COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEW GUIDANCE

The following guidance has been prepared to help you, as a hiring manager, establish your questions to ask candidates at interview.

What are competencies?

Competency-based selection methods are based on the assumption that past behaviour is the best predictor for future behaviour. It is not enough for a candidate to just say what they can offer; they need to provide evidence. Competency-based questions are designed to help candidates give evidence of the personal qualities which are needed to perform well, and these qualities will be detailed on the Person Specification for the role.

Usually, candidates are expected to give an example of how they have demonstrated particular qualities in the past.

Example:

Describe a situation where you had to……

- *make a difficult decision*
- *show initiative*
- *overcome a difficult obstacle*

The table below provides a number of potential competency-based interview questions that could be used to assess common qualities required in LJMU roles. These can be supplemented by technical questions specific to the role where applicable or amended as appropriate to fit the specific role:

Competency/Skill	Question	
	General roles	*Managerial/senior roles*
Communication	Tell me about a time when you had to communicate a complicated idea to others. How did you go about this? How did you plan to communicate this so they understood? How did you check their understanding?	Tell us about a time when you had to communicate important information persuasively to a diverse audience? Why was it important? What were the key points you had to make? How effective were you?
	Give me an example of when you have written an important letter/email to a customer. How did you ensure it was clear to the reader? What feedback did you receive?	Can you tell us about a time you have resolved a conflict at work? How did you deal with this? What was the outcome?

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	General roles	*Managerial/senior roles*
	Tell me about a time when you had to persuade a colleague(s) to your point of view? What positive messages and benefits did you outline and why?	Describe a situation where you had difficulty getting others to agree with your decisions. How did you handle it?
Team working	Tell me about a time when you worked with a group to complete a shared goal. What was your role?	Describe a time when you have had to build a team. How did you go about this and was it successful in achieving its goals?
	Give us an example of when you have had to support others in a team.	Collaboration often involves delegation and trust in others' abilities. How do you decide when to delegate tasks to others, and how do you ensure accountability within the team?
	Can you provide an example of a time when you had to collaborate with colleagues from different departments or teams? How did you ensure effective teamwork across different areas of the organisation?	Communication is crucial in collaborative work. Can you give an example of a time when you effectively communicated with team members to ensure everyone was on the same page and working towards a common objective?
Customer Service	What is your definition of 'excellent' customer service? Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond to help a customer.	How do you empower and motivate your team to deliver exceptional customer service consistently?
	Tell us about a particularly difficult situation with a customer. What did you find difficult to handle? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?	How do you handle feedback or complaints from students or other stakeholders and how do you use this feedback to improve service delivery?
	Can you describe your understanding of the term 'customer service' within the context of higher education? Who do you see as our customers?	
Planning and Organising	Describe a time sensitive project or piece of work you worked on that required close attention to detail. How did you ensure the quality of work was at the required standard whilst making sure deadlines were met?	What strategies do you adopt to ensure delivery of key objectives whilst faced with conflicting priorities and tight deadlines?
	General roles	*Managerial/senior roles*

Competency/Skill	Question	
	General roles	*Managerial/senior roles*
	Describe a situation where you had to manage multiple priorities. How did prioritise your work? What obstacles did you face? What steps did you take to help ensure successful outcomes of each? Can you talk us through a situation where you had to adapt to unexpected changes or disruption to your working day? How did you reorganise your priorities to accommodate this?	Can you talk us through a time you were required to coordinate multiple stakeholders or team members to achieve a common goal. What did you do to ensure effective communication and collaboration?
Leadership	Give us an example of a time that you showed initiative and took the lead without being asked to.	Give me an example of how you have given clear direction to your staff and empowered them to achieve their objectives.
		Tell me about how you have communicated your organisation's vision and how you have encouraged others to work towards this.
		Talk us through the most difficult decision you've had to make recently that had a significant impact on staff or students, and tell us how you navigated them through that?
		Tell me about a person who, as a result of your coaching, has improved their skills or performance.
Diversity and Inclusion	What is your definition or understanding of diversity? How would you promote diversity and inclusion?	What does being inclusive mean to you? What would you do to ensure a fully inclusive environment for staff and students?
	Can you talk us through a time you championed diversity and inclusivity in your role and it brought a positive outcome?	Diversity in teams can lead to innovation and better problem-solving. How do you ensure that diverse perspectives are valued and included in team discussions and decision-making processes?
		How have you promoted diversity and inclusion within your current or previous institution, both in terms of student demographics and faculty/staff representation?

Competency/Skill	Question	
	General roles	*Managerial/senior roles*
Initiative and Problem Solving	Tell me about a time when a problem arose, and your manager was unavailable. How did you handle the situation and how did things turn out?	Tell me about a situation where you had to adapt quickly to changes over which you had no control. What strategies did you use to handle the situation?
	Describe a time when you have sought new responsibility or volunteered to do something which was normally outside of your role.	Can you provide an example of a time when you had to think creatively to find a solution to a problem?
	Can you give me an example of an occasion you have improved existing systems or procedures? Did you face any barriers? What impact did this change have on your role or team?	Can you provide an example of a time when you took a calculated risk in your career or work? What was the outcome, and what did you learn from the experience?
Building Relationships	Describe an occasion that you have developed a positive relationship with a customer or colleague outside of your immediate team.	Talk me through the most successful partnership you have developed in the workplace and what steps you took to achieve this. What impact did the partnership have on your department or organisation?
	Tell us about any collaborative working that you have done whilst teaching. What challenges did this bring and how did you overcome them?	How do you approach networking to expand your professional connections and opportunities? Can you give us an example of a time that this approach has given a positive outcome?
	Describe a time when you had to navigate a challenging interpersonal relationship in the workplace. How did you address any conflicts or misunderstandings and maintain a positive working relationship?	Describe a situation where you had to rebuild a strained relationship with a colleague or team member. What steps did you take to repair trust and collaboration?
Values-Based Questions	Can you discuss a time when you had to speak up for yourself or others in a challenging or uncomfortable situation? What motivated you to take action?	What is the most courageous thing that you have had to do in your career to date? Why was it courageous and would you do anything differently if presented with the same set of circumstances again?
	How do you personally contribute to creating a sense of belonging and cohesion within your community (*this could be a personal or work-related community*)?	How do you incorporate community feedback and perspectives into your decision-making processes?

Competency/Skill	Question	
	General roles	*Managerial/senior roles*
Teaching and Learning	What steps do you take to ensure that every student in your classroom receives the support they need to succeed academically and personally?	Can you provide examples of successful initiatives or programs you've implemented in previous leadership roles that positively impacted student success, academic excellence, or institutional reputation?
	Can you provide an example of a time when you tailored your teaching methods to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of your students?	How do you balance your responsibilities for management and associated administration with your commitment to supporting effective teaching and learning practices?
	How do you incorporate student feedback into your teaching practices to enhance their learning experience?	How do you foster a culture of innovation and collaboration among faculty members to enhance teaching and learning experiences for students?
	Can you provide examples of how you've integrated real-world applications or experiential learning opportunities into your courses?	