GOsC online recruitment seminar
14 September 2021
Hints and tips

The Competency-based application form

What are competencies?
- Competencies are transferrable skills, knowledge and behaviours which demonstrate whether you can do the role.

What is a competency-based application?
- Competency based application forms are designed to help you to present relevant evidence/examples to evaluate how well you 'best suit' the requirements of a role.

Filling out Application Form 2
Taking the STAR(R) approach: Situation, Task, Action, Results/Reflection

Situation
- Describe the situation when you carried out the relevant activities that demonstrate the competency.
- Include your role/responsibilities, the circumstances, context and the resources available.
- Keep this section short but detailed enough to allow an assessment to be made of the complexity of the task, your role/responsibilities, available resources and any challenges you faced.

Task
- Describe what was required of you by clarifying the task you needed to undertake to meet the objectives.
- This section can merge with situation, and similarly needs to be short but clear enough to allow an assessment to be made of what was required of you.

Action
- Describe what action/s you took.
- This is one of the most important parts of your answer because this is where an evaluation is made of what you actually did in response to the situation and task.
- It should be the longest part of your answer.
- Use active verbs such as achieved, changed, enabled, initiated or secured (words like this make for more 'impactful' statements).

Results/Reflection

- Highlight the results achieved from your actions and reflect on why the outcome of your actions were successful.

- If the results were not successful, explain the lessons learned and what you could have done to make it so. Demonstrating that you are able to reflect on your actions is valuable.

NB The majority of your word count should be used on the Action and Results sections (and Reflection where appropriate).

Steps to follow when completing your application

Information pack

- Read the candidate information pack carefully, paying particular attention to the competencies required for the role.

Application Form 2

- Read the competency description carefully thinking about what we are looking for, what we need and why we need it.

- Read the statement/question carefully thinking about your recent and relevant examples which you can pull from your:
  a. work experience
  b. learning situations
  c. education
  d. voluntary work
  e. leisure or social activities or
  f. hobbies

- Use the prompts provided to help you structure your answer. Describe what you did, not what others did because the answer is about you and your involvement in the situation. Therefore, you should include more 'I did this' and less 'we/the team did this' statements.

- Before submitting your application check whether:
  a. you have included everything that you needed to
  b. you have provided recent and relevant examples for each competency
  c. you have used different examples (wherever possible) for each competency
  d. your answers are clear and succinct covering all the necessary points
  e. your answers do not exceed the word limit
  f. you have used bullet points to summarise where appropriate/possible

  Once you have reviewed your answers, take a moment to proofread it thoroughly (check for all errors, especially typos and misspellings)

A competency-based interview

- Remember when an interview is competency based, the selection panel is asking you to tell them about your transferrable skills, knowledge and behaviours.

- Remember the STAR(R) approach: Use the STAR(R) technique outlined earlier to answer the questions.

- You will be asked questions about your past experience so be prepared to expand on the responses you have given on the application form and also prepare any other **recent** and **relevant** examples you may have.

Tips
- Listen carefully to the questions.
- Try to be yourself, the selection panel wants to get to know you and wants you to succeed.
- **But**, make sure that you remain professional throughout and do not become overfamiliar with the selection panel members. Remember this is an interview not a social event.
- Carefully select recent and relevant examples and point out how they are relevant to the role you are applying for.
- Try not to repeat your examples more than once.
- It's OK to ask the interviewer to repeat a question, or to clarify your understanding of what you are being asked.
- Take time to collect your thoughts and think of your best example to fit the question before speaking.
- But, try to keep your answers relatively succinct and in line with the STAR(R) approach. Try to avoid remaining on one point for too long.
- At the end of the interview, you will be given the opportunity to ask questions, you may want to prepare these in advance.