

Competency Reflection Guide¹

Select **3 different competencies** from the list below and create a STAR story for each competency. STAR stories are often used to answer behavioural interview questions.

Formula: STAR = S (situation) + T (task) + A (actions) + R (results) or (relate to learning)

Behavioural interview questions work from the premise that how you behaved in the past is an accurate indicator of how you will likely behave and what skills you will likely call upon in response to a similar situation in the future. The STAR formula is recommended for answering questions in which you are asked or expected to provide an example of a time when you demonstrated a particular skill or asset. Following the formula will help to ensure that you provide specific details and concrete evidence for your competencies.

- **S (Situation)** - Where were you when this happened? (e.g. Working as a Software Developer Intern at BlackBerry in the Application Development Department). When did it happen? (e.g. This past summer)
- **T (Task)** - What specific question, problem or challenge were you facing at the moment?
- **A (Actions)** - What steps did you take to do a good job? What style did you use? What policies/procedures/theories, principles did you apply? This should be the longest part of the answer. *Make sure you keep your answer focused on your role using "I" instead of what the whole team accomplished "we".*
- **R (Results or Relate to Learning)** - What happened because you did a good job? What positive impact did your actions have? What problem was avoided? Qualify and quantify your results whenever possible. If there wasn't a positive result, what did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently if you encountered a similar situation in the future?

Competencies/Skills	Description
Teamwork	Working with others; understanding their needs and being empathetic with them. Contributing to group relationships and effectiveness. Dealing effectively with conflict and resolve issues.
Problem Solving	Identifying, prioritizing and solving problems, individually or in groups. Includes the ability to ask the right questions, sort out the many parts of a problem and contribute ideas as well as answers.
Listening	Being attentive when others are speaking, and responding effectively to other's comments during a conversation.
Oral Communication	Presenting information verbally to others, either one on one or in groups, in a clear and concise manner.
Written Communication	Effective writing of formal reports and business correspondence as well as informal notes, memos and emails.
Balance between quality & quantity of work	Completing work that is thorough and error free; demonstrating the required technical skills to produce accurate and efficient work; using time productively; meeting deadlines.

¹ This guide is an adaptation of the Career Centre's Work Term Report. Many parts of the guide are taken verbatim.

Dependability	Arriving to work on time; following through on actions; can be counted on in any situation.
Learning	Gaining knowledge from every day experiences and from formal education experiences (e.g. able to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations, seeks out new information to improve quality of work, learns from colleagues, training, resources, etc.)
Personal Strengths	Maintaining a high energy level; motivating oneself to function at optimal levels of performance; functioning in stressful situations; maintaining a positive attitude; showing enthusiasm for work; recognizing and understanding own moods, sensitivities, biases and convictions, and the effects these have on the individual and situation.
Organization/ Time Management	Managing several tasks at once; being able to set priorities and to allocate time efficiently in order to meet deadlines. Being able to determine the tasks to be carried out toward meeting objectives, monitoring the progress made against the plan, and revising a plan to include new information.
Decision Making	Making timely decisions on the basis of a thorough assessment of the short and long term effects of decisions; recognizing the political and ethical implications, and being able to identify those who will be affected by the decisions made.
Initiative	Maximizing opportunities, acting voluntarily in routine situations, going above and beyond what is expected.
Creativity/ Innovation	Adapting to situations of change, at times initiating change and providing novel solutions to problems; taking reasonable risks by recognizing alternative or different ways of meeting objectives.
Adaptation to Organization	Fitting into the organization; adapting to the work culture. Following set policies, such as dress code, hours of work, and guidelines for appropriate kinds of behaviour by employees; complying with policies.

Example:

Competency/Skill: Teamwork

Answer:

(S): While working as a Financial Analyst internship student at Scotiabank in the Corporate Accounting Services Department this past winter.

(T): My team was assigned to forecast the budget for the department for the next fiscal year by reviewing the current fiscal year budget and interviewing all managers.

(A): In our 3 person project team, I was responsible for reviewing the current budget by comparing what was actually spent to what was projected. Our project team had weekly meetings where we would collaborate on ideas, discuss our progress and set deadlines for new tasks. I came prepared to each meeting by having notes ready to discuss what I had found. I stayed organized when tracking my findings by using Excel spreadsheets to capture all data and I communicated with my other team members if I had any challenges.

(R): After 3 weeks we were able to give a presentation to all the department managers outlining the methods used to come up with our data analysis and our forecast for the next fiscal year. We received

positive feedback from our direct manager who really appreciated our hard work because the project resulted in a very accurate forecast for the next fiscal year.

Please list your competencies / skills using the template below:

Competency / Skill 1:

(S):

(T):

(A):

(R):

Competency / Skill 2:

(S):

(T):

(A):

(R):

Competency / Skill 3:

(S):

(T):

(A):

(R):