Public Sector Interviews

What to Expect & How to Succeed

Public sector recruitment focuses on fairness, structure and evidence.

You can expect interviews that are:

Highly structured and formal Interviewers typically follow a script to ensure fairness and consistency across candidates.

Built around the Success Profiles framework
You'll be assessed on **behaviours, strengths, experience and technical capability**.

Competency based
Most questions require real examples of things you have done.

May include assessments
You may also complete online tests, written exercises, or a presentation as part of the assessment.

psr:

How to Succeed in a Competency-Based Interview

Research the Organisation
Understand the contracting authority's mission, culture, priorities and current challenges.

Study the Job Description
It will indicate exactly what behaviours and capabilities will be assessed.

Prepare Strong Examples
Choose examples from recent roles where you delivered measurable impact.

Stay Specific
Interviewers need to know precisely what you did, not what the team did.

Use Structured Storytelling (STAR)
This keeps your answers focused and purposeful.

Reflect
Show learning, growth, resilience and continuous improvement.

Align with Public Sector Values
Weave in themes like fairness, diversity, integrity, resilience and public service impact.

The STAR Method

S **Situation**: Set the scene briefly.

T **Task:** What were you responsible for?

A **Action:** What you did - this should be the longest, most detailed part.

R **Result:** What happened? What was the impact? What did you learn?

Tip: Prepare **4–6 STAR stories** that can flex to answer different behavioural questions.

During the Interview: Best Practices

Communicate Clearly

- Be structured and concise
- Maintain positive body language and a professional tone

Stay STAR-Focused

- Keep answers to **1–2 minutes** unless asked for more detail
- Ensure every answer offers clear, scored evidence the panel can use

After the Interview

Next steps are simple: await feedback from the hiring panel. Feedback can be quick, but depending on interview volumes it may take a few weeks.