

## What are Competencies?

The Scottish Government competencies are a set of behaviours that have been identified as being integral to performing at a highly effective level in any given role. Competencies are about behaviours rather than tasks. People who perform within these behaviours will as a result be able to carry out the tasks effectively.

## What is a Competency Based Interview?

The main objective of competency based interviews is to allow the recruiting panel to gather factual evidence of skills, competence and experience which are relevant to the needs of the vacant post and based on the Skills for Success Framework. The recruiting panel will seek to gather this evidence by asking applicants for examples of how they have reacted and behaved in the past.

## The Format

Competency based questions focus on what you did and why you did it and the results you achieved. They are designed to give the interviewer a clear understanding of the specific job related abilities you possess. You will be asked questions based on the Skills for Success relevant to the job. Which Skills for Success will be tested should be evident from the advert or further information supplied. In each case you must be prepared to explain the following:

- what you did
- why you chose to act the way you did
- what the end result was
- how this impacted on others

The interviewers will be taking notes throughout the interview, recording the positive and negative evidence which they gather from your answers. Interviewers will usually take it in turns to ask questions about your relevant experience of each competency i.e. Skill for Success.

Please feel free to ask the panel to repeat any of the questions if you are unsure about what you are being asked.

## What Competencies are used?

The Scottish Government has a standard competency framework, which are the behaviours that the Scottish Government requires its entire staff to apply and develop to operate successfully. The interview questions have been designed to enable you to demonstrate these competencies:

- **Self Awareness**  
You will have good organisational and planning skills to manage your own workload. Ability to work in a structured approach to progressing assigned tasks within the agreed timeframe and to know when to seek the support of others when required.
- **Team Work**  
Working as part of a team, you will value the contribution of other team members and recognise the impact your actions have on others. You will be open to the views of others and build and maintain good working relationships with colleagues.
- **Customer Service**  
We expect you to be able to differentiate between good and outstanding customer service, as we all have an understanding of the value of customer providing excellent customer service in a professional manner.
- **Information Management**  
You will have the ability to create and present records, data and other information that is accurate and timely. You will be expected to use a range of corporate management information systems effectively.
- **Communications and Engagement**  
You will be able to communicate clearly & concisely, both orally and in written form. You will be expected to have the ability to deal with a wide range of stakeholders and customers, both internal and external, in a professional manner.
- **Further Information**
  - [Scottish Government Competencies \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Competencies for Band A Roles \(PDF\)](#)

## General Points to keep in mind

Remember the assessors are not looking to catch you out, but to try to give you every opportunity to perform to the best of your ability. Ensure that you declare on the day if you are suffering from any problem which may affect your performance and finally just relax and be yourself.

## How can you prepare?

Although an interview is about your performance on the day, research has shown that those candidates who prepare can improve their chances of success.

Before you attend you may wish to:

- Read all this information familiarise yourself with what you can expect on the day. Being familiar with this, will help to reduce any anxiety you might otherwise experience;
- Ensure you read and fully understand what each competency you are being assessed on means.
- Think about your experiences which demonstrate these competencies best. Think about what the situation was, what it was *you* did and how that affected the outcome. You may wish to use the STARR framework to help you prepare.
- Think about the skills you have shown to complete a certain task / to reach an outcome. You might not have ever been a manager, but have you used the skills of management in helping a team to achieve its goal? Think about what situations have you been in which were difficult and required a lot of you? How did you cope? Most importantly remember to describe what YOUR role and input was.
- You may take in some notes with you to interview as a memory aide. Whilst prompts/memory aides/bullet points may be used, you should not be reading fully scripted answers.
- Spend some time finding out as much as you can about the civil service and the Scottish Government. Websites can be useful, as can speaking to people currently doing the job.
- Try to relax and remember - the panel want you to do well!