

Preparing for a Cisco interview requires a strategic approach, as the company evaluates candidates on technical expertise, problem-solving skills, and behavioural traits. Below is a comprehensive guide on how to prepare for a Cisco interview, along with sample questions from technical, HR, and behavioural rounds.



Cisco Interview Process Overview

The Cisco interview process generally includes the following stages:

1. **Online Assessment Test:** Covers aptitude and technical questions related to networking, coding, algorithms, and operating systems.
2. **Technical Interview Rounds:** Focuses on role-specific technical skills such as networking protocols, system design, or programming.
3. **HR/Behavioral Interview:** Evaluates cultural fit, communication skills, and leadership qualities.

For specialized roles, there may be additional rounds focusing on niche areas like advanced networking or system architecture.

Key Areas to Prepare

Technical Topics

1. **Networking Concepts**
 - OSI model layers and their functions
 - Routing protocols (e.g., RIP, OSPF)
 - Subnetting and IP addressing
 - Firewalls (e.g., transparent firewalls)
 - LAN/WAN technologies
 - Switching methods (e.g., store-and-forward)
2. **Programming and Data Structures**
 - Arrays, strings, linked lists, trees, and graphs
 - Algorithms (e.g., greedy algorithms, dynamic programming)
 - Multithreading and memory management
 - Writing programs (e.g., permutations of a string)
3. **System Design**

- Designing scalable systems with low latency
- Understanding of load balancers and distributed systems

4. Other Technical Areas

- Operating systems (e.g., Linux threads)
- Basics of C/C++ programming
- Internet Protocols (e.g., TCP/IP)

Behavioral Topics

- Leadership qualities
- Team collaboration
- Problem-solving in high-pressure scenarios
- Alignment with Cisco's values

Sample Questions

Technical Questions

1. Define a firewall and its purpose in network security
2. What are the advantages of subnetting?
3. Explain the differences between C and C++
4. How does the network layer function in the OSI model?
5. Write a program to print all permutations of a string

System Design Questions

1. Design a load balancer for a high-traffic website.
2. Explain how you would build a fault-tolerant distributed system.

HR/Behavioural Questions

1. Why do you want to work at Cisco?
2. Describe a time when you solved a challenging networking issue.
3. How do you prioritize tasks under tight deadlines?

Preparation Tips

1. **Understand Cisco's Core Business:** Research Cisco's products (networking hardware/software) and recent innovations.
2. **Practice Coding:** Use platforms like LeetCode or HackerRank to solve problems on arrays, graphs, and dynamic programming.

3. **Review Networking Basics:** Master the OSI model, subnetting, routing protocols, and switching methods.
4. **Mock Interviews:** Simulate interviews using tools like Yoodli to get feedback on your communication style.
5. **Behavioral STAR Method:** Structure answers using the Situation-Task-Action-Result framework for HR questions.

By focusing on these areas and practicing consistently, you can improve your chances of succeeding in your Cisco interview!

Citations:

[1] <https://yoodli.ai/blog/28-cisco-interview-questions-you-need-to-know>

[2] <https://www.simplilearn.com/cisco-interview-questions-for-freshers-experienced-candidates-article>

[3] <https://in.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/cisco-interview-questions>

[4] <https://interviewkickstart.com/blogs/companies/two-month-cisco-tech-interview-preparation-plan>

[5] <https://www.shiksha.com/online-courses/articles/top-25-cisco-interview-questions-answers/>

[6] <https://www.interviewbit.com/cisco-interview-questions/>

[7] <https://mindmajix.com/cisco-interview-questions>