and salary expectations - To decide whether to present your profile to the employer

If the recruiter feels you are a strong match, they will **submit your profile to their client (the employer)**.

Step 2: Interview with the Employer

The second interview is with the **actual employer or hiring manager**. This may include:
- The line manager - A senior leader or business owner - Sometimes a panel (2–3 people)

This interview focuses more deeply on: - Your technical or professional skills - How you handle real work situations - Whether you will fit well into the team and company culture

How to Prepare for a New Zealand Interview

1. Research the Company

Before any interview: - Read the company website carefully - Understand what they do, who their customers are, and their values - Look up the interviewer on LinkedIn if possible

New Zealand employers expect candidates to show genuine interest, not just apply for any job.

2. Understand the Role Clearly

Be ready to explain: - Why your background matches the role - Which of your skills are most relevant - How you can add value to the organisation

Avoid repeating your CV word-for-word. Instead, **connect your experience to their needs**.

3. Prepare Examples Using the STAR Method

New Zealand interviews often use **behavioural questions**, such as: - “Tell me about a time when...” - “Can you give an example of...”

Use the **STAR method**: - **S – Situation**: What was happening? - **T – Task**: What was your responsibility? - **A – Action**: What actions did *you* take? - **R – Result**: What was the outcome?

Keep answers clear, structured, and focused on your contribution.

4. Communication Style Matters

New Zealand interview style is generally: - Professional but friendly - Clear and conversational - Not overly formal or scripted

Tips: - Speak calmly and clearly - Avoid exaggeration or overly technical jargon - Be honest if you don't know something — explain how you would learn or solve it

Common Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

“Tell me about yourself”

What they want: a short professional summary.

How to answer: - Your current role or background - Your key skills and experience - Why you are interested in this role in New Zealand

Keep it to **2–3 minutes**, not your full life story.

“Why do you want to work in New Zealand?”

Good approach: - Talk about professional growth, quality of work environment, safety, and long-term contribution - Avoid focusing only on lifestyle or migration benefits

“What are your strengths?”

Choose **2–3 strengths** that are relevant to the role. Support each with a short example.

“What is a weakness or an area you are working on?”

New Zealand employers value self-awareness.

Best approach: - Choose a genuine but manageable weakness - Explain what you are doing to improve it

Avoid saying “I have no weaknesses.”

“How do you handle conflict or challenges at work?”

Focus on: - Communication - Problem-solving - Remaining calm and respectful

Give a real example where possible.

Questions You Should Ask the Recruiter or Employer

Asking questions shows interest and professionalism.

Good questions include:

- “What does success look like in this role after 6–12 months?”
- “Can you tell me about the team I would be working with?”
- “What are the biggest challenges facing the team right now?”
- “What training or support is available?”
- “What are the next steps in the interview process?”

Don't ask about salary or leave unless the recruiter or employer mentions it first. If asked about your salary expectations, reply: “I'm not yet familiar with salaries in NZ. Based on my experience, skills, and qualifications, what would you suggest is the typical range in the current market?”

Practical Interview Tips

- Be on time (or online 5–10 minutes early)
 - Dress professionally (business or smart casual unless advised otherwise)
 - Test your internet, camera, and microphone for online interviews
 - Keep answers clear and concise
 - Smile, be polite, and be yourself
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After the Interview

- Thank the interviewer or recruiter
- Ask about timelines and next steps
- Reflect on what went well and what you can improve

Recruiters may provide feedback — use it constructively.

Final Advice

New Zealand employers value: - Reliability - Honesty - Teamwork - Clear communication - A positive attitude

In all communication either via email or online interviews, you do not start your email or conversation with “Dear”. For NZ employers and recruiters it would be a positive start if you began your conversation/email with Kia ora (which is a Maori greeting and is appreciated when you use it).

You do not need to be perfect. **Be prepared, make sure you have read and understood the job description if given one, and if you are interviewing with an employer make sure you do as much research as possible about that employer, and above all be genuine, and show how your skills and experience will benefit the employer.**

This guide is intended to support international jobseekers preparing for employment opportunities in New Zealand.