Information about the Interview Process
HSE Dublin and North East Region

We would like to help you in preparing for your interview which will follow a structured format and which may be new to many candidates. Please read the following information as it should help you make the most of your performance on the day.
Please be assured that the interview board wish you to do well in the interview. They will aid you in demonstrating your ability, skills and experience by asking you questions focusing on your individual skills and experience, as they relate to the job. It is normal to be nervous before an interview. The best way to counteract nervousness is to prepare in advance for the interview.

What is a structured interview?

A structured interview is an interview that follows a structured format. The areas that the interview board will examine you on are decided before the interview takes place. *The areas to be examined in the interview are based on the requirements of the post as outlined in the job specification.*

In the interview the Board will examine the candidate on the competency areas listed in the Job Specification and will ask the candidate questions about their experience and ability to demonstrate the skills and qualities. The same areas will be explored with all candidates but not necessarily in the same order.

In addition candidates will be assessed on their 'Communication & Interpersonal skills' from the evidence they provide throughout the interview.

What will happen at the interview?

- When you arrive at the venue, you will be asked to present identification.
- An interview board member will bring you to the interview room.
- At the start of the interview you will be introduced to each member of the board and format of the interview will be explained to you.
- One of the Board Members may ask you to briefly talk about your work, education or voluntary experience to date.
- Once this has been completed, one of the skill areas will be clearly introduced to you and one of the board members will ask you questions relating to your experiences of demonstrating that skill. The Board member may explore the example put forward on the application form or may seek another example of where you demonstrated the skill. The board member may question you about how you might expect to apply your experience to the role. The board member may question you on other aspects of your application form where they deem the content particularly relevant to the skill area in question.
- The other board members will have an opportunity to ask you questions at the end of that skill area.
- You will be told when the questioning for that particular skill area has ended.
- The interview will follow this pattern until the range of skill areas has been covered.
- Notes will be taken throughout the interview.
- At the end of the interview you will be given an opportunity to add any additional comments in support of your application.

How do I prepare for a structured interview?

The structured interview involves the interview board assessing your ability in a number of skill and knowledge areas by exploring *your career and educational experience, your particular knowledge of certain areas and how you have demonstrated the specific skills listed.*

In order to prepare for interview, you should read the job specification and compare your relevant experience, knowledge and education to the requirements as outlined in the job specification.

In preparing for the interview, you should think of *a number of situations* where you have demonstrated the skills listed above. Think carefully about the skill areas in relation to your experiences to date, as you may find it difficult to come up with suitable examples on the spur of the moment.

The interview board will not make assumptions about your ability based solely on the result or the outcome of the situation. Instead, they will be interested in exploring how you demonstrated a particular skill and *exactly what you did* to achieve the outcome.

How do I maximise my performance during the interview?

It may seem quite obvious but during the interview it is vital that you listen extremely carefully to the questions asked. The questions that are used in the structured interview method are typically more specific than in interview formats that you may be used to.

Questions in a structured interview refer to a particular skill or particular knowledge. For example if a Board Member is examining your ability to Plan and Organise, examples of questions may include: "How did you go about organising that project?", "Why did you do that?", "What happened next?", "What was the result?" as opposed to a less specific question e.g. "Tell me how you went about that project – from start to finish?"

This means that you must give specific answers to questions. If you are asked a question such as "How did you go about organising that project?" it is advisable to give a specific answer that demonstrates your ability to plan and organise. If your example refers to a project or exercise where you worked as a member of a team, you should ensure that you talk specifically about *your* role in the team and the actions *you* took as a team member.

We wish you best of luck on the day.