



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

[www.cymru.gov.uk](http://www.cymru.gov.uk)

# External Candidate Recruitment Guidance

Shared Service Centre (SSC), Welsh Government, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cathays Park, Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ Telephone: 0300 025 5454

E-mail: [sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales](mailto:sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales)



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Principles for Recruitment into the Civil Service</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Points to Note</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Stage 1: The Application Process</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The application form:</b>	<b>6</b>
- <b>Minimum Criteria</b>	<b>6</b>
- <b>Role Specific Questions</b>	<b>6</b>
- <b>Personal Details</b>	<b>7</b>
- <b>Education</b>	<b>7</b>
- <b>Learning and Development</b>	<b>7</b>
- <b>Employment History</b>	<b>7</b>
- <b>Languages</b>	<b>7</b>
- <b>Positive about Disability</b>	<b>8</b>
- <b>Competency and Job Specific Criteria Evidence</b>	<b>8</b>
- <b>Attach Supporting Document(s)</b>	<b>9</b>
- <b>References</b>	<b>9</b>
- <b>Source of Application</b>	<b>10</b>
- <b>Equal Opportunities</b>	<b>10</b>
- <b>Declaration</b>	<b>10</b>
- <b>Application Updates</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Stage 2: The Sift Process (short listing)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Stage 3: The Interview Process</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Stage 4: After Interview</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>ANNEX A: Providing your evidence</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ANNEX B: The Use of Active Language</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ANNEX C: Scoring Matrix</b>	<b>20</b>

## **Introduction**

This guidance has been developed to assist candidates in applying for an external vacancy at the Welsh Government. Please use the guidance provided throughout each stage of the recruitment and selection process, it includes useful advice on:

- what you need to do before you apply
- completing an application, including producing competency and job specific examples
- the interview process

If you have any questions relating to the information contained in this guidance or the application process, please contact the Shared Service Centre on 0300 025 5454 or via email ([sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales](mailto:sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales)).

## **Principles for Recruitment into the Civil Service**

The Welsh Government is bound by the principles for recruitment as set out in the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles.

The main Principles are:

- Individuals will be selected on merit on the basis of fair and open competition: Prospective applicants will be given equal and reasonable access to adequate information about the job and its requirements, and about the selection process; and applicants will be considered equally on merit at each stage of the selection process.
- The process will be based on consistent criteria relevant to the job being applied consistently to all candidates; selection methods will be reliable and guard against bias.
- All external recruitment to permanent posts will be underpinned by these principles, including the requirement that permanent appointments must be made on merit via fair and open competition as set out in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

## **Points to Note**

### **Equality and Diversity**

The Welsh Government has a statutory duty to adhere to the principles that there should be equality of opportunity for all people in conducting its business as an employer and

service provider. The Welsh Government is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and equality of opportunity. This is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and must be adhered to at each stage of the application process.

In respecting this duty, we comply with the requirements of the Department for Work and Pensions “Two Ticks” Scheme for disabled job applicants, including making reasonable adjustment(s) where a candidate indicates that this is required.

## **Guaranteed Interview Scheme**

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) provides individuals with disabilities the right to proceed to the next stage of the selection process if they meet the minimum criteria at the sift stage. To apply under the GIS, simply confirm this under the ‘Positive about Disability’ section in the application form.

## **Stage 1: The Application Process**

The majority of vacancies with the Welsh Government are advertised on the [Recruitment](#) pages of our website. Select ‘Vacancies’ to view the different types of opportunities available with the Welsh Government. Vacancy adverts will include a description of the vacancy and will identify the competency behaviours (core skills and behaviours) and essential job specific criteria required for the post, together with any other requirements such as particular qualifications. The advert will also provide details of any other assessment method that may be undertaken during the course of the recruitment activity in addition to the interview. It will also set out the general terms and conditions of the vacancy, including the starting salary at which the appointment will be made.

## **Planning your Application**

Before you make your application you should carefully read the job advert and job description and assure yourself that you can provide sufficient evidence of the core skills and behaviours and job specific criteria for the post. It is worth noting that anyone who is deemed unable to provide sufficient evidence by the panel will not progress to interview and will be sifted out. Only candidates deemed competent against each of the areas being tested (which for the purposes of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is the minimum criteria for the post) may progress beyond the sift (short listing) and/or assessment stage. If you are applying for more than one post you will need to complete a separate application form for each one, tailored to reflect the competency behaviours and job specific criteria required for each one.

You should plan the completion of your application being mindful of the closing date for the vacancy, as this is a fixed date that will not be negotiated (except where a reasonable adjustment is appropriate and has been agreed beforehand).

Assistance in completing the Application Form: It is your responsibility to provide examples that best demonstrate the relevant competency behaviours and job specific criteria required and it is important to bear in mind it is your application and should therefore be all your own work. If you get an interview or progress to another form of assessment, you will

be tested in depth on what you have written. You must not seek advice from anyone who will be involved in the recruitment process, particularly members of the recruitment panel. Assistance may however be provided for a disability-related reason, including the help of an advocate to complete the form in appropriate circumstances.

You are welcome to complete the application form in English or Welsh. For posts where Welsh language skills are required, please check the job description and advert carefully for any instructions about the need to answer certain questions in Welsh in order to test those skills.

## How to Apply

The majority of Welsh Government vacancies are advertised via our e-recruitment system, which can be accessed via the Recruitment page on the internet. We have recently upgraded to a new e-recruitment system, so if you have previously applied for vacancies with the Welsh Government, you will need to create a new account.

To view all the types of opportunities the Welsh Government has to offer, visit the Recruitment page on the internet, and then select the type of vacancy you are looking for.

You are able to track the process of any applications you make via the online recruitment system, in the Candidate Application Centre section of your account.

### Did you know?

You can register for Job Alerts via the Candidate Application Centre in your account, so that you are sent the details of any vacancies that meet your search criteria to you via your registered e-mail address. Just select 'Create Job Alert' at the bottom of the vacancies board.

## To apply in Welsh

To access the Welsh version of a vacancy, simply click on the 'Change Language / Newid Iaith' toggle button at the top right hand of the page. If you would like to apply in Welsh, simply click on the 'Gwneud cais' button at the bottom of this page. Please note, once you start an application in Welsh, you aren't then able to switch to an English application for that post, using the same user account. If you experience any difficulties, or have any questions regarding the process, please contact the Shared Service Centre on 0300 025 5454 or via email ([sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales](mailto:sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales)).

## Creating a new user account

Once you have selected 'Apply' you will be taken to the candidate log in screen. If you do not have an existing candidate account, you will need to select 'Create New Account' which can be found underneath the log in details. Once you have done this, enter your details and read the terms and conditions. If you agree to the terms and conditions, confirm this and select 'Submit Registration'. (Please note that from 28 August 2014, the

Welsh Government online recruitment system will be upgraded. If you are applying on this date or later, you will need to create a new account, even if you have previously applied for Welsh Government vacancies).

## **Navigating the Application form**

The fields marked with an asterisk ‘\*’ are mandatory, therefore you must provide a response or you will not be able to submit your application. Fields without a ‘\*’ are not mandatory, as they may not be relevant to all candidates. If you do have information you could include in response to a question, providing as much information as possible against each field will help to ensure that the sifting panel have a complete picture of your skills, experience and knowledge.

Select ‘Continue’ once you have completed all the questions on a page to proceed (this will save what you have completed on that page). You can also select ‘back’ at any point to return to the previous page. Alternatively, you can select a specific page you want to return to by clicking on a link to the page in the Progress Tracker on the left hand side

## **Progress Tracker**

A green tick by a section shows that you have responded to all the questions in that section. An orange tick shows that you have completed all the mandatory questions in that section. A cross indicates that you have left some mandatory questions unanswered; therefore the application cannot be submitted.

You don’t have to complete the whole application form in one go. Once you have completed a section, ensure you click the ‘Continue’ button to save all you have done in that section. You can then log out of your account and return to your unfinished application at any point up to the closing date for the vacancy. To return to the application form, simply log in to your account, select ‘My applications’ and click on the relevant vacancy title, which should be in your applications history.

## **Minimum Criteria**

The purpose of these questions is to determine if you are eligible to apply for the vacancy, in accordance with Civil Service nationality requirements. The application form will require you to provide some personal details to enable us to process your application effectively. You will be asked as part of your eligibility, to confirm your nationality details and that you are legally allowed to work in the United Kingdom. This is a requirement for working within the Civil Service. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the application form, your application will not be taken further. If it becomes apparent at a later stage in the process that you aren’t eligible to apply, your application may be withdrawn, or offer retracted.

Answer the questions via the drop down boxes with regards to the minimum eligibility criteria.

## **Role Specific Questions**

Answer either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to these questions if shown. These questions will only appear if the role for which you are applying requires specific qualifications, skills or experience,

without which you will not be able to fulfil the requirements of the role. If you aren't able to confirm you meet the requirement(s) your application will not be progressed.

### **Personal Details**

Complete the fields regarding your personal details such as your name, address etc. It is essential that you provide correct and up to date information, as the information is needed in order to progress your application.

### **Education**

Please provide us with details of your education history. The institution refers to the school/college/university you have attended, and the subject will be what you studied there. It is essential that you provide correct and up to date information, as this may be taken into consideration at the sifting stage..

If a particular qualification has been noted in the vacancy advert as essential or desirable for the post, you should ensure that you include the details of that qualification if you hold it.

You are able to add another instance of the boxes to input your information if there are too few to enter your qualifications.

### **Learning and Development**

Please provide us with the details of any wider learning and development you have undertaken that may be relevant to the application. This could include any personal development you have undertaken which hasn't led to a qualification, but is relevant to the post for which you are applying.

### **Employment History**

Complete the fields with regard to your current (or most recent) employment and then add any previous employment. To add the details of an additional employer or role, respond 'Yes' to the 'Do you have previous employment?' question. This will add another instance of the employer details section. It is essential that you provide correct and up to date information, as the information is needed in order to progress your application.

You will need to provide details of the name of your previous employers, position(s) held and reason(s) for leaving, for at least the last 3 years (unless you have not been in employment for this long – please provide as many details as you are able). If you have no employment experience, select 'No' to the 'Are you currently serving as a civil servant?' question, and then insert 'No employment history' in the 'Employer Name' box.

**Please Note: For posts in Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) a complete career history is required in all applications regardless of mode of advert and any gaps in service must be explained fully.**

### **Languages**

Select your level of Welsh language ability for the various skills areas listed, as well as your preferred language for assessment. Your level of ability will only be taken into

account if Welsh is identified in the vacancy advert as being essential or desirable for the role. If Welsh is essential or desirable for the role, it may be necessary to assess your Welsh language skills at the sift or interview stage. Look out for any information regarding this in the vacancy advert, or future communication regarding the vacancy.

### **Positive about Disability**

The Positive about Disabled People scheme operated by the Welsh Government means that we welcome applications from people with disabilities. The scheme guarantees an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the post applied for. Select your responses with regards to the guaranteed interview scheme and provide us with the details of any requirements for assistance at interview, or any information you would like to make us aware of with regard to your requirements.

### **Competency behaviours and Job Specific Criteria Evidence**

This is the most important part of your application. You will be asked to evidence how you meet the competency behaviours and job specific criteria identified as essential for the role. The panel will be looking for how well the evidence you have provided demonstrates that you meet the requirements for the role.

### **Competencies**

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The [Civil Service Competency framework](#) outlines 10 competencies (under 3 key areas or 'clusters') which are deemed to be key for successful performance within the Civil Service. For each competency there is a description of what it means in practice and some examples of effective and ineffective behaviours at all levels. In your application, you will be asked to provide evidence, in the form of real examples, of how you demonstrate the key competency behaviours identified as essential for the role for which you are applying. The required competency behaviours will be outlined in the vacancy advert (there will usually be 4 competency behaviours that you will need to evidence). The competency evidence is used to benchmark how you have behaved in the past, as this is likely to be a good indication of how you will perform in the future. Your competency evidence should be written in a way that helps panel members assess your suitability for the role. Read on for advice on how to choose and write your evidence for your application.

### **Job specific criteria**

These are criteria identified by the recruiting line manager as crucial to the particular role that they are recruiting to. They could include particular skills, experience or knowledge in a field relevant to the role, or even a specific qualification relevant to the role. You will usually be required to provide evidence against three job specific criteria (unless stated differently in the job advert). You should evidence how you meet the job specific criteria listed in the advert in the same way as you have evidenced the competency behaviours - by drawing on your past experience, knowledge and achievements to provide relevant examples which demonstrate that you meet the criteria. This is an equally important part of the application form, and if you do not sufficiently evidence the job specific criteria, it is unlikely that your application will pass the sift stage.



## **How do I provide my competency behaviour and job specific evidence?**

If you are applying for a Team Support level role or an Apprenticeship, the application will ask you to provide evidence on a structured application form. Each Competency behaviour and job specific criteria that need to be evidenced will be listed in the application form above a text box into which you will enter your evidence for that competency / job specific criteria. We would expect around 300 words per each individual competency behaviour/job specific criteria, but no more. As such, the text boxes are limited to 300 words only. You should aim to provide as much evidence as you can for each individual area, so make best use of the word allowance for each.

For all other roles (i.e. those which aren't Team Support or Apprenticeship level), you will be asked in the application form to upload your evidence in a Word document or pdf (again, there is a 300 word limit for each behaviour/criteria being evidenced). It is recommended that you structure your evidence using each Competency Behaviour and Job Specific Criteria as a header, with your evidence for that particular area outlined underneath. You should ensure that you clearly evidence all the necessary competency behaviours and job specific criteria that are identified in the vacancy advert.

Failure to provide good evidence will result in you not getting through the sift process to interview.

For further advice on evidencing your competency behaviours and job specific criteria, see [Annex A: Providing your evidence](#).

## **Attach Supporting Document(s)**

You may also be asked to attach additional information, for example, a CV or personal development plan. A CV allows you to demonstrate to the recruiting panel the required skills, experience and personal attributes you possess to do the job effectively. Whilst there is no set CV template that you must adhere to, you may wish to provide further information on your personal attributes and key achievements throughout your career history, together with any further information you may wish to provide on your education, training and professional memberships. Please note, the CV will support your Competency Statement, but should not be provided instead of the Competency Statement. The Competency Statement should contain your evidence of how you meet the Competency behaviours and job specific criteria for the role. The CV should be used to add any additional information which you feel is relevant to the role.

You may also have been asked in the vacancy advert to provide additional documentation, for example, a copy of your Personal Development Plan if you are aligned to a professional body. If this has been requested in the vacancy advert, you can attach your additional document in this section in .doc, .docx, .pdf, .xls or .xlsx formats.

## **References**

You will need to provide the names of two referees (one must be your current or most recent employer) that cover at least the previous three years of employment. If you have just left school or college and have no previous work experience, please make sure that at

least one of your referees is one of your teachers, lecturers or your head teacher or personal tutor.

### **Source of Application**

Please provide information on how you found out about the vacancy – this is for Welsh Government monitoring purposes, to ensure we are using the most effective means of advertising our vacancies.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Complete the sections with regards to the equality data, such as gender, as required. If you prefer not to answer one or more questions, select 'Prefer not to say'. Please be reassured, the information is collected for monitoring purposes only and is not seen by the selection panel.

### **Declaration**

Please ensure you read the declaration statement. If you agree to the statements regarding Data Protection, Equal Opportunities and how your application will be processed, select the tick box to confirm your agreement.

Select 'Submit' ONLY if you are content that your application is complete and you do not wish to make any changes.

### **Application Updates**

Once you have applied for a vacancy, you will be kept updated on the progress of your application via your registered e-mail address. You can also check on the progress of your application by logging in to your account and viewing the 'My Applications' section of your account which is at the top of the page when you are logged in.

## **Stage 2: The Sift Process (short listing)**

Once the closing date has passed, the appointment panel will consider all applications received, and sift out those who have not provided sufficient evidence against the identified competency behaviours and job specific criteria. If you have applied under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, you are guaranteed an interview if you meet the minimum criteria agreed by the panel prior to the sift. The sift panel will rank applications in merit order, using an agreed, standardised scoring system. If you are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum criteria required to be invited to the next stage of the process, you will be notified by e-mail to your registered e-mail address.

Notification of the outcomes of the sift, will be issued to all candidates. If you are offered an interview or other assessment format, you will be given a minimum of 5 working days notice of it taking place. You will receive confirmation of the arrangements for the interview, including the location, date and time. The normal 5 days notice is considered a

minimum period and will be extended where any disability related adjustments need a longer time-scale to be put in place.

If you are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum criteria required to be invited to the next stage of the application, you will be notified by e-mail and given feedback to help you with future job applications.

## **Stage 3: The Interview Process**

If you are successful in passing the sift stage you will be invited to attend an interview. This will involve questions based on the competency behaviours and job specific criteria noted in the advert. For some posts you may also be asked to undertake some other form of assessment, for example a written exercise, a presentation or other form of assessment appropriate to the type of role that you are applying for (this will usually be made clear in the job advert and / or the invitation to interview e-mail).

### **The Panel**

At interview, the recruitment panel will usually comprise of three people: the Chair, whose responsibilities include ensuring that the process complies with open and fair competition guidance; and two other panel members. Some panels may include a fourth member, depending on the type of role e.g. if knowledge of a particular specialism is required for the interview.

### **Interview Language**

We will endeavour to ensure that your interview is conducted in your preferred language, English or Welsh (you will be asked your preference in the application form). If you select to have an interview conducted in Welsh, we will also need to test your ability in English, so part of the assessment will be conducted in English. You will be informed of the arrangements beforehand. In some cases where a full Welsh-speaking panel cannot be convened, simultaneous translation from Welsh to English may need to be provided for the benefit of any panel members who don't speak Welsh. In such cases, you will be informed of the arrangements prior to the interview.

### **Interview duration**

Typically the interview will last between 30- 45 minutes. This will depend on the number of questions asked by the panel and your responses.

### **Purpose of the Interview**

The purpose of the interview is to:

- Test your suitability for the requirements of the role
- Give all candidates an opportunity to express their views and present their evidence
- Score candidates based on the requirements identified for the role

- Recommend which candidate should be offered the position and produce an order of merit based on scores achieved
- Help you to decide if the role is right for you.

At interview, the Panel will be trying to find out how you meet the competency behaviours and job specific criteria identified for the role. You need to be prepared to give answers demonstrating how you meet them. The interview will be an opportunity for the recruitment panel to confirm, probe or further explore the evidence given in your application. The work that you have already done in completing your application will greatly assist you in preparing for the interview. You should ensure that you are familiar with the evidence provided in your application. Remember that the panel will be looking to see from the evidence in your application form and the interview, whether you are likely to be able to carry out the responsibilities of the specific post. The panel will not be allowed to ask you questions about your personal circumstances.

**Please note**, you will not be allowed to take notes into the interview. Prompt cards can however be used where a presentation is being made as part of the assessment.

### **Preparing for the interview**

Here are some useful tips to help you in preparing for your interview:

- try to arrange a 'mock interview' with a friend, family member or colleague
- research the area of work that you are applying for – check the Welsh Government website for any relevant information
- you may want to speak to the recruiting line manager to better understand the role – the job advert will include a point of contact for the role
- Prepare more examples than you provided on your application. The panel may ask you for more details and another example if it helps you to provide the evidence required.

Remember the “STAR” model may be helpful to you when preparing for the interview, as well as during the interview when responding to questions, by giving a clear structure to your responses. See [Appendix A: Providing your evidence](#) for more details on the STAR model.

### **Competency Based Interviewing**

The aim of a competency based interview is to find out how you have behaved and used certain skills to deal with challenges and problems in the past, on the premise that this is likely to be a predictor of how you will perform in the future. You are therefore asked to provide evidence of your competence in relation to specified behaviours and job specific criteria which are defined beforehand in the job advert.

The questions at interview will be designed to allow you to provide evidence of the required behaviours and job specific criteria, through the use of relevant examples from

your experience. Please remember, that though the panel will be looking for evidence of the behaviour/job specific criteria, you will also need to ensure that you answer the question that they have asked you. It is important therefore to remember to listen to the question, and then select the most appropriate example that will enable you to both evidence the behaviour/job specific criteria, and answer the question fully.

The recruiting line manager may decide that a presentation will be appropriate to test one of the required behaviours or job specific criteria. If this is the case, you will be notified of the presentation topic and the expected duration of the presentation (usually 5 or 10 minutes) in your invite to interview e-mail. The presentation will be assessed using the same scoring matrix as the interview questions, and will form part of your final score at interview.

If the vacancy is linked to a particular profession which requires a specific skillset, or a specific skill is essential to the role; the recruiting line manager may decide that an additional form of assessment may be necessary. An example of this would be for roles within the translation profession, the recruiting line manager may want an additional written assessment in order to test your translation skills. You will be informed of any additional assessment element beforehand, in the invite to interview e-mail.

The panel will assess your evidence against the pre-defined Welsh Government scoring matrix, which can be found in Annex B. The panel will agree beforehand the minimum qualifying criteria for the role, and ensure that these criteria are applied consistently for all candidates.

## **The Interview**

The panel will hope to see you at your best at the interview and will do all they can to give you the opportunity to show that you can meet the criteria. They will not be trying to trick you. When they see you they will already have seen the qualities you have from your application form. The panel will want to complete the picture of what you can do by learning more about you in a face-to-face situation. Interviews will generally follow the following structure:

- The Chair will introduce the other panel members and explain the format of the interview (including which panel member will ask questions on each area being assessed) and will outline the timing of the interview (which will be the same for all candidates). You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions about the format of the interview. You will also be asked if there may be any extenuating circumstances which may affect your performance at interview i.e. a recent bereavement, car accident etc. This is to ensure that there is nothing which may inhibit your performance. In the event that something has occurred, you will be provided with the opportunity to reschedule your interview. However, if you do choose to go ahead with the interview, you will not be able to reschedule for another time if afterwards you feel you did not perform at your best.
- If a presentation is required to test a particular competency behaviour or job specific criteria, you will be notified in advance. It will be limited to a specified 5 or 10 minutes with no visual aids, however the use of prompt cards are permitted. If the post requires

a more demanding presentation style which is to be of differing length or to include audio visual aids you will be notified in the interview invitation letter.

- The interviewing panel will ensure that reasonable adjustments are taken into account for any disabled candidate who has identified specific requirements on their application form, in relation to any aspect of the interview process. It is important therefore that any specific requirements you may have are identified as soon as possible – there is a section in the application form to note these.
- Each member of the panel will then take it in turns to ask questions. It is the Chair's job to ensure these are focused on testing the competency behaviours and job specific criteria for the post and the interview or assessment method runs to time.
- At the end of the interview, the Chair will give you the chance to ask any questions you may have about the post.

## **Stage 4: After Interview**

### **Issuing Outcomes**

The panel Chair will give you an indication at the end of the interview of when the outcome of your interview will be issued. All outcomes will be notified by e-mail.

### **What you should do if you are unsuccessful in an application**

Take time to reflect. Look at the feedback provided in your outcome e-mail and the points made. Remain positive and look at what you did achieve. You should be aware that, inevitably, you may receive different feedback from different panels for similar or even identical job applications. The overall agreed score rating will have been achieved by a consensus decision by all panel members.

### **Starting in your new post (for successful candidates)**

Once you have been notified of your successful outcome, the Shared Service Centre will send you a new employee starter pack, which will include a conditional contract, security vetting documentation and any other documentation needed to start your employment. The starter pack will include instructions on how to ensure your employment can start as quickly as possible, including how to arrange to attend a Security Vetting Clinic, and what documentation needs to be returned to the Shared Service Centre before your starting date can be agreed. Your references will also be taken up at this point.

### **Grievance and Complaints**

Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly, or has a grievance or complaint, about how the process was conducted should either write to the Head of Resourcing,

Welsh Government, Cathays Park 2, Cardiff CF10 3NQ or email [sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales](mailto:sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales). If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint raised with the Welsh Government and feel that the principles of appointment on merit through fair and open competition have not been met you have the right to pursue your grievance with the Civil Service Commission at 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ.

August 2014

## **ANNEX A: Providing your evidence**

You should always pick your strongest examples which allow you to evidence how you meet the competency and job specific requirements in the context of the role. When choosing your examples, consider the following advice:

- Base your examples on a previous experience.
- Ensure your examples are at the right level for the grade. Refer to the Grading Characteristics guidance, which can be found on the internet, to help you pitch your examples at the right level.
- Write down all the things that you have done well in your job over the past 2 years. Any performance reports you may have completed may help here. For each of these things note down how you achieved what you did, what skills and behaviours you used.
- For each example, note which competency behaviours or job specific criteria it might cover.
- Gather your evidence together and analyse it before you start writing examples – you probably have more evidence than you think.
- Use evidence from work if possible, but if you have any roles of responsibility outside of work, these may provide you with equally appropriate evidence of the competency behaviours/job specific criteria
- Talk through your evidence and examples with your line manager or a colleague – a second or third pair of eyes is always useful.
- Always tell the truth. You will be asked about your examples at the interview stage so you may not be able to provide sufficient evidence if you have written about something you are not familiar with.

### **Writing Your Evidence**

Ensure your examples are presented as succinctly as possible. As there is a limit on the number of words it is essential that you use the space as effectively as possible by focusing on the actions you took as part of the example. When writing your examples, consider the following advice:

- Write a first draft, then allow yourself plenty of time to refine your examples
- Check everything is there that is needed
- Check your word count – you don't want to exceed the word count of 300 words per competency behaviour/job specific criteria
- Think about presentation – would bullet points work as opposed to paragraphs of text?
- Draft in clear language that is grammatically correct, including the spelling
- Do not use jargon, abbreviations or specialist terms
- Make use of the past tense e.g. achieved, verified. Use active verbs (see Annex B)
- Don't assume the sift panel has any knowledge of the situation. They cannot assume what is not included in the example and can only assess what you have actually written
- Make sure you include how you overcome problems/obstacles
- Describe your thoughts, actions and feelings rather than just describing what happened
- Don't get caught up telling a story in your example. Just give enough to show -
  - how you went about the task
  - why you did it the way you did and
  - describe any obstacles you encountered
- Don't forget to include results and show why your actions were effective and/or how you could have improved on what you did
- Use 'I' not 'we'. This is about your role in the task and how you affected the outcome
- Use short statements that show the value you added
- Use your own words. Consider using active verbs to create greater impact (see Annex B).

## The 'STAR' Model



The **STAR** approach may also help you to present your evidence by providing structure and focus to your examples in both the application form and the interview. The STAR approach includes:

- **Situation** – briefly describe the context and your role
- **Task** – the specific challenge, task or job that you faced
- **Action** – what you did, how and why you did it
- **Result** – the outcomes and what you achieved through your actions.

Keep the **situation** and **task** parts brief. Concentrate on the **action** and the **result**. If the result was not entirely successful describe what you learned from this and what you would do differently next time.

**STAR** may help you to cover all the points you need to make. It may help you in drafting your application and ensure that you cover what you personally have done. Make sure you focus on your strengths. It may also help you at the interview stage, by giving you a structure to form your answers to questions asked at interview. There are however other frameworks available which could help you with structuring your evidence. Spending some time researching application and interview techniques prior to applying for a vacancy could help you to identify a framework that best suits you.

## **ANNEX B: The Use of Active Language**

When completing your competency examples consider using active verbs which give your application greater impact and make a stronger impression. Using the past tense also gives the sense that you have completed or achieved your goals. As an added bonus you will use fewer words.

**Don't use:** I was responsible for organising a programme of speakers.

**Do use:** I organised a programme of speakers.

Here is a list of active verbs that you can consider using:

**A** - accomplish, achieve, adapt, administer, advise, analyse, apply, appoint, appraise, approve, assess, attain, arrange, assist

**B** - broaden, budget, build

**C** - calculate, capture, centralise, check, coach

**D** - decrease, define, delegate, deliver, demonstrate, determine, develop, devise, diagnose, direct, distribute, document, drive

**E** - earn, edit, eliminate, encourage, engineer, ensure, establish

**F** - facilitate

**G** - generate, guide

**H** - help

**I** - identify, implement, improve, improvise, incorporate, increase, influence, initiate, innovate, inspire, instigate, instruct, interpret, interview, investigate, introduce

**L** - lead, liaise, launch

**M** - mentor, manage

**N** - negotiate, network

**O** - organise, operate, obtain

**P** - participate, persuade, plan, present, produce, prompt, propose

**R** - reinforce, research, revitalise

**S** - shape, sell, solve, specify, streamline, supply, support

**T** - teach, test, train, transform

**U** - understand, undertake, urge

**V** - validate, value, volunteer

**W** - weigh up, widen, write

## ANNEX C: Scoring Matrix

Good/ Strong Evidence	5	<p><b>Strong evidence</b></p> <p>To be issued when evidence far exceeds expectations in terms of relevance to the area being tested and when compared to the requirements of the grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence is well presented and structured; <b>and</b></li> <li>• Evidence is directly and wholly relevant to the area being tested; <b>and</b></li> <li>• Evidence is judged to far exceed the minimum requirement for the grade and may actually correspond to the requirements of a higher grade.</li> </ul>
	4	<p><b>Good evidence</b></p> <p>To be issued when evidence exceeds expectations in terms of relevance to the area being tested and when compared to the requirements of the grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence is well presented and structured; <b>and</b></li> <li>• Evidence is well aligned to the area being tested; <b>and</b></li> <li>• Evidence is judged to exceed the minimum requirements of the grade.</li> </ul>
Competent Evidence	3	<p><b>Competent evidence</b></p> <p>To be issued when the evidence offered is sufficient in terms of relevance to the area being tested and when compared to the requirements of the grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient evidence is presented and follows a basic structure <b>and</b> □ Evidence is sufficiently aligned with the area being tested; <b>and</b></li> <li>• Evidence is judged to meet the minimum requirements of the grade.</li> </ul>
Poor/ Unsatisfactory Evidence	2	<p><b>Unsatisfactory evidence</b></p> <p>To be issued when the evidence offered is insufficient in terms of relevance to the area being tested and/or when compared to the requirements of the grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some evidence is presented but assertions and statements are insufficiently supported; <b>or</b></li> <li>• Evidence offered is only partly relevant to the area being tested; <b>and/or</b></li> <li>• Evidence offered is/may be relevant to the area being tested but is judged to be insufficient when compared to the requirements of the post in terms of sophistication/complexity.</li> </ul>
	1	<p><b>Poor evidence.</b></p> <p>To be issued when the evidence offered is way short of expectations in terms of relevance to the area being tested and/or when compared to the requirements of the grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little/no evidence is presented to support assertions or general statements; <b>or</b></li> <li>• Evidence does not correspond in any way to the area being tested; <b>and/or</b></li> <li>• Evidence is/may be relevant to the area being tested but is judged to be far below the required level for the post in terms of sophistication/complexity</li> </ul>
	0	<p><b>No evidence attempted.</b></p> <p>To be issued when evidence is missing from an Evidence Document or when candidates fail to attempt to answer a question at interview.</p>

