
Best Practice Guidance for using Competencies in Recruitment and Selection



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Welcome to The Best Practice Guidance for the use of Competencies in Recruitment and Selection - this guidance is written to help managers based in the UK recruit and select their staff. It is not tailored to the recruitment of any staff working overseas on a locally engaged or similar basis. However, many of the principles outlined in this guidance would be useful if you are engaged in an overseas recruitment scheme/campaign. **You should consult and use your local processes.**

Equally, if you are recruiting in Northern Ireland, you should consult with your HR Business Partners as Northern Ireland has additional employment legislation such as Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989 and Fair Employment Treatment Order 1998 and 2003.

1. Introduction

“Recruitment is the process of having the right person, in the right place, at the right time. It is crucial to organisational performance.” (CIPD recruitment factsheet, March 2012).

Recruitment, whether this is from external or internal sources, is a critical part of your role as a manager. In many ways, it's one of the most important "investment decisions" you can make. Recruiting people who are right for the organisation means stronger teams, higher performance and lower turnover as motivated employees are less likely to leave. Getting the right people is good for the organisation and good for the person.

This guidance will provide an overview of the generic Civil Service wide recruitment and selection processes, as well as an overview of how you

- Initiate recruitment
- Advertise the vacancy
- Consider applications and use appropriate selection methods
- Conduct an interview
- Induct and bring on board the new member of staff

However, please note that the recruitment and selection process you follow **will be tailored** to your Department/Agency's needs and comply with Departmental/Agency policies. Professions may also have policies or guidance that applies to the recruitment and selection of professional roles. So before undertaking any recruitment or selection exercise, it's important that you familiarise yourself with your Department/Agency's policies and procedures, together with any policies or guidance from Professions, where relevant. These are normally available on your intranet. It is suggested that you consult your HR Business Partner for further advice in this area.

2. The recruitment and selection process

Before you embark on initiating recruitment, you need to identify that the vacancy needs to be filled. It could be, for instance, that a reorganisation may change the nature and content of the job or if the job is full time, it could be job shared, home worked or met through other working patterns. Equally, is there a need to keep the current grade level both in the short and long term?

Having identified the fact that the vacancy exists, you now need to initiate the recruitment.

3. Step 1: Initiate recruitment

In order to initiate recruitment, you first need to find out if you have authority to fill the vacancy: Do you have authorisation to recruit? As a manager with a post to fill, the first decision is whether or not you *can* fill a vacancy. A vacancy could, for example, be for an existing role that someone has left or a newly required role. The decision about whether a post can be advertised must be discussed/approved by a member of the senior management team, finance partners and (typically if there are more than 5 posts to fill) with the workforce planning team. Check with your Departmental policy as to your exact initiation approval requirements/process. Other options need to be explored before a post can be advertised such as whether or not a surplus member of staff, a priority mover, someone requiring a move linked to disability or someone returning from a career break could undertake the work. You may also wish to consider filling the role with a loan appointment.

If a decision is made to advertise the vacancy, the following four stages **must** be followed. Note that it is possible to miss out stage one and move straight to stage two.

Stage 1 - Internal Departmental/Agency moves

This is where your Department/Agency goes through your own surplus/redeployment pool to see if there are any potential surplus candidates within the Department to take the job. Redeployment opportunities have to be considered before you can go on to advertise a vacancy more widely.

If there is no-one within your surplus pool, then it can be opened to your whole Department/Agency for level transfer (i.e. applicants from the same grade as that advertised can apply).

Stage 2 - Surplus

This stage is linked to a central agreement between Departments, where the Cabinet Office and Trade Unions seek to redeploy people from the Civil Service wide surplus pool (including accredited NDPBs). The vacancy must be advertised at this stage for ten working days. Only those who are registered as surplus will be able to apply for the vacancy. In some cases where this stage is unlikely to provide applicants with the required skills (e.g. very specialist posts) an exemption to run this stage concurrently with stage three may be permitted. *Civil Service Resourcing* has to agree this exemption. Further information about the Redeployment Policy is available through your Departmental/Agency intranet or contact HR Shared Services.

Stage 3 - Wider Civil Service

This stage allows vacancies to be advertised to all civil servants, regardless of grade or Department within a region and, if the Department wishes, across regions. It is best practice to leave the vacancy at this stage for another ten working days but there is no mandate to say how long the vacancy should stay advertised. Some Departments leave advertisements for a week, others advertise for three weeks. It is entirely up to the vacancy holder (i.e. the manager who has the vacancy) and the Department/Agency.

Stage 4 – External

The job can usually only progress to stage four when the internal pools have been exhausted. The job should stay on the jobs portal but can be advertised via other means e.g. Universal Job match, newspapers, job websites etc. Check your Departmental/Agency policy for who needs to authorise this stage. Note: as from May 2010, there has been an external recruitment freeze. To recruit a member of staff from outside of the Civil Service, you will require your Permanent Secretary's approval.

All job vacancies in the Civil Service are advertised on the Civil Service Online Jobs portal. Check your intranet or contact HR if you do not know how to access this and use the Online Jobs Portal. The Online Jobs Portal provides a standard way of advertising vacancies to everyone in the Civil Service and allows job applicants to search for vacancies using various search criteria and to set up alerts. Vacancy holders decide how to handle the actual recruitment process using a range of methods.

Some Departments have access to the e-recruitment system. This automates the recruitment process for both vacancy holders and for job applicants. Check your intranet or contact HR Shared Services if you are unsure whether your Department uses e-recruitment. If you would like to find out more, find out who in your Department or Agency is the point of contact with Civil Service Resourcing.

4. Step 2: Advertising the vacancy

To complete the job template, you need basic information about the job. The first is the job title. Make this as simple and jargon free as possible so that job applicants will easily understand the role they are applying for. You will also need to specify the number of vacancies as well as the type of role, region, and grade. Potential applicants can use these as well as other criteria such as salary to search for relevant vacancies.

Writing the job description

The next step is to write the job description. This should be clearly written, give enough information about the post and its duties for applicants to decide whether it is right for them. Avoid using any Department specific terms and acronyms as these will not be readily understood by people in other government departments or external candidates.

Review the relevant professions' information if appropriate and remember that you can attach role profiles or other additional information about the vacancy if you want to.

Preparing a job description is not a legal requirement but it is used within the Civil Service to describe the scope of the work, and clarify what applicants will have to do in the role. Think of a job description as a "snapshot" of a role. The job description communicates clearly and concisely what responsibilities and tasks the role entails. A good place to start would be the previous incumbent's objectives.

The job description includes the person specification. This is designed to identify the specific attributes which will be needed in order to carry out the role successfully. Examples may include a specific qualification or previous experience which is relevant to the post. These may be different from the attributes held by the present or previous incumbent. Since the recruitment and selection processes are normally competitive, the personal attributes specified should be identified as either being essential requirements to perform the role, or as being desirable. If your Department/Agency has signed up for e-recruitment, this process may be done directly online. Also, check your intranet for any applicable forms.

Note: Any external recruitment must be in line with the Civil Service Commissions' Recruitment Principles of appointment on merit through fair and open competition (unless recruiting to a permitted exception). Therefore, take care that none of the requirements indirectly disadvantages a particular group of applicants. For example, the Equalities Act requires all recruiters to ensure that if length of experience is specified, this must be explicitly linked to the job requirements in order to avoid indirect age discrimination. Please note that in many Departments or Agencies both you and any one selecting people for jobs must have recently completed Diversity and Equality training.

Activity 1: Writing a job description/person specification

Download a copy of your Department/Agency's job description/person specification forms and then complete these forms for your approved vacancy.

Summarise in the Job Description the competencies that are required to carry out this job successfully.

Job Description	Competencies Required
	<p>From the choice of Civil Service Competency Framework (CSCF) Competencies:</p> <p>From elements of relevant professional frameworks (or other standard job requirements in your department):</p>

For CSCF competencies, see **Attachment 1**

Choosing the competencies

Vacancy holders often include competencies as part of the application. Competencies let applicants know about how the job is to be done. On the Online Jobs portal, you can choose whether to include competencies, how many (up to 6) and the competency framework you have decided to use. The range of competencies available for inclusion in the competency section of a Job Description is as follows:

- The Civil Service Competency Framework (CSCF) competencies
<https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/competency-framework/welcome>
(or see Attachment 1) for full details
- The agreed List of Professional Competencies. This list has been issued with the best guidance as a separate product

Guidance Advice

The choice of competencies lies with the Vacancy Holder and their judgement of what fits best for their vacancy. This determination should be based upon business priorities and local consultation. Vacancy Holders should also check whether their department and/or profession have a policy on the competencies to be included. In terms of the pragmatic implications of this choice, the feasibility of investigating candidates' evidence of multiple competencies should be borne in mind, and on this basis it is generally the case that up to 6 CSCF competencies may be chosen to populate a Job Description. It is suggested that Vacancy Holders might consider up to two CSCF competencies from each cluster, but the final determination of what are the most appropriate competency choices should be judged by the Vacancy Holder on the basis of the purpose of the job and the core requirements of the job. Some roles require professional skills, knowledge and experience and in these cases a blend of generic (CSCF) and other competency elements (including professional skills/competencies where these are articulated) will be appropriate.

Example of approach to blending generic and other competency elements:

Using the CSCF as the start point for the definition of competency elements, consider what additional professional requirements define this position, and also consider any statutory, regulatory or other elements that need to be adhered to. The choice of competencies can vary with context, as is shown in Attachments 2 and 3.

Attachment 2 is an example of one set of choices which demonstrate the blending of CSCF and elements of a professional framework for a management level job within a particular profession.

Attachment 3 demonstrates an operational role in which all key responsibilities and related competency requirements are fully covered within the CSCF model.

5. Step 3: Designing the selection process

Once you have written the job description/person specification and selected the competencies needed to do the job effectively, you can consider what the key selection criteria will be for this role. Many vacancies attract only a few candidates while others attract far more. Any selection process must clearly specify the criteria to be used to select candidates and follow the agreed scoring criteria. This is vital to

ensure that the selection process is fair and open. The process and tools that are used should be designed and developed to ensure the right people are selected for the right roles. Taking time to establish and think through the selection criteria at this stage will help you manage applications by specifying how you will sift application forms.

- Plan the interview process – check your Department/Agency recruitment policy for details of competency based scoring criteria. You may also have set competency based questions that you should ask. Note: these and any additional questions which will enable you to assess if the candidate has the key competencies, skills, knowledge and experience (where appropriate) to be successful in the role. Please note where experience is required the requirements need to comply with current age discrimination legislation.
- Implement appropriate assessments – deciding how you will measure an individual’s ability in particular areas of the job.
- Short list candidates.
- Provide appropriate feedback to candidates – assessment feedback should be completed and, with a view to adhering to best practice process standards, issued to candidates before progressing to the next stage of the vacancy process.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS)

Note that where a candidate applies under the GIS, they only need to meet the minimum criteria for each stage in order to progress to interview – this is key where a scoring system has a possible range of scores.

The selection criteria are based on the job description/person specification written earlier and on the competencies specified. Department/Agencies usually have a marking scheme defined and may have forms already created for you to “score” applicants. For example, in the Home Office, the “shortlist marking sheet” includes the ratings below.

Rating	Description
5	Demonstrates positive evidence of a high level of competence with no

	substantial negative evidence
4	Demonstrates positive evidence of competence with little negative evidence
3	Demonstrates similar amounts of positive evidence and negative evidence of competence
2	Demonstrates some positive evidence of competence, but with significant negative evidence
1	Demonstrates little or no positive evidence of competence, along with considerable negative evidence

Attachment 4 outlines a set of evidence that a candidate might submit and demonstrates how this evidence might be evaluated (for sifting purposes) in assessing fit with role.

Activity 2: Selection marking schemes

Check on your intranet for your Department/Agency's sift/interview rating schemes and ensure that you are familiar with the rating system.

6. Step 4: Managing/short-listing the applicants

Once you have received all of the applications, you will need to sift them to decide who to advance to the next stage. Your selection criteria may include sifting applications to ensure applicants meet the required qualifications/experience specified or scoring competency statements using an agreed scoring key. As well as recognising these criteria from the applications, you may also need to think at this stage, about any gaps or inconsistencies from the applications, which might need further probing at interview stage. A standard setting discussion should be held prior to undertaking the sift to establish the sift criteria to be used.

Sifting is usually done by a panel (2 - 3 people, one of whom is from outside the immediate organisational unit) to ensure objectivity. Good practice, is that the sift criteria are established prior to receiving the applications so that the criteria set is

matched to the individual needs of the job not as a subjective reaction when the applications are received.

Note: for internal candidates, check whether your Department/Agency's policy allows you to also consider line manager's comments for the candidate's application and the Performance Development Review (PDRs)/appraisal forms as supporting information where two or more applicants' scores are considered to be equal. Note: this will not be applicable for all Department/Agencies. Vacancy holders may choose to include psychometric tests as part of their selection process. Your Department or Agency will have its own policies about this.

Those Departments which have signed up to the e-recruitment service have access to the Civil Service Initial Sifting Tool (CSIST). CSIST has been designed around Civil Service jobs to be used mainly for large-scale selection campaigns where it is necessary to sift out unsuitable candidates by using test scores. CSIST is designed for use at a stage prior to the meeting of Sift Panels.

Please note that CSIST is not intended to be the sole method of assessment, but simply to provide time and cost savings over manual application sifting processes for large scale recruitment.

The CSIST uses a combination of multiple choice questions and judgment-based questions to assess an applicant's broad capability for Civil Service work. From April 2012, the refreshed tool which is aligned to the new Civil Service Competency Framework is available at five grades from AO to Grade 7. The tests are short, provide feedback reports for all candidates and give immediate information about candidate scores to vacancy holders. For more information about using this tool, contact Civil Service Resourcing.

Your Departmental/Agency guidance will tell you what the criteria are for accepting someone for interview. In a number of departments that use a 5 point rating scale like the Home Office one above, the candidate would need to score 3 or above in all areas to be called for interview.

Letter templates may be available via your intranet which can be used to inform candidates of the outcome of the sift or letters can be issued via CS Jobs. It is

important to notify the applicant promptly of the results of their application (you should check with Civil Service Resourcing who is going to be responsible for such communication). Note: internal candidates may request oral or written feedback if unsuccessful and external applicants under a Freedom of Information request can see their sift/interview notes.

It is therefore important that records must be accurate and that full notes are available to support decisions which are based on evidence.

7. Step 5: Interviewing candidates

Having defined the job, attracted the candidates and managed the applications you are now at the selection stage. This involves interviewing the candidates and making a final selection.

The most common type of interview is an initial face to face where the vacancy holder together with an independent member meets the applicant and interviews them about their application and their competencies.

For more senior grades, a panel of interviewers is typical. In such cases, the interview may also include a presentation and/or practical assessment.

A standard setting meeting should have been held prior to the first interview taking place in order to confirm the criteria being used and to ensure consistency of scoring.

Interview duration

Typically you will interview for about 45 minutes. (Again, consult your Departmental guidance on recommended duration). During this time you need to remember that the interview is a two way process:

1. For you to gather the evidence required to decide if the candidate has the ability and/or potential to be successful in the role you are recruiting for. The interview will also allow you to:

- Test the candidate's suitability for the requirements of the role
- Guarantee fair treatment at the interview for all candidates by treating them in a demonstrably equal manner

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- Give all candidates an opportunity to express their views and present their evidence
 - Score candidates based on the requirements of the job
 - Recommend which candidate should be offered the position and produce an order of merit based on scores achieved

Note: Panel chairs should ensure that their panels have covered all reasonable adjustments requested by the applicant and confirm these back to the applicant (using the CS Jobs area dedicated to this if selected/required).

2. For the candidate to decide if the role and the Department/Agency is right for them.

Interview structure

Refer to your Departmental/Agency procedures to find out any specifics for your organisation about interview structure.

A good interview starts with excellent preparation. This gives interviewers the necessary self-confidence as the discipline of preparation is needed to ensure that the interview gets all the information required in order to achieve the interview's purpose.

For most interviews, there will generally be a Chair and panel member(s). Please refer to Appendix A where you will find a checklist for effective Chairs

Having prepared your interview structure in advance read all the necessary material and prepare the room. You will need to think about how you gather evidence. For this you will need to explore Competency-Based interviewing which is covered in the next section.

Competency Based Interviewing

What are competencies?

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) define competencies as:

“the behaviours that employees must have, or must acquire, to input into a situation in order to achieve high levels of performance”. (www.cipd.co.uk)

The interview will be based on the competencies that you previously defined for the job role and, in line with the policies of most departments, these will have been the competencies used to sift the interview candidates. The number and choice of competencies against which interviews will be conducted will be based upon the determination by the vacancy holder of the business priorities and departmental policy requirements which apply. However in practical terms it is unlikely that more than 6 competencies could be assessed in a standard 45 minute interview.

Interview questions should be based on the required competencies. Questions should be used to give the candidate every opportunity to demonstrate competence in this area.

An example of a poor interview question to elicit the required skills/competencies is shown below:

“How much customer service experience do you have?”

An answer may be:

“I’ve been working with customers for 3 years”

This provides no information about the quality of the customer service delivered. Through focusing on competencies, we can focus on how someone undertakes the tasks.

A poor example of an answer to an “outstanding customer service question” would be:

“We kept the counter open, we dealt with the customer really well and we received a thank you letter”

An interviewer needs to know what “the candidate” did in this situation. In the above example the candidate may have sat in the back waiting to shut the counter while their colleagues dealt with the customer.

Activity 3: Creating Competency based Interview questions

Think about the job you are filling and its key competency requirements. In order to generate interview questions choose 3 relevant competencies and write 3 questions which will give a

candidate the opportunity to demonstrate whether or not they possess the necessary competencies for this post. Increase the number of competencies and questions as appropriate:

Competency 1:

Question 1:

Competency 2:

Question 2:

Competency 3:

Question 3:

Competency based interview question examples

The example interview questions below are based on the Civil Service Competency Framework competencies.

Managing a Quality Service

- How do you and your team understand what the standards required by your customers are?
- Give me an example of how you have demonstrated an understanding of customer needs?
- What steps have you taken to understand how you and your team perform against performance/customer standards?
- How do you respond to customer feedback?
- Can you describe a time when you have been proactive in finding a solution to a problem encountered by your customers?

Leading and Communicating

- When communicating to staff how have you ensured your communication is clear, well structured and tailored to your audience?
- Can you give an example of how you have engaged your team in discussions about changes taking place in your unit, business area or Department?
- Tell me about a time when you have had to influence a senior manager, stakeholder or partner and how you went about this?
- Tell me about a time when you have had to use written communication to successfully influence someone? How did you go about structuring your written communication?

Collaborating and Partnering

- How have you created a good team spirit within your teams?
- Tell me about a time when you have been faced with resistance or negativity and how you have responded to this?
- Give me an example of how you have motivated others to do their job better?
- Tell me about a time when you have collaborated with individuals or teams outside of your business area in order to deliver a positive outcome?

Seeing the Big Picture

- How have you ensured a team understands how its work connects into the work of the Department?
- Tell me how your current role fits into the overall objectives of the Department?
- Tell me about a time when you have developed and updated good practice in your area of work?



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- Give me an example of when you had to make a change in your work area. How did you ensure it fitted with the strategic direction of the Department or your business area?

Building Capability for All

- Can you describe a time when you have had to address underperformance and how you went about this?
- Can you give me an example of how you have nurtured a talented member of your team?
- How do you increase your own knowledge and expertise and that of your team?
- What are your own development areas and what are you doing to address these?

For more hints and tips on competency based interviewing, refer to your Departmental/Agency guidance.

The S.T.A.R Approach

Using the STAR acronym when competency based interview questioning can help you drill down to the answers that you need. It gives you a 4 part structure to find out:

1. Situation

From the beginning of the example the applicant gives you – what was the situation? Where were they? Who was there with them? What had happened?

2. Task

What was the task that the applicant had to complete and why?

3. Actions

What did the applicant do? Ask for detail here.

NOTE – take care to listen to the answer and ensure that the applicant explains what he or she did and not we or them, as this could indicate that they had help or it was someone else who took the action!

4. Results

What results did the actions produce? Was it a successful outcome?

During the interview

As discussed previously, questioning is a key component of the interview but there are other skills needed during the course of any interview which are covered below:

Listening

Listening is perhaps the most vital skill of all in interviewing. A good interview calls for an interchange of ideas but there is only one person who can give you the information you need to decide whether an applicant is well suited to the job - the applicant. Therefore, your goal must be to allow the candidate the freedom to speak while you focus all your energies on listening effectively.

Broadly, there are a number of reasons for you to talk during the interview. They are:

- to put the candidate at ease and help them to open up
- to ask pertinent questions
- to clarify issues
- to control and guide the interview
- to close the interview

Effective questioning is a delicate balance between securing good information and potentially intimidating the candidate. However, as a guideline, if you find yourself talking for more than a quarter to a third of the interview there is a good chance you're talking too much and you will not secure the necessary information to make an objective decision.

Listening takes effort. You will find it hard work. The key is to focus on what the candidate is saying. Try to make sense of it in their terms, seeing what they see, hearing what they hear and feeling what they feel. Listen to what is not said.

Other key points for effective listening:

- A good listener knows what ought to be obtained from an interview and is flexible enough to change questioning approach should the need arise within an interview.
- Try to judge the content of the message rather than the person sending it.

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- Try to suspend judgement initially - listen in a non-evaluative way. Only evaluate when you feel you have thoroughly understood.
 - Listen analytically; look for central ideas, themes, links and necessary details. Remember your personal specification for the post(s).
 - Eliminate distractions (noise, views, people etc) and concentrate on your interviewee.
 - Seek clarification or repetition if required.
 - Use silence (within reason) - silence tends to draw people out if used appropriately.
 - Rephrase where necessary - indicates that you've understood and encourages the interviewee to elaborate.
 - Summarise - this will indicate understanding as well as progress within the interview timeframe.

Using non-verbal behaviour

Utilise non-verbal communication throughout the interview in order to get the best out of the candidate although be aware that non-verbal behaviour can be prone to cultural differences. Broadly, non-verbal behaviour can be broken down into five main areas;

1. posture (covering position, direction, degree of movement, etc)
2. facial expression (covering expression, eye contact, eye movement, head movement etc)
3. gestures (hand, leg and arm movements)
4. voice and breathing (pace, depth/tone of voice etc)
5. energy level (more subjective, but the degree of energy that the above are showing and the nature of that energy, e.g. enthusiasm, capacity or anxiety)

No one behaviour can be taken in isolation but should be viewed as part of a cluster of related behaviours.

Maintaining Control

1. *Remember your interview plan.* At times, it may be necessary to direct the course of the interview i.e.
 - "Let's" or "could we move on to talk about"
 - "I would like to pick up something you mentioned to my colleague"



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- “I noticed from your application form you worked/are interested in X - why was this? Or a similar exploratory question.
2. *Keeping to time.* Within reason, you need to keep to your interviewing schedule. Running late creates a potential poor impression for any candidate and may disadvantage them if they are given an abbreviated interviewing time. Within the interview itself, make sure you can discretely track time.
 3. *Challenging.* There may be times when you will find it necessary to challenge some information or opinion given by the candidate. Here, direct eye contact and appropriate facial expression *are* important. An open, honest challenge will encourage the candidate to think seriously about their answer without arousing ill feeling.
 4. *Calming down and encouraging.* For some people interviews are a daunting experience so it is important to encourage through nodding, smiling, interested eye contact and where necessary appropriate interview pacing. The effective interviewer will consciously use their skills to encourage the candidate to give their best.

Closing the Interview

Before closing, check that you've covered everything from your preparatory work. In a panel interview, you may check whether your colleague (s) has any outstanding issues. If necessary summarise.

Give the interviewee a clear picture of what will happen next.

Keep a record of the interview - again consult your HR processes. We recommend that when preparing for the interview you discuss note taking with your colleague (s) and ensure a strategy is agreed. **The most effective method is to make very brief jottings to help you maintain the flow of questions whilst your panel colleague (s) takes more detailed notes of your questions and the candidate's answers.** Some Agencies or Departments have a prepared checklist of competencies you need

to explore which makes an assessment easier. Remember, that all notes you make must be legible and available for scrutiny.

8. Awareness of equality issues

The importance of diversity must be taken into account at each stage of the recruitment process. Processes and systems should be regularly reviewed to ensure hidden bias is removed and to ensure talent is not being blocked from entering the organisation. Everyone taking part in activities such as short-listing and interviewing should undertake training in recruitment and selection and be aware of the relevant legislation and the importance of avoiding discrimination. The Government Equalities Office provides guidance on how the Equality Act impacts on recruitment and selection.

Activity 4: Awareness of equality issues

Instructions: Read each of the questions and situations below, then identify whether the question is **(A)** legal and/or appropriate in terms of your Department/Agency policies and procedures or **(I)** inappropriate by writing the either **A** or **I** in the space provided.

For more information, refer to the Equality and Diversity e-learning.

1. Are you over the age of 18? _____
2. Your resume/CV/application form states that you speak Russian. How fluent are you? _____
3. You mentioned earlier that you have two children. What kind of childcare arrangements do you have? _____
4. How do you think your military experience has prepared you to manage the responsibilities of this position? _____
5. Are you married? _____
6. Can you provide me with the names of character and professional references? _____
7. Your name is listed on your resume/CV/application form as Karen Anne Martin. Is that Miss or Mrs. Martin? _____



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8. Would you be willing to relocate? _____
 9. When did you graduate from university? _____
 10. Is your spouse employed? _____
 11. Have you worked or earned degrees under any other name? _____
 12. This position requires travelling at least 10 days a month. Can you meet this requirement? _____
 13. Do you have any physical disabilities that might prevent you from performing this role? _____
 14. Which church/temple/mosque do you attend? _____
 15. How many days leave did you take last year? _____
 16. You mentioned you have an interest in current events and politics. Who did you vote for in the last election? _____
 17. Do you understand that any false information knowingly provided by you on your employment application, including salary history, can be grounds for your immediate dismissal? _____
 18. Do you own your home or do you rent? _____
 19. How do you feel about having a woman supervisor? _____
 20. What sorts of activities do you like doing on weekends? _____

(Answers in Appendix A)

9. Step 6: Selecting and appointing after the interview

“To recruit or not to recruit...that is the question?”

Here are some steps you can follow to make this evaluation process easier:

Score each candidate



Compare the candidates' answers to your criteria, following the agreed scoring. When conducting a panel interview, the panel will need to compare and discuss individual ratings and agree an overall mark.

Refer to your Department/Agency guidance for details of this process.

10. Step 7: Referencing and screening

Once you have selected your candidate, ensure that you follow your Departmental/Agency guidance for pre-employment and security checks. These checks may include following up references. As some of these checks may take some time, if applicable, it is advisable to notify the candidate that they should not hand in their notice to their existing department/employer until checks have been confirmed.

11. Legislation and policies

There are many laws that protect equality and discrimination when recruiting. Ensure you are abreast of the relevant HR policies and legislation, prior to beginning the recruitment and selection process. Refer to your Departmental/Agency policies for guidance.

Further Reading

Your Departmental/Agency policy, procedures and forms for recruitment and selection, available from your intranet.

CIPD (Mar 2012) Recruitment factsheet. Available from the CIPD membership resources section of the website. www.cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/factsheets/recruitment-overview.aspx [accessed 12/4/12]

GOVERNMENT EQUALITIES OFFICE. (2011) *Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know? A quick start guide to using positive action in recruitment and promotion*. London: GEO. Available at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/positive-action-recruitment

For more information on interviewing skills, see the Ashridge “Competency-based interviewing learning guide” from the CSL portal by selecting the link below:
<http://www.ashridge.org.uk/valogin&username=csl&password=development&redirectto=/en-GB/materials/learningguides/CBILG/Pages/Default.aspx>

Appendixes

Appendix A – Checklist for effective Chairs

What effective Chairs (plus panel members) do - before the interview

- Organise sufficient time for all to read the paperwork and plan the interview properly
- In briefing the panel, check that all paperwork has been read and the band, grade, duties and responsibilities are understood for the prospective post (s)
- Ensure that the aims and objectives of the interviews are understood and agreed
- Ensure that behavioural style/competency approach for interviewing is used appropriately
- Draw attention to the importance of fairness and avoiding discrimination
- If required, review and understand Person Specification/Job Description
- Establish an agreed critical criterion for assessment and the evidence required for success
- Establish a list of core questions which will explore critical criteria
- Allocate roles and decide how the criteria will be explored
- Remind a panel that the candidate should do most of the talking
- Agree how a record of each interview will be kept
- Establish a timetable
- Make sure all panel members work as a team
- Make sure that the environment for the interview is welcoming and pleasant. This means comfort for both you and interviewee
- Arrange the seating so that it does not emphasise any status difference. Depending upon your internal procedures it may be preferable to sit in easy chairs rather than talk across a table
- Interview in an environment free from interruptions. Ensure mobiles are turned off and that you cannot be overheard in the interview process
- Adjust the temperature of the room, ventilation, sunlight, water etc so that the interviewee feels comfortable

- Time manage the interview process, time before the interview, interview time and assessment post-interview plus any wash up at end of day
- Prepare an initial introduction so that as much as possible you put interviewees at their ease by establishing rapport
- Initial impressions are important - the interviewer's attitude will determine whether rapport is built and maintained. Some things that you can do to help build rapport are:
 - Adopt a warm, friendly manner, accompanied by a smile and eye contact at suitable points
 - The usual courtesies are also important in the creation of rapport. For example, "please come in" rather than "come in"
 - Treat interviewees as equals - eliminate or reduce social/status barriers

They do not:

Disclose information about previous panels to panel members (for instance, this would be in a recruitment campaign to fill a number of posts):

- Impose their criteria on to panel members
- Stick rigidly to the interview framework - Good interviewing has to have some degree of flexibility

Activity 4 - Answers

No.		Comment
1.	I	Are you over the age of 18? Questions related to age can only be asked to determine the applicant's ability to meet minimum age standards as established by local law.
2.	A	Your CV states that you speak Russian. How fluent are you? If fluency in a foreign language is required for the position, this is an appropriate question. Do not, however, ask whether it is the person's native language or otherwise reference national origin. If there is no foreign language requirement for the position, do not ask this question as it asks the applicant to provide information that could be used to discriminate on the basis of national origin.
3.	I	You mentioned that you have two children. What kind of childcare arrangements do you have? Questions related to family status are prohibited by law, even if the candidate volunteers information about their family situation.
4.	A	How do you think your military experience has prepared you to



		<p>manage the responsibilities of this role?</p> <p>References to military service can be made in the context of questions related to an individual's ability to perform the job. Questions about the applicant's termination from the military service, for example: "Did you receive honourable discharge on leaving the military?" are prohibited by law.</p>
5.	I	<p>Are you married?</p> <p>Questions about marital states are prohibited by law.</p>
6.	A	<p>Can you provide me with the names of character references and professional references?</p> <p>This should not be requested at interview. Check your Department/Agencies policy/procedures for the most appropriate time to request this information. Typically this should be covered on the application form (or subsequent forms issued for pre—appointment checks). Guidance to the candidate should explain that references will not be followed up unless the person is offered the post (subject to them passing pre-appointment checks). This information should not form part of the selection process.</p>
7.	I	<p>Your name is listed on your CV as Karen Ann Martin. Is that Miss or Mrs?</p> <p>Questions about marital status, even when stated indirectly, are prohibited.</p>
8.	A	<p>Would you be willing to relocate?</p> <p>If the job requires the candidate to be mobile or relocate, this should be clearly stated in the job advert. Note: this will be particularly applicable to more senior mobile grades. If this is clearly stated as a job requirement, it should not need to be asked at interview.</p>
9.	I	<p>When did you graduate university?</p> <p>Questions relating to age, or requiring answers that might be used to determine age, are prohibited by law.</p>
10.	I	<p>Is your spouse employed?</p> <p>Questions relating to a spouse are illegal as they do not relate to the applicant's ability to perform the role.</p>
11.	I	<p>Have you worked or earned degrees under any other name?</p> <p>This question is not related to the individual's ability to do the job and therefore may not be asked.</p>
12.	A	<p>This position requires travelling at least 10 days a month. Can you meet this requirement?</p> <p>This question addresses the applicant's ability to meet a specific job requirement and is therefore permissible.</p>
13.	I	<p>Do you have any physical disabilities that might prevent you from performing this job?</p> <p>This question must not be asked. Questions should focus on job related competencies/requirements, not disabilities. If there is a physical requirement for the position, this should be clearly stated in the job advert. If this is clearly stated as a job requirement, it should not need to be asked at interview. However, if a question must be asked, it should be related to the job requirement e.g. "The job requires you to lift and carry 25kg boxes [or other requirement]. Is that acceptable to you?" If you ask this question of one applicant, you are required to ask every</p>



		applicant.
14.	1	Which church / temple / mosque do you attend? Questions related to religion are illegal.
15.	I	How many days leave did you take last year? This question is illegal based on the Family Medical and Leave Act (FMLA).
16.	I	You mentioned you have an interest in current events and politics. Who did you vote for in the last election? Asking questions which require the candidate to reveal political affiliation are prohibited.
17.	A	Do you understand that any false information knowingly provided by you on your employment application, including salary history, can be grounds for your immediate dismissal? You can ask questions related to the terms and conditions of employment. However, Civil Service practice is usually to cover this by the candidate signing a declaration in the application form, and so would not normally be a question asked at interview.
18.	I	Do you own your home or do you rent? This question is not related to the candidate's ability to perform the job requirements and is therefore not permitted.
19.	I	How do you feel about having a woman supervisor? This question is not related to the candidate's ability to perform the job requirements and is therefore not permitted.
20.	I	What sorts of activities do you like doing on weekends? This question is not related to the ability to perform the job requirements and should therefore not be asked.



Attachments

Attachment 1 – Civil Service Competency Framework

Strategic Cluster – Setting Direction

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with and supports organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Civil Service goals and deliver the greatest value. At senior levels, it is about scanning the political context and taking account of wider impacts to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen and support economic, sustainable growth.

2. Changing and Improving

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it's about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. At senior levels, this is about creating and contributing to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy implementation and build a leaner, more flexible and responsive Civil Service. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches wherever possible.

3. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective; using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned justifiable decisions. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks



and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and balancing social, political, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

People Cluster - Engaging People

4. Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It's about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision; managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the Civil Service.

5. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the Civil Service to help get business done. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions. At senior levels, it's about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration and building effective partnerships including relationships with Ministers.

6. Building Capability for All

Effectiveness in this area is having a strong focus on continuous learning for oneself, others and the organisation. For all staff, it's being open to learning, about keeping one's own knowledge and skill set current and evolving. At senior levels, it's about talent management and ensuring a diverse blend of capability and skills is identified and developed to meet current and future business needs. It's also about creating a learning and knowledge culture across the organisation to inform future plans and transformational change.

Performance Cluster - Delivering Results



7. Achieving Commercial Outcomes

Being effective in this area is about maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities. For all, it's about having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are delivering added value and working to stimulate economic growth. At senior levels, it's about identifying economic, market and customer issues and using these to promote innovative business models, commercial partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value; and ensuring tight commercial controls of finances, resources and contracts to meet strategic priorities.

8. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money. At senior levels, effective people embed a culture of value for money within their area/function. They work collaboratively across boundaries to ensure that the Civil Service maximises its strategic outcomes within the resources available.

9. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches to support service delivery. At senior levels, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services.

10. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it's about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way. At senior levels, it is about building a performance culture to deliver outcomes with a firm focus on prioritisation and addressing performance issues resolutely, fairly and promptly. It is also about leaders providing the focus and energy to drive activities forward through others and encourage staff to perform effectively during challenging and changing times.



Attachment 2 – Example of Job Description (Generic and Professional)

EXAMPLE SCENARIO

THE IDENTIFICATION OF COMPETENCIES FOR JOB DESCRIPTION INCLUSION WHERE COVERAGE CAN BE FULLY ACHIEVED BY A BLEND OF CSCF COMPETENCIES AND ELEMENTS OF A PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

The job description below outlines the key requirements of the role of Operational Research Analyst. This role is based on a current position in a large operational department. In line with that department's HR policy the competency requirements have been specified in order to summarise the specific personal attributes that are required of the job holder.

These competencies are drawn from a mixture of Civil Service Competency Framework (CSCF) competencies and professional, i.e. Operational Research (OR) competencies. The selection of the CSCF competencies is based on what is required (in competency terms) of the job holder in order to fulfil the *Purpose of the Job* and the *Job Requirements*. The professional competencies outline those areas of competence which are required of OR professionals at this level. All aspects of the job can be achieved by application of a selection of the CSCF competencies plus professional competencies.

The analysis which generated the combination of competencies outlined in this job description was:

As the vacancy holder can chose to assess candidates against a maximum of 6 competencies, 3 essential professional competencies were identified. Of the remaining 3, one competency was chosen from each CSCF cluster ensuring that a holistic assessment was achieved across the framework.

Job Description

Purpose of Job



To provide Operational Research analysis and advice

Job Requirements

The role encompasses a range of responsibilities that include:

- Supporting the analysis of Departmental spending impact
- Providing advice on systems thinking to policy processes, in particular around department's functions
- Supporting the development of a new model around resource use in the UK
- Providing input to quality assurance activities, for instance, developing an evaluation framework for the quality of evidence, refining good practice guidance for the departmental evidence community on procuring quality evidence, and the planning and delivery of science reviews for laboratory agencies and NDPBs
- Supporting the delivery of the Evidence Investment Strategy (EIS), including finding innovative approaches which enable more effective engagement with network partners to deliver a truly effective service
- Supporting the internal cross-Department review of modelling
- Supporting the international modelling team to deliver the capability to assess international security

Personal Attributes

Competency 1 Knowledge and Application of OR Skills and Techniques

Please give examples when you have used operational research skills like statistics, analytics, data analysis, scientific analysis, computer programming, simulation, process redesign or



mathematical modelling. Briefly describe the problem and how you chose the technique.

Competency 2 Achieving Impact with Analysis

Please give examples where your analytical work had a positive outcome. Explain how you made sure it was a success and what the outcome of the work was.

Competency 3 Sustaining and Developing Operational Research

Please describe examples where you saw an opportunity for analysis, where you explored new options for analysis, and where you have quality-assured your own analytical work (or that of others). Remember to say what the outcome was.

Competency 4 Collaborating and Partnering

Please give examples where you have developed and managed good working relationships to achieve a successful outcome, changed the way you work, shared knowledge and learning or encouraged diversity, equality and inclusion.

Competency 5 Managing a Quality Service

Please give examples where you identified risks and took action to reduce their impact; where you worked with your team to set goals and timescales, sought out feedback and responded positively and improved the way you worked.

Competency 6 Seeing the Big Picture

Please give examples where you focused on the overall goal, not just your task; where you made sure your work aligned with wider objectives, you actively expanded your knowledge and developed your work.



For a complete summary of the competencies please check the GORS page of the competency framework website.

Attachment 3 – Example of Job Description (Generic only)

EXAMPLE SCENARIO:

THE IDENTIFICATION OF COMPETENCIES FOR A JOB DESCRIPTION WHERE COVERAGE CAN BE FULLY ACHIEVED BY A SELECTION OF CSCF COMPETENCIES ALONE.

The Job Description below outlines key aspects of the role of a Manager in Delivery. This role is based on a current position in a large operational department. In line with that department's HR policy the competency requirements have been specified in order to summarise the specific personal attributes that are required of the job holder.

The selection of the CSCF competencies specified is based upon the articulation of what is required (in competency terms) of the job holder in order to optimally fulfil the Purpose of the Job and the Job Requirements. All aspects of the job can be achieved by application of a selection of the CSCF competencies (in this case 5 competencies in total). There are no other qualification, experience or skill requirements specific to this role.

JOB DESCRIPTION: MANAGER, DELIVERY, Grade 7

Purpose of job

The Manager leads all aspects of the Service Delivery function to enable the achievement of published targets and strategic outcomes by making the most of the talents, contribution and engagement of our people.

Job Requirements

- Leadership of delivery teams in a multi-site organisation of comparable complexity. Demonstrable capability of managing people to targets, quality and with excellent customer service and able to balance conflicting demands on resources.

-
- Delivering significant operational process improvement programmes, preferably those involving the introduction of new working practices enabled by IT, together with the coaching and influencing of operational teams at all levels to implement major sustainable change.
 - Developing strategies that contribute directly to the achievement of business goals and high quality customer service. Ideally this includes experience of collaborative working with suppliers/ partners to achieve shared objectives.
 - Engaging, leading and empowering people at all levels working in dispersed teams, including maintaining oversight and development of capability.

Personal Attributes

The role requires the ability, expertise and stature to quickly establish the credibility and authority of the unit.

The competencies sought are drawn entirely from the CS Competency Framework (CSCF).

Setting Direction

Seeing the big picture: demonstrating business insight and strategic focus, together with the capability of translating a strategic perspective into practical short term action plans.

Changing and improving: creating and contributing to a culture of innovation, and encouraging improvements with uncompromising commitment to a professional and high quality service.

Delivering results

Achieving commercial outcomes: being commercially astute with the skills, experience and external focus that helps deliver best value and effective risk management.

Engaging people

Leading and communicating: being an authentic leader with an enthusiastic, collaborative and motivational style. Able to give clear direction, while allowing teams the space to deliver.

Collaborating and partnering: demonstrating collaborative behaviours and interpersonal skills that engender trust and confidence at all levels, and with Ministers, partners and suppliers.

For a detailed summary of the behavioural indicators encompassed by the above summary please refer to CSCF Level 4 for the Competencies cited.

Attachment 4 – Sifting Example

Example of use of CSCF Competencies in sifting candidates for posts

Vacancy holders should make a selection of CSCF competencies from the 10 competency framework. The purpose of sifting is to remove ineligible candidates who do not meet the standard from the short list for final interview. Therefore the choice of competencies to be used for sifting purposes should focus on elements that are essential for the role and without which a candidate would not be fully competent to operate. In order to control the volume of data being analysed it is recommended that the number of competencies to be assessed is limited to 6 or fewer (in line with the advice outlined in the Recruitment and Selection Guidance/Best Practice Guidance).

The example below outlines a particular competency requirement for a post in which the job holder has responsibility for decisions and financial controls which affect end-customers. Please note that this is intended as no more than an example – vacancy holders should consider evidence against the competency as a whole and evaluate accordingly.

The following is a set of effective behaviours that might be considered as positive evidence for the competency listed under the Delivering Value for Money * Competency at Level 2 (EO or equivalent) and (on the right hand side) an indication of the sort of evidence which would demonstrate competence.

*Delivering Value for Money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayer’s money in the delivery of public services.

Evidence of having set up a record system which is accurate accessible and effective
Evidence of having set up a record of expenditure and having made successful submissions to vary expenditure levels with comprehensive evidence

Evidence of having alerted manager to the misuse of resources with associated, verifiable evidence
Evidence of investigating the costs of resourcing a course of action and finding ways of reducing such costs
Evidence of adherence to procedures and controls
Evidence of monitoring plans and budgets with exception reporting

The scoring system to be applied to the above followed the principles demonstrated in the *short list marking sheet* (outlined under Step 3 of the Guidance).



Attachment 5 – Use of CSCF competencies in interviewing candidates

EXAMPLE OF USE OF CSCF COMPETENCIES IN THE INTERVIEWING OF CANDIDATES

Vacancy holders will have made a selection of CSCF competencies, as well as other competency elements if relevant (e.g. professional standards and requirements). These are the competencies against which the interview will be conducted.

The example below outlines a particular competency (Managing a Quality Service) and provides a sample of relevant questions that you may ask of candidates in order to discover their competency against the requirements of the job:

Competency	Question	Examples of positive evidence
Managing a Quality Service	Give me an example of how you have demonstrated an understanding of customer needs	<p>Close questioning of the customer and both identification and confirmation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of required customer outcomes, specified in writing in clear, unambiguous terms, including their business drivers for wanting/needing this service, any constraints or dependencies, timelines for delivery • Evidence of the direct questioning of customers regarding their expectations • Investigation of whether any further research is required before service agreement is reached with customer. • Discussion with customers about the needs of their own end-customers, and the development of an agreed understanding of what will constitute a successful outcome for all parties. • Specific example provided by candidate to illustrate the point
	What steps have you taken to understand how you and your team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal evaluation of customer satisfaction conducted on the completion of an assignment • If an ongoing or continuous service, conducting regular Account



	perform against performance/customer standards?	<p>Management reviews of performance and delivery against agreed measures and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal review (by senior team member) of levels of satisfaction of customers with service provision to date• Lessons learnt from reviews and customer feedback fed back into service delivery to ensure continuous improvement
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Attachment 6 – Recruitment and Selection Flow Chart

