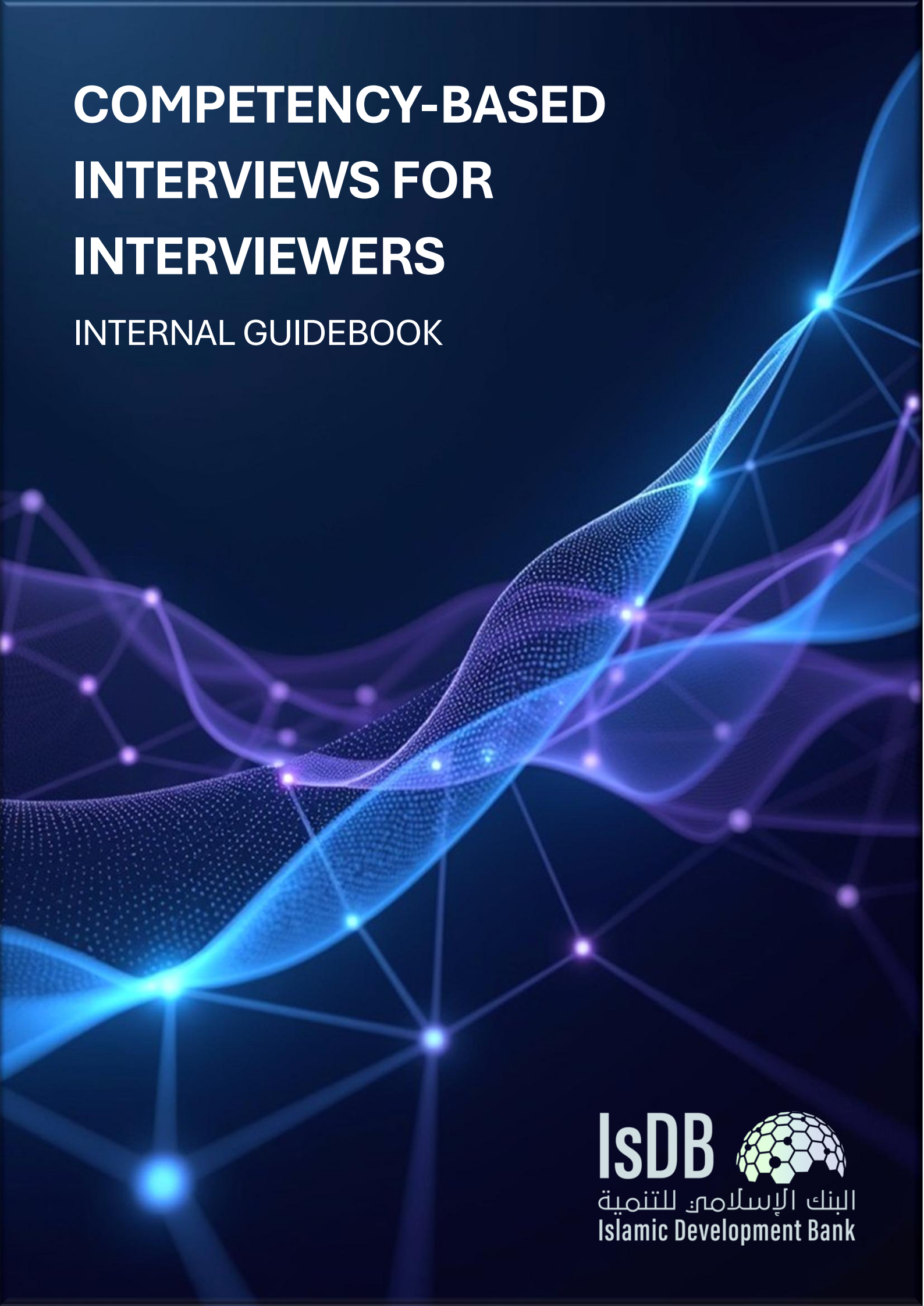
# COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS FOR INTERVIEWERS

INTERNAL GUIDEBOOK



IsDB
البنك الإسلامي للتنمية
Islamic Development Bank

# COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS FOR INTERVIEWERS

# INTERNAL GUIDEBOOK

**A practical guide for HR professionals and line managers**

This guidebook supports the IsDB ***Competency-based Interviews for Interviewers*** programme and is designed for real interview use. It focuses on competencies as patterns of behaviour in the performance pathway, evidence quality in live interviews, disciplined scoring, and the consistency standards required across panels and departments.

**Created By**

ORGMASTR

# Contents

# How to use this guide

— Read Sections 1 and 2 first if you want the conceptual foundation: what competencies are, where they sit in the performance pathway, and why the distinction between KSAOs, behaviour, and outcomes matters.
— Use Sections 3 to 9 as the practical manual for interview preparation, questioning, probing, note-taking, scoring, calibration, and panel practice.
— Use the tables and checklists as working tools. They are written to be usable across technical, managerial, professional, and support roles within the Bank.
— Use the final section as a quick reference before live interviews.

# 1. Why this programme matters for IsDB

Interviewing in large organisations is often treated as an ordinary management activity. In reality, it is not ordinary at all. Interviewers sit at a decisive point between institutional standards and human judgement. They influence who enters the organisation, how fairness is experienced, how professionalism is upheld, and how well the organisation matches role requirements with future performance. In a bank such as IsDB, where roles span specialist, operational, managerial, and leadership demands, interview quality is not a peripheral matter. It is a **quality-control function in talent acquisition**.

The ***Competency-based Interviews for Interviewers*** programme here in IsDB emphasises that interviewer capability matters because traditional hiring decisions can become subjective when too much weight is given to intuition, confidence, conversational style, or personal preference. It also emphasises that competencies are harder to assess consistently unless **interviewers know what evidence to look for, how to probe for it, and how to document it clearly**. Time pressure then amplifies the problem: when interviews are short, structure becomes more important, not less. Focused questioning, disciplined probing, and clear scoring logic improve judgement under constraint. This is why the programme treats interviewers as both gatekeepers for talent and custodians of standards. It is not merely about asking better questions; it is about protecting the quality of institutional judgement.

The programme's objectives also underline a broader intention: to **strengthen interviewer capability across managers, directors, and HR colleagues**; standardise interviewing processes across departments; align practice with talent acquisition guidelines; and **support the goal of hiring high-quality candidates**. That agenda is larger than interview technique alone. It is about creating a common interviewing language across functions and panels, so that assessment quality does not depend excessively on the habits of individual interviewers or on the culture of one department compared with another.

# 2. What competencies are, and are not

The word competency is used so casually in organisations that it often creates more confusion than clarity. Different organisations, professions, and texts use it to mean different things. Sometimes it refers to knowledge and skills. Sometimes it refers to standards or outcomes. Sometimes it refers to values and cultural expectations. Sometimes, and most usefully for interview assessment here, it refers to the behaviour or action that a person demonstrates in a real work situation and that contributes to a meaningful result.

That distinction matters because interviewers are not just listening for general merit. They are trying to make a judgement about whether the candidate can demonstrate the kinds of behaviour that matter for effective performance in the role and in the institutional setting. When everything is called a competency, interviewer judgement becomes blurred. The programme therefore distinguishes four broad uses of the term.

— First, predictors or KSAOs: knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that may help predict performance.
— Secondly, outcomes or standards: the results, KPIs, measures, or standards that tell us whether performance happened.
— Thirdly, **behaviours or actions**: the observable things people actually do, decide, initiate, monitor, or change in order to create results.
— Fourthly, normative or cultural 'competencies:' values-based or identity-based expectations such as conduct, or alignment with institutional principles.

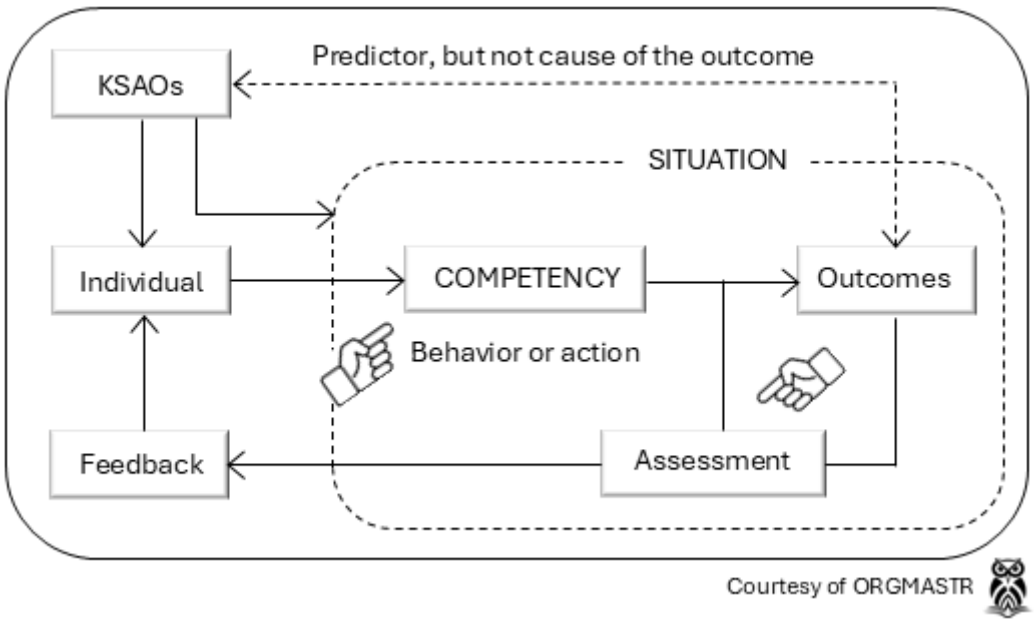
For interview assessment, the most useful competency is the third kind (and recommended here): a pattern of behaviour demonstrated in context. This does not mean KSAOs are irrelevant (recruitment and talent management focus), nor that outcomes do not matter (performance management). It means that they are not the same thing as the behaviour itself. KSAOs may tell us something about a person's likely readiness or background; outcomes tell us that something happened; but the interviewer is trying to surface the action in between. In practical terms, this is why good competency interviewing asks for real examples, decisions, behaviours, context, and consequences rather than accepting broad claims such as "I am collaborative," "I am strategic," or "I have strong stakeholder skills."

A practical working definition used in the programme is this: *a competency* ***is a pattern of behaviour demonstrated for effective on-the-job performance and contributing favourably to the organisation's performance, environment, and adaptability***. The first half of that definition keeps attention on role performance. The second half reminds interviewers that there is more at stake than individual task completion. In real organisations, behaviour influences how teams work, how standards are protected, how risk is handled, and how the institutional environment is reinforced.

**Table 1. Distinguishing what is often called a "competency"**

| Type | What it means | Example | Interview implication |
|---|---|---|---|
| **KSAO / predictor** | Knowledge, skill, ability, experience, or attribute linked to performance | Financial analysis knowledge; language skill; regulatory experience | Useful background, but not sufficient evidence of how the person acts in role |
| **Outcome / standard** | Result, target, KPI, quality level, or formal standard achieved | Project delivered; risk reduced; audit standard met | Shows that something happened, but not necessarily what behaviour created it |
| **Behaviour / action** | Observable pattern of conduct in a specific work situation | Escalates risk early; weighs evidence objectively; coordinates across functions | Primary focus of competency interviewing |
| **Normative / cultural expectation** | Value-based or conduct-based expectation tied to organisational identity | Stewardship; professionalism; living the values | Relevant, but must still be tested through examples, not slogan repetition |

**Figure 1. Where the competency sits in the performance pathway**




KSAOs = Knowledge, Skill, Attributes and Other

# 3. The performance pathway: capability to result

One of the most useful ideas in the programme is that people do something to differentiate their impact and performance. Two individuals may appear similar on paper. They may both have strong qualifications, similar experience, and comparable role-related knowledge. Yet their workplace impact differs. Competency thinking asks: **what are they actually doing in-role that helps explain the difference**? That is the practical question sitting behind competency assessment.

The human performance pathway used in this programme is helpful precisely because it prevents interviewers from collapsing everything into a single judgement. A person brings KSAOs or predictor characteristics into the role. The person then acts in a real situation. In that situation, certain behaviours are demonstrated. Those behaviours contribute to outcomes. Assessment follows from evidence of the behaviour and its consequence. Once seen in this way, the interviewer's task becomes clearer. The interviewer is not simply judging whether the candidate *sounds* competent. The interviewer is listening for whether the candidate can describe credible, relevant patterns of behaviour that link their capability to the result.

This logic matters for three reasons. First, it improves question design. If the interviewer knows that behaviour is the target, the question can be constructed to elicit behaviour. Secondly, it improves note-taking. Notes can be organised around situation, action, and outcome rather than around impressions of the candidate. Thirdly, it improves scoring. The assessor can ask whether the situation was real and relevant, whether the behaviour was clearly evidenced, whether the outcome was traceable, and whether the judgement is documented clearly enough for another assessor to follow.

**Table 2. A simple evidence frame for competency interviewing**

| Element | What the interviewer listens for | Why it matters |
|---|---|---|
| **Situation** | A real context, challenge, decision point, risk, or requirement | Shows whether the example is specific and relevant rather than generic |
| **Behaviour** | What the candidate actually did, said, decided, initiated, changed, or monitored | Surfaces the competency in action |
| **Outcome** | What happened as a consequence: result, change, lesson, standard, impact | Links the action to something meaningful |
| **Ownership** | Which part belonged to the candidate and which part belonged to others | Prevents inflation of team achievements |
| **Judgement** | Why the candidate chose that approach and how trade-offs were handled | Shows quality of thinking, not just activity |

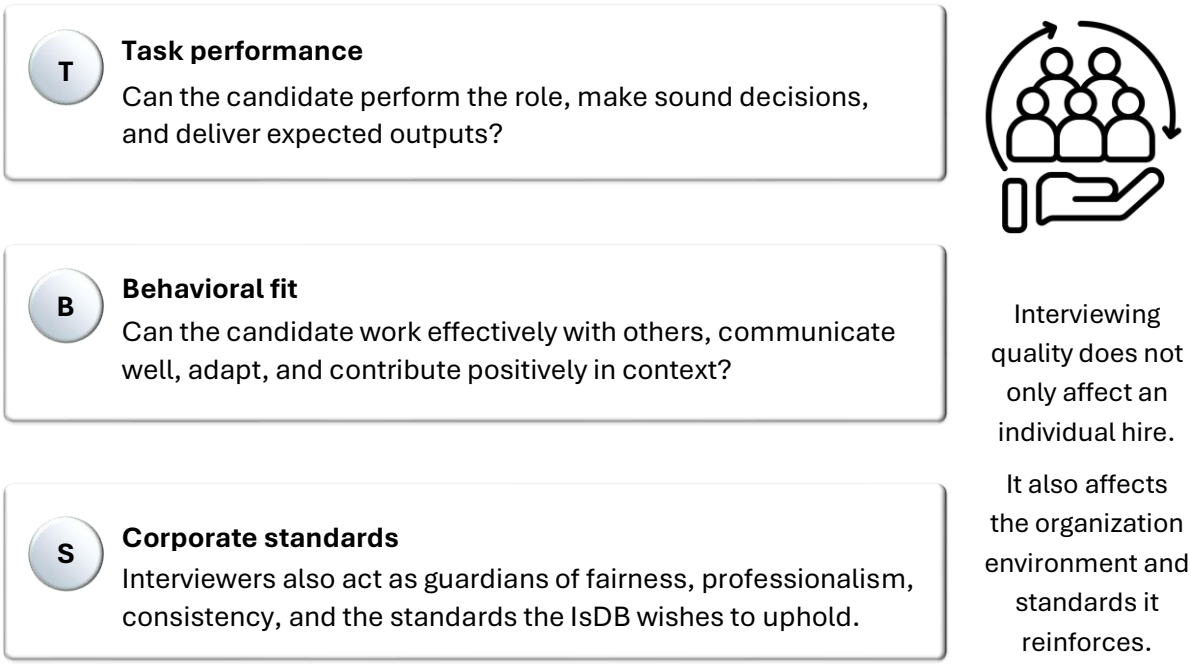
This also explains why the programme emphasises the **difference between evidence and impression**. When a candidate says, "I am a strong communicator," that is not yet evidence. When a candidate describes a case in which they reconciled conflicting stakeholder demands, clarified the decision path, adjusted messaging to suit audience needs, and achieved a specific outcome, the interviewer now has something more usable. The interview becomes stronger when the candidate is doing the describing and the interviewer is doing disciplined listening, probing, and documenting.

# 4. Competencies, capability, and standards (IsDB)

Competency assessment is sometimes described too narrowly as a way of testing whether someone can do a job. That is only partly true. This programme stresses that competencies are also about standards and organisational capability. Interview quality does not affect only an individual hire. It also affects the environment and standards that the organisation reinforces through its selection decisions.

There are at least three layers to keep in mind. The first is task performance: can the candidate perform the role, make sound decisions, and deliver expected outputs? The second is behavioural fit in the serious sense of the term, not as a social comfort test: can the candidate work effectively with others, communicate clearly, adapt to context, and contribute positively in the organisational setting? The third is corporate standards: fairness, professionalism, consistency, stewardship, and disciplined judgement in the interview process itself. Interviewers therefore assess competency, but they also enact competency themselves. They model the very standards they are trying to protect.

**Figure 2. Competencies are also about standards and organizational capability**



For line managers, this means competency interviewing should not be treated as an HR-only ritual. **Managers are closest to the realities of work**, the practical demands of roles, and the ways in which technical and behavioural performance combine. They bring valuable judgement on what effective action looks like in context. For HR, this means the process dimension matters greatly. HR protects consistency across departments, keeps practice aligned with policy and standards, helps structure questions and documentation, and reduces the risk that one panel interprets competency very differently from another. This is an important governance role.

The guidebook is therefore written for both audiences together. HR and line managers do not bring the same contribution, but both are essential. A well-run panel interview uses this complementarity. The line manager brings operational and role realism; HR brings process integrity and standardisation; both should work from the same evidence logic.

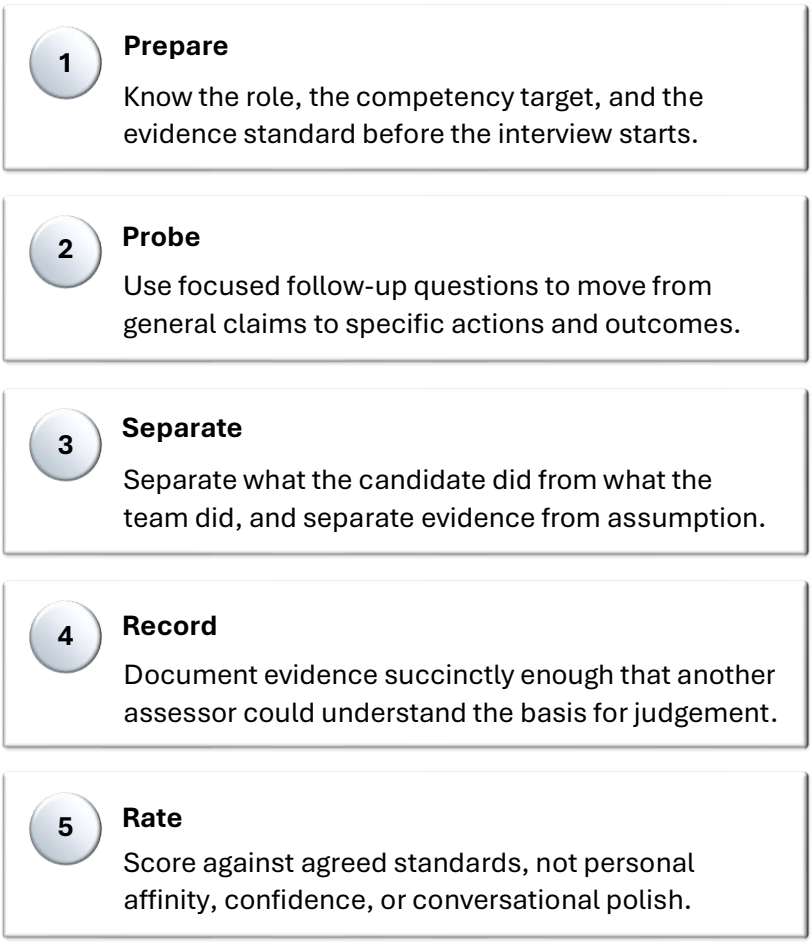
# 5. Preparing for a competency interview

Good interviews do not begin when the candidate enters the room or joins the call. They begin in preparation. The programme highlights five important yet simple disciplines: **prepare, probe, separate, record, rate**. One of the key benefits from this discipline is bias mitigation through interviewing; much of this is a natural human trait, and requires robust structures and processes, covered in more detail in sections 7–9. Preparation comes first because weak preparation creates downstream problems that no amount of live improvisation can fully solve. If the interviewer is unclear about the role, the competency target, and the evidence standard, the interview will drift into general conversation.

Preparation starts with the role. **What does this role actually need to achieve**? Which behaviours are likely to matter most if the person is to perform effectively in context? Which of those are technical or task-oriented, and which are adaptive, cross-functional, or organisational? The TACO™ lens (Appendix B) introduced through this programme is helpful here. Not every role requires the same balance. Some roles rely heavily on technical evidence and direct task performance. Others place stronger emphasis on adaptive learning, cross-functional collaboration, stakeholder handling, or organisational stewardship. The question is not which domain is superior; it is which behavioural evidence is most material for this role.

Preparation then moves to **evidence standards**. What would count as a credible example? What would be too vague? What would indicate strong judgement? What level of consequence or traceability would be meaningful for the role level? If the role is senior, the panel may expect more evidence of judgment under ambiguity, coordination across boundaries, or governance sensitivity. If the role is more specialised, the panel may need more direct evidence of technical decision-making, error handling, process discipline, or regulatory awareness. In either case, the evidence standard must be thought about before the interview, not invented halfway through it.

**Figure 3. Five interviewer disciplines that protect quality**




**Bias mitigation, consistency, and clean documentation are not "extra" activities – they are core interviewing capability.**

Finally, preparation includes **panel alignment**. The group training deck is right to emphasise panel roles. Consistency improves when the panel does not have everyone doing everything at once. One interviewer can lead and frame. Another can handle pre-agreed probes. Another can take the scoring lead and manage evidence capture. HR can maintain process integrity and fairness. Panels do not always need a rigid division of labour, but they do need role clarity. Otherwise, questions become repetitive, probes become leading, note-taking becomes partial, and scoring is shaped too heavily by the strongest voice in the room.

**Preparation checklist**

→ Clarify the purpose of the role (job description and person specification) and the behaviours most likely to matter for effective performance.
→ Select a small number of competency targets rather than test everything badly.
→ Translate each target into a question plan: opening question, likely probes, evidence sought, and rating anchor.
→ Agree the panel roles before the interview begins.
→ Agree how notes will be taken and how scores will be recorded.
→ Review any fairness, documentation, or policy requirements relevant to the interview.

**Table 3. Example preparation map by role focus**

| Role focus | Likely behavioural emphasis | Typical evidence sought | Assessment caution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Technical specialist** | Technical + judgement | Problem diagnosis, decision logic, standards, error handling | Do not confuse technical fluency with disciplined behaviour under constraint |
| **Manager** | Adaptive + cross-functional | Delegation, prioritisation, decision quality, coordination, people judgement | Do not accept team outcomes without clarifying personal contribution |
| **Senior leader** | Cross-functional + organisational | Judgement under ambiguity, institutional standards, trade-offs | Do not let polished language substitute for traceable examples |
| **Support / service role** | Technical + behavioural | Client handling, process reliability, communication, responsiveness | Do not overweight charm if documentation or standards are weak |

# 6. Designing good competency interview questions

Question design is where conceptual clarity becomes practical value. The programme repeatedly emphasises that interviewers should start with the competency to be evidenced and then build a question set that invites concrete description, not general self-presentation. This is a subtle but critical shift. Many weak interviews start with a topic and hope for useful evidence. Better interviews start with the behaviour target and then shape a question that gives the candidate a fair opportunity to surface it.

A good question design process has four steps. First, define the **target behaviour**. Name the competency as a behaviour to be evidenced in role. This often works best when expressed with a verb: assesses, analyses, decides, escalates, collaborates, coordinates, challenges, clarifies, adapts, prioritises. Secondly, specify the **evidence frame**. Clarify the kind of situation, the behaviour, the consequence or outcome, and the standard that will matter for judgement. Thirdly, write the **opening question**. This should ask for a real example. The candidate should have to do the describing. Fourthly, prepare follow-up **probes** that test depth, sequencing, ownership, judgement, and consequences.

The practical formula used in the group training deck is effective because it forces the interviewer toward specificity: “Tell us about a time when you had to [target behaviour]

in a situation where [context or constraint]. What exactly did you do, how did you decide, and what happened as a result?" It is not the only formula, but it is a reliable one. It invites a real case, locates the candidate in context, and creates a route into action and result.

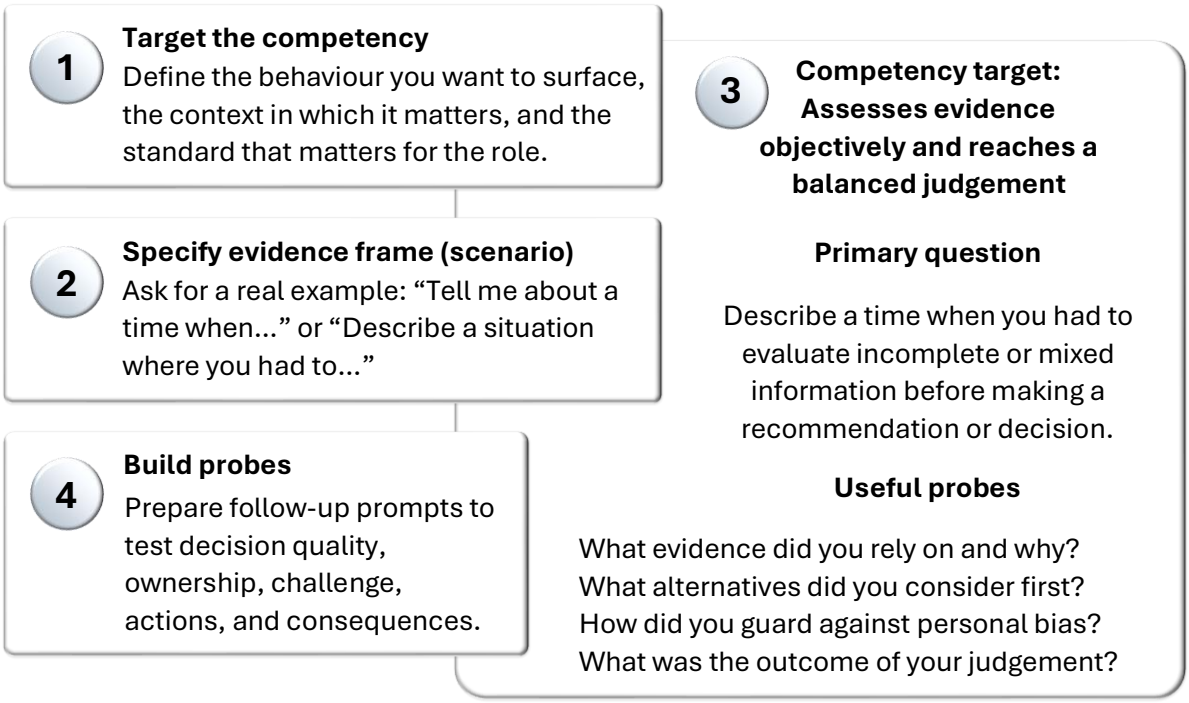
This also means that question quality is partly about what the question does not do. It should not lead the candidate toward a preferred answer. It should not be so broad that the candidate can remain at abstract level. It should not combine too many competencies in one question. It should not depend on insider language or assumptions unfamiliar to candidates from different backgrounds. And it should not be an abstract hypothetical unless there is a specific reason to test hypothetical reasoning. In general, past-behaviour examples are more useful because they are easier to probe and document.

Where technical clarifiers are needed, they should still be attached to behaviour. For example, a technical role may require the candidate to explain how they evaluated mixed financial or operational evidence before making a recommendation. The panel is not just testing whether the person knows the subject; it is testing how the person behaved in the presence of that subject matter. This is an important difference. **Technical interviewing without behavioural anchoring can become a knowledge quiz**. Competency interviewing without technical realism can become too generic. Strong question design integrates both where required.

**Table 4. Examples of weak and stronger interview questions**

| Competency target | Weak question | Stronger question |
|---|---|---|
| **Objectivity in judgement** | Are you objective when making decisions? | Describe a time when you had to evaluate incomplete or mixed information before making a recommendation or decision. |
| **Cross-functional collaboration** | How do you work with other departments? | Tell us about a time when progress depended on cooperation from another function with different priorities from your own. What did you do? |
| **Risk escalation** | Would you escalate a risk if needed? | Describe a situation in which you identified a concern that others had not yet acted on. How did you decide whether and how to escalate it? |
| **Adaptability** | Are you adaptable? | Tell us about a time when assumptions or circumstances changed and you had to adjust your approach quickly. |
| **Professional standards** | Do you value professionalism? | Describe a situation where professional or organisational standards were under pressure. What did you do to protect them? |

**Figure 4. From competency target to interview question**




# 7. Probing: how to move from claim to evidence

The opening question rarely does all the work. Competency interviewing becomes powerful because of probing. Good probes do not rescue the candidate, and they do not lead the candidate toward what the interviewer wants to hear. Their purpose is to **clarify evidence**. The programme promotes a very practical probing ladder: **context, ownership, action, judgement, outcome**. This is a sound discipline because it keeps the interviewer close to what is assessable.

Context questions establish the real situation. What was happening? Why did it matter? What constraint, pressure, or requirement defined the case? Ownership questions establish what part belonged to the candidate. Who else was involved? Which part did the candidate actually lead or decide? Action questions surface the behaviour itself. What did the candidate do, in what sequence, and with what specific steps? Judgement questions surface choice quality. How did the candidate decide on that approach? What alternatives or trade-offs were considered? Outcome questions surface consequence and learning. What happened? What changed? How does the candidate know? What would they do differently now?

This is not mechanical if used well. It is a disciplined route through evidence. It helps the interviewer distinguish a polished but thin example from a credible and well-grounded one. It is also a major defence against one of the most common distortions in interviewing: confusing eloquence with substance. Some candidates speak fluently and confidently while giving little that can be documented. Others are less polished but

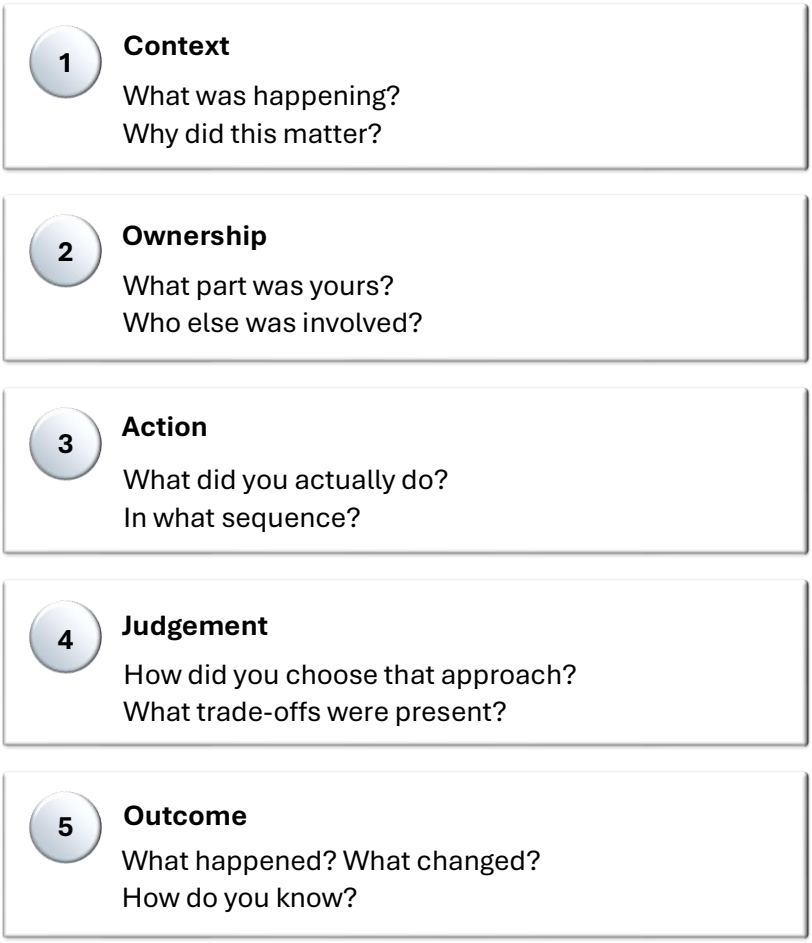
provide excellent underlying evidence once they are helped, fairly and neutrally, to clarify it. Probing is where that distinction often becomes visible.

Probe discipline also reduces bias. When panels use neutral probe stems consistently, the interview becomes less vulnerable to leading questions, conversational drift, or culture-specific assumptions. That is why the programme warns explicitly against using probes to *supply* the answer path. Once evidence is sufficient, probing should stop. The purpose is to clarify, not to coach the candidate into a stronger answer.

**Useful neutral probe stems**

→ What was the real context?
→ What part was yours?
→ What did you do first?
→ What alternatives did you consider?
→ How did you involve others?
→ What result or consequence followed?
→ How do you know that made a difference?
→ What would you do differently now?

**Figure 5. A practical probing ladder**




**Probe to clarify evidence, not to rescue the candidate or lead them toward a preferred answer.**

# 8. Note-taking and evidence capture

A scoring discussion is only as strong as the notes behind it. This point is simple, but it is one of the major practical disciplines in the programme. Interviewers should record four things only: the **situation** or context, the **behaviour** actually described, the **outcome** or consequence, and the **basis for interviewer judgement**. Good notes are short, neutral, and traceable back to the candidate's own evidence.

This matters because poor notes create three problems. First, they make scoring weaker. If the note says only "strong communicator" or "good strategic thinker," there is little on which to base a defensible rating. Secondly, they increase bias risk. Vague evaluative notes are more easily coloured by likeability, confidence, or first impressions. Thirdly, they undermine panel calibration. Another assessor cannot easily follow or challenge a judgement if the notes do not show the evidence chain.

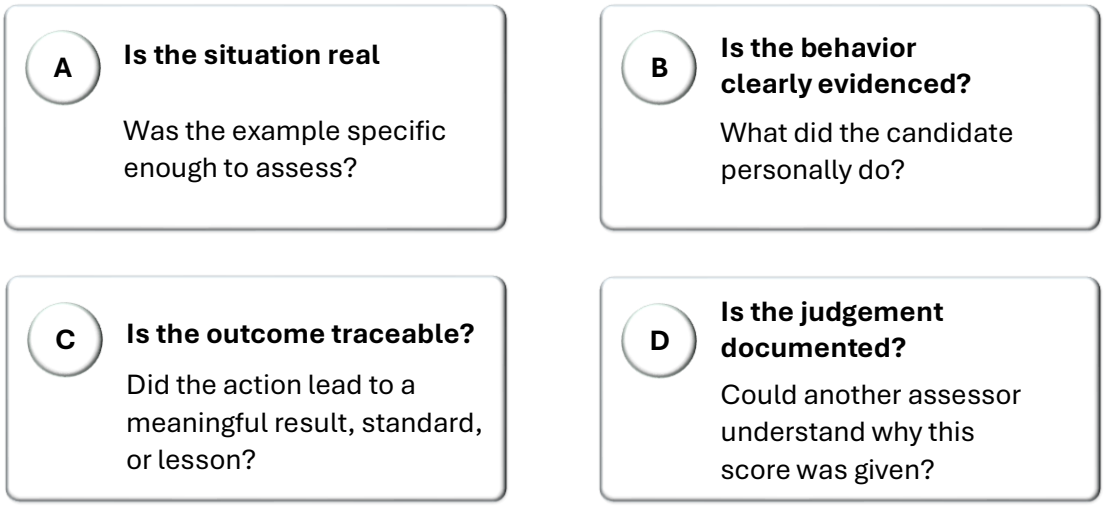
A useful discipline is to write what the candidate did, not what the interviewer inferred. Compare the difference between "impressive, probably collaborative" and "led weekly cross-team review; flagged risk early; changed sequence; reduced delay by two weeks." The second note is much more useful because it records conduct and consequence. It gives the panel material to discuss. The first note gives the panel a feeling, but little else.

For HR, strong notes also support documentation integrity. For line managers, they improve the quality of post-interview reflection and feedback. For both, they make later coaching, reporting, and dashboarding more credible. In other words, documentation is not a bureaucratic afterthought; it is part of the assessment method itself.

**Table 5. What to write down and what to avoid**

| Write this | Avoid this |
|---|---|
| "Evaluated three data sources; highlighted inconsistency; sought peer validation before recommending action." | "Analytical. Sensible. Strong." |
| "Escalated concern after second exception; documented rationale; informed manager and compliance contact." | "Risk-aware person." |
| "Adjusted stakeholder message by audience; secured agreement from two functions; reopened timeline." | "Good communicator and collaborator." |
| "Candidate owned the analysis, while team lead approved final submission." | "They delivered the project." |

**Figure 6. Structured evidence note model**




*This logic is later translated into observation sheets, scoring forms, and dashboard reporting.*

# 9. Scoring and calibration

The programme uses a simple five-point rating logic. The virtue of this is not statistical sophistication; it is disciplined comparability. The point of the rating is not precision theatre. It is to support consistent judgement, explain decisions, and create comparable evidence across panels. The rating is useful when it is anchored and discussed well. It becomes less useful when it is treated as a performance of exactness unsupported by evidence.

A practical anchor set is as follows. A score of 1 indicates minimal, unclear, or weak evidence: little relevant detail, mostly claims, unclear ownership, or poor fit to the target competency. A score of 2 indicates partial evidence: some useful material, but incomplete, thin, or weakly supported. A score of 3 indicates the competent threshold: a clear example with reasonable evidence and acceptable judgement. A score of 4 indicates strong evidence: good depth, ownership, reasoning, and consequence. A score of 5 indicates superior or highly credible evidence: rich detail, disciplined judgement, strong result, and reflection.

To use this logic well, the panel should anchor every score in four questions. Was the situation real and relevant? Was the behaviour clearly evidenced? Was the outcome traceable? Is the judgement documented so another assessor could understand why this score was given? These questions are valuable because they make the assessor explain the path to the score, not just the score itself.

Calibration is then the social process by which panels reduce scoring drift. Useful calibration questions include: what evidence supports this score? Which notes are strongest? Are we scoring behaviour or simply liking the answer? What would need to be

present for one score higher? Are we mixing role fit with interview performance? These questions are especially important when assessors differ. Disagreement is not itself a problem. Unexamined disagreement is.

A practical rule is that each interviewer should make an independent provisional judgement before group discussion where feasible. Panel discussion should then centre on the notes and the evidence logic. The strongest panel is not the one that agrees most quickly. It is the one that can explain why it agreed, what evidence was used, and what standards were applied.

**Table 6. Suggested five-point evidence rating logic**

| Score | Band | Anchor description |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Minimal / unclear | Little relevant evidence; mostly claims, weak ownership, poor specificity, or weak relevance to the target behaviour. |
| **2** | Limited / partial | Some useful evidence but incomplete, thin, or weakly supported on action, judgement, or outcome. |
| **3** | Competent threshold | Clear example with reasonable evidence, relevant behaviour, and acceptable judgement for role level. |
| **4** | Strong evidence | Good depth, clear ownership, sound reasoning, and meaningful consequence or lesson. |
| **5** | Superior / highly credible | Rich and well-structured evidence, disciplined judgement, clear impact, and strong reflection or learning. |

# 10. Judgement traps and how to manage them

Interviewing always involves judgement, so the aim is not to eliminate human judgement but to discipline it. This programme has picked out several common traps. The first is **halo and horns**: an early strong or weak impression colours later judgement. The second is **similarity bias**: assessors overvalue answers that feel familiar, culturally comfortable, or stylistically aligned with their own preferences. The third is **leading probes**: the panel accidentally supplies the answer path. The fourth is **overweighting confidence**: a polished answer sounds strong even when the underlying evidence is thin.

Each of these traps can be managed, but only through process discipline. Halo and horns are reduced by scoring each competency separately and returning to notes before rating. Similarity bias is reduced by asking what evidence was shown rather than how comfortable the style felt. Leading probes are reduced by using neutral probe stems and stopping once evidence is sufficient. Overweighting confidence is reduced by rewarding detail, sequence, ownership, judgement, and outcome rather than delivery style alone.

Bias awareness training has value, but awareness is not enough. In practice, most bias control happens through the ordinary mechanics of good interviewing: question design, probe discipline, structured note-taking, scoring anchors, and calibration discussion. That is why these tools are not extras. They are the operational means by which fairness and consistency become real rather than rhetorical.

**Table 7. Practical bias-control reminders**

| Judgement trap | What it looks like | How to manage it |
|---|---|---|
| **Halo / horns** | One early answer or first impression shapes all later judgement | Score each competency separately; return to notes before rating |
| **Similarity bias** | Preference for answers that feel familiar or culturally comfortable | Ask what evidence was shown, not how comfortable the style felt |
| **Leading probes** | Interviewer helps the candidate toward the answer | Use neutral probes and stop once evidence is sufficient |
| **Overweighting confidence** | Polished delivery is mistaken for strong evidence | Reward detail, ownership, judgement, and outcomes over fluency alone |

# 11. How panel interviewing should work

Panel interviewing becomes more consistent when the panel uses clear roles rather than everyone doing everything simultaneously. The programme recommends a practical role split: a lead interviewer who opens, frames the question, manages time, and moves the panel through the question set; a probe interviewer who uses pre-agreed follow-up questions to deepen evidence where needed; an observation or scoring lead who captures notes, watches evidence quality, and leads calibration after the response; and an HR or standards role that monitors fairness, process alignment, and documentation requirements.

This should not be applied mechanically in every case. Some panels are small, and some roles may require more flexible handling. But the principle is still valuable. Panels function better when responsibilities are visible and when the evidence chain is not left to chance. If everyone asks questions without discipline, two things happen quickly: duplication increases and note quality declines. If everyone tries to score without role clarity, the loudest or most senior voice can begin to shape the judgement too heavily. Clear roles support better evidence, cleaner process, and more thoughtful discussion.

For line managers, the key discipline is not to dominate with operational certainty at the expense of evidence. For HR, the key discipline is not to become process-heavy at the expense of role realism. The strongest panels combine role realism and process integrity. That is the real practical partnership behind consistent competency interviewing.

**Table 8. Suggested panel roles**

| Panel role | Primary responsibility |
|---|---|
| **Lead interviewer** | Frames the interview, opens questions, manages flow and interview time |
| **Probe interviewer** | Uses pre-agreed follow-up questions to deepen evidence and clarify weak areas |
| **Observation / scoring lead** | Captures structured notes, watches evidence quality, and leads post-response calibration |
| **HR / standards role** | Protects consistency, fairness, policy alignment, and documentation quality |

# 12. Practice, coaching, and follow-through

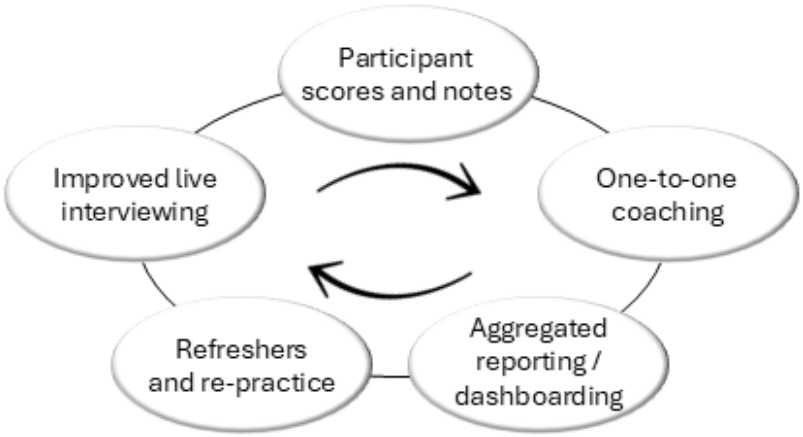
The programme is intentionally designed for continuous learning. The value is built through practice, coaching, feedback, refreshers, and follow-through. **Group workshops** translate concept into interviewer behaviour. They create drafted questions and probes, observation notes using a common evidence frame, calibrated scoring conversations, and inputs for one-to-one coaching and dashboard reporting. In short, a workshop can give the organisation raw material that can be used beyond the classroom.

The workshop structure is practical for good reason. It refreshes the evidence model, builds interview questions, practises observation and judgement, and prepares participants for coaching and follow-through. Live exercises (question drafting, rating calibration, and mock interviewing) help participants experience the difference between a competency target that is vaguely understood and one that is operationally usable. The coaching loop then ensures that strengths, evidence gaps, and recurring judgement issues are not lost. **One-to-one coaching** reviews one or two priority behaviours, provides specific feedback, and agrees improvement actions. Reporting and dashboarding then aggregate patterns by group, theme, and follow-up need. Refreshers and virtual resources should always help to keep standards alive after the formal training.

This logic is important because interviewing capability is not installed in a single event. It is developed through **repeated use**, **reflected feedback**, and **shared standards**. That is

also why the interview record matters. The same notes and scores that support live judgement can also support coaching, improvement, and programme evaluation. Used properly, the interview process becomes both a learning and assessment mechanism.

**Figure 7. Coaching and reporting loop**




# 13. Quick reference: standards to use for interview

Before moving into live interviewing, it is useful to reduce the guide to a set of standards that can be remembered quickly. These standards are not an alternative to the rest of the guidebook. They are what remains when the larger logic is compressed for real use.

Start from the (1) **competency to be evidenced**. (2) **Ask questions that produce real examples**, not polished self-description. (3) **Probe** for context, ownership, action, judgement, and outcome. Write (4) **short, neutral notes** that another interviewer can follow. (5) **Rate from evidence**, then (6) **calibrate** with the panel. Use the interview record for coaching, reporting, and continuous improvement. Those six habits are simple, but if carried consistently into practice, they materially improve interview quality.

Above all, remember what the interview is trying to do. It is not trying to reward confidence theatre. It is not trying to confirm first impressions. It is not trying to turn vague organisational language into a performance of alignment. It is trying to surface credible patterns of behaviour that matter for performance and standards. When the interview is built and run on that basis, competency assessment becomes much clearer, fairer, and more useful.

**Interviewer quick-check**

→ Have I defined the behaviour I am trying to evidence?
→ Does my opening question ask for a real example?
→ Do my probes clarify context, ownership, action, judgement, and outcome?
→ Am I writing down evidence, not impressions?
→ Am I scoring from notes and anchors rather than from confidence or likeability?
→ Could another assessor understand why I gave this score?

# APPENDIX A
# Sample question stems by behavioural purpose

| Behavioural purpose | Question stem |
|---|---|
| **Decision quality** | Describe a time when you had to reach a judgement using incomplete, mixed, or contested information. |
| **Cross-functional coordination** | Tell us about a situation where progress depended on cooperation from another function with different priorities from your own. |
| **Adaptation under change** | Describe a time when circumstances changed and you had to alter your original approach while still protecting the outcome. |
| **Standards / risk protection** | Tell us about a case where standards, controls, or professional expectations were under pressure. What did you do? |
| **Stakeholder handling** | Describe a time when you had to communicate a difficult message or manage conflicting stakeholder expectations. |

# APPENDIX B
# From TACO™ domains to interview use

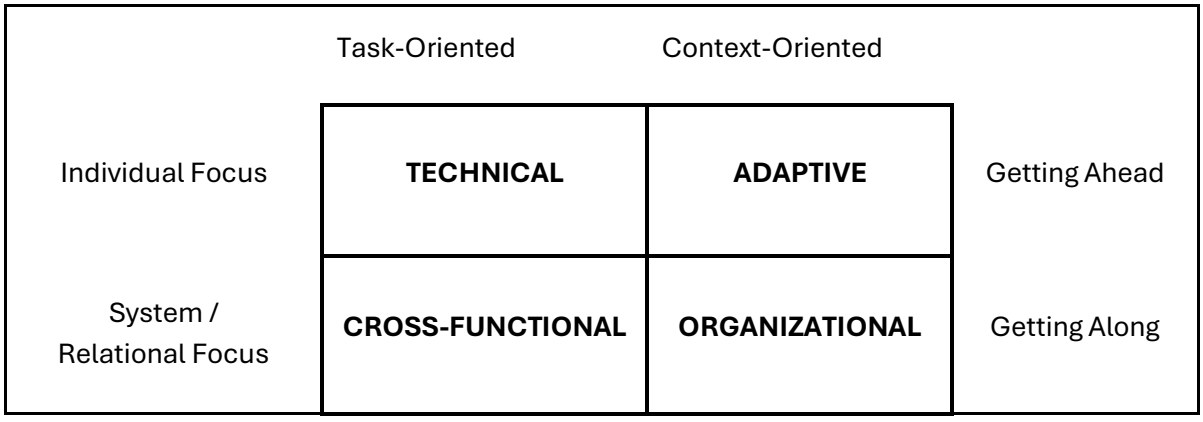
The TACO™ model is referenced through this programme, because competency modelling and frameworks extend beyond interview assessment alone. Still, the domain logic can be useful for interview preparation. **Technical** competencies often generate the most direct and role-specific evidence. **Adaptive** competencies relate to learning, adjustment, and adding value through growth. **Cross-functional** competencies relate to working across organisational boundaries in pursuit of solutions. **Organisational** competencies relate to the wider standards, values, and institutional behaviours the organisation seeks to reinforce.

In practice, interviewers do not need to use the TACO™ language in every interview. But the underlying distinction helps when deciding what mix of evidence matters most for a role. Technical interviews become stronger when they do not stop at knowledge. Behavioural interviews become stronger when they remain tied to performance and consequence rather than to generic virtue-signalling. The TACO™ logic is therefore best used as a preparation and design aid rather than as something to be forced into every live conversation.

**Table 9. Using the TACO™ lens in interview preparation**

| Domain | Typical interview focus | Example behavioural evidence |
|---|---|---|
| **T – Technical** | Role execution, task judgement, professional method | Analysed evidence, applied process, made sound recommendation<br>Examples: risk review, credit analysis, financial assessment, policy interpretation |
| **A – Adaptive** | Learning, adjustment, self-development, response to change | Adjusted approach, learned quickly, improved method under new conditions |
| **C – Cross-functional** | Working across boundaries, integrating different inputs | Coordinated with other functions, resolved conflict, aligned stakeholders |
| **O – Organisational** | Standards, stewardship, institutional conduct and environment | Protected standards, handled risk responsibly, contributed positively to organisational setting |

**Figure 8. TACO™ Model**




Courtesy of ORGMASTR

**Final note**

This guidebook is intentionally practical. It is designed to be used alongside one-to-one coaching, group workshops, forms, scoring sheets, coaching records, workbook, and reporting templates. Its real value will come from repeated use in live interviews, calibration discussions, and follow-up coaching.

The Competency-based Interviews for Interviewers programme was created by **ORGMASTR**
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