**Competency Based Interview Guide**

What is a competency?

* The ability to do something successfully or efficiently.

Competency-based interviews are becoming a more common part of the recruitment process. We have created this document to give you an idea of how to approach competency-based interviews. To help you do this we have set out 16 typical competencies along with some typical questions and behaviours that they seek to look at. Competency interviews can sometimes be quite daunting, but with a bit of preparation and a broad range of examples, they can actually run quite smoothly and be an opportunity to stand out from the crowd.

Competency-based interviewing is a structured interview approach which aims to gather evidence of how well a candidate will perform in a particular role. This is achieved by asking candidates to describe past experiences of when they have demonstrated particular competencies (or job relevant behaviours). Employers will want to explore your past experiences as a large amount of research suggests that past behaviour is a strong predictor of future behaviour. For each particular competency, you will usually be asked a number of questions, to give you more than one opportunity to demonstrate your abilities.

In order for an organisation to assess whether you are suitable for a job it is important that you talk about specific past experiences, rather than your general way of working. It is also important that you describe what you actually did, rather than talking about the performance of a team you were a member of. To give you a better understanding of the types of questions you may be asked, the following is the typical format for a competency-based interview question: “Describe a time when you have worked in a particularly effective team.”

Competency-based interviews are very structured, with every candidate often being asked the same questions. This is to ensure that everybody gets the same opportunity and the process is completely fair to all.

**Tips for Participating in a Competency-based Interview**

**Before attending the interview:**

• Think about what kinds of behaviours may be important to perform well in the job

• Think about times in the past when you have demonstrated your abilities e.g. successful projects, interactions with other people, convincing a difficult audience, analysing a large amount of information, leading a sports team, participating in a school council, working to a deadline

• Think through exactly what you did in these scenarios and separate your own actions from those of any team you were a part of

• If you have had a part-time job it will be useful to think about this role when talking about your competencies but also include examples from school, sports and teams you have been in, projects you have contributed to and activities you have done

**During the interview:**

• Listen carefully to the question and make sure you provide an example of what is being asked, not just telling the interviewer what you want them to know.

• Talk about a **specific** example, not about how you generally act.

• Talk about what you did e.g. “I spoke to lots of different individuals” **not** “We spoke to lots of different individuals.

**Typical Competencies**

**Action Orientation**

Demonstrates a readiness to make decisions, take the initiative and start action.

**Creativity and Innovation**

• Creates new and imaginative approaches to issues.

• Identifies fresh approaches and shows a willingness to question traditional ways of doing things.

**Drive and Resilience**

• Maintains effective behaviour in the face of setbacks or pressure.

• Remains calm, stable and in control of themselves.

**Flexibility**

Successfully adapts to changing demands and conditions.

**Interpersonal Sensitivity**

Interacts with others in a sensitive and effective way. Respects and works well with others.

**Leadership**

Motivates and empowers others to reach goals.

**Oral Communication**

Speaks clearly, fluently and in a compelling manner to both individuals and groups

**Personal Motivation**

Commits self to work hard towards goals. Shows enthusiasm and commitment.

**Persuasiveness**

Influences, convinces or impresses others in a way that results in acceptance, agreement or behaviour change.

**Planning and Organisation**

• Organises and schedules events, activities and resources.

• Sets up and monitors timescales and plans.

**Problem Solving and Analysis**

• Analyses issues and breaks them down into parts.

• Makes rational decisions based on relevant information.

**Team work**

Works collaboratively together with others to achieve group goals and objectives.

**Written Communication**

Writes in clear and concise manner, using appropriate grammar, style and language for the reader.