Guidance on competency-based applications

Contents

Introduction

This guidance is designed to help you complete the application for a non-executive role at the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC).

One of the most important parts of the application is the section where you are asked to provide evidence that you have the knowledge, skills, abilities and other personal qualities required for a specific role. These are known as competences.

Preparation for completing your application

The competencies for the specific role you are applying for are found in the information pack, under the section headed 'Competencies required for the role'.

Before starting your application, please read the information pack carefully, paying particular attention to the competencies required and the associated attributes. Please also consider the other information provided in the pack, so you can take this into account when completing your application.

We recommend that you do not wait until close to the deadline to complete your application because you might not have enough time to complete it thoroughly.

Please remember that the selection panel will compile a shortlist based on the evidence you provide in your application.

Please note that we do not accept applications by CV alone.

Before deciding whether or not you wish to apply for a role, it is strongly recommended that you think about any interests you have which may conflict (see section on 'eligibility') and think about whether or not you are able to commit the amount of time required for the role.

Providing competency-based answers

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development defines 'competency' as 'the personal attributes or inputs of an individual – defined as behaviours (and technical attributes where appropriate) that individuals must have, or must acquire, to perform effectively at work'.

The information you provide in relation to the competencies is important because the selection panel will use it to assess your suitability for the role. It is not sufficient to say that you have relevant experience. You must provide evidence of making a success of your experiences, or learning from experiences that were not successful, by describing how you acted in specific scenarios and what effect your actions had, or what you learned from the experience.

For each competency: think about, and consider providing examples of, how you made a success of an experience, which:

- can demonstrate how you meet the competency
- allows you to explain (in some detail) your individual involvement and your role in the matter

- had a positive impact (examples of experiences that were less successful are just as acceptable, but in these cases you may wish to reflect in your answer the lessons learned)

- clearly demonstrate the impact of your actions

- allow you to highlight other key skills or knowledge mentioned in the information pack (where possible).

You can choose examples from a variety of scenarios. For example, you could choose from your current or previous employment, voluntary work, education, leisure activities, learning situations or professional posts. 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. Although you should also describe how your actions affected other relevant people when this helps provide evidence for the effectiveness of your actions.

You may wish to consider adopting the **STAR(R)** approach (Situation, Task, Action, Results (Reflection)) to structure your answer. See the next section.

The STAR(R) approach

STAR(R) stands for:

Situation

Task

Action

Results (Reflection)

This can be a useful way of structuring your answers. The STAR(R) approach can help you to break down the word limit into four to five manageable chunks. The majority of what you write should be explaining the Action and Results (and Reflection when appropriate). There are a lot of helpful websites that explain how to answer 'STARR' questions. Here is some brief guidance:

Situation
- Describe the **situation** when you carried out the relevant activities that demonstrate the competency.

- Include your job 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** you took.

- This is one of the most important parts of the answer because this is where an evaluation is made of what you did in response to the situation and task.

- It should be the longest part of your answer.

- Use 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 you learned and what you would do differently next time.

Choosing examples

Stronger examples fully demonstrate that you hold the competency required and that your actions have had a positive impact on key stakeholders, groups of people, or the entire organisation. A stronger example shows that you have supported key organisation objectives and priorities, and includes evidence of quantifiable improvement.

Weaker examples only partly demonstrate you hold the competency being asked for; have little or no direct link to anything on a strategic or organisational level, and contain little evidence supporting positive outcomes and impact.

The rating system that will be used by the selection panel at sifting, shortlisting and interview stage to evaluate your application is outlined on page 6.

What to do if you do not have an example for a competency

When you feel you do not have a relevant example for a particular competency, you might want to contact people who have observed you in a professional, academic, voluntary or other vocational capacity, because they might be able to offer suggestions of where they have seen you demonstrating particular competences that you could use.

If you are unable to provide an example, it is best either to:

- describe your closest matching example, or

- explain that you do not have direct experience but then go on to explain your understanding of the competency and relate this to your overall experience in the best way possible.

We strongly recommend that you do not leave an answer box blank. By leaving it blank you indicate that you do not (or cannot) meet this criterion.

Reviewing your application form

An essential skill that is required in completing these types of applications is being able to express yourself clearly and succinctly, while covering all necessary points.

You may need to edit your answers down because you have used too many words. Be prepared to do an initial draft and review it before producing your final version.

When reviewing your application, consider whether you:

- have included everything that you needed to and remove anything that is irrelevant or repetitive
- are able to re-write your statement to keep to the word limit, without losing any necessary information
- could use bullet points to summarise your points.

Use the checklist on page 7, which is designed to remind you of what you may wish to cover in your competency-based answers.

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

Ask someone you trust (for example a friend or family member), to review your application, so they can give feedback on the content, grammar and spelling.

Once you are happy with your application, email your forms to the GOsC at councilrecruitment@osteopathy.org.uk together with your up-to-date CV (maximum two A4 pages). Once you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email of receipt within two working days. It is advised that you submit your application in **Microsoft Word** or **PDF** format to ensure that we can open it.

But always check the information pack for the specific instructions you need to follow, including the deadline.

Competency-based interviews

If you are invited to interview, here are some hints and tips to help you with a competency-based interview:

- You will be asked questions about your experience, so be prepared to expand on the responses you gave in your application and also prepare any other examples you may have.
- Be yourself and act naturally, the panel wants to get to know you and wants you to succeed.
- Don't be afraid to take time to collect your thoughts and think of your best example to fit the question before speaking.
- It's ok to ask questions; it is a two-way conversation.
- It's ok to ask the interviewer to repeat a question or clarify your understanding of what you are being asked.
- If you are unsure if your example is what the panel was looking for, and whether it provided sufficient evidence, ask the panel if your response has answered their question.

How competency statements are assessed

The selection panel will use the following rating system at sifting, shortlisting and interview stage to evaluate your application.

Rating	Sifting/Shortlisting/Interview
3 = Excellent evidence	• This rating should be used when the candidate provides a well-developed example that shows they have met all the criteria. The answer provides depth and confidence in what the candidate can offer. • The candidate has provided plenty of detail in their example and strong and clear rationale/logic behind any actions undertaken.
2 = Good evidence	• This score should be used when the candidate provides an answer that demonstrates that they have the knowledge, experience, behaviour, understanding or skills in question, but which provides a more limited picture of what the candidate can offer. • The candidate has provided some detail in their example and some rationale/logic behind any actions undertaken.
1 = Some evidence	• This score is used when the candidate provides a weak example which loosely demonstrates that they meet the criteria. • The candidate has provided some detail in their example and some rationale/logic behind any actions undertaken but this provides only limited evidence of how they meet the criteria.
0 = No/little evidence	• This rating should be used when the candidate gives a very weak example or is unable to provide any evidence of the criteria in question. • The candidate does not demonstrate an understanding of the concept behind the criteria and/or does not provide an example of how they meet it. • It is also used when the candidate demonstrates competencies different from what is requested and is not answering the question. • It is appropriate to give this rating if you do not understand the point the candidate is trying to make in their answer.

Checklist for competency-based answers

☑ Are your examples relevant to the competency you have been asked to demonstrate?

☑ Are your examples relevant to the role description, wherever possible?

☑ Have you used your strongest, most appropriate example?

☑ Have you adopted the STAR(R) approach?

☑ Have you explained what you, not anyone else, did?

☑ Have you used active verbs? What you did, not what was done.

☑ Have you stuck to the maximum word count?