**Appendix 5(a) Guidelines on Questioning at Interviews**

### GUIDELINES ON QUESTIONING AT INTERVIEW

The areas covered in the interview and the questions asked should be based on the selection criteria appropriate for the particular post. Post relevant information can identify characteristics that distinguish excellent from average employees and this information can inform interview questions which will be useful in identifying the best candidates.

Basing questions on the selection criteria appropriate for the particular post is an excellent way to avoid asking inappropriate questions or questions which could be seen as discriminatory, such as those relating to marital or family status.

###### Consistent Approach

It is important to pre-plan the format of the interview to ensure that all necessary areas are covered. Consistency of approach generally relates to the opening, the key competency areas covered and the closing. It is important that there is consistency within each area covered in terms of the approach to questioning used with each candidate. It is not necessary to ask each candidate the same questions, but each applicant must be asked questions relating to each identified competency.

###### Questioning Techniques

Questioning is one of the primary skills of effective interviewing. There are many different types of questioning techniques. One technique which is particularly effective in the context of competency-based interviewing is the “funnelling technique”. This questioning approach commences with a broad open-ended question (e.g. describe leadership style) and depending on the candidate’s replies is followed by successively more detailed and specific questions designed to identify the candidate competence in terms of knowledge, understanding and experience in the area of leadership. In essence, the questioning proceeds from the general to the particular and is visually represented by a funnel hence the name funnelling technique. The technique is also referred to as the “drill-down” technique.

In conducting competency-based selection interviewing it is also useful to employ some of the following questioning strategies to elicit whether a candidate possesses a particular competency:

1. Ask for a demonstration.
2. Ask for a description of past experience with job barriers. This can be done by describing a specific situation the applicant would face on the job and asking how the candidate would overcome the barriers.
3. Ask for a description of behaviour in comparable situations.
4. Ask how past behaviour relates to performance expectation.
5. Ask for descriptions of accomplishments.

These questioning strategies fit comfortably with the funnelling approach to interviewing suggested above.

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| E | Experience | – give the range of experience. |
| P | Probe | – give specific examples of competence. |
| O | Outcomes | – give specific and measurable outcomes. |
| L | Learning | – what the experience has taught the candidate. |
| A | Application | – give examples of where the learning was applied. |

Another way to keep structured interviews on track can be to use the EPOLA structure;