

Once you have short-listed you can use a variety of techniques to find that ‘*right person for the job*’.

Structured interviews

Structured interviews are a framework of key questions designed to assess the knowledge, skills and abilities of applicants in a consistent way against the basis for assessment. (Other questions may be asked around the key questions to drill down into applicant responses or seek clarification.)

The following question options can be used alone or in combination to help to assess different elements of applicant knowledge and ability.

- **Behavioural questions**

Behavioural questions help you find out how an applicant might think and act in certain situations by asking how they handled a situation in the past. Because questions draw on real experiences, behavioural questions are particularly valuable for assessing areas requiring demonstrated skill or knowledge.

Example question: “Please describe a recent circumstance in which you had to resolve a complex and volatile issue face-to-face”.

- **Situational/scenario questions**

Situational/scenario questions employ hypothetical circumstances to test how applicants would handle a given situation. By presenting a situation to the applicant and asking what he or she would do you can assess both ability and potential.

Example question: “Please outline the steps you would take if staff absences in your work area were affecting your ability to deliver a project which is due in a month’s time”.

See also ‘*Improve your interview skills*’ on this CD.

Do-it-yourself options

- **Work samples**

Work samples require applicants to show their skills in practice. You can use actual work (for example, written work) or work simulations to predict on-the-job performance. Using work samples can also help you assess many skills that may be difficult to appraise, such as the ability to think quickly and logically. Some options are outlined below.

- **Skills tests**

Skill tests involve applicants to complete tasks which allow you to assess whether they have a required level of competency.

Example: Assessment of applicants for a data entry role could involve them undertaking a skills test to measure their data input speed and accuracy.

- **In-tray exercises**

In-tray exercises require applicants to perform tasks which simulate the real work to be undertaken.

Examples: Prioritising and responding to requests for information; planning the stages of organising an event; etc.

- **Role-plays**

Role-plays are designed to mirror the interpersonal challenges of the work. Applicants may be involved in interactive scenarios which simulate, for example, chairing meetings, dealing with clients face-to-face etc.

Example: Assessing the interpersonal skills of applicants for a supervisory role could involve role-playing a scenario requiring the mediation of a dispute between staff.

Source: Office of the Public Service Commissioner 'Recruitment and Selection Resources'