

COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEWS FOR INTERVIEWERS

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

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Structured note space, exercises, rating practice, reflection, and action points for HR and line managers.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Programme | Competency interviewing capability development |
| Audience | HR professionals, line managers, panel members, and interview leads |
| Use | Opening lecture, group workshop, one-to-one coaching, and follow-through |

How to use this workbook

- Bring it to the opening lecture, the group training session, and one-to-one coaching discussions.
- Write in it. The workbook is designed to hold question drafts, evidence notes, ratings, reflections, and next actions.
- Use the quick-reference pages during practice and later in live interviewing.
- Keep the same evidence and rating logic throughout the programme so your judgement becomes more consistent.

Created By



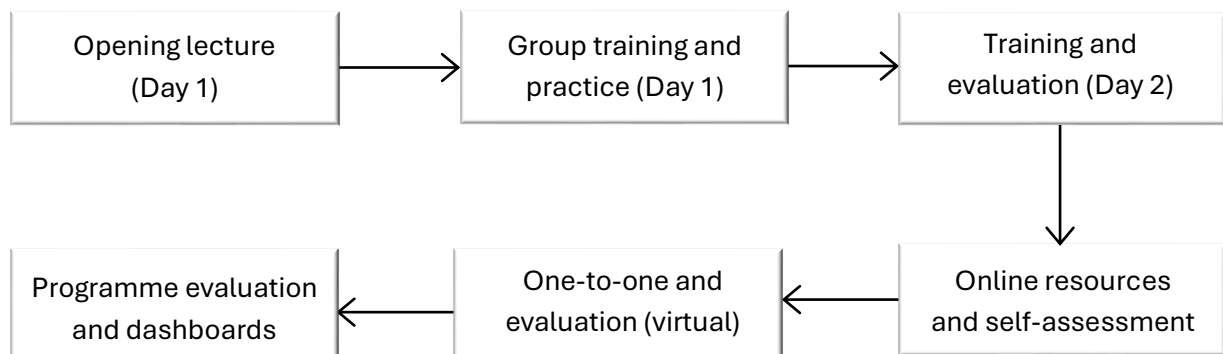
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- Notes (additional note-taking space)

This workbook follows the same practical sequence used from the opening lecture, group training, and one-to-one coaching sessions:

Concept → evidence → questions → probes → notes → rating → calibration → coaching

Figure 1. Programme architecture at a glance



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1. Introduction and purpose

This workbook is not a theory book. Its primary purpose is to help participants become better interviewers in practice. That means better question design, better probing, better evidence handling, better scoring, and better consistency across panels and departments. The opening lecture establishes the concepts, but the real programme value is built through practical work, live exercises, one-to-one coaching, and disciplined follow-through. The workbook is therefore designed as a working tool rather than a passive handout.

The programme responds to real interviewing challenges. Traditional hiring decisions can become too subjective when interviewers lean too heavily on intuition, personal preference, or conversational impressions. Behavioural competencies are difficult to assess consistently unless interviewers know what they are looking for, what counts as evidence, and how to document it. Time pressure adds another problem: if the interview lacks structure, weak questions and vague notes produce weak judgement. For that reason, interviewers are not just participants in a selection process. They are gatekeepers for talent and custodians of standards across the bank.

Used effectively, this workbook should help HR and line managers do three things well.

1. First, it should help them identify the competency that genuinely matters for the role.
2. Second, it should help them ask questions and probes that invite real examples rather than polished self-description.
3. Third, it should help them document and rate what they hear in a way that can be explained, reviewed, calibrated, and used later for coaching and reporting.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Explain what a competency is, and distinguish it from predictors such as KSAOs and from outcomes such as KPIs or performance results.
- Turn a competency target into a structured interview question with useful probes.
- Capture evidence in short, neutral, usable notes during live interviews.
- Use a common five-point rating logic and justify scores from evidence.
- Recognise common judgement traps and reduce bias through process discipline.
- Contribute effectively to panel interviewing and follow-up coaching.

PARTICIPANT NOTE SPACE

What part of interviewing do I currently find hardest?

Where do I think subjectivity enters most easily in my own practice?

What would better consistency look like in my team or department?

2. Competencies, KSAOs, and outcomes

One reason competency interviewing often becomes confused is that the word competency is used to mean several different things. In some settings, it refers to predictors such as knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. In others, it refers to standards or outcomes. In still others, it refers to cultural expectations or normative descriptors such as living the values. These are all understandable uses in organisational practice, but they are not the same thing.

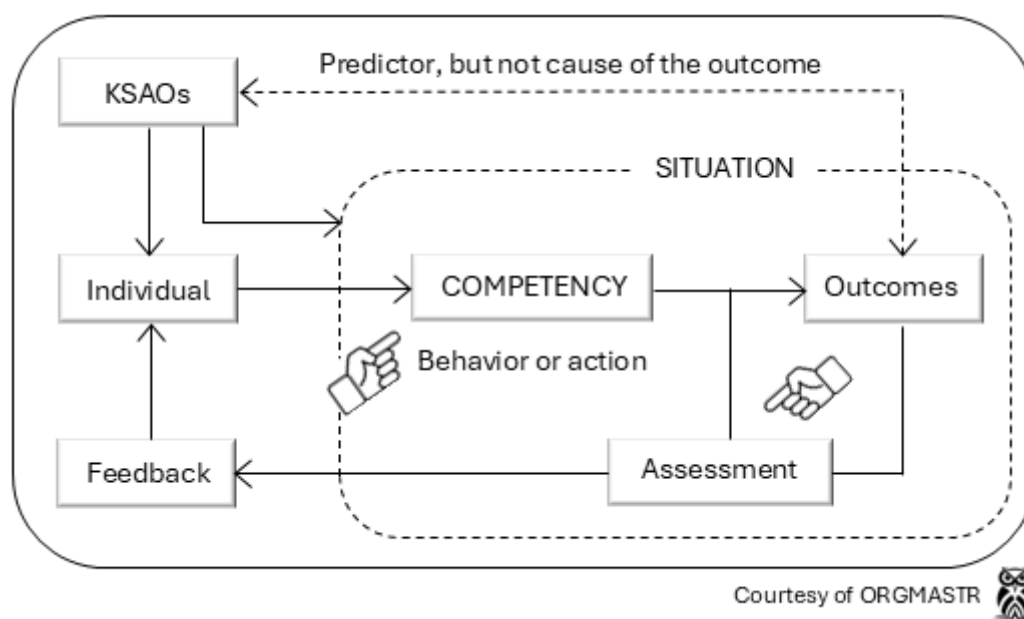
The most useful competency for interview assessment is the behaviour or action that links capability to result. KSAOs may help predict performance, and outcomes may tell us whether performance happened, but the interviewer is trying to listen for what the candidate actually did in a real situation. That is why competency interviews should focus on examples, decisions, behaviours, context, and consequences rather than on broad claims alone.

A practical working definition used throughout this programme is that 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.

This definition keeps attention on behaviour in action rather than drifting back to assumptions about personality or generic capability.

Figure 2. Where the competency sits in the performance pathway



KSAOs = Knowledge, Skill, Attributes and Other

Table 1. A practical distinction interviewers should keep in mind

| Element | What it is | What the interviewer should do |
|---|---|--|
| KSAOs / predictors (K) | Knowledge, skill, ability, experience, qualifications, and other person characteristics. | Treat as background indicators or context. Do not mistake them for evidence of behaviour in action (on-the-job). |
| Outcome / standard (O) | The result, consequence, KPI, lesson, or standard reached after the behaviour. | Use it to test whether the behaviour produced something meaningful and traceable. |
| Behaviour / action (B) | What the person actually did, decided, initiated, changed, monitored, or influenced. | Probe for this directly. This is the centre of competency interviewing. |
| Normative / cultural expectation (N) | A value-based or institutional expectation, such as stewardship, professionalism, or collaboration. | Clarify what actual behaviour would count as evidence in role. |

The focus on this course is on determining the **behaviour / action** point (competency) through interviewing and competency assessment. See Internal Guidebook, pages 4-5.

EXERCISE 1. DISTINGUISH THE EVIDENCE TYPE

| Statement | Your answer | Notes / why |
|--|---------------|-------------|
| Has strong financial modelling expertise. | K / B / O / N | |
| Improved turnaround time by 20 percent. | K / B / O / N | |
| Challenged weak evidence before making a recommendation. | K / B / O / N | |
| Acts with organisational stewardship. | K / B / O / N | |
| Holds a professional certification. | K / B / O / N | |

3. Why interviewer capability matters

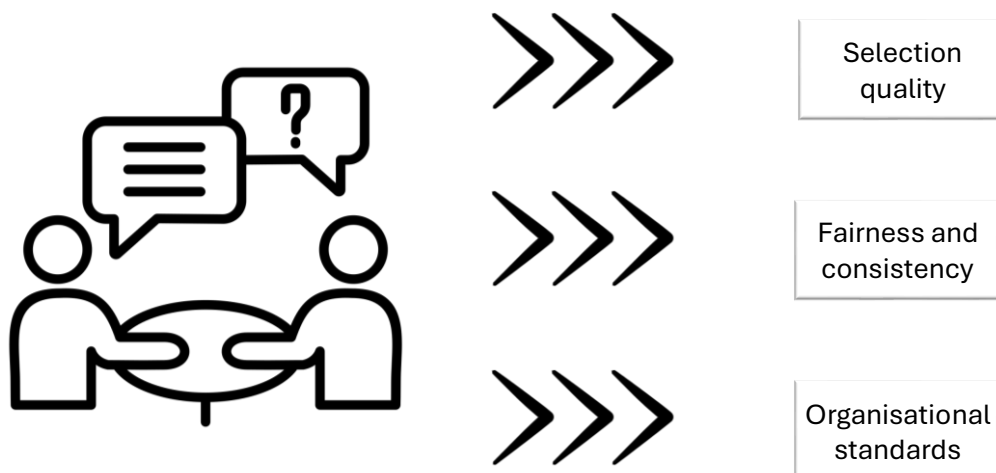
Good interviewing is not simply about asking questions. It is about protecting selection quality and corporate standards. Standardised interviewing protects talent acquisition quality and supports organisational standards across functions and panels.

This matters because interview quality can fail in predictable ways. If interviewers rely on personal preference, they may confuse confidence with competence. If they ask vague questions, they may get polished self-description instead of real evidence. If they record only impressions, later scoring discussions become weak and untraceable. If each panel member uses a different standard, hiring quality becomes uneven across departments.

It is also useful to remember that interviewer capability sits at the intersection of task performance, behavioural fit, and corporate standards. A candidate may appear technically capable but weak in judgement, collaboration, or professionalism. Another candidate may be strong interpersonally but unable to demonstrate task-relevant evidence.

- Selection quality: identifying the strongest evidence for role-relevant performance.
- Fairness and consistency: applying common questions, note logic, and rating anchors across candidates.
- Documentation integrity: leaving a clear evidence trail that supports discussion, review, coaching, and reporting.

Figure 3. Why interviewer capability matters



4. From competency target to interview question

Question design is where competency interviewing either succeeds or starts to collapse. Begin by defining the target behaviour. Then specify the evidence frame. Next, write an opening question that asks for a real example. Finally, prepare follow-up probes that test depth, judgement, sequencing, ownership, and results.

The quality of the opening question matters because a weak question invites vague self-presentation. A good question, by contrast, makes the candidate do the describing. It asks for a real episode, a real context, and a real action. The main point is that the question should force evidence.

Core formula

- 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?
- What happened as a result?

| Step | Purpose | What to write or decide |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Target the competency | Name the behaviour to be surfaced. Use an action verb where possible, such as assesses, collaborates, analyses, escalates, or decides. |
| 2 | Set the evidence frame | Clarify the context, the expected level of ownership, and the kind of result or consequence that matters. |
| 3 | Write the opening question | Ask for a real example. Do not begin with abstract questions about strengths, style, or preferences. |
| 4 | Prepare follow-up probes | Plan three to five probes that test ownership, sequence, judgement, alternatives, and outcomes. |

See **Internal Guidebook**, pages 10-12.

EXERCISE 2. DRAFT ONE QUESTION FOR YOUR OWN ROLE AREA

| | |
|--|--|
| Target competency | |
| Why it matters in the role | |
| Primary question | |
| Three probes | |
| What good evidence would sound like | |
| What weak evidence would sound like | |

5. Probing for useful evidence

The opening question opens the door, but probing determines whether the interviewer gets usable evidence. A practical five-part probing ladder is context, ownership, action, judgement, and outcome. This helps the interviewer clarify evidence rather than rescue the candidate or lead them toward a preferred answer.

| Step | Focus | Useful prompt |
|------|------------------|---|
| 1 | Context | What was happening? Why did this matter? |
| 2 | Ownership | What part was yours? Who else was involved? |
| 3 | Action | What did you actually do? In what sequence? |
| 4 | Judgement | How did you choose that approach? What trade-offs were present? |
| 5 | Outcome | What happened? What changed? How do you know? |

Good probing practice

- Use neutral probes. Ask to clarify evidence, not to suggest the answer.
- Stop once evidence is sufficient.
- Do not confuse silence with weakness.
- Bring the candidate back to the question if they drift into general narrative.

See **Internal Guidebook**, pages 12-13.

EXERCISE 3. OPTIMISING PROBE INTERVIEWING

| Weak probe | Why it is weak | Your improved version |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|
| <p>So, you handled that well, right?</p> | | |
| <p>You must have been the team lead then?</p> | | |
| <p>Would you say communication is one of your strengths?</p> | | |
| <p>Did everyone agree with you in the end?</p> | | |

6. Observation and note-taking

Scoring conversations are only as strong as the notes behind them. For that reason, note-taking is not a secondary administrative task. It is a core part of interviewer capability. Record four things only: the situation or context, the behaviour actually described, the outcome or consequence, and the basis of interviewer judgement.

Good notes are short, neutral, and traceable back to the candidate's own evidence. Weak notes are full of labels and impressions. See **Internal Guidebook**, pages 14-15.

| Write this | Avoid this |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Specific context and challenge (Situation). → Behaviour the candidate personally described. → A short note on consequence or result (Outcome). → Enough detail to explain the score later (Judgement). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → General impressions only. → Broad labels such as excellent or weak. → Assumptions about style or fit without evidence. → Long transcripts that are hard to use. |
| <p>Example: Escalated issue after risk review; consulted legal and operations; recommended revised timeline; avoided approval delay.</p> | <p>Example: Seems sharp. Probably good stakeholder manager.</p> |

EXERCISE 4. OBSERVATION & EVIDENCE

| Impression note | Rewrite as evidence note |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Confident and articulate. | |
| Good team player. | |
| Strong strategic thinker. | |
| Probably not resilient enough. | |

7. Scoring, calibration, and judgement

The programme uses a simple five-point rating logic. The point of the rating is not precision theatre. It is to support consistent judgement, explain decisions, and create comparable evidence across panels.

| Score | Band | Meaning |
|-------|----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Minimal / unclear | Little relevant evidence; mostly claims, thin detail, or unclear ownership. |
| 2 | Limited / partial | Some useful evidence but incomplete, weakly supported, or shallow on judgement or result. |
| 3 | Competent threshold | Clear example with reasonable evidence and acceptable judgement for the role standard. |
| 4 | Strong evidence | Good depth, ownership, reasoning, and consequence. |
| 5 | Superior / highly credible | Rich evidence, disciplined judgement, strong result, and useful reflection. |

Questions to consider

- Is the situation real and **relevant**?
- Is the behaviour clearly **evidenced**?
- Is the outcome **traceable**?
- Could **another assessor understand** why I gave this score?

See **Internal Guidebook**, pages 15-17

8. Bias control and panel discipline

Bias mitigation is built into the logic of question design, note structure, scoring anchors, and calibration discussion. In practice, bias control depends on process discipline as much as awareness. See **Internal Guidebook**, pages 16-18.

| Trap | Risk | How to manage it |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Halo / horns | One early impression shapes all later scoring. | Score each competency separately and return to notes before rating. |
| Similarity bias | Style or background feels familiar and is overvalued. | Ask what evidence was shown, not how comfortable the style felt. |
| Leading probes | The interviewer gives the candidate the answer path. | Use neutral probes and stop once evidence is sufficient. |
| Overweighting confidence | Polish is mistaken for substance. | Reward detail, sequence, ownership, reasoning, and outcomes. |

EXERCISE 5. BIAS CONTROL & PANEL DISCIPLINE

| Role | Main responsibility | Who will do it in your setting? |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Lead interviewer | Frames questions and manages flow | |
| Probe interviewer | Tests depth and judgement | |
| Observation / scoring lead | Captures notes and supports calibration | |
| HR / standards role | Protects process, fairness, and documentation | |

9. Practical exercises

The **group workshop** is designed as a practical session with repeated movement between explanation, demonstration, exercise, and calibration. It uses three live practice formats: **question drafting**, **rating calibration**, and **mock interview** work in triads.

EXERCISE 6. QUESTION DRAFTING

| | |
|---|--|
| Competency chosen | |
| Opening question | |
| Technical clarifier (if needed) | |
| Probe ladder | |
| What good evidence should sound like | |

EXERCISE 7. RATING CALIBRATION

| What we scored | My score | Why |
|--------------------------|----------|-----|
| Situation and relevance | 1-5 | |
| Behaviour and ownership | 1-5 | |
| Outcome and traceability | 1-5 | |

EXERCISE 8. MOCK INTERVIEW

| Round | My role | What I learned |
|-------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Interviewer / Candidate / Observer | |
| 2 | Interviewer / Candidate / Observer | |
| 3 | Interviewer / Candidate / Observer | |

10. Candidate practice answer set

Short fictional answers for independent scoring and panel calibration.

Suggested use

- Ask participants to score each answer individually before discussion.
- Then compare scores and justify the final rating from evidence.
- Use the same 1–5 rating logic from the training programme.

Case 1. Balanced judgement under incomplete information

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Question | Describe a time when you had to evaluate incomplete or mixed information before making a recommendation or decision. |
| Candidate answer | In one project, different departments were giving conflicting information on delivery risk. I reviewed the reports, spoke with operations and legal, and realised some assumptions were not aligned. I asked for one extra day, compared the scenarios, and recommended a phased approach with additional controls. The decision was accepted, and we avoided a delay later in the process. |
| Calibration prompts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Is the situation specific enough to assess? → What behaviour is clearly evidenced? → How strong is the judgement logic? → Is the outcome traceable? |

| | |
|---|--|
| My score (1–5) | |
| What evidence supports it? | |
| What keeps it from being higher? | |
| Final calibrated score | |

Case 2. Polished but shallow collaboration answer

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Question | Tell us about a time when you had to work across functions to resolve a difficult issue. |
| Candidate answer | I am very collaborative by nature, and I always make sure people stay aligned. In one situation there were different stakeholders involved, and I made sure communication remained strong. I kept people positive and focused, and in the end things worked out well. It was a good example of how I bring teams together. |
| Calibration prompts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → How much concrete behaviour is actually evidenced? → What part was the candidate's own contribution? → What is missing from this answer? → What score would you give and why? |

| | |
|---|--|
| My score (1–5) | |
| What evidence supports it? | |
| What keeps it from being higher? | |
| Final calibrated score | |

Case 3. Strong action, weaker reflection

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Question | Describe a time when you had to escalate a risk or issue that others were not treating seriously enough. |
| Candidate answer | I noticed a control gap in a reporting cycle and raised it with my manager, but the concern did not move quickly. I documented the issue, checked the reporting requirements, and escalated it through the formal route with the supporting evidence. That triggered a review and the process was tightened. Looking back, I would probably involve one more stakeholder earlier next time. |
| Calibration prompts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → How strong is the ownership evidence? → What makes this stronger than a score of 3, if anything? → How much does the answer show judgement as opposed to action only? → What is the best-supported score? |

| | |
|---|--|
| My score (1–5) | |
| What evidence supports it? | |
| What keeps it from being higher? | |
| Final calibrated score | |

Case 4. Confident style, uncertain ownership

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Question | Tell us about a time when you improved a process or working method. |
| Candidate answer | Our team improved the process significantly last year. We made it much more efficient and there was much better coordination. I was involved throughout, and it was a very successful initiative. Senior leaders were pleased with the final result and everyone recognised the impact. |
| Calibration prompts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → What is unclear here? → What ownership probes would you ask? → Can this answer be scored confidently yet? → What further evidence is needed? |

| | |
|---|--|
| My score (1–5) | |
| What evidence supports it? | |
| What keeps it from being higher? | |
| Final calibrated score | |

11. Coaching, reflection, and action planning

The group workshop is not the end point. It generates the raw material for personalised coaching, follow-up, and programme evaluation. One-to-one coaching reviews priority behaviours, gives specific feedback, and agrees improvement actions.

- What is the strongest interviewing habit I already have?
- What judgement trap am I most likely to fall into?
- Where do I most need to improve: questions, probes, notes, ratings, or calibration?
- What would better interviewer discipline look like in my own team?

EXERCISE 9. ACTION PLANNING

| Action | By when | Priority | How success will be seen |
|--------|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| | | H / M / L | |
| | | H / M / L | |
| | | H / M / L | |
| | | H / M / L | |

12. Quick-reference checklists

Before the interview

- Do I know the role, the competency target, and the evidence standard?
- Do I have a clear opening question and planned probes?
- Do I know who is doing what on the panel?
- Am I ready to capture evidence, not impressions?

During the interview

- Am I asking for a real example?
- Have I clarified context, ownership, action, judgement, and outcome?
- Am I keeping probes neutral?
- Are my notes short, traceable, and usable?

Before giving a score

- Is the situation real and relevant?
- Is the behaviour clearly evidenced?
- Is the outcome traceable?
- Could another assessor understand why I gave this score?

After the interview

- Have I scored from evidence rather than style or affinity?
- Can I explain the score clearly to the panel?
- What coaching point or learning point follows from this evidence?
- What should be captured for reporting or follow-through?

Closing Note

A competency interview is strongest when it focuses on behaviour, context, and outcome rather than on self-description alone. Interviewers uphold both selection quality and corporate standards through objectivity, probing discipline, and clean documentation. Evidence quality should drive scoring; confidence, fluency, and likeability should not. The rest of the programme translates these principles into applied capability through exercises, forms, coaching, refreshers, and reporting tools.

Notes

Use for additional notes or exercise space

