

## Congratulations on being invited to interview.

We want you to do well and see you at your best on the day, so the following guide is designed to help you prepare for your interview and understand what will happen on the day.

Click on the relevant link below:

- [What to expect on the day of the interview](#)
- [Competency Based Interview – What is this?](#)
- [STAR principle for answering questions](#)
- [Taking Notes into the Interview](#)
- [Handling questions:](#)
  - [Behaviour to promote at interview](#)
  - [Behaviours to avoid](#)
- [A few things to remember](#)
- [Providing feedback on your experience](#)

## What to expect on the day of the interview

- When you arrive you may be asked to provide your identification documents and any qualifications, licenses or certificates which you are essential to the post. If this is not done at this stage, you may be asked for this information at the end of the interview. If interviews are being conducted remotely the panel may ask you come into our premises for a manager to verify the documents.
- You will normally be met by the line manager for the post you have applied for, and they will take you to the interview room and introduce you to the other 'board members'. The board is normally made up of at least 2 but sometimes 3 managers – the line manager, and 1 or 2 other operational managers.
- The interview will be competency based and behavioural in style meaning that candidates are evaluated against their past behaviours in different situations in order to predict future performance. Some technical questions may be asked also depending on the type of role you have applied for. More information about this is highlighted below in the section 'What is a competency Based Interview'. The interview will include;
  - Opening questions
  - Technical/competency selection
  - An opportunity for you to ask questions
  - Closing questions

- Interviews will normally last approximately 30- 60 minutes depending on the level and nature of the job you have applied for.
- For jobs at middle management level and above and for some specialist jobs you may also be required to take part in additional assessments and/or questionnaires. These will be communicated to you before the interview and are likely to comprise of one or a combination of:
  - Role Play
  - Written Exercise
  - Presentation
  - Psychometric testing
  - Behavioural Profiling

### Competency Based Interview – What is this?

We use competency based interviews to evaluate your 'competence'. Competency based interviews (sometimes known as situational or behavioural interviews) give us a valuable insight into your preferred style of working and behaviours, and help us determine if you fit the values and culture of SCTS.

The interviewer will ask you to describe a situation which demonstrates your abilities and skills that are integral to the role that you have applied for. The questions will focus on the skills, knowledge and experience outlined within the Person Specification you will have seen when you applied online.

When answering competency based questions apply the **STAR** principles to the examples you provide. Further guidance can be found in on [our recruitment page](#).



**Situation** – Describe the situation and explain what happened

**Task** – Outline the task you had to complete and describe your responsibilities

**Action** – Explain the steps that you took or the decisions you made

**Result** – Explain the outcomes of your actions and what you learnt from the experience

- Each Board Member will be responsible for asking you a set of questions relating to the criteria outlined on the Person Specification used for the role.
- You may notice that 'board members' are making notes whilst you respond, this is

normal and you should not be concerned about this. The Board Members are simply recording key information from your responses so that they have accurate information when discussing your interview at the end. It is also useful for them to be able to give you constructive feedback if you are unsuccessful.

- The Board will be assessing you against the Person Specification for the job and a 0-4 scoring mechanism will be used for each of the criteria listed on the Person Specification. Each element of the interview and/or assessment will be reviewed by the panel members who have been trained to do so fairly and accurately.
- At the end the interview you will have the opportunity to ask any questions and to add anything else you feel may be of relevance.

### **Taking notes or paperwork in to the interview**

It is 100 percent acceptable to bring notes to a job interview if those notes contain a short list of questions you've prepared in advance to ask your interviewers. In fact, bringing this type of information to an interview demonstrates to the recruiter your genuine interest in the job opportunity.

You can also take a long a copy of your application form if you wish to although this is not required.

Typically, taking notes in to an interview would be where a candidate requires these as an aide-memoire when required to deliver a presentation but not as a reference point for questions asked by the Board Members.

If you require reasonable adjustments to be made, please request these ahead of the interview and in good time.

### **Handling Questions**

You should:

- Take the time you need to collect your thoughts before answering a question.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question; if you feel you need to, explain why you did not understand it.
- Answer the question asked, answering as fully as you can using specific examples from your past experiences.
- Try not to move away from the point you are making, be succinct in your answer.
- Say if you don't know the answer or can't think of a specific example and the panel can return to the question later.
- Stop and start your answer again if you think you are on the wrong track, but don't do this too often. Explain your reasoning.
- Speak up at the end – but only if you have something that needs to be said, for example to change or add to any of the answers you have given.

### Try not to:

- Give one word answers – this is your opportunity to convince the Board you meet the criteria for the job.
- Talk in generalities and give unfocussed examples as this is the most common reason why people are unsuccessful at interview. In order for us to be able to measure your suitability for the post we need to know *Who, What, When, Where, Why!*\_ not *What you think you would do or could do!*
- Try to bluff or evade questions – if you don't know the answer or can't answer, say so.
- Ramble – when you feel that you have given an adequate response, stop. The Board will ask you follow up questions if we want to know more.
- Make exaggerated claims or oversell yourself.

### A few things to remember:

- Plan to arrive early, giving yourself plenty of time to get to the interview.
- Try to relax – the Board wants to see you at your best; if you are nervous they will understand and make allowances.
- Be prepared, having assessed yourself against the Person Specification and have thought out specific examples relating to each criteria listed.
- Try to relax before you go in, listen to your breathing for half a minute or so and try to compose yourself.
- Think and act positively; project confidence and give a good first impression.
- Remember that the Board want candidates to perform well and that they will do their very best to put candidates at ease.

### Providing feedback on your experience

We would welcome your feedback to help us continually enhance the candidate experience when applying for a role and joining SCTS. If you wish to provide us with some feedback, please let us know by emailing [recruitment@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@scotcourts.gov.uk).

All feedback will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

**Good Luck!**