

GSR Recruitment Guidance Part 2 – Applying the GSR Recruitment Principles in practice

When is the next central recruitment campaign taking place?

It has been decided that GSRU will not be undertaking a central recruitment campaign during the calendar year 2010. However, GSR is taking part in the Analytical Fast Stream, providing an entry route (dependant on departments having vacancies) for external candidates to take up roles as GSR Fast Streamers (pay and grading equivalent to an experienced RO).

How do I initiate the recruitment process?

As soon as it is known that a GSR role will become vacant, or a new post is authorised, member organisations should follow the steps below.

1. Identify the recruiting manager for the vacancy; prepare the job description and person specification [jump to 'choose relevant competencies], and register the vacancy with your local HR department. You **must** fulfil the local HR recruitment criteria before you can think about next steps. This would normally mean searching through the local redeployment pool and advertising in your own organisation.
2. Once step 1 is completed you can contact GSRU to:
 - Obtain details of candidates in the redeployment pool and/or external recruits pool. Once you have approval to advertise the vacancy outside your organisation, you must contact GSRU: Andrew.teale@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk for details of all eligible members of the GSR redeployment pool. You must consider the suitability of these members for your vacancy before it is advertised to the wider membership/across the civil service. For full details/guidance click here [link to redeployment pages].
3. Once Step 2 is completed GSRU will advertise the vacancy on GSR Civil Pages and you should arrange for your HR team to place the advert on Civil Service Gateway and internal sites where necessary. For guidance on how to manage your recruitment process click here [jump to managing your recruitment campaign].
4. Obtain suitable assessment materials [jump to using the right assessment tests]. Book suitable assessors [jump to choosing relevant assessors].

FAQs

How do I combine GSR competencies with local competencies?

This should be relatively easy to do – GSRs competencies will map onto most local frameworks – consider the how the essence or spirit of a GSR competency matches one in your local framework, without getting bogged down in competency titles or detailed descriptions. The one GSR competency which probably won't map is Professional Expertise, so you should assess this and any others which really don't map within the competency based interview. GSRU can advise if needed.

What is the procedure when assessing for a secondment?

If the recruiting department wants the secondee to be badged as a member of GSR they will be required to follow the standard GSR recruitment procedure. They will also be required to

follow the normal local HR procedures. GSRU can provide case by case advice at the time of need.

What are the requirements of assessors?

At least one member of a GSR, or joint analytical selection panel will have attended the GSR assessor-training course. Ideally a panel will comprise of assessors at least one grade above the role advertised. Where assessor availability is an issue, then dispensation for using assessors equal to the grade being assessed will be given however this must be agreed with GSRU beforehand and in all instances the chair must be at least one grade senior. All promotion panels must include an assessor from another GSR member organisation.

Choose relevant Competencies

To define the Competencies that are relevant to the vacancy you will need to refer to the GSR Competency Framework which provides details of the relevant competencies for all roles within the GSR structure. You should think about how this translates in to the tasks that the job holder will be required to carry out when in post. This will help to bring the Competencies 'to life', clearly showing how they are relevant. Ultimately this will enable you to ensure the assessment methods used are relevant to the GSR role/grade for which they are being applied. [To download a copy of the GSR Competency Framework click here](#) [link to competencies]

Managing your recruitment campaign

If there is no one suitable in the GSR redeployment pool, GSRU will place an advert for your vacancy on GSR Civil Pages and you should advertise in any other appropriate locations depending on the type of campaign.

Stage 1a: Initial Sift

Candidates are sifted based upon the competency based application form they complete. Candidates selected to the first stage of the process will be assessed to check that they meet the job requirements and have achieved the minimum benchmark set for the competencies

Stage 1b: Knowledge Test & Numerical Test (where appropriate)

Having passed the initial sift candidates on entry into the profession are required to take the Knowledge test and in some instances RO's will need to sit a numerical reasoning test also. Clear benchmarks have been set with regard to these and are used to determine which candidates will be progressed to the final stage of the recruitment process.

Stage 2: Interview and Oral Briefing/Presentation

Candidates take part in a Competency Based Interview where they are asked questions to elicit evidence of the competencies required and, their motivation for the role and membership of GSR. The oral briefing exercise is specifically designed to assess the competencies relevant to the role. The presentation can be used instead of an oral briefing

for PROs or, in addition to the oral briefing for other grades. To be successful candidates will need to have satisfied the competency benchmarks required for the role they have applied to.

Making decisions - Case Conference

In order to decide which candidates have been successful a 'case conference' should be carried out. In this way each candidate is discussed with reference to their 'fit' to the competency profile required for the role. The case conference is an opportunity for assessors to review and integrate all candidate information collected and make a final decision as to their suitability for the role.

GSRU can offer advice about integrating the assessment evidence to reach decisions if needed.

When you have completed your assessment process you will need to notify GSRU of the outcomes of the recruitment exercise. GSRU will then register or amend successful candidates' details on the GSR membership database and where applicable enrol them on the next available GSR induction course.

Please note it is up to the recruiting department to contact their local HR team once they have selected their candidate to process security clearance, contracts, negotiating pay and so on.

Using the right assessment tests

Certain tests are compulsory for each grade, depending on whether the post is advertised internally on level transfer/promotion or, advertised externally. As well as the compulsory tests, there are other tests which can be added into the selection process if preferred or where more rigorous assessment of a particularly competency is required. [For full details of the tests to be used click here](#) [link to test matrices]. To access support and obtain the tests at least one member of the assessment panel must have attended the GSR assessor-training course.

Competency Based Application Form

When making an initial job application candidates are asked to complete an application form which makes use of competency based questions. This means that candidates are asked to provide examples of their experience based upon the desired competencies for the role. This is based upon the widely accepted concept of past performance being a strong predictor of future success.

Oral Briefing

The Oral Briefing exercise is a 'work-simulation exercise', i.e. it is designed to simulate aspects of the job to be performed. The exercise simulates a briefing the job holder might be asked to deliver to a senior research colleague or a policy maker. The candidate is provided with information to review and prepare prior to carrying out the briefing. Subsequently they take part in a question and answer session to further test their understanding of the information provided and also assess their interpersonal skill.

Competency Based Interview

The interview tests the competencies being measured for the role. All candidates are asked the same questions to ensure the process is fair and objective. As with the competency based application form the interview is based on the concept that past performance is a strong predictor of future success.

[Additional assessment tests available](#)

Candidates may be asked to carry out additional selection tests dependent upon the role they are applying for.

Social Research Knowledge Test

The Social Research knowledge Test taps into theoretical knowledge of research methods, the strengths and weakness of different approaches and the candidates' ability to apply them. The test comprises 16 multiple-choice questions and 4 free text questions exploring the basic knowledge and application of statistical, analytical and research skills and techniques.

Written Exercises

Candidates may be asked to carry out a written exercise. This is a 'work-simulation exercise', i.e. it is designed to simulate aspects of the job to be performed. It provides a basis for assessing the competencies required in the job.

Presentation

The candidate will have prepared a 10 minute presentation on a pre-set topic which is then delivered to the assessors, after which they will have up to 20 minutes to ask questions. The presentation is to some extent a combination of the oral briefing and the competency based interview. The presentation topic requires the candidate to reflect upon and describe an example of their past performance that relates to the competencies being measured. Therefore, the content of the presentation is assessed on the basis that a candidate's past performance is a strong predictor of future success. However, the presentation element provides a useful and objective measure of the candidate's personal impact, communication and organisational skills.

[What competencies are measured by the assessment tests?](#)

Each of the assessment tests are designed to assess different competencies from the GSR competency framework. These differ according to the role being assessed. [To view the GSR Test matrices click here](#) [link to the test matrices]

1. Oral Briefing

Role	Competencies measured
Research Officer	Delivering Results, Professional Expertise, Communicating with Impact
Senior Research Officer	Policy & Delivery Focus, Professional Expertise, Communicating with Impact
Principal Research Officer	Policy & Delivery Focus, Professional Expertise, Communicating with Impact

2. Competency Based Interview

Role	Competencies measured
Research Officer	All

Senior Research Officer	All
Principal Research Officer	All

3. Written Test

Role	Competencies measured
Research Officer	NOT APPLICABLE
Senior Research Officer	Delivering Results, Learning & Improving, Critical Analysis and Decision Making, Developing Constructive Relationships
Principal Research Officer	Delivering Results, Learning & Improving, Critical Analysis and Decision Making, Leading & Directing

4. Knowledge Test

Role	Competencies measured
All Grades	Critical Analysis and Decision Making , Professional Expertise

5. Presentation

Role	Competencies measured
Research Officer	Delivering Results, Professional Expertise, Communicating with Impact
Senior Research Officer	Policy & Delivery Focus, Professional Expertise, Communicating with Impact
Principal Research Officer	Policy & Delivery Focus, Professional Expertise, Communicating with Impact

Choosing relevant Assessors

You must ensure that at least one member of the assessment panel has attended the GSR assessor-training course. Furthermore, all panels must include a trained assessor from another GSR member organisation. GSRU have a register of all trained assessors. To receive a copy of the GSR trained assessors list email Andrew.teale@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk.

Assessor Training

The GSR assessor training course is compulsory for all substantive GSR members at SRO and above with 12-18 months seniority. The course is designed to ensure attendees fully understand the requirements of an assessor at a GSR assessment event. It provides delegates with a practical understanding of the assessment tests used by GSR. Focus is also given to the theory supporting the use of assessment techniques.

The workshop is run over two days and takes place on a regular basis over the course of the year.

Module 1 - Basic Assessment Methodology

Who should attend: GSR Members at SRO and above who have not attended a GSR Assessor training course. *Content:* This 1 day module is designed to focus on the core skills required to be an effective GSR assessor. The module covers the following areas:

- Background to assessment centres
- The GSR competency framework
- The ORCE methodology of assessment
- Competency Based Interviewing
- Sifting candidates
- Roles at the assessment centre
- Rating assessment data
- Integrating data & the Case Conference
- The role of the OGD assessor

Module 2 – GSR Assessment in practice

Who should attend: All GSR Members at SRO and above

Content: This 1 day module builds on module 1 to focus on the application of the ORCE model in simulation tests. Delegates will be introduced to the new GSR assessment tests and will have the opportunity to practice their assessment skills through a variety of exercises.

The programme covers the following areas:

- recap of the ORCE methodology
- introduction to the new suite of assessment tests
- practical sessions – incorporating the new assessment tests
- integrating data and the case conference
- an introduction to psychometrics

NB Individuals who have not received GSR assessor training previously will be required to attend both modules 1 & 2. ***Those who have attended a GSR assessor training programme will be required to attend module 2 as all selection tests are refreshed every 12 month period.***

To book a place on either GSR Assessor Training module click [here](#)

Feedback

It is best practice, a legal requirement and the policy of GSRU to provide candidates with meaningful feedback on their performance in the selection process. Whether successful or not candidates will be provided with feedback when their part in the selection process is complete. It is important that you make relevant notes for feedback as the process progresses to ensure you have this available for collation when required. Where candidates have been unsuccessful in the knowledge test, GSRU will issue feedback to them.

If a candidate has been successful in the knowledge test but is unsuccessful at stage 2, test scores will be retained for 1 year. The results of these tests may be used again in subsequent applications within that 1 year period.

GSR Competency Framework

The GSR competency framework comprises nine competencies which represent the behaviour required to succeed in social research roles. These are defined in detail to reflect the differing requirements for each of the roles. [Insert competency framework link here.](#)

In order to assess the framework GSR use the following five point scale which is defined for each exercise using Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS).

Scale	Description
5 – (Very good / well above the required standard for entry level into that grade)	Strong positive evidence seen with few weaknesses and no, or very little, negative evidence. Overall, a highly acceptable (very good) performance that comfortably exceeds an acceptable standard in this area.
4 – (Good / above the required standard for entry level into that grade)	Good positive evidence seen. There may be some negative evidence but this is slight or occasional, but in any event is easily out-weighed by the positive. Overall, a good performance, which indicates a more than acceptable achievement in this area.
3 – (Reasonable / reaches an acceptable standard for entry level into that grade)	Positive evidence seen, although there may be some inconsistency in performance (e.g., candidate may sometimes fail to show sufficient positive evidence or may occasionally show 'good' positive evidence). Negative evidence is relatively minor and is outweighed by the positive. Overall the candidate's performance was acceptable even though they would benefit from further development.
2 – (Poor / below the required standard for entry level into that grade)	Some positive evidence seen but this was insufficient, or the positive evidence was outweighed by the negative evidence. The candidate's performance showed significant weaknesses and indicates that he/she needs development to perform at the required standard. Overall, performance is generally below the standard required for this area.
1 – (Very poor / well below the required standard for entry level into that grade)	Little positive evidence seen for this competency, or candidate demonstrates significant negative evidence. On balance, a weak (very little positive evidence) or unacceptable performance (significant negative evidence), which indicates that the candidate is well short

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	of the required standard.
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