

FAQ's and Candidate Guidelines for the APMP Proposal Professional Panel Interview



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ASSOCIATION OF PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS



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Candidate

Introduction

What is a Competency Based Interview?

A competency based interview is a structured series of questions aimed at eliciting behavioural information against specific bid related competencies that have been defined by the APMP. A competency in this context is a type of behaviour found to be relevant to the role expected of Proposal Professional.

When does the Interview Happen?

Candidates will be invited to attend the competency-based interview following the successful assessment of their Proposal Professional Impact Paper (PPIP), and as the final stage for APMP Proposal Professional accreditation. They will be expected to present their PPIP to an Interview Panel that will consist of three interviewers. The Panel must have as a minimum one APMP accredited interview assessor.

How long will it last?

The interview will last about 45 minutes in total. You will be required to give your PPIP Presentation (approximately 20 minutes)

There will then an informal discussion for approximately 25 minutes with the interview panel where you will be asked competency based questions based on the Behavioural and Attitude Key Competency Area defined by the APMP. The questions will predominantly relate to your PPIP, but may require you to call upon other, previous experience.

What does the interview focus on?

The interview will focus on a number of questions that the panel have pre-agreed based upon the Key Competency area Behaviour and Attitude. Questions will therefore relate to the following detailed competencies in this area:

- Persuasiveness
- Communication
- Quality Orientation
- Stress tolerance and Energy
- Building Strategic Relationships and a Team
- Decision Making and Delegating Responsibility
- Continuous Learning
- Innovation
- Meeting Leadership

What should I expect in the Interview?

Competency based interview questions are slightly different to the style you may be used to. They will tend to focus on situations and your behaviour in those situations. Questions are likely to start with:

"Please give me an example when. . ."

or

"Please describe an occasion" etc.

What will the Panel Interviewers be looking for?

The interviewers will be looking for specific examples about exactly what you did situations related to your PPIP, not what the team's role as a whole was, or what you would do in a hypothetical situation.

You can choose any relevant examples that relate to your PPIP. You will be asked to discuss the example in some detail.

It is likely that the interviewers will then follow with some probing questions, possibly clarifying a particular area. They will be interested in the outcome of the situation, whether there was anything you learned from the experience, etc.

If you are not able to answer any of the questions with specific reference to your PPIP, you must clearly state why the question is not relevant to your PPIP.

Using the **STAR** model will provide you with a structure for your answers:

- **Situation** - describe a situation or problem that you encountered within the context of the Impact you have described in your PPIP
- **Task** - describe the task that the situation required or your ideas for resolving the problem
- **Action** - describe the action you took, and the obstacles that you had to overcome
- **Results** - highlight the outcomes achieved from the actions you took

Hints and Tips

Look again at the impact you have described in your PPIP. The interviewers will ask questions related to that impact

Try to anticipate what questions may be asked.

As the interview will be focused on specific examples from achieving your impact, it would be advisable to think about possible examples that you could use.

- Consider your role in the situation
- Were there any potential barriers or pitfalls?
- How did you overcome them?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Is there anything that you have learned?

You may not be asked these particular questions during interview, but they will prepare you for possible questions and encourage you to think about these areas.

Example Questions in the Behaviour and Attitude Key Competency Area

Persuasiveness

You may have strong verbal skills but did you influence another person or others to change their thinking or take some action. At Proposal Professional level do you have you the skills to persuade and involve rather than coerce?

- Tell me about how you were able to change someone's/the organisations viewpoint significantly to enable your impact.
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to do something that you disagreed with.

Communication

Successful communication is having the ability to listen to all types of communication in an open way. Therefore consider whether you are an active listener:

- Give an example of when you listened to a team member and heard what was actually said?
- Give an example of your ability to read and act upon the non-verbal messages that others communicate?

Do you communicate in an engaging and convincing way?

- Give an example of a difficult or sensitive situation that required you to use excellent communication skills to achieve your impact
- Give an example of how you have developed communication skills in others?
- Tell me about a time when you were successful in getting crucial information from another person.
- Tell me about a time when someone misunderstood what you were attempting to communicate to them.
- What do you think are the three most important things about communication?
- Tell me about a time when you worked with people from a culture unlike your own. What did you do to overcome any perceived barriers to communication?

Quality Orientation

This area will check that you have effective work habits, and knowledge of workplace routines and some experience of common office administration systems.

- Tell me how you organise your work and schedule your time.

Stress tolerance and Energy

These questions will be to understand your resilience in the work environment.

- Give an example of a time when you had to keep inappropriate emotions in check (either yours or a member or your team) and explain how you positively managed this situation?

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- Which two accomplishments to achieve your impact gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
 - Describe a time when you led or motivated others.
 - Tell us about a time when you had more to do than you could complete in the time allocated: tell us what you did about it and what the outcome was.

It is possible that the panel will try to understand how you manage or avoid stress.

- Tell me about a time when you felt under pressure.
- Tell me about a time when you felt frustrated by your work.
- What has been your most satisfying/ disappointing experience within the proposals environment?

You may also like to consider areas of your experience that would demonstrate that you strive to achieve a standard of excellence, use initiative at the appropriate time, and show persistence in pursuing goals. This is likely to include how your team responds to your personality and temperament.

- How would you describe your management style?
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- What's your greatest weakness?
- What does "success" mean to you?
- What does "failure" mean to you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- What are you passionate about?
- Tell me about a major problem you encountered whilst achieving your impact and how you dealt with it?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?

Building Strategic Relationships and a Team

Employers need people who are socially competent. The desire to build and maintain relationships in and beyond the workplace is critical. Many workplaces function on the basis of project teams. These teams are task oriented and short lived. Those who are highly collaborative and co-operative are most likely to thrive in this type of environment.

- What skills and personal qualities did you contribute to the team to achieve your impact?
- Tell me about a time when you used tact and diplomacy.
- Tell me about the most difficult person you worked with to achieve your impact.
- What kinds of people did you enjoy working with most to achieve your impact?
- What kinds of people frustrated you the most whilst you were achieving your impact?

Decision Making and Delegating Responsibility

- What qualities do you admire most in others?

What's your problem-solving style? Do you manage your activities to minimise or avoid them? How do you behave in a crisis?

- Tell me about a difficult decision that you had to make.
- Tell me about an unpopular decision you had to make.
- What significant problems did you face to achieve your impact?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a quick decision. What were the circumstances and what did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had conflicting priorities and what you did to resolve them.
- What kind of problems do you handle best?

How do you behave in a crisis? What does it take to shake your poise or self-confidence? What approach do you take to problem solving?

- Tell me about a significant crisis you have faced.
- How do you resolve conflict in the groups or teams that you have membership of?
- Have you ever anticipated a difficult situation before it arose? Describe the situation, the action you took and the outcome.
- What would you do if your colleagues were complaining to you about the organisation?
- Tell me about a time when you bent the rules. When is it okay to do so?

Continuous Learning

Employers are likely to invest money in your training and development and will want to ensure that your objectives don't conflict with theirs.

- Tell me about a person or event that has been influential in your personal development.
- What are the most important things you are seeking in a career?
- What person do you admire most and why?
- Why do you want to become a Proposal Professional?
- How do you plan to keep up with developments in your field?

Meeting Leadership

- Describe how you led a team (comprising trainees, juniors and seniors) through a difficult audit.
- How did you improve their work?
- Describe a situation where you had to take charge either with a demanding customer or with your own team.

Panel Interviewers

Standards and Guidelines for Referee Questionnaire Assessment

Fully = OK

Largely = Check if critical – define critical,

If they are must be followed up in interview

Partially = Should be followed up with at least one question

Marginally Must be followed up in interview with 2 questions –
failure to satisfy at interview will result in failure

Not at all Must be explore in depth and failure to satisfy at
interview will result in failure