Senior Interview Guidance

Introduction

This document will provide a guidance from the candidate's perspective for the Senior Associate Interview process. It will describe the interview itself and in the interest of fairness balance, will offer a general guidance on how to prepare for it, so that first time applicants will know what to expect.

Senior Associate roles include: Chair of Examiners, Chief Examiner, Principal Examiner, Principal Moderator, Lead Examiner and Senior Standards Verifier. Interviews for other roles may share some similarities in their process, however, this document will primarily focus on interviews for the mentioned roles.

Interview Structure

Since March 2020, Interviews are now conducted primarily online in a video call platform. Most interviews take place on the software platform Microsoft Teams. However, depending on the requirements of the role it may be conducted on different platforms.

In the interview there will be 1 candidate, 3 panel members and on some occasions may include an observer. The observer will be a Pearson staff undergoing training to become an interview panelist. The input of the observer will be minimal.

The full interview process takes around **one hour**, but please leave at least 90 minutes of availability for the interview in order to account for any potential technical difficulties, or unforeseen circumstances.

The interview is split into two main parts. **Part one** is for the presentation of the task (10-15 mins), and **part two** is the interview questions (40-50 mins).

Upon commencing the interview process, the hiring manager will introduce the panel and confirm the basic details of the vacancy. Before the interview begins the candidate is given the chance to ask for clarification on anything they may be unsure about. Finally, after all interview questions have been asked, the panel will give the candidate a chance to ask any questions they may have about or surrounding the advertised role.

Note: In some circumstances, the proceedings may be altered at the request and requirement of the role. The interview panel will be taking notes during the interview and therefore may not be making constant eye contact.

The Task

The task is sent to the candidate 7 days before the interview date for their preparation of the presentation. The task can be delivered to the panel via a Word/PDF file, an Excel sheet or a PowerPoint presentation. Unless specified, the candidate may present in any way they deem appropriate.

The interview will start off with the presentation of the task from the applicant. It takes around 10-15 minutes, where the candidate presents the interview task to the panel. The candidate will be given 10 minutes to present their work, research findings, or thought process. The panel may be very strict in the time restriction, stopping the presentation once it reaches the 10-minute mark. The panel may ask questions about the presentation at the end.

The task is designed to get in depth information on an aspect of assessment, the subject or specification. The candidate will be asked to create relevant materials, research a theme and/or explain a process within a subject or assessment area.

The Interview Questions

After the task is presented, the interview moves on to the formal questions. In most interviews, there are 9 to 11 Competency, and Subject Specific questions. Each should be answered within 5 minutes.

The Competency questions are there for the panel to capture a range of skills from the candidate, including: Team Work, Leadership, Performance Management, Organisation, Change Management and Flexibility, Decision Making and Customer service.

The Subject Specific questions are there to help the panel capture the candidate's knowledge and ability within the advertised subject sector and/or assessment.

Note: Being a Competency based interview, the appropriate questions must be answered with real life examples of situations the candidate has gone through, as opposed to hypothetical scenarios. These examples can be from any part of the candidate's background (professional or personal), provided that it is relevant to the question being asked. A good way to present real life examples is using the STAR method.

The STAR Method

Where relevant, we advise and encourage the use of the STAR method for answering the interview questions.

The STAR method is a structure approach to competency based questions that splits the answer into 4 parts, the **S**ituation, the **T**ask, the **A**ction and the **R**esult.

- **Situation**: Describe and set up the event and situation you are sharing with the panel about. Please make the context of the event known to the panel.

- **Task**: What was the task or objective you were working toward? Who was working with you? What barriers did you have to overcome?

- **Action**: What action(s) did you take to complete the task or reach your objective?

- **Result**: What were the impacts of your actions? Did you complete the task successfully? What did you learn in the process?

Conclusion

The senior interview process is the best way Pearson can fairly and consistently use to identify the best candidate for a position. As you go through this material and better understand this process, we hope that you'll be at a better position to show the hiring panel who you are.