



Candidate Support

14 Steps to Delivering an Outstanding Presentation and Interview Performance

KOSOVO: Strengthening Good Governance, Transparency and Accountability of Government Institutions - FCO CSSF

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Congratulations, you were successful in your application and you have received an invitation to the Presentation and Interview.

Your aim is to provide an engaging and insightful presentation followed by an opportunity to show how your past experience is a perfect fit for this role. You don't know how good the other candidates are - but by being well prepared you will maximise your chances of success.

Step	Action	✓
1	<p>Candidate Guidance</p> <p>You should be sent some Candidate Guidance materials. These outline the process. Read this carefully and make a note of the timings and competencies.</p>	
2	<p>Presentation Topic</p> <p>Read this topic. Look for each topic it asks you to cover in the presentation. There could be two or three elements. Note each one separately. This will help you structure your presentation according to what you have been asked to cover. This will also inform how you make use of the time you have for presenting.</p>	
3	<p>Research the Presentation Topic</p> <p>You may be an expert in the field however, you will still need to do some research to avoid relying on what you currently know and think.</p> <p>Obtain relevant publications from that public body, consider recent events that will have impacted on that institution and consider what has been said about the institution politically, internationally and in the media.</p>	
4	<p>Adding your own Thinking</p> <p>Once you have done your research - add your own thinking. Depending on the presentation topic, this might relate to the strategic direction the institution should take, and what needs to be done to enable it to deliver its remit.</p> <p>Other areas which you might wish to consider are your strategy for the institution, and how you will influence the strategy if it's not directly the remit of the role you're applying for. Also, consider what you will personally do, and what your plan is to deliver the organisational remit. What will your priorities be, and which other institutions and stakeholders will you work with to deliver your plan and strategy? How will you go about this? Having a clear plan will be more compelling than a list of general, disjointed and unplanned ideas.</p>	
5	<p>Planning your Presentation</p> <p>You have done some thorough thinking about the role and organisation, so now it is time to create your presentation. The most important part of a presentation is the planning and preparation. If your presentation is not</p>	

	<p>structured - with background information and relevant content for the role and organization or Agency - it will not appear to be a credible presentation to the listener.</p> <p>Go back to the presentation topic and the individual elements you listed in an earlier step.</p> <p>Consider how much time you will spend on each element of the presentation. You will want to make sure you can cover all aspects of the presentation question in the time allowed. Use the full time allocated; not using enough time means you give less evidence to be marked, equally, running out of time means you may miss some key points and shows poor time management. If you reach the time allocated you will be stopped - this could mean you miss the opportunity to include some important points.</p> <p>Given that time is critical, practice delivering the presentation to see if you can deliver it in the time allowed</p> <p>Your job is to also communicate this to the commission in a compelling and credible way. So, use notes if you need to - but avoid simply reading out from a script as this will undermine the impact you have in your communication.</p> <p>Consider the topic you have been asked to present. If you were the commission - which competencies may they be looking to gather evidence of: review your presentation and see if you are likely to be addressing these areas.</p> <p>While you can use notes during the presentation you will be asked to put any notes away during the rest of the interview and you will not have them to refer to. You will be given a pen and piece of paper to be able to take notes during the interview but you will be asked to hand this back at the end of the interview.</p>	
6	<p>Technical Questions</p> <p>Technical Questions are used by Commissions to explore your thinking about the institution and role you have applied for.</p> <p>These tend to focus on some of the critical challenges someone in the role will need to address. These may be strategic, operational, financial, or technical. They may relate to innovations that are required to develop the institution, and/ how you would work with other institutions and stakeholders. You will be expected to have a clear view of your ideas and proposed approaches. You should be aware of the possible areas of questioning from your research, and you should have prepared what you think about all the issues as part of your preparation for the presentation. Generally, these questions, along with the presentation, are your best opportunity to show your relevant technical experience to the role.</p>	
7	<p>Interview - Competencies</p> <p>A competency-based interview is a timed, structured interview made up of specific questions relating to each competency area being assessed. The Interviewing Commission will have selected the most important</p>	

	<p>competencies for the job and will ask you for specific examples of your past behaviour in relation to each of them. Competency-based Interviews seek to gather evidence of your suitability for a role by asking for specific examples of how you have previously demonstrated your experience of delivering against the behaviours critical to the role.</p> <p>The first step is to list all the competencies - there are 11 and these tend to be provided within the Candidate Guidance. The Presentation will be concerned with some of these and the Interview will explore others. Please note, it is normal that not all competencies are covered. The Commission will have selected those they consider as being more important to the success of the role and institution. So, your next job is to consider which competencies are the Commission most likely to be interested in for this role and institution. Do not ignore other competencies, but this gives you an idea of what you may be asked during your interview.</p>	
8	<p>Interview - Past Experience Examples</p> <p>Competency-based interviews tend to focus on questions that require you to describe specific past situations, and explain how you have dealt with these situations. Competency based interviews are based on the principle that past behaviour is a good predictor of future behaviour - an example of an interview question might be: "Please tell me about an instance you continued to deliver results despite reduced funding?"</p> <p>In preparing for these questions - list all competencies. Create a list of examples that help to show you delivering each of these competency areas. Some of your examples will provide a better demonstration of specific competencies. Having several examples is helpful as you will not know the exact focus of each question you are asked. Don't assume what you consider to be your best example will definitely answer the question you are asked - giving a great example but not answering the question is likely to result in a low rating. Be prepared to be flexible - use the right evidence for each question you are asked.</p>	
9	<p>Interview - Relevance</p> <p>Evaluate your prepared examples for relevance to the role and institution you are applying for. Remember, you are trying to show how you will add value and deliver the role you have applied for. The Commission are looking to see how relevant the examples you provide are. The more relevance your examples have to the challenges faced by the institution the more highly they are likely to be rated. For example, are your examples set within the same industry or sector? Are they from the same type of role and size of organisation?</p>	
10	<p>Interview - Level for the Role</p> <p>As well as your examples needing to be relevant, the Commission will also be interested in the level of the role that you were fulfilling in examples used. You may have already met the basic, minimum criteria for management experience at the shortlisting stage. However, this does not necessarily mean that your past management experience is at a sufficient level to clearly demonstrate that you are ready to take on the role in question, particularly if it is a senior, strategic-level position. You should ensure that the examples you use really demonstrate your readiness to</p>	

	<p>take on these challenges, in terms of the complexity and demands of the past situations you are describing. You are less likely to be rewarded for examples which demonstrate relatively low-level management or supervisory responsibilities - e.g. situations in which you tackled a relatively straightforward issue with one person. If you are applying for a role in which you will be responsible for managing an institution of several hundred people, you need to ensure that your examples demonstrate that you are ready for the responsibilities and challenges that this will bring.</p>	
11	<p>Interview - Your role</p> <p>In preparing, and delivering your answers, be clear about your personal role. Talking about personal successes can be uncomfortable for many people. However, the Commission will want to know what specific actions you took and what decisions you made. They will also want to know about who else was involved and what they did relative to your actions and decisions - they will not expect you to have personally done everything. However, if it is a senior role they will expect you to have had the overall responsibility and accountability.</p> <p>Whilst it is common to deliver work as part of a team - talking about ‘We’ rather than ‘I’ is unhelpful and is likely to result in lower ratings, simply because it is impossible for the commission to see what your personal contribution to the situation actually was. You can talk about work delivered within a team - but be clear about your personal and unique contributions to this e.g. which ideas were yours? Which decisions did you make? Which actions did you lead on?</p>	
12	<p>Interview - Future Focused Questions</p> <p>Whilst most questions will focus on your past experience, they may also ask you a future focused question. These are also sometimes called hypothetical questions. They are likely to focus on the key challenges and issues in the role and organisation. For example: “If funding was reduced what would you do to preserve delivery”. These are similar to Technical Questions and as you have already fully prepared for these as part of the Presentation, you should be confident that you can tackle anything the Commission ask.</p>	
13	<p>Interview - Structuring your Responses</p> <p>You need to communicate your response to the Commission. This is more than just answering the question. To assist it is useful to use the following structure to help you provide what the Commission require:</p> <p>STAR</p> <p>Situation - describe the situation and relevant events that led up to this. You are setting the context. Within this you should be clear about the role you were fulfilling at the time, its level and the relevance of the situation to the context of the role/institution applied for. Be concise in this description of the situation - remember that the commission will be more interested in the following stages - i.e. what you actually did.</p> <p>Task - this is what you were required to achieve as an outcome; what you were trying to deliver or the strategy/remit you were fulfilling in this instance.</p> <p>Action - this is what you did; the actions you took; interventions you created; conversations with key stakeholders you held etc. 70% of your</p>	

	<p>answer time should be used giving information about what actions you personally took.</p> <p>Result - finally, the Commission will be interested in the impact. What did you achieve as a direct consequence of the actions you took? Why would this not have been achieved without your input/actions? It may also include what has happened since and what is the position on this issue now?</p> <p>Example: Communication competency</p> <p>Your ability to communicate effectively and influence others to act in support of your own and team goals could be examined. An ability to adapt your communication methods depending on situations and individuals is important here.</p> <p>Example of an interview question for this competency: Please note this question is provided to illustrate the structure of a competency question and is not the actual questions you will be asked:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Q: Tell us about a time when you influenced a colleague to adopt your way of thinking?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Use the STAR model to answer: what was the situation, what did you what did you want to achieve, or what were your aims, what were the specific actions you took and what was the result?</i></p> <p>Probing question examples - What difficulties did you encounter? How did you approach these?</p>	
14	<p>Interview - A Discussion with a Purpose</p> <p>Be conscious that the interview is a discussion with the purpose of gathering evidence of suitability in order to rate each candidate. For each competency question asked, the Commission will probe your answers further with additional and supplementary questions. Listen carefully to the questions - ensure you have understood what they are asking for. The additional questions are called probe questions and look to get more evidence from candidates about specific areas the Commission are interested in - in effect, they help candidates perform better, as these additional questions give you the opportunity to provide more detail and more evidence about your experience.</p> <p>Commissions will also interrupt candidates, especially if you go off track or do not answer the question directly - be aware that the Commission are not being rude but trying to ensure you use the time most effectively to present what you can offer and they are trying to ensure fairness by each candidate getting the same amount of time for the interview.</p> <p>In the introduction, you will be told how many competency areas will be covered in the interview and over what time. Some simple maths about approximately how long each area will last will help you manage your time effectively e.g. if there are 35 minutes and five competencies you know you have approximately 7 minutes for each question. Try to be clear and succinct throughout.</p>	