

Guidelines for Candidates

How to write your application and prepare for an OSCE

Interview

The OSCE's greatest asset is the quality of its staff. To ensure that the very best people join the Organization, we want to make sure that you as a candidate understand the recruitment process and are well prepared when applying for OSCE vacancies, and when being interviewed. The objective of this document is to provide you with key information on the OSCE recruitment process and with tips on how to best prepare.

1. Understanding the OSCE Recruitment Process

In order to ensure that the principles of recruitment and selection are properly implemented and consistently adhered to, the recruitment and selection process normally includes the following steps:



Vacancy Notice

A vacancy notice or Call for Nominations (for Head of Mission) is issued for a specific position and applications are accepted until midnight (CET/CEST) of the deadline for applications



Evaluation

You are evaluated on the basis of your application form and cover letter, and candidates who fulfil the requirements of the position are presented to the hiring manager



Pre-Assessment

A pre-interview or pre-test may be carried out in the event that many candidates meet the requirements of the position. The pre-interview or pre-test are designed to test the competencies relating to the specific position and the motivation of the individual



Candidate Assessment

The most suitable candidates are invited for a competency-based interview and a written test and/or a presentation. The interview is focused on the competencies and technical skills that are most important for the position and reflected in the vacancy notice



Reference Check

Other testing methodology may be used as appropriate, and checking of work-related references and verification of educational credentials takes place before a selection decision is made



Offer

Offer of appointment/assignment is sent to the successful candidate, and candidates interviewed are normally advised of the outcome of the selection process within 3-4 weeks. Upon completion of the recruitment process, all other applicants are informed of the outcome

2. The Competency Model

The OSCE Competency Model aims to define the behaviours that are essential to effective performance in a given position. The Model sets out the core values of the OSCE, as well as the competencies needed to perform on the job. Values are shared principles and beliefs that underpin the Organization's work and that guide actions and behaviours of staff. Competencies are the skills, attributes and behaviours directly related to successful job performance.

The OSCE values and competencies apply to all OSCE officials, regardless of function or title. Managers must, in addition to the values and core competencies, demonstrate a number of competencies that are deemed essential in a management role. OSCE values and competencies are listed and described in detail in the document "Our competency model", available [here](#).

3. How to apply and prepare for an interview

Your online application should relate to the specific position you are applying for and you are expected to highlight achievements that demonstrate the competencies from the vacancy notice in your application form. A good application is tailored to the specific position you are applying for. Try to keep it structured and to the point.

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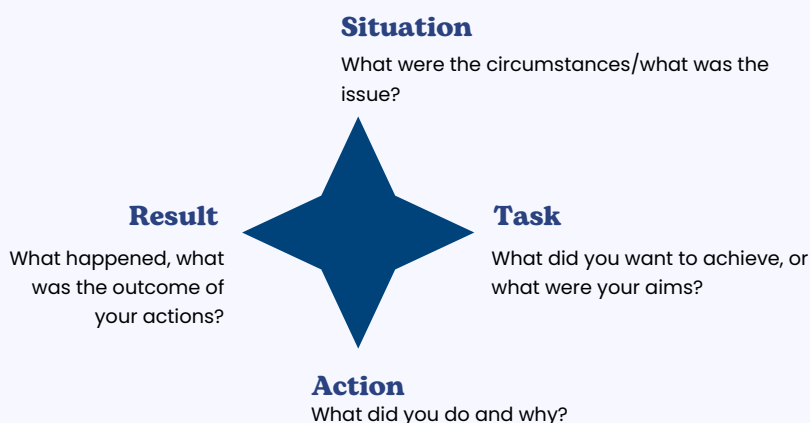
The Competency-Based interview is based on the concept that past behaviour and experience is the best indicator of future performance. In the interview you will therefore be asked for specific examples of your past behaviour that relate to competencies outlined in the vacancy notice. Questions often begin with "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of when you have...".

In order to prepare, you should review the vacancy notice and think through your own professional history to identify relevant examples that relate to the skills and knowledge outlined in the vacancy notice. You should be prepared to address positive results and achievements using these examples, but also challenges you might have had. If the situation did not have a positive result, the important part is to demonstrate what you learnt from the experience and what you would do differently next time. Be aware of the specific skills each story illustrates

If you apply for a junior-level position and don't have extensive work-related experience, you may wish to provide examples from your studies, voluntary work, or other areas. Try to use an example from the more recent past where you can remember the details about what you did and why.

When answering the questions in the interview, you should talk about "I", rather than "We", in order to highlight your own role in the given situation.

A useful technique to use when preparing for and answering competency-based questions is the "STAR" method. These letters act as a guide to remind you how to structure your response.



It is recommended that you do some research on competency- or behaviour-based interviews. There is a lot of material available on preparing for such an interview structure. There is also information available online on how to handle stress before and after the interview.

You should be prepared to answer a motivational question and provide an answer that illustrates your motivation to apply for the position, and why you want to work for the OSCE. Try to learn as much as you can about the department and/or field operation you are applying to and the work it does, and be prepared to answer how you could contribute to that work. Technical or job-specific questions might also be asked. If you are applying for a management position, you should also be prepared to answer questions relating to managerial competencies.

Listen carefully to the question and do not be afraid to ask for clarification if you do not understand the question. Take your time to collect your thoughts and think of the best example you can provide to fit the question before speaking. Keep to the point and try to be as specific as possible, but be yourself and act naturally. The Interview Board is there to help you provide a full picture of what you have achieved in the past and would not be trying to trick you in any way. It is recommended that you practice interviewing at home, either by yourself or with a friend or family member.

For more information regarding OSCE competency-based interviewing, we recommend that you take a look at the following [presentation](#) and [video](#).

4. How to prepare for a written test

The written test and/or presentation will relate to the position you have applied for and you can prepare for the test by learning about the OSCE in general, but more specifically about the department itself, and, if applicable, the field operation and its mandate. Make sure you take the time to read the instructions and that you understand the questions.