COMPETENCY BASED QUESTIONS

Information on completing the Competency Based Questions overleaf:

In this following section, you are required to describe some of your personal achievements to date that demonstrate certain necessary skills and qualities required for this position. The skills and qualities are outlined in the Questions Areas on page 5 to 7 of the application form. All question areas must be completed and remember that you will be questioned on all areas at interview if you are invited to one**.** The instructions below will help you to complete your answers, but you should also consider these instructions when you are preparing for interview.

For **Question Areas 1-4**, you are given a description of the competency. You are then asked to describe a situation, from your own experience, which you think is the best example of what **YOU** have done which demonstrates this skill or quality. It is essential that you describe how **you** demonstrated the skill or quality in question.

The information you present here will form part of a shortlisting process, where necessary, and may also be used to help structure your interview, if you are invited to one. Therefore, compose your replies carefully and try to structure what you write so that you give specific information about what you have done – for example, do not simply say that "X was successful", describe exactly what you did and how you demonstrated the skill or quality in question. **Do not exceed the space allowed in the boxes.**

For each of the examples please include the following:

(a) The nature of the task, problem or objective;

(b) What you actually did and how you demonstrated the skill or quality

(c) The outcome or result of the situation

Please do not use the same example to illustrate your answer to more than two skill areas.

Please note that, should you be called to interview, the Interview Board may look for **additional examples** of where you demonstrated the skills required for this post so you should think of a number of examples of where you demonstrated each of the skills.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE COMPETENCY BASED QUESTIONS

The competencies are designed to help you to present **relevant evidence** in order that decision makers can evaluate how well you 'fit' the requirements of the role. Relevant evidence is usually drawn from your work experience and the way in which you have accomplished a range of activities. Those involved in screening the applications will be evaluating the information you give against **specific skills** required for effective performance in the role. To do this they need you to give enough detail so that they can tell **what you actually did** and **how you did it.**

The people doing the screening **will not** assume that you demonstrate a skill at the right level just because of your current role, length of experience or educational qualifications. These do not give enough evidence about how you accomplished relevant tasks. So, if a question is about your approach to decision making, you need to do more than describe your current role and list important decisions you have made. You will need to describe **how** you reached relevant decisions.

Some guidelines for presenting yourself well are given below:-

- **Give specific examples** – all competencies will ask you to describe an example of when you have demonstrated a skill: try to do this concisely but with enough detail so that the reader will be clear about **what you actually did**. This detail might include information about timescales, the number of people involved, budgets etc. It can help to use bullet points to that the sequence of events is clear to the reader.
- **Give a range of examples** – if possible, base your answers on different situations or challenges you faced rather than rely on just one experience. This helps the reader to evaluate how you tackle different challenges and not just your behaviour in a 'one off' situation.

- **Be concrete rather than theoretical** – a clear description of **how you actually behaved** in a particular situation (and why) is of much more use to the reader than a vague or general description of what you consider to be desirable attributes.

EXAMPLES ON HOW TO COMPLETE THIS SECTION OF THE APPLICATION FORM

***Competency*: Communication Skills:** *able to adapt your communication style to particular situations and audiences….. Able to produce clear and concise written information….*

Example 1: *I was responsible for producing important management reports and supporting presentations for a range of important and high profile clients. Through my understanding of the clients' needs and my effective communication skills, I have ensured that the reports that go to the clients are relevant and focused, and are continually improved. The reports I have produced and the presentations I have made were well received by all my clients. As a result of the combination of my analytical thinking and interpersonal and communication skills, my brief has been extended to lead the development of the strategic plan for the organisation.*

Example 2:

(a) *The unit I was attached to was responsible for producing a management report and supporting oral presentation for several large clients, some with significant problems and issues to report. In some cases the management report was publicly available and was subject to a great deal of scrutiny. A new style/format of management letter needed to be developed for my clients, as many of the clients were complaining that the letters were too large/long and difficult to read.*

(b) *I was tasked with developing a new style of management letter for the clients. I had to meet stringent quality requirements/criteria whilst addressing the need to reduce its size. Following consultation, mainly over the phone and face-to-face, with the majority of our clients, I realised that a summarised report format with a better*

visual and more interactive presentation was the answer. I developed a format for a summarised report, reducing the average length from 40 pages to just 10. I achieved this through careful editing of information and increased use of graphs etc. I then developed a more focused presentation to clients and included more graphical displays and incorporated short presentations by colleagues directly involved in producing the work. During the presentations I encouraged clients to ask questions and develop their understanding of the issues at hand.

(c)*The summarised management report and improved presentations were seen as a success by the clients, who with exception, in responding to an evaluation survey, found the new format/style better than the previous, and all requested that the revised system should be continued.*

Example 1 (above):

This is **not** a good example because it:

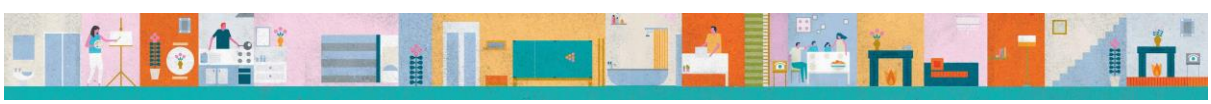
- does not give sufficient details of exactly what the person did or how they actually demonstrated their *"effective communications skills"*, also, it is not clear where the information requested at (a), (b) and (c) above is presented.

EXAMPLE 2 (ABOVE):

This is a **better** example because it:

- describes exactly what the person did and how they communicated, for example ***"…..consultation, mainly over the phone and face-to face" & "developed a format for a summarised report, reducing the average length from 40 pages to just 10" "achieved this through careful editing of the information and increased use of graphs". "Encouraged clients to ask questions"***
- Also, it is clearer where the information requested at (a), (b) and (c) above is presented.

Reminder:

Please note that all 4 competencies must be completed at the time of application.

Failure to complete all areas of the application form may result in you not being brought forward to the interview stage of the selection process.