

un competency based interviewing guide

un competency based interviewing guide is an essential resource for candidates and recruiters engaging with the United Nations recruitment process. This guide explores the methodology behind competency-based interviewing (CBI), a structured approach used by the UN to assess candidates' skills, behaviors, and attitudes in alignment with specific job competencies. Understanding the principles of CBI helps applicants to prepare effectively and respond confidently to interview questions designed to evaluate past experiences and problem-solving abilities. This article covers the key competencies valued by the UN, the structure of competency-based interviews, effective response techniques, and tips for success. Additionally, it highlights the importance of the STAR method in organizing answers and how to tailor responses to the UN's unique organizational culture. The following sections provide a detailed breakdown to assist candidates in mastering the UN competency based interviewing guide.

- Understanding UN Competency Based Interviewing
- Key Competencies Assessed in UN Interviews
- Preparing for a UN Competency Based Interview
- Answering Techniques: The STAR Method
- Common UN Competency Based Interview Questions
- Tips for Success in UN Competency Based Interviews

Understanding UN Competency Based Interviewing

UN competency based interviewing is a systematic approach used during the recruitment process to evaluate candidates against predefined competencies required for specific roles. Unlike traditional interviews that may focus on hypothetical questions or general qualifications, competency-based interviews emphasize real past experiences and behaviors as evidence of future performance. The United Nations uses this method to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency in selecting candidates who demonstrate the right skills, attitudes, and values aligned with its mission and goals. This approach helps interviewers assess not only technical abilities but also interpersonal skills, adaptability, and commitment to the organization's principles.

Purpose of Competency Based Interviews at the UN

The main purpose of competency based interviewing at the UN is to objectively evaluate how well candidates meet the established competencies for a given position. It allows recruiters to predict how individuals will perform in similar situations in the future based on concrete examples from their past work or life experience. This process reduces bias, enhances merit-based selection, and identifies candidates who can contribute effectively to the UN's diverse, complex environment.

Difference Between Competency Based and Traditional Interviews

Unlike traditional interviews that may rely on general questions or focus on education and qualifications, competency based interviews require candidates to describe specific instances where they demonstrated relevant skills. The emphasis is on evidence and detail, rather than opinions or theoretical responses. This method provides a more reliable assessment of a candidate's capabilities and ensures alignment with the UN's competency framework.

Key Competencies Assessed in UN Interviews

The United Nations has a comprehensive competency framework that outlines the necessary skills and behaviors for various roles. These competencies are grouped into core values and core competencies, managerial competencies, and technical competencies depending on the job level and function. Understanding these key competencies is crucial for candidates preparing for a UN competency based interviewing guide.

Core Values

Core values are fundamental to the UN's work and culture, guiding how employees act and interact. These include:

- **Integrity:** Demonstrating honesty, ethical behavior, and accountability.
- **Professionalism:** Showing competence, expertise, and commitment to quality work.
- **Respect for Diversity:** Valuing diversity and promoting an inclusive work environment.

Core Competencies

Core competencies relate to the essential skills required for all UN staff, such as:

- **Communication:** Effectively conveying information and engaging with diverse audiences.
- **Teamwork:** Collaborating with colleagues to achieve common goals.
- **Planning and Organizing:** Managing time and resources efficiently.
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for actions and outcomes.

Managerial and Technical Competencies

For managerial roles, competencies such as leadership, decision-making, and people management are assessed. Technical competencies focus on job-specific knowledge and skills relevant to the position's functional area.

Preparing for a UN Competency Based Interview

Preparation is key to success in a UN competency based interviewing guide. Candidates should begin by thoroughly reviewing the job description and competency framework associated with the role. This enables them to identify the competencies that will likely be assessed and gather relevant examples from their experience. Preparation also involves practicing how to articulate these examples clearly and concisely.

Research and Self-Assessment

Understanding the UN's mission, values, and work environment helps candidates align their responses with organizational expectations. Conducting a self-assessment against the competency requirements allows candidates to select strong evidence demonstrating their suitability.

Gathering Examples

It is important to collect specific examples from previous employment, volunteer work, or academic projects where competencies were demonstrated. These examples should be varied and relevant, showcasing problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, or communication skills as required.

Practice Mock Interviews

Engaging in mock interviews with peers or mentors can improve confidence and help refine answers. Practicing the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) is especially beneficial when preparing for competency based questions.

Answering Techniques: The STAR Method

The STAR method is a widely recommended technique for responding to competency based interview questions, including those used by the UN. This structured approach helps candidates present clear, focused, and impactful answers by breaking down their responses into four components.

Situation

Describe the context or background of the example, providing enough detail to set the scene for the interviewer.

Task

Explain the specific task or challenge that needed to be addressed in that situation.

Action

Detail the actions taken to handle the task or resolve the problem, emphasizing the candidate's role and contributions.

Result

Highlight the outcome of the actions, quantifying success where possible and reflecting on any lessons learned.

Common UN Competency Based Interview Questions

Familiarity with typical questions enhances readiness for the UN competency based interviewing guide. Questions generally focus on past experiences that demonstrate core UN competencies and values.

Examples of Common Questions

- Describe a time when you had to work collaboratively with a diverse team to achieve a goal.
- Tell us about a challenging project you managed and how you ensured its success.
- Give an example of a situation where you had to adapt quickly to change.
- Explain how you handled a conflict with a colleague or stakeholder.
- Provide an instance where you demonstrated integrity in a difficult circumstance.

How to Approach These Questions

When answering, candidates should focus on providing concrete examples using the STAR method, ensuring their responses are relevant to the competencies the UN prioritizes. Clarity, honesty, and reflection on outcomes are important to convey professionalism and self-awareness.

Tips for Success in UN Competency Based Interviews

Achieving success in the UN competency based interviewing guide requires more than just knowledge of competencies and examples. It involves strategic preparation and mindful presentation during the interview process.

Be Specific and Concise

Provide detailed examples but avoid overly long or vague answers. Focus on clarity and relevance to the competency being assessed.

Demonstrate Alignment with UN Values

Emphasize integrity, respect for diversity, and professionalism in responses to reflect the UN's culture and expectations.

Practice Active Listening

Listen carefully to each question and ask for clarification if needed before answering. This ensures that responses directly address the interviewer's inquiries.

Maintain Professionalism and Confidence

Present yourself with confidence, maintain good eye contact, and use positive body language to create a strong impression.

Prepare Thoughtful Questions

At the end of the interview, asking informed questions about the role or organization demonstrates interest and engagement.

Summary Checklist for Preparation

- Review UN competency framework and job description
- Collect and practice relevant examples using STAR
- Research the UN's mission and values
- Engage in mock interviews
- Plan interview logistics and dress professionally

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a UN competency based interviewing guide?

A UN competency based interviewing guide is a structured framework used by the United Nations to assess candidates' skills, behaviors, and competencies relevant to the job through targeted interview questions.

Why does the UN use competency based interviewing?

The UN uses competency based interviewing to ensure a fair, consistent, and objective evaluation of candidates by focusing on demonstrated behaviors and skills that align with UN values and job requirements.

What are some key competencies assessed in UN competency based interviews?

Key competencies often assessed include teamwork, communication, accountability, planning and organizing, client orientation, and commitment to continuous learning.

How can candidates prepare for a UN competency based interview?

Candidates can prepare by reviewing the job description, understanding the required competencies, practicing STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) responses, and providing concrete examples from their experience.

What is the STAR technique in the context of UN competency based interviews?

The STAR technique stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. It is a method candidates use to structure their answers by describing a specific situation, the task they needed to accomplish, the actions they took, and the outcomes achieved.

Are UN competency based interviews different from traditional interviews?

Yes, UN competency based interviews focus specifically on candidates' past behaviors and competencies through structured questions, whereas traditional interviews may be more general and less structured.

Can the UN competency based interviewing guide be used for

all UN job levels?

Yes, the UN competency based interviewing guide is adaptable and used for various job levels within the UN system, though competencies and their emphasis may vary depending on the role.

Where can I find official UN competency based interviewing guides and resources?

Official UN competency based interviewing guides and resources can typically be found on the United Nations Careers website or through specific UN agency recruitment pages.

Additional Resources

1. *Competency-Based Interviewing: Master the Tough Interview Style Used by the Fortune 500s*

This book offers a comprehensive guide to understanding and excelling in competency-based interviews. It breaks down the key competencies employers look for and provides practical strategies to demonstrate these through real-life examples. Readers will learn how to prepare answers that highlight their skills effectively and confidently.

2. *The Complete Guide to Competency-Based Interviews*

A detailed manual that walks candidates through the process of competency-based interviews from start to finish. It includes sample questions, model answers, and tips on how to research and align your experiences with job requirements. The book is ideal for job seekers aiming to improve their interview success rates.

3. *Competency-Based Interviewing for Dummies*

This accessible guide simplifies the concept of competency-based interviewing for readers of all levels. It explains the rationale behind this interview style and offers practical advice on structuring responses using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) technique. The book also provides insights into common pitfalls and how to avoid them.

4. *How to Pass Competency-Based Interviews*

Focused on helping candidates succeed in competency-based interviews, this book provides clear instructions on how to prepare and present compelling evidence of your skills. It includes practice questions and exercises designed to build confidence and polish delivery. The guide is especially useful for those new to this interviewing approach.

5. *Competency-Based Interviewing: A Practical Guide*

This book serves as a hands-on resource for both interviewers and interviewees interested in competency-based methods. It offers frameworks for identifying key competencies and techniques to assess or demonstrate them effectively. Readers gain insights into improving their interviewing techniques and decision-making.

6. *Success in Competency-Based Interviews*

A strategic guide that focuses on crafting impactful answers to competency questions. The author emphasizes the importance of storytelling and provides templates to help structure responses clearly and persuasively. The book also covers how to handle tricky or unexpected questions with ease.

7. *Winning at Competency-Based Interviews*

This title equips readers with the knowledge and skills to outperform competitors in competency-based interviews. It contains detailed examples of competencies across various industries and advice on tailoring answers to specific roles. The book also explores psychological aspects of interviewing to help manage stress and build rapport.

8. *Competency-Based Interviewing: Techniques for Success*

Designed for professionals seeking career advancement, this guide highlights techniques for identifying personal strengths aligned with job competencies. It provides actionable steps for preparing for interviews, including self-assessment and mock interview exercises. The book is a valuable tool for career coaches and HR professionals as well.

9. *Mastering the Competency-Based Interview*

This book breaks down the competency-based interview process into manageable parts, offering clear guidance on each stage. It covers research, preparation, delivery, and follow-up, ensuring readers are well-equipped to impress interviewers. The author includes real-world examples and tips for continuous improvement.

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