



## Competency Based Interviews

Once you have secured an interview, there are a number of steps you can take to ensure, as far as possible, that the interview is a success.

### What is a Competency Based Interview?

Competency based (or behavioural) interviews are based on the premise that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour.

Interviewers seek to obtain information about candidates past behaviour in certain situations. Competency based interviews are structured, with questions that relate directly to the essential criteria/ competencies required for the post.

Research into recruitment and selection methodology suggests that structured, competency based interviews can be one of the most reliable and accurate forms of assessment.

Competency based interview questions have been asked for some time in Highways Agency selection interviews but have not always been labelled as such.

A good recruitment and selection interview should assess candidates against each essential criteria or competency, asking questions about:

- Past behaviours and performance
- Learning from past behaviours
- Future adaptability to new post
- Knowledge and understanding of issues in relation to the post

### What does the interview focus on?

Most interviews will focus on six key areas. These will mostly be competencies but may also include other knowledge-based essential criteria.

They will be focused on those competencies that are most important for the particular job.

You may also be required to meet other, specific essential criteria. This could be an in-depth knowledge of a particular area or experience of working in a similar role previously.

The competencies and essential criteria against which you will be assessed will relate to those identified in:

- The advert or trawl notice
- The Information Pack
- The Application Form



## What should I expect in the Interview?

Competency based interview questions are slightly different to the style you may be used to.

They will tend to focus on past situations and your behaviour in those situations.

Questions are likely to start with:

"Please give me an example when..." or "Please describe an occasion..." etc.

## What will the interviewers be looking for?

The interviewers will be looking for specific examples about exactly what you did in such situations, not what the team's role as a whole was, or what you would do in a hypothetical situation.

You can choose to use relevant examples from your current job, a previous role, or a situation outside of work altogether.

You will be asked to discuss the example in some detail.

It is likely that the interviewers will then follow with some probing questions, possibly clarifying a particular area. They will be interested in the outcome of the situation, whether there was anything you learned from the experience, etc.

The interviewers may also want to ask you questions about the information you have provided in your application form.

## Read through your application form again

- Look again at the essential requirements
- The interviewers will ask questions related to those requirements
- Try to anticipate what questions may be asked.

As the interview will be focused on past specific examples, it would be advisable to think about possible examples that you could use.

- Consider your role in the situation
- Were there any potential barriers or pitfalls?
- How did you overcome them?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Is there anything that you have learned?

You may not be asked these particular questions during interview, but they will prepare you for possible questions and encourage you to think about these areas.

Consider your present job and how your role fits within the team.

Consider the job you are applying for and think about the issues and responsibilities related to that job.