
Competency-Based Interviewing for Senior Appointments: Panel Design and Evidence Scoring Course

1 – 5 February 2027
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

Competency-based interviewing for senior appointments is a five-day training course for HR directors, talent acquisition heads and panel chairs at advanced level, culminating in a validated interview blueprint for a senior role. Leadership hires made on impression are costly to reverse, and panels disagree when they never agreed what good evidence looks like. The approach moves from the competency profile to question design, probing, evidence scoring and calibrated panel decisions. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in competency-based interviewing for senior appointments.

The Business Case

When senior interviews are unstructured, panels reward confidence over capability, overlook gaps that later surface in performance, and cannot explain decisions when a candidate challenges the outcome. Structured, evidence-scored interviews reduce costly mistakes and build trust in the fairness of selection.

- **Quality of Hire:** Improves as panels assess the competencies that predict performance in the role rather than general impressions.
- **Early Leaver and Failed Appointment Rates:** Fall as capability gaps are identified before an offer is made.
- **Selection Challenge Exposure:** Reduces as every decision rests on documented, consistently scored evidence.

Principles and Evidence Base

- **Structured Interview Research:** Meta-analytic findings from Schmidt and Hunter and the later Sackett update on the validity of structured interviews frame the design choices in Session 1.
- **Competency Frameworks:** Translating a role's competency profile into observable behavioural indicators underpins question design in Session 2.
- **STAR Technique and Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales BARS:** Probing for situation, task, action and result, then scoring against anchored levels, drive Sessions 3 and 4.
- **ISO 10667:** Its principles for assessment service delivery inform the governance, candidate communication and documentation built in Session 5.

Intended Participants

- Leaders who chair or sit on panels for director, executive and senior specialist appointments.
- HR heads who own the selection policy and the defensibility of hiring decisions.
- Talent acquisition leaders who design interview guides, scorecards and interviewer training.
- Executives choosing between strong internal and external candidates.



The programme serves government, energy, financial services and healthcare organisations recruiting into senior roles.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate an existing selection process against the evidence on structured interview validity.
2. Participants will be able to construct behavioural and situational questions mapped to a senior role's competency profile.
3. Participants will be able to apply STAR probing to separate personal contribution from team achievement and rehearsed answers.
4. Participants will be able to design behaviourally anchored rating scales and an interview scorecard for each competency.
5. Participants will be able to calibrate panel ratings and diagnose sources of bias before a decision is reached.
6. Participants will be able to justify a hiring decision with documented evidence that withstands internal or external challenge.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Competency-Based Interviewing and the Evidence for Structure

Why do structured interviews predict senior performance better than conversational ones?

- Structured Versus Unstructured Interview Validity Research
- Common Failure Points in Senior Selection Panels
- Competency-Based, Behavioural and Situational Interview Formats
- Interview Within a Multi-Method Assessment Design
- Selection Process Diagnostic Against Structured Design Criteria

Day 2: From Competency Profile to Interview Questions

Which questions reveal the behaviours that matter most in the role?

- Role Analysis and Senior Competency Profile Definition
- Behavioural Indicators at Executive and Director Level
- Past-Behaviour Question Construction
- Situational and Strategic Dilemma Questions
- Interview Guide Sequencing and Time Allocation

Day 3: Probing for Evidence with the STAR Technique

How does a panel draw out specific, verifiable evidence from experienced candidates?



- STAR Technique for Situation, Task, Action and Result
- Follow-Up Probes for Depth, Ownership and Learning
- Detecting Rehearsed, Generalised and Borrowed Answers
- Note-Taking Protocols for Observable Evidence
- Interviewing Senior Internal Candidates and Peers

Day 4: Evidence Scoring and Panel Calibration

How are ratings made consistent across interviewers and candidates?

- Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales Design
- Interview Scorecard and Weighting by Competency
- Independent Rating Before Panel Discussion
- Panel Calibration and Wash-Up Facilitation
- Cognitive Bias Controls: Halo, Similarity and Contrast Effects

Day 5: Applying Competency-Based Interviewing to a Senior Appointment

Is the selection decision fair, documented and ready to defend?

- ISO 10667 Principles for Candidate Communication and Records
- Role-Play Panel Using the Day 2 Interview Guide
- Scoring the Role-Play with the Day 4 Rating Scales
- Decision Rationale and Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates
- Senior Role Interview Blueprint Completion

Methodology

The programme is built around structured exercises and recorded panel simulations. Participants draft questions and scales for real senior roles, interview role-played candidates, score independently and calibrate as a panel to expose drift and bias.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting an unstructured interview guide for a finance director role into a competency-based guide.
- Suggested activity: Probing a role-played candidate whose answers describe team rather than personal results.
- Suggested activity: Calibrating divergent panel scores for a hospital operations director appointment.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a senior role interview blueprint for a position in their own organisation. It contains the competency profile, the interview guide with probes, anchored rating scales, the scorecard and weighting, panel roles, bias controls and a decision record template.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is competency-based interviewing training at this level suitable for experienced interviewers?

Yes. It is set at advanced level for leaders who already sit on selection panels, and focuses on design, scoring and calibration rather than basic interviewing etiquette.

Which models does competency-based interviewing for senior appointments rest on?

It rests on structured interview validity research, competency frameworks, the STAR technique, behaviourally anchored rating scales and the assessment principles of ISO 10667.

How is the competency-based interviewing blueprint used at work?

You can use it to run your next senior recruitment campaign and train panel members to one standard.

How does competency-based interviewing differ from competency framework design courses?

It applies an existing competency profile to selection interviews, question design and evidence scoring, rather than building the organisation-wide competency framework itself.