

Guidance Note 11 Competency assessment

What you need to do:

We are looking for evidence of the qualities you already have or may develop to enable you to carry out the role of a police constable. Your answers here will be used to decide whether your application progresses to the next stage. It is important therefore that you think carefully about your answers. The content of your response and the standard of your written communication are assessed throughout your application. If you are unsuccessful, you will not be able to reapply for at least six months.

Questions 1 to 4 ask you to provide four specific examples from your recent past experience about situations you have encountered.

You must give specific examples of what you did or said on a given occasion. It is important that we can see, in as much detail as possible, exactly how you behaved.

If necessary, quote exactly what was said. Generalisations about what you usually do, what you did on a number of previous occasions, or what your group/team have done will not score well. We need to know what part you played on that occasion.

- You should read the questions fully and choose your examples very carefully. Each question has a number of prompts. Make sure that you consider all of the prompts.
- Try to use examples that you found difficult or challenging to deal with. In addition to the four competency questions, your answers to questions 5 to 10 are also assessed. These ask about your motivations to become a police officer in your chosen police force, your expectations of the role and what preparation you have undertaken to apply.
- Answer all of the questions. If you leave a question blank or tell us that you cannot think of an answer, it is very unlikely that you will pass.
- In all parts of the form, please write clearly and concisely. If we cannot read it or understand it, we cannot score it. Pay attention to your spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar. You are being assessed throughout this part of the application form on your written skills. We also expect your examples to be succinct and fluently written, as any police report would be.
- Avoid using jargon or slang terms. Remember that this is a formal application for an important and responsible role.
- You must not add extra sheets, write outside the space provided or write between the lines. No marks will be given for evidence outside the space provided. Write only a single line of text on each line.
- The application must be all your own work. Be honest and expect to be questioned on any answers that you give. Applications that contain any material which is not original and accurate may be discontinued. We have developed an example of the style of answer we would like for the competency assessment questions 1 to 4. This should give you an idea of the kind of detail that we need from you.

Example response (Openness to Change competency area):

Question:

Please describe a specific occasion when you have had to adapt to a new situation.

Why was it necessary to adapt to the new situation?

I work for a pharmaceutical company and when the management changed we moved from a smaller office in a traditional building to all being in one big, modern open-plan office. I had to adapt because the working environment was completely different. I knew I'd have to find a different way of working.

What did you do to adapt to the new situation?

I knew that open plan offices could be noisy so I brought in my MP3 player so that I could listen to it through headphones if I needed to zone out and concentrate on my work. I also put effort in to making sure that I was considerate of the needs of others in the office.

What did you consider when adapting to the new situation?

I considered that I wasn't the only one in this situation and that other people would have to adapt to the new office too. I also thought about all the different tasks I had to do and thought about how I would need to approach them differently in the new office. I tried to think outside the box and not be constrained by old ways of doing things.

What was particularly good or effective about how you adapted to the new situation?

I think it was effective that I made myself adapt quickly to the new way of working and that I was prepared to work hard at making the new office pleasant for everyone. I knew that I might not find it easy at first but that if I put the effort in, I'd adapt to the new office in no time.

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

Some people were upset about moving to the new office and didn't like that things were changing. I overcame this problem by telling them about the benefits of the new office and how we all need to be open to change. It was also sometimes difficult to work in high levels of noise, so if I needed to concentrate I booked myself a private quiet room for the day.