

LESSON 7

Completing a Competency-Based Application Form

60 minutes

Strand 2.2: Engaging with the Workplace

Applying

Outcome LCW.M2.S2.APP.5

Outcome LCW.M2.S2.APP.3

Outcome LCW.M2.S2.ENG.2

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson you will complete sections of a competency-based application form including personal information, education, experience and competency responses. You will use your personal statement as evidence and produce a finished application artefact for a chosen role.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M2.S2.APP.5	complete a competency-based application form for a job in a chosen career field.
LCW.M2.S2.APP.3	demonstrate an understanding of a competency-based application form, identifying competencies that reflect their chosen career and/or job role.
LCW.M2.S2.ENG.2	discuss how their personal statement might support their engagement with the workplace.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Finish a competency-based application form for a role in your field, covering personal information, education, experience, three STAR competency responses and two referees
- Reshape lines from your personal statement and evidence bank into the boxes the form actually asks for
- Save a complete Competency Application Form as your Strand 2.2 portfolio artefact

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Application form	A structured set of questions an employer uses to collect the same information from every candidate in the same order.	A county council graduate intake form with fixed boxes for education, experience and competencies
Competency response	A short answer that proves a skill with a real Situation, Action and Result rather than claiming the skill in the abstract.	Describing how you calmed a queue dispute at a part-time café shift, and what the supervisor noted afterwards
Referee	A named person who can confirm your character or work honestly if the employer contacts them.	A teacher who supervised your Transition Year placement, or a manager from a weekend job

BEFORE THE BELL

- Ensure students have their ALT 1 Personal Statement and Competency Evidence Bank / STAR notes from earlier Strand 2.2 ready (print or device).
- Prepare access to the blank Competency Application Form document in the Strand 2.2 folder.
- Have the sample Harbourview practice form available for the annotation activity; remind the class it is an invented employer modelled on typical Irish public-service or facilities school-leaver forms.
- Recovery path if files are missing: two minutes for three bullet STAR seeds from memory or work experience, then flag the gap.
- Take the five claims one at a time and ask for hands on true and false for each before you say anything about which is which. Wait until three or four students have committed to an answer, because once you explain the first claim the rest of the room will simply follow you and you lose the honest prior belief this step is collecting. Nothing here is scored.
- On screen this lesson: worked example, document annotator.

Completing a Competency-Based Application Form

HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
8 min	activity	What Does This Form Really Want?
10 min	activity	Annotate a Sample Competency Form
32 min	activity	Finish Your Form From Leah's Case
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open by asking who has already filled any online application (part-time job, summer work, course form). Name that today's form is the same skill at full size.

Files students need open: ALT 1 Personal Statement; Competency Evidence Bank / STAR notes from earlier Strand 2.2. If a student has neither, give two minutes for three bullet STAR seeds from memory or work experience and note the gap for follow-up. Blank Competency Application Form document should already sit in the Strand 2.2 folder.

8 min What Does This Form Really Want? On screen: worked example

LOOK-FORS

- Students who mark the second claim, that real enthusiasm is enough on its own, as true: push gently towards evidence, and ask what a reader could check.
- Confusion between a referee and a character witness who has never seen them work.
- Anyone without ALT 1 open: give two minutes to locate the personal statement file, or to write three bullet STAR seeds from memory.

10 min Annotate a Sample Competency Form On screen: document annotator

SUGGESTED TIMING

Allow about six minutes for labelling and two minutes for revealing the model. Students begin producing their own form in the next step, so there is no need to push the discussion further here.

TEACHING TIPS

- Say aloud at the start that Harbourview is an invented employer used for practice, modelled on typical Irish public-service and facilities school-leaver forms, so that nobody goes looking for the company or worries about its details. Then keep the talk on what the sections are asking for.
- If a student has no target role in mind yet, tell them they will use a realistic role from their career-field shortlist when they write in the next step, so they can label the sample now without deciding anything.
- After the reveal, name one weak pattern briefly using the model note on Section D: a trait claim with no occasion behind it, such as "I am great with people". Work from the wording that is actually highlighted on the form, so that students can go back and find it.

Watch for students labelling every box "personal info" and missing the competency ask underneath the wording.

32 min Finish Your Form From Leah's Case On screen: worked example

HOW TO RUN THE CASE

Read Leah's situation aloud once; it is also on the student page, so they can follow. Ask which of her STAR notes maps to which competency box and take two or three answers. Keep that discussion to about four minutes and then move to writing and circulate, because most of this step is students producing their own form and they need the clock for it rather than more talk about Leah.

DIFFERENTIATION

- If a student stalls, have them finish one full competency response to publication standard rather than three thin ones, plus headings and seeds for the rest.
- Stronger writers should trim one vague sentence from each response, using the same cut they practised on personal statements.
- For anyone who freezes on the first line, give them an opening to borrow and finish in their own words: "*On a Saturday shift in May, a customer came to the desk because ...*", "*I had a deadline and a shift in the same week, so the first thing I decided was ...*", or "*I noticed that ... before anyone asked me to, so I ...*". Each one forces an occasion and a date rather than a trait claim.

If minutes remain: run a peer STAR swap, where pairs exchange one competency response and each marks one slogan to cut, or have students draft the short permission message they will send a referee.

Portfolio check before the bell: look for a file named Competency Application Form, three competency headings present, at least one full STAR response to standard, and referees either listed or a dated plan to ask them. Where a box is still thin, the student should have written the named evidence gap and a note to finish it before the next lesson.

5 min What you covered

Spot-check three portfolios for a named role, at least one full competency response to standard, and referees contacted or scheduled. Note anyone still missing STAR evidence ahead of the next lesson on shortlisting. Anyone with a thin box should leave with a dated plan to finish before that lesson.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- Worked example: "more confident in group work" - Nothing to check - Confidence is a feeling. Nobody, including Ciara, can say at Christmas whether this happened.
- Worked example: "the person who speaks first in at least four group tasks" - Specific and countable - Four is a number she can be honest about. Speaking first is an act she either did or did not do.
- Worked example: "keeping a note in my phone each time, with the date" - Evidence she will actually have - The evidence is decided in advance and it is something she will genuinely do, not a log she invents in May.
- Worked example: "I have been letting other people say them for me" - The real reason - This is the line that makes it personal development rather than a task. She has named what she is actually working on.
- Worked example: "I will drop the target to twice and ask Ms Kelly" - Revised, not abandoned - The R in SMARTER. She has decided in advance what she does when it goes badly, which is the difference between a plan and a wish.
- Document annotator: "List your current school, the subjects you are taking for the Leaving..." - What it is really asking - Facts only, in their order. This is not the place for a story about why you like a subject.
- Document annotator: "Describe a time you helped a customer, classmate, or member of the..." - What it is really asking - One real incident with Situation, Action, Result. The word 'time' means a single occasion, not a personality trait. A weak answer would claim 'I am a people person' with no occasion.
- Document annotator: "Give one example of planning your time when you had more than one..." - Personal statement can feed this - Many personal statements already hold a line about balancing school and a job or team. Lift the occasion, then reshape it to the ask.
- Document annotator: "Outline a practical problem you fixed without being told every step" - What it is really asking - Initiative and problem-solving. Name the stuck point, your options, and the change. Avoid 'I always find a way'.
- Document annotator: "Name two referees who have seen you work, learn, or take..." - What it is really asking - Role and contact details matter. Social friends without a work or school link rarely help a shortlist.
- Document annotator: "Ask them before you list them" - What it is really asking - Permission is part of this section. Skipping it is a common fail: a surprised referee undermines a strong form.
- Worked example: "A parent arrived angry that a birthday room was double-booked" - Situation named - One real occasion, not a trait. The reader can picture the moment before any action starts.
- Worked example: "I listened, checked the diary, moved the second booking with my..." - Actions she took - Clear verbs show what Leah did. This is the evidence shortlisting will weigh.
- Worked example: "The parent emailed thanks the next day" - Result that landed - A concrete outcome closes the STAR. Without this line the box is only a story about effort.
- Worked example: "told my manager on the Monday before, not on the day" - Managing yourself in practice - Planning plus advance notice. She proves time management with a decision, not a claim that she is organised.
- Worked example: "wrote the stock gap on the whiteboard so the next person would see it" - Problem solved, then shared - Initiative beyond the fix itself. The whiteboard line shows she thought about the next person.
- Worked example: "ask permission before submit" - Referees still open - Leah has names but not consent. Listing them now would risk a surprised referee and a weaker form.

TEACHING MOVES

- Run predict mode in the true-or-false activity without revealing answers early.
- Keep annotation to label + model reveal; do not start portfolio production until step 4.
- Use Leah's mapping to model STAR notes onto competency boxes, then circulate during the long writing block.
- Spot-check portfolios at the end for a named role, at least one full response, and referees contacted or scheduled.
- Optional extension if minutes remain: peer STAR swap or referee permission-message draft.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students paste their personal statement as a block. Remind them to reshape it into specific responses.
- Students claim skills without evidence. Direct them back to real STAR examples from their notes.
- Students select referees they have not contacted. Advise them to confirm availability in advance.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Offer sentence starters for the competency response sections; accept one full response to standard plus seeds for the rest if time is tight.
- Extension: Ask students to complete an additional competency response or research the target role.
- Support: Allow paired discussion during the annotation step before individual work.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Competency Application Form completed for a role in your field