

# Competency-based interviews

How would you  
**contribute**  
to the work of the United  
Nations and to the specific  
job you are applying for?



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*"Past, demonstrated behavior is the best indicator of future performance"*



# Values and Competencies

- Values:
  - Shared principles and beliefs that underpin the Organization's work and guide actions and behaviours of staff
- Competencies:
  - Skills, attributes and behaviours directly related to successful job performance



# Values and Competencies

Core Values	Core Competencies	Managerial Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Integrity</li><li>○ Professionalism</li><li>○ Respect for Diversity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Communication</li><li>○ Teamwork</li><li>○ Planning and Organizing</li><li>○ Accountability</li><li>○ Creativity</li><li>○ Client Orientation</li><li>○ Commitment to Continuous Learning</li><li>○ Technological Awareness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Vision</li><li>○ Leadership</li><li>○ Empowering Others</li><li>○ Managing Performance</li><li>○ Building Trust</li><li>○ Judgement and Decision-making</li></ul>



# Why competency-based interviews (CBI)?

- Competencies are forward-looking; they describe skills and attributes that staff and managers need to build human capital and meet future challenges
- Competencies help organizations clarify expectations and define future development needs
- CBI questions ask about past professional experiences that can demonstrate that the applicant is competent
- The theory is that if you can demonstrate that you have done it in the past or have learned from the past, chances are that you will be able to do it in the future
- When assessing the applicants' responses, panels will ascertain the depth and complexity of the responses given by applicants
- CBI is sometimes referred to as behavioral or situational interviewing



# CAR (L) Principle

- **Context:**
  - You will be expected to give an overview of the situation: what the situation was about, how you first got involved, what were the key events and the time frame
- **Actions**
  - You will be expected to cover significant events, specific instances, that were clearly attributable to you rather than the team
- **Results**
  - What was the outcome, impact or results of your actions: You may be asked questions such as how did it turn out? What was the final result?
- **Learning**
  - What did you learn from this experience?



# Preparing and Practicing

- Be flexible and non-demanding with timing
- **Prepare** for the interview:
  - learn as much as you can about the **organization** (mandate, publications, organigramme, strategic directions, news, etc.)
  - understand the **position** and look at the competencies in the job opening
  - review your application/PHP and select real **examples** matching your accomplishments to the competencies (i.e. how did you work in a team, solve conflict, mobilize resources, etc.)
- **Practice, practice, practice** beforehand (refer to your application and the requirements of the job opening)
- If invited to an interview:
  - **face-to face**, know what you are going to wear and err on the side of conservatism
  - **telephone** (or Skype/VTC) make sure you are in a private location and equipment is working



# During the interview: **do**

- Make a good first and last impression
- Dress appropriately
- Maintain eye contact with the person who asked the question, if culturally appropriate
- Even on the telephone, smile
- Listen carefully to the complete question. Ask for clarification if a question is not clear
- Keep to the point. Be as specific as possible
- Provide concrete examples that show you were able to handle a situation and/or learned from it



# During the interview: **do not**

- Answer in the hypothetical
- Talk about “we”, rather talk in the “I”
- Espouse theories or values (“waffling on”)
- Make blanket generalizations nor statements about the future
- Interrupt the panel
- Ask questions about benefits and entitlements





# SAMPLE JOB OPENING

Job Title : Administrative Officer, P3  
Department/ Office : Department of Political Affairs  
Location : NEW YORK  
Posting Period : 4 October 2012-3 December 2012  
Job Opening number : 12-ADM-DPA-25185-R-NEW YORK (X)

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**United Nations Core Values: Integrity, Professionalism, Respect for Diversity**

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## **Org .Setting And Reporting**

This position is located in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) was established by the Secretary-General in 2005. It is the United Nations designated entity to bring together into one coherent framework decades of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism policy and legal responses emanating from the General Assembly, Security Council and relevant United Nations Specialized Agencies. The CTITF is part of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and is located at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The incumbent will report to the Director of the CTITF Office.

## **Responsibilities**

Within delegated authority, the Administrative Officer is responsible for the following duties:

- Human Resource Management:- Effectively coordinates actions relative to the administration of human resource activities including recruitment, performance appraisal, job classification reviews, while ensuring consistency in the application of the UN rules and procedures;
- Budget and Finance:- Takes lead with respect to the preparation and implementation of the work programme;- Monitors allotments and redeployment of funds, adhering to the UN Financial rules and regulations; determines/recommends reallocation of funds while observing that the implementation of funds is within the authorized/ levels;- Administers and monitors extrabudgetary resources, including review of agreements and cost plans to ensure compliance with UN Financial regulations and rules and established policies and procedures,- Provides expert advice to Programme Manager and prepares relevant documentation to finalize budget performance reports to donor;
- General Administration:- Serves as Office Liaison on administrative matters with UNDP and DPA's Executive Office. Is responsible for the administrative and logistic aspects of the UNCCT/CTITF events; - Under the supervision of the Team Leader, drafts fund raising strategies for the CTITF - Prepares CTITF/UNCCT project implementation/project closure reports;- Participates in the development, monitors and evaluates the implementation of assigned programme in support for the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT);- Identifies problems and issues to be



# SAMPLE JOB OPENING

addressed and liaises with relevant parties on corrective actions.- Prepares and provides monthly updates and quarterly briefings on status of funds to maintain transparency and sound relations with donor countries and accompanying reports.

## Competencies

**Planning & Organizing:**- Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies- Identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required- Allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work- Foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning- Monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary- Uses time efficiently

**Professionalism:**- Demonstrates expertise and knowledge of financial management and accounting practices,- In-depth knowledge and command of budget development and financial administration of resources,- Ability to identify issues and to use sound judgement, analytical and conceptual abilities,- Expertise in managing programmes and projects particularly in the context of inter-agency process,- Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results, - Operates in compliance with the organizational regulations and rules,- Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensure equal participation of women and men in all areas of work

**Teamwork:**  
- Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals, - Solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise, - Places team agenda before personal agenda, - Supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position, - Shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings

## Education

An advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in business or public administration, accounting, management or related area is required. A first-level university degree in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree is required.

## Work Experience

A minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in Administration, Human Resources, Finance or related field is required. Experience in grant/trust fund management and human resources management systems is desirable. Qualifying years of experience are calculated following the receipt of the first level university degree recognized by the United Nations.

## Languages

English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this post, fluency in English (both oral and written) is required. Knowledge of another UN official language is an advantage.

## Assessment Method

Evaluation of qualified candidates may include an assessment exercise which may be followed by competency-based interview.



# SAMPLE JOB OPENING

## **Special Notice**

This position is funded for a period of at least one year and may be subject to further extension. Staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to assignment by him or her. In this context, all staff members are expected to move periodically to new functions in their careers in accordance with established rules and procedures.

## **United Nations Considerations**

The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs. (Charter of the United Nations - Chapter 3, article 8). The United Nations Secretariat is a non-smoking environment.

## **No Fee**

THE UNITED NATIONS DOES NOT CHARGE A FEE AT ANY STAGE OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS (APPLICATION, INTERVIEW MEETING, PROCESSING, OR TRAINING). THE UNITED NATIONS DOES NOT CONCERN ITSELF WITH INFORMATION ON APPLICANTS' BANK ACCOUNTS.



# Exercise

## Planning and Organizing

- Tell us about a time you had to organize or plan a major event
  - What was the nature of the event?
  - What was your role?
  - How did you plan and organize the different actions to carry out?
  - How did the event turn out?
  - Reflecting back, what did you learn from the experience? If you had to do it again what would you do differently?



# Exercise

## Professionalism

- Tell us about your relevant experience as it relates to the position of Administrative Officer
  - Please explain what types of budgets that you have prepared.
  - Is there anything that you would do differently?
  - What were the constraints/challenges that you had to account for?
  - Please provide us with an example of a difficult Human Resources problem that you had to overcome.
  - What issues led to this situation?



# Exercise

## Teamwork

- Describe to us a successful teamwork work experience
  - What was the situation?
  - What was your role?
  - What made the team successful?
  - How did you handle any disagreements within the team?
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn from the experience? If you had to do it again what would you do differently?



# Exercise Creativity

- Describe to us a situation when you had to be creative
  - What was the nature of the situation?
  - What was your role?
  - What were the different actions you carried out?
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn from the experience? If you had to do it again what would you do differently?



# Exercise Integrity

- Describe to us a situation where you felt pressured to act in a way that would compromise your values or those of the organization
  - What was the nature of the situation?
  - What were the implications of your actions?
  - How did you respond to the pressure?
  - What was the results?
  - What did you learn from the experience? If you had to do it again what would you do differently?





Gracias

Merci

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