

# Example questions and answers

Most questions on application forms are encouraging you to provide specific evidence of competencies, usually outlined on the person specification.

It's not enough simply to mention what skills you have but **WHEN** and **HOW** you put them into practice.

Try using the STAR model:

<b>S</b>	<b>Situation</b>	Briefly outline the scenario, date, place
<b>T</b>	<b>Task</b>	What were you asked to do? Describe what you had to do
<b>A</b>	<b>Action</b>	What specific actions did you take to overcome the difficulty?
<b>R</b>	<b>Results</b>	What were the quantitative results and what did you learn?

Some examples using this model are given below:

**Describe a challenging project, activity or event which you have planned and taken through to a conclusion. Include your objective, what you did, any changes you made to your plan and the outcome.**

As a member of the university's drama committee in my second year, I co-organised a visit to Stratford upon Avon for members of Theatre Group. My personal objectives were to arrange travel and accommodation for anyone wishing to participate. I promoted the event initially by poster on each university campus and e-mailing all 250 people registered on the society's database. I set a strict deadline for receipt of payments from people wishing to book. Based on a realistic estimate, I arranged appropriate travel facilities, in this case a mini-bus, and liaised with a small hotel for a discounted block booking. Owing to a late surge of interest in the visit, I negotiated a larger bus and arranged extra accommodation with the hotel which required certain students to "double-up". The visit was a great success measured by the positive feedback received and the £500 revenue generated for the committee.

**Describe how you have achieved a goal through influencing the actions or opinions of others (perhaps in a team context). What were the circumstances? What did you do to make a difference? How do you know the result was satisfactory?**

In my current part-time job at a leisure centre I attend monthly staff meetings where we discuss innovative ways of improving performance. Last summer, we were asked for ideas on improving sales during the summer period when trade is usually quieter. I proposed the introduction of a "Savers Card" scheme that would allow customers to make full use of all facilities at a reduced rate and which could be purchased on either a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Each card would be priced on a scale respective to average usage. I also suggested we advertised this offer in local schools and colleges prior to the start of the summer break, as this was where I anticipated our largest summer trade would come from. The idea was adopted and summer tradings for June, July and August were 30% higher than in the previous year. I

received a bonus from management as a reward.

**Describe a difficult problem that you have solved. What was the problem? How did you analyse and solve the problem? Is there anything you would do differently?**

During the final year of my degree I chose optional modules on both my English Literature and History courses which clashed in the timetable. Disappointed, as I was very keen to take both modules and there seemed no chance of either being rescheduled, I contacted both departments to find out if either module was being offered at an alternative time. It transpired that the Literature option (The 19th Century Historical Novel) was being offered as a second year module to Cultural Studies students. I negotiated with the Cultural Studies department to attend their lecture series and with the English department for appropriate tutorial support. I also organised meetings with my own classmates to ensure I met all deadlines. This enabled me to successfully complete both modules. In retrospect, I would have identified possible third year options in my second year to avoid this happening.