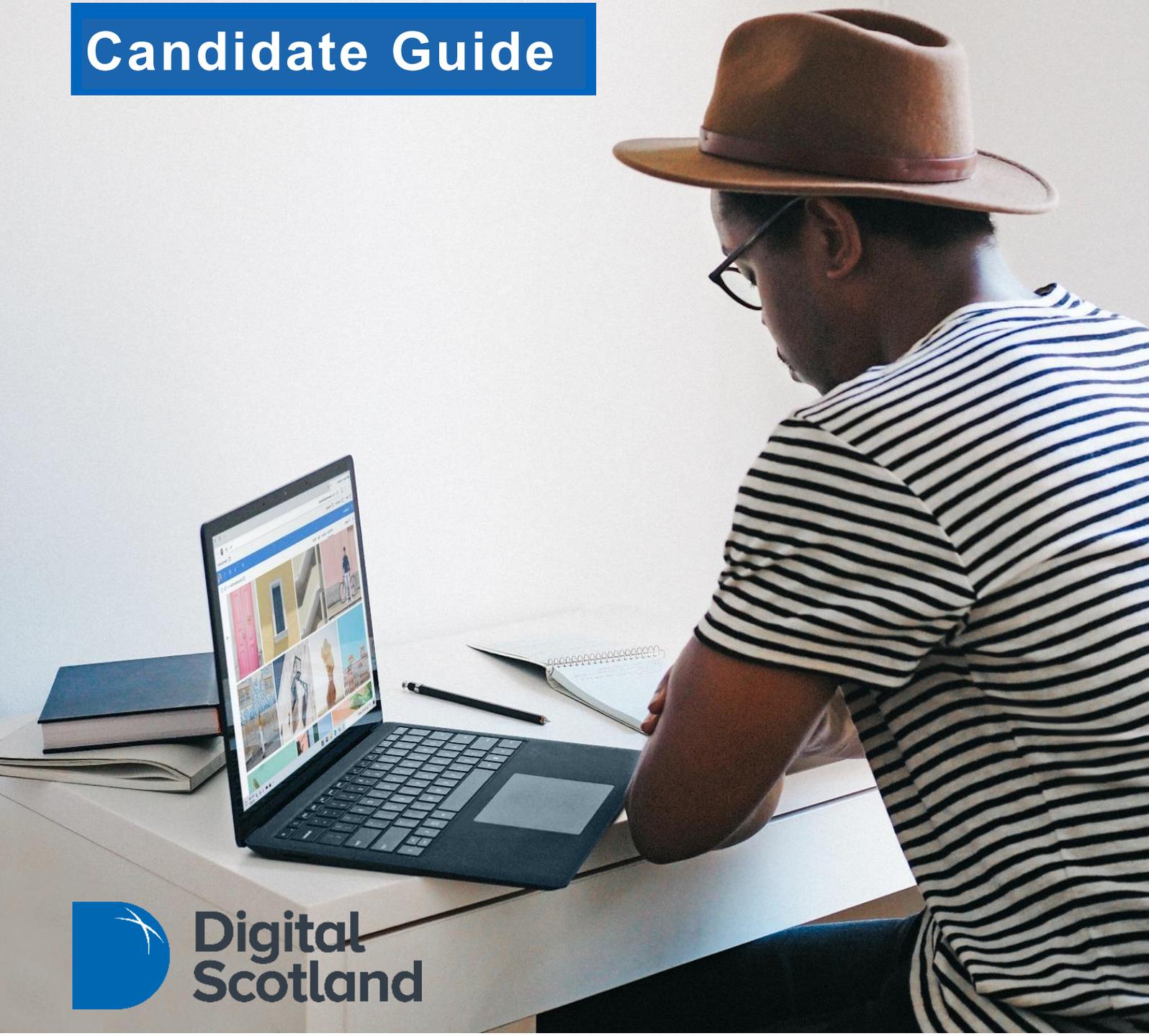Scottish Government
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gov.scot

Digital, Data and Technology

Recruitment during COVID-19

Candidate Guide

Digital Scotland

Contents

Introduction

Thank you for applying for a Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) role in Scottish Government.

This guidance outlines the requirements and processes we have put in place to allow recruitment to continue during the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. The recruitment and selection process for DDaT roles involves a technical assessment and a competency-based interview and this guidance covers what to expect during the process of an assessment.

The requirements and processes stated in this interim guidance only apply for recruitment whilst there is a need to run virtual assessment centres.

Digital, Data and Technology in government

This is a crucial time for digital, data and technology specialists as government harnesses digital technologies, skills and tools to transform public services. The DDaT Function comprises around 18,000 digital, data and technology colleagues across UK and devolved governments, and it is rapidly scaling up nationwide in the face of a rapidly changing society and circumstances.

The profession works across a number of roles, to ensure government is efficient and meeting user-needs. This includes a [capability framework](#) which provides a common definition of over 40 digital, data and technology job roles and career paths across government.

In Scotland, the profession currently has over 40 job roles, organised into 7 job families. These are:

- cyber security and information assurance
- data
- IT operations

- product and delivery
- quality assurance testing
- technical
- user-centred design

Compared with the UK Government version this profession model is slightly larger with security as an additional DDaT job family. The DDaT profession, at a UK and Scottish level, will continue to evolve as skills and requirements change.

A key benefit of the DDaT profession is continued alignment to the UK Civil Service approach to developing digital professionals in government. For instance we offer a large selection of courses for Scottish public servants through the [Scottish Digital Academy](#).

Find out more about Digital, Data and Technology Profession in Scottish Government on [gov.scot](#). Find out more about the UK wide Digital, Data and Technology Profession on [GOV.UK](#).

Inclusion

We want you to be able to participate fully in all recruitment and selection processes. If you require any adjustments to allow you to participate please contact the recruiting manager as soon as you can to discuss your needs.

Examples of what we can provide include;

- Additional time to complete an exercise
- Breaks during or in between assessments and interviews
- Documents provided in an accessible format (e.g. Braille or large print)
- Live captioning for video interviews
- Providing a BSL interpreter for interviews

We will do our best to handle requests at short notice, but it may not be possible to accommodate some requests without advance notice.

Telephone interviews

The assessment may include a telephone interview if there is a high volume of applications for the vacancy. The recruiting manager will confirm if telephone interviews are being used.

The purpose of a telephone interview is to discuss your application and ask you some further questions about your skills and experience. The interview will ask you questions related directly to the role you are applying for. There will be two interviewers, one will ask the questions and the other will record your responses. The interview will normally last about 20 to 25 minutes.

In order to help a telephone interview go smoothly there are a number of things we recommend you do to prepare;

1.   Make sure you know when to expect the call and answer it in time, it may come from a withheld number or a number you don't recognise.

2.   Make sure you can find a quiet space where you won't be disturbed or distracted for the duration of the interview.

3.   Make sure, if you're using a mobile phone, that you are in an area with good signal cover.

4.   Review the person specification and essential criteria for the role so you know what the questions are likely to cover.

5.   Have your CV to hand so you can refer to it if you need to.

During your interview you will be asked a number of questions and the interviewers will be noting down your response to these. They want you to do well so try and relax. Make sure you;

1. Listen to the questions asked.

2. Ask for clarification if you're not sure what is being asked or ask for a question to be repeated if you didn't catch it.

3. Take your time. It's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.

At the end of the interview there will be the chance for you to ask any questions you have about the role or the process.

Technical assessments

A technical assessment is an exercise that is included in the selection process. This is tailored to the role that you're applying for.

The exercise gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your technical and functional knowledge against the skills needed in the role. The specific skills that you will be tested against are detailed on the [capability framework](#).

The exercise will not ask you specific questions about each skill in turn but will provide you with an opportunity to show evidence of your ability against them. The exercise will be about a subject or topic that is relevant and is designed so that you do not need to have existing knowledge of the organisation, team, or programmes the role will be based in.

All members of the DDaT profession must complete a technical assessment as part of the selection process, and there are no exemptions or exceptions to this.

If you are unsure which role you are being tested against please contact the recruiting manager to confirm.

Usually, technical exercises are conducted in person and run by the recruiting manager. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have moved to a virtual assessment process.

Exercise practicalities

Scheduled / unscheduled breaks

There are no scheduled breaks during the exercise, unless previously agreed. You are advised take a comfort break prior to your exercise starting.

Access to information

You should not require access to external sources of information to complete your exercise, unless specifically noted in the instructions.

Technical difficulties

Should you have any technical difficulties whilst completing the exercise or interview please contact the recruiting manager, or named contact, who will be able to assist you.

Missed appointment

If you miss your scheduled time to complete your exercise please contact the recruiting manager, or named contact, who will confirm if an alternative day and/or time can be arranged.

Candidate expenses

Any expenses incurred by candidates will not be reimbursed by Scottish Government.

Competency-based interviews

Following the technical assessment you will complete a competency-based interview. The competencies you will be asked about are noted in the person specification document.

The Scottish Government use Skills for Success that supports career planning and skills development. It also supports the SG People Strategy to have the right skills at the right time by underpinning our recruitment and performance management systems. It sets out what is fundamental to success in the Scottish Government from Band A to the Senior Civil Service. The competency framework identifies a set of Core Skills that everyone should have and be able to demonstrate whatever job they are doing.

Competency-based interview questions aim to find out how you have used specific skills in your previous experience and how you approach problems, tasks and challenges. Questions focus on:

- what you did
- why you chose to act the way you did
- what was the end result
- how this impacted on others
- reflection – what they learned from their actions

Interviewers will take notes throughout the interview, to record both positive and negative evidence that they gather from your answers. Interviewers will usually take it in turns to ask questions about your relevant experience of each competency.

Common competency-based interview questions include:

- tell us about a challenge you've encountered when working as part of a team and how you overcame it
- tell us about a time when you've had to work to tight deadlines
- tell us about a resources problem you've had to solve in your work and what was the result
- describe a situation you've experienced in which your ability to communicate well was vital
- what is your experience of having to adapt to changes in work methods and practices?

To prepare for an interview you should:

- fully research the needs of the advertised post (business area website a good starting point) and be clear how to match your skills, experience and knowledge to it

- identify key achievements and quantifiable results to link to each Skills for Success/professional or specialist competency

- review your employment history

- review your Skills for Success profile

- undertake a mock interview if possible if not been in an interview situation for a while

For each competency, you should prepare answers that provide evidence of your level of:

- experience
- success
- achievement
- learning

Ideally, aim to have more than one example for each competency.

You should quantify all of your examples, to explain:

- the situation and task
- the action you took
- what you achieved, and how you achieved it
- how the organisation benefited
- reflection – what did you learn from the situation

Think also about a time when things didn't go as well and what you learnt from the experience.

Be ready for follow-up questions to each of your answers.

More information on the competencies can be found using the links below.

- [Competencies for Band B Roles](#) (PDF)

- [Competencies for Band C Roles](#) (PDF)

Usually, interviews will be conducted in person. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have moved all interviews online or by telephone, the recruiting manager will confirm the approach being used.