Civil Service HR

Guidance:
Application of Success Profiles during
HR Director recruitment

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HR Director Success Profiles

Success Profile guides have been developed to assist you in designing a successful recruitment process for HR Director roles, including expressions of interest for temporary roles.

There will be differences and more specific requirements for the roles depending on the organisational context and the Success Profile guides are not designed to be used prescriptively; they have been produced as starting guides and do not replace the requirement for job analysis to be undertaken prior to recruiting. Vacancy holders should also refer to the HR Career Framework and the CIPD Profession Map when drafting recruitment materials.

The four HR Director Success Profile guides are:

- HR Director: Leading a Function

- HR Director: Centre of Excellence 1. Talent, Organisational Development and Diversity and Inclusion

- HR Director: Centre of Excellence 2. Policy, Employee Relations and Workforce Strategy

- HR Director: Chief Operating Officer or HR Operations

Not all elements of the Success Profile guides will be relevant to every role, so the composition of the Success Profile should be different for different types of job to improve the chances of hiring the best person for the role.

Pre-Recruitment Launch Activity

The CSHR Capability and Talent Team support the HR Talent Forums and work with the Government Recruitment Service and departmental recruiting teams to collate HR campaign data.

It is recommended that the Capability and Talent Team are informed before any planned HR Director campaigns are advertised, including any temporary promotion opportunities. This will enable the team to provide the vacancy holder with insight on potential candidates from across the HR Function, including 'above the line' candidates from previous campaigns, and could remove the need to run a full competition.

Information should be sent to capabilityandtalent@cabinetoffice.gov.uk outlining the details of the role and proposed approach on recruitment.

The approach that SCS vacancies should be advertised externally is still in place but that does not stop vacancy holders from considering internal moves on level transfer in the first instance for developmental purposes.

Recruitment Design

The selection for appointment to the Senior Civil Service must continue to be undertaken on the principle of merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

After undertaking a thorough job analysis of the vacancy to define the role requirements, the vacancy holder should refer to the relevant HRD Success Profile guide(s) and select relevant elements to define the Success Profile for the specific role, taking into consideration the context of the role and the composition of the wider leadership team. Once defined, the elements will form the person specification in the recruitment materials.

As a guide, it is recommended that no more than four behaviours are prioritised as critical to the role. This will allow the panel to sufficiently test the criteria at interview stage, along with a candidate's strengths and experience.

When considering the experience required the vacancy holder should adhere to the central CSEP guidance that, where experience can be gained within six months of commencing a role it should not be considered as essential experience at the point of recruitment.

Recruitment Design (continued)

The vacancy holder should ensure the experience being assessed is clear in its requirements and it is recommended that services such as Textio are considered to promote the use of inclusive language.

When determining the the appropriate strengths for the role, vacancy holders should consider the strengths that map to their selected behaviours. It is also acceptable to select strengths which align to behaviours deemed as important for the role, but not selected as core, as part of the Success Profile.

In addition, it is recommended that the specific strengths being assessed are not explicitly referenced in recruitment materials such as adverts, candidate information packs and interview invitation letters. A well written person specification will indicate requirements that relate to the chosen strengths without being so explicit that candidates prepare their responses prior to the interview stage.

Assessment matrix

Success Profile element	Sift		Leadership assessment(s)		Decision making assessment	
	CV/Statement of Suitability	Expression of Interest	Individual Leadership Assessment	Staff Engagement Exercise	Interview	Presentation
Technical	●	●			●	●
Behaviours	●	●	●	●	●	●
Strengths			●	●	●	
Experience	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ability			●	●		

HR Director roles will test technical, experience, behaviours, strengths and ability. Leaders at this level should be able to demonstrate their professional authority and this may be better tested with an experience based assessment. SCS recruitment already operates in a way that follows the Success Profiles methodology for blended and role-centered testing.

Assessment options for HR Directors

Sifting assessment

At sift, candidates submit a CV and personal statement which will be considered against the person specification. Evidence of the candidates' **behaviours**, **technical** skills and **experience** are considered together and a single score given. It is acceptable to award a score using either the 7 point scale, which aligns with the vX application tracking system, or the following 3 point scale:

- A - candidate meets all the criteria

- B - borderline/candidate meets some of the criteria

- C - candidate does not meet the criteria

Those who clearly meet the criteria will progress to the next stage. Those who meet some of the criteria may progress to the next stage of assessment depending on the places available.

Pre-interview leadership assessment

The Individual Leadership Assessment (ILA) and staff engagement exercise (SEE) are not scored. The findings will be shared with the interview panel for the next stage of assessment, along with suggested probing questions. The panel will use this information to decide what probing questions to ask to explore whether candidates have demonstrated the required **behaviours**, **strengths**, **experience** and **ability** for the role.

Interview assessment

The blended interview will assess **experience**, **technical** skills, **behaviours** and **strengths**.

It will also includes a 5-minute presentation covering a set topic related to the candidate's leadership experience.

Experience, **technical** skills and **behaviours** should be scored using the 7 point scale. **Strengths** should be scored using the 4 point scale.

Panel members should observe, record, classify, evaluate and score each question independently before jointly calculating and agreeing an overall score based on all of the candidate information, including the pre-interview leadership assessment reports.

Use of Executive Search Firms

If the vacancy holder has engaged an Executive Search firm, they should instruct them to undertake the long list and shortlist process in accordance with the criteria set out in the person specification, as has traditionally been the case.

The vacancy holder may also wish to ask their chosen Executive Search firm to explain the methodology of Success Profiles to the individuals they are engaging with to demystify the terminology. It can be made clear that 'Success Profiles' is internal branding which packages a more flexible framework which assesses candidates against a range of elements using a variety of selection methods.

Interview process

Interview questions should be designed to allow the candidate ample opportunity to provide the required level of evidence to demonstrate their capability for the role.

The Occupation Psychology Team (OPT) can assist with the drafting of assessment materials. Please note, there will be a **cost** associated with this bespoke service and it is recommended that contact is made with OPT during the early planning stages of a recruitment campaign. For further details and to check availability, please contact occupationalpsychologyteam@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

A Civil Service Commissioner will chair the interview process. In addition, all interview panels for centrally managed SCS recruitment run by Whitehall departments, the Scottish and Welsh Governments and their associated agencies should have at least one panellist who is from an ethnic minority background and/or has a disability.

All panellists should have undertaken training on interview skills prior to sitting on an interview panel.

Video Interviewing

It is acceptable to conduct live video interviews online, where candidates and multiple panel members join the interview at a predetermined time, and this format is compatible with strengths-based assessment.

This may be preferable in some cases, for example if panel members and the candidates are in multiple locations or you require the ability to record or view interviews live.

If choosing to undertake video interviewing, it is important that the panellists engage in a pre-discussion to agree the running of the interview and who will be leading on different questions. It is also essential that checks are made to ensure that the chosen technology is available, accessible and compatible for all panel members and candidates taking part, and the panel should consider if any reasonable adjustments are required, arising either from access to technology or a range of other conditions

Diversity

Diversity outcomes were analysed, for all groups, to monitor impact on protected characteristics to ensure they enabled fair outcomes for all groups in blended interviews.

Analysis indicated that, on the whole, there are no adverse impacts indicated with outcomes based on protected characteristics - as long as selection methods are delivered in a structured and consistent way, and training is provided to and/or official guidance is followed by those who are involved in delivering and assessing/making selection decisions.

Further guidance

Success Profiles: Overview

Success Profiles: Experience

Success Profiles: Civil Service Strengths dictionary

Success Profiles: Civil Service Behaviours

Success Profiles: Technical

Success Profiles: Interview methodology

Success Profiles: Scoring case studies

End.