Annex B our ref : IA/01116/11

Managerial Guides for Interviews and Assessments

Recruitment guide for interview panels

Interviews for posts in DfT are either competency-based, skills based or a combination of skills and competencies, which ever method used the panel is looking for evidence against the essential criteria.

When arranging interviews, managers will want to think about the following things.

Preparing for interviews

- Supported by HRBP team in partnership with the DfT Resourcing Group (DRG), the chairperson should agree an interview plan with panel members. They need to ensure the panel are clear on the interview questions, so that you can compare each candidate against them. The timetable for each interview will be based on the information provided on the Vacancy Approval form. Before each interview be clear about the aims of the interview, and the job requirements.
- Work with HRBP team in partnership with DRG to make the necessary practical arrangements, e.g. ensure the room is suitable. Consider candidates who may have additional needs.
- When interviewing, check whether applicants with disabilities meeting the minimum acceptable score have applied for a guaranteed interview. Disabled candidates can indicate any assistance required at interview / assessment stages. If an applicant with a disability requests a reasonable adjustment, e.g. to take an entry test, contact the Occupational Health and Safety Unit (OHSU) for advice.
- Try to avoid arranging interviews during the school holidays, or major religious festivals.
- Where possible, try to avoid arranging interviews on Mondays and Fridays, as many part-time workers are not in the office on these days.

Meeting and greeting candidates

It is the line manager’s responsibility to ensure that there is someone in place to meet and greet all candidates as they come for interview. This can be any member of the panel or delegated to another staff member. If delegated the line manager must ensure that the staff member greeting the candidates is familiar with the proper procedure.

Some of the activities required relate to external candidates, this is indicated where this is the case.

- Make sure you have a copy of the interview timetable and familiarise yourself with the timings.

- Check if any of the candidates have asked for assistance and any necessary arrangements are in place.

- Make sure you know the extension of the interview room in case you need it and make sure the panel know your extension.

- Make sure that reception have a list of the candidates/copy of the timetable and your extension so that they can let you know when candidates arrive.

- Ensure the room is set up suitably, is free from rubbish and provide water – liaise with panel as necessary.

When the candidate arrives:

- Welcome the candidate.

- Tick their name off the timetable.

- Explain/show the candidate where the nearest toilets are, and notify them if there will be any fire drills carried out today.

- If a candidate mentions a special need that was not known about, you must try to accommodate them. If necessary, consult with the panel and ensure that you don't make the candidate believe that they are causing you a problem.

- Escort candidate to waiting area and arrange with Chair for them to come and collect the candidate.

- Let them know if the interviews are running late.

- Candidate should be asked for all completed forms they have brought with them.

- Ask external candidates for the sealed envelope containing Character Enquiry form.

- Ask the candidate for original qualification certificates if required and proof of identity.

    - Photocopy, sign to confirm it is a **true copy.**
    - Complete the Verification Record **and get candidate's signature**.

Summary of documents you should expect to receive:

Proof of identity/nationality –

British National: Full 10 year British Passport

or

EEA National: Full EEA passport or National Identity Card

or

Commonwealth National: Full passport or Home Office Document confirming UK immigration status.

Candidates are also told that if they hold a previous passport which contains an immigration stamp relevant to their residence in the UK, they must also bring this, as well as their current passport.

If candidates do not hold a passport or document as described above, they are asked to bring **two** types of identification from the following table, one, which must include their current address:

Current UK photocard driving licence
Current full UK driving licence (old version)
P45
Birth certificate bearing an issue date within six weeks of birth.
Cheque book and bank card with three statements, showing current address (statements should be from within last 6 months)
Credit card with three statements (statements should be from within last 6 months)
Recent original utilities bill (e.g. gas, council tax, telephone) which shows your name current address and was issued within the last 6 months.

Nationality/Passports – further information

- Nationality requirements are not the same as security requirements and the <u>nationality of new entrants need to be recorded on the verification record.</u>

- All documents sent in by candidates must be valid and current, however, a candidate may produce an expired passport which may be useful if it is the one on which the candidate entered the UK and shows the immigration stamps.

- If a candidate, who is not a British Citizen, provides a passport as a form of I.D. please check all pages of the passport and photocopy any pages which include immigration stamps, as well as photocopying the main photo/info page.

Candidates will be asked to provide a passport as the main evidence of ID, however alternative documents may be provided to give evidence of nationality. The table below is a useful tool to help you understand the different types of I.D you can expect:

Nationality Status	Either	Or
British citizens born in the UK:	Passport	Letter from Home Office confirming British Citizenship.
British citizen born abroad:	British passport that states either ‘British Citizen’ or ‘Citizen of the UK or colonies’. If it states the latter it should have a right of abode endorsement	Letter from the Home Office confirming British Citizenship.

British Citizen by registration or naturalisation:	Naturalisation or registration certificate	British passport that states either 'British Citizen' or 'Citizen of the UK or colonies'. If it states the latter it should have a right of abode endorsement **OR** Letter from the Home Office.
British Overseas citizens and British Dependent Territories, British (overseas) nationals and British subjects:	British Passport showing 'British Overseas Citizen', British Dependent Territories Citizen', British Nationals (overseas) ' or British Subject'	Letter from the Home Office.
Commonwealth citizens:	Passport	Official letter from relevant national authorities.
Citizens of Republic of Ireland:	Irish Republic birth certificate	National passport ***OR*** Letter from the authorities confirming citizenship.
Citizens of EEA Member States (other than Republic of Ireland):	Passport	Letter confirming citizenship ***OR*** National identity card.

The following **ARE NOT** acceptable as proof of identity:

- International driving licence – can be easily forged.
- Copy of birth certificate issued later than 6 weeks after birth (can be purchased for an identity on request) the certificate can only be used for evidence of age.

If candidates bring with them more forms of I.D. than requested, you should take copies of all I.D. What we ask them for is the minimum requirement.

What to do with the I.D. you receive:

- When checking the identification supplied, <u>original documentation</u> must be provided. Under no circumstances should photocopies be accepted in place of originals.

- Closely examine the documents provided to check that they are genuine and have not been tampered with (in line with the Baseline Personnel Security Standard).

- Photocopy all documents, including pages within passports containing immigration stamps.

- If you believe that any documents have been altered, request an explanation from the candidate and make a note of the response on the Verification Record.

- Complete the Verification Record with the applicant and document details – **ASK CANDIDATES TO SIGN THE VERIFICATION [1]RECORD,** as proof of signature.

- If you are concerned about whether any of the documents are genuine, you must make a note on the comments on the Verification Record explaining your concerns – i.e. 'photo on passport appears to have been placed over a previous photo'

- The main thing to remember is that the check you undertake on identity is very important but is only one part of the overall Baseline Security Standard check. Therefore, if you have any doubts about the documents you receive, you must raise them with the HRBP team. These doubts can then be investigated further and other areas of the Baseline standard closely scrutinised. The DRG via HRBP team can request original documents to be sent in to them for further official checking if necessary.

All completed documents need to be returned to HRBP who will forward to DRG. Ensure you double-wrap the documents and mark the envelope Restricted: Staff. NB please ensure the method of delivery used is in accordance with Security provisions for the transfer of personal data.

Conducting the interview

- Try to ensure candidates feel at ease so that you can communicate effectively and find out more about them.
- The chairperson should state the purpose of the interview and outline the structure at the outset.
- Remain objective - avoid expressing your own emotions or prejudices.
- Be open and honest about the less attractive bits of the job, to ensure a shared understanding of the expectations of the job.
- Do not be too influenced by first impressions or only remembering details of earlier or later candidates.
- Seek clarification of the candidate's thoughts and views, to allow the candidate to confirm whether your understanding of what has been said is correct.

Closing the interview

- The advertising manager (or promotion panel chairperson) should:
  - Check to see that all the essential criteria have been covered.

  - Ask the candidate if they have any final comments/questions but only assess them on the answers they give against the competency or skill being assessed.
  - Close the interview and say when candidates will be notified of the outcome.
  - Thank them for coming and show them out.
  - Score each candidate against the advertised competencies and/or skills.

Selection

Selection must be based on the evidence supplied at interview by the applicant. Decisions must be made solely on the basis of an applicant's suitability for the advertised vacancy.

The interview panel assesses each applicant against the competencies or skills of the post, based on the evidence provided at interview.[2]

Applicants must meet or exceed the standard across the essential and desirable [if necessary] competencies or skills, to be considered suitable for the job.

- Candidates who do not meet the standard must be considered 'not suitable' for the post.

- Candidates who meet the standard will be listed in merit order with the highest scoring candidate offered the post.

Where two or more applicants have identical marks, the advertising line manager/chairperson or lead assessor makes the final decision, which may be based on the evidence of the applicant's overall performance at the interview or assessment event The decision-maker must record clearly on the board report the rationale of why the successful candidate was chosen and also provide indication of any weighting attached to the relevant criteria.

The advertising line manager must complete the Assessment Event Board Report setting out how each applicant performed against each competency and/or skill.

Candidates will automatically receive written feedback via the feedback template sheets. They can also request face to face feedback from the chairperson or panel member .

Post-interview

The steps to be taken post interview are outlined below:

- The chairperson completes the interview board report and sents to DRG for quality assurance.
- DRG will then inform SSC of the outcomes. DRG will not inform SSC until after the appeals period. SSC will then issue result letters to all candidates .
- Candidate should confirm acceptance of the job within two working days.

- In exceptional circumstances the advertising manager can ring the successful candidate to offer the post. The manager must also ring the unsuccessful candidates on the same day but only with prior approval from the DRG.

Actions after interviews for an internal post

Releasing staff[3]

The advertising manager must agree a release date with the current manager. This should be within **four** weeks from the date of the offer letter.

Unsuccessful candidates

Unsuccessful applicants will automatically receive written feedback, and in some cases face to face will also be offered.

Feedback

Sift and interview panel assessment sheets must form the basis of feedback to applicants. The advertising line manager or chairperson should give full feedback to applicants who request this after interview / assessment.

Feedback should be delivered promptly. It should be an accurate and unbiased summary of the reasons for non-appointment based on the selection criteria for the post.

Any areas where there was a lack of evidence that the candidate had the skills, knowledge and experience required for the position should be outlined.

Tact must be used and constructive advice should be given where possible, for example, by suggesting in which areas the candidate needs to gain more experience in relation to selection criteria. Do not give feedback on information that did not emerge from the selection process, or make statements that may imply unfair discrimination.

Actions after interviews OGD candidate

The steps to be taken post interview are outlined below:

- The chairperson completes the interview board report and sends to DRG for quality assurance.
- DRG will then inform SSC of the outcomes. DRG will not inform SSC until after the appeals period. SSC will then issue result letters to all candidates .
- Candidate should confirm acceptance of the job within two working days.
- In exceptional circumstances the advertising manager can ring the successful candidate to offer the post. The manager must also ring the unsuccessful candidates on the same day.

In addition

- the advertising manager will need to contact the relevant department to agree release dates. The advertising manager will them inform DRG and SSC.
- SSC will then conduct the necessary pre-employment checks and issues relevant letters and contract.

With regards to feedback candidates do not have an automatic right to face to face feedback. In some circumstances though, the advertising manager may wish to offer it.

Actions after interviews for external candidate

The steps to be taken post interview are outlined below:

- The chairperson completes the interview board report and sends to HRBP team who will forward to DRG for quality assurance.
- DRG will then inform SSC of the outcomes. DRG will not inform SSC until after the appeals period. SSC will then issue result letters to all candidates.
- Candidate should confirm acceptance of the job within two working days. [4]
- In exceptional circumstances the advertising manager can ring the successful candidate to offer the post after approval to do so from DRG, and after the appeals period. The manager must also ring the unsuccessful candidates on the same day provided they get DRG approval.

In addition

- the HRBP team will need to agree with the external candidate start dates, and identify any salary or contractual issues. The HRBP team will then inform DRG and SSC.

- SSC will then conduct the necessary pre-employment checks and issue relevant letters and contract.

With regard to feedback candidates do not have an automatic right to face to face feedback, although the advertising manager may wish to offer it.

Interview Guidance

The purpose of the interview is to gather evidence of the level of competencies to enable the panel to rate the demonstration of the competencies displayed.

The Panel

The panel should consist of at least 2 people and should wherever possible consist of different genders and ethnicity. Panel members (unless a HR representative) should be at least 1 grade above the vacant post. HR representatives can be equal to the grade of the post.

The panel should consist of a representative from the Branch and another member who should have an overall understanding of the work but also be as independent and impartial as possible.

The Chair

The Chair will be responsible for:

- managing the interview
- conducting a briefing session with panel members prior to the interviews
- explaining the process to interviewees and supporting them through the process
- carrying out introductions and closing the interview
- ensuring good time keeping
- managing the assessment of the applicant’s performance at the interview and the correct completion of the paperwork.

Equal opportunities

All panel members have a responsibility to ensure that the interview process is in line with equal opportunities principles and provides equality of opportunity to all candidates throughout the process. The questions asked and the way in which the interview is conducted should give all candidates equal chance to provide evidence of the competency. There should not be any bias with regard ethnic origin, disability, gender or age.

Panel members should declare any conflict of interest to HR who will arrange a replacement panel member. Examples of conflict of interest are if a panel member is related to, a close friend of or has been working closely at the same grade with a candidate. If in doubt you should discuss the issue in confidence with the Recruitment Manager.

All panel members should have received interview training. Legislation under Data Protection means that all notes from the interview must be kept and any candidate can ask to see the notes under the Data Protection Act. The Chair will therefore collect all notes at the end of the interview and these will be kept with all other papers for 12 months on the Recruitment file.

The Pre-meet

Panel members should have a pre-meet to decide who will cover which competency, who will take notes and what questions will be asked. Each panel member should be familiar with the role profile and competencies needed. It is also good practice to look at the performance criteria for each competency as detailed in the DVO Framework. The Chair will answer questions and at the end of the pre-meeting all panel members should be aware of what is expected of them.

Questions

Interview questions should relate to the competencies and performance criteria detailed within the job notice and competency framework.

You should be asking for specific examples which allow a candidate to demonstrate that they have met the competency. You will be looking for candidates to cover the 3 As within their responses, i.e. what they did (Action), how they did it (Approach) and what the outcome was (Accomplishment). It is not good practice to ask hypothetical questions but to ask for actual examples.

HR will supply the leading questions to be used under each competency and the panel should decide on the lead questions to be used at the pre-meet. It is open to interviewers to modify questions to provide a relevant context, while not undermining the process. The responses should be used to rate how the candidate has demonstrated where they meet the competency. Ratings should be made on the basis of the evidence provided by the candidate. Notes of the questions asked and the candidates' responses must be made and collected by the Chair at the end of the interview.

New competencies or selection criteria cannot be added.

Most of the questions you ask will be open questions beginning with the words:

- what
- how
- why
- when
- where
- who

This type of question is useful for obtaining information. You should also ask additional probing questions to ensure the candidate has the best opportunity to provide the evidence. These may be:

- tell me about …
- give me an example of …
- what was your role?
- What was the outcome/result?

When asking your questions you must ensure that you do not introduce any bias and that your questions are not either directly or indirectly discriminatory.

Opening

The Panel Chair should try to put the candidate at ease, introduce the other panel member, ensure the candidate is comfortable and describe the purpose and format of the interview. They should explain that the interview will be competency based, that the panel members will take notes and that at the end of the interview the candidate will have the opportunity to add anything they feel they did not cover and ask questions.

Questioning

Sufficient time must be given within the interview for all necessary competencies to be tested. Only the lead questions agreed at the pre-meet, plus any resultant probing questions, should be asked. Remember that the questions are competency based and situational or 'what if….' questions should not be asked.

Panel members should ensure that the answers are recorded as these notes will be the only source of evidence that will enable you as panel members to justify your ratings and ultimately your selection decision.

Closure

The Chair will give the candidate the opportunity to add anything else in support of their application and ask any questions.

Scoring

Scoring should be completed after each interview when the information is fresh in the panel members' minds. Each panel member should first complete an Individual Rating form independently and then the Chair should complete a Summary Rating form for each candidate. When scoring the evidence, panel members should have regard to the performance criteria of the relevant part of the skills and knowledge framework. The written comments on the Individual Rating form will form part of the feedback to the candidate and should clearly indicate whether the evidence demonstrated the performance criteria. Remember that candidates can request access to information relating to the selection process under the Data Protection Act.

The rating scale

SCORE 3	SCORE 2	SCORE 1	SCORE 0
Evidence is: **Strong Evidence**	Evidence is: **Meets Minimum Standard**	Evidence is: **Limited Evidence**	Evidence is: **No Evidence**

Evidence rated as strong would contain:
A clear identification of what the applicant has done (action)
How they did it (approach)
What key issues arose and how the candidate handled them (approach)
The outcome and where appropriate lessons learned (accomplishment).

For a candidate to pass the interview, they must score at **least 2** on each of the competencies tested at interview.

The information from these interview ratings forms will be incorporated into a final overall board report, which will be completed by HR.

At the end of the interviews, the Chair should complete the order of merit list from the interviews.   All papers should be returned by the Chair to the Recruitment Team.

DfT Recruitment

Interview/Assessment Event

Guidance on Providing Candidate Feedback

Each candidate will automatically receive written feedback on their performance at interview / assessment centre, via the candidate feedback template. In some exceptional cases, e.g. where the posts are difficult to fill, where the applicants were surplus civil servants, or where there is a need to retain the engagement of these applicants, the advertising manager or chair of the panel may choose to provide 1:1 verbal feedback either face-to-face if location allows, or via a telephone conversation.

The following guidance outlines how you provide feedback to the candidate.

Explain to the candidate that the format for the feedback session will concentrate on how they performed on the day for this particular role and it is no reflection on how they may perform in their current role.

Ensure you have the competency and skill definitions with you. Read out the top line definition to the candidate to ensure they understand what they were being assessed against.

Explain the rating scale to the candidate.

Explain that where a criteria was being covered in more than one exercise the evidence from each exercise was robustly discussed with the assessors and an overall score was allocated. It is not simply looking for the average score, it will depend on the full range of evidence observed for each of the criteria. The feedback is not exercise specific.

You should also explain that you are not there to defend any scores but simply to feedback to the candidate the results.