

# Elementary occupations (cleaners, labourers, catering assistants)

General competency framework · Frontline / operational level · 5 competencies · approx. 75 minutes

## How to use this guide

- Focus on these 5 competencies — the behaviours that matter most for this role — not a chronological career history.
- Ask every candidate the same core questions, then probe. Allow around 15 minutes per competency.
- Ask for real examples and use STAR — the Situation, the Task, the Action they took, and the Result.
- Stay neutral, capture what they say, and judge later. Gather evidence on one competency at a time.
- Rate each competency 1–5 against the positive and negative indicators, and note the evidence.

5 Outstanding 4 Good 3 Acceptable 2 Marginal 1 Poor

## 1. Dependability

Conscientious and thorough in their approach to work, delivering what they promise to the necessary standard. Behaves in line with the organisation's values and ethical principles.

**Why this matters for Elementary occupations (cleaners, labourers, catering assistants):** Strongly named across all four triangulated sources (Cleaning Hygiene Operative L2 + Hospitality Team Member + Construction Operative + British Cleaning Council). Reliable attendance, conscientious working, procedural compliance (safety especially for labourers; hygiene for cleaners; allergens for catering). Errors and absences have direct operational impact.

**Tell me about a time you had a lot to get done on a shift. How did you make sure it was all done properly?**

- How did you keep the standard up?
- What did you do if you were running short of time?

**Describe a time you turned up and found things hadn't been done properly by someone before you. What did you do?**

- How did you handle it?
- What was the result?

**How do you make sure your work is always done to the right standard, even when no one's checking? Give an example.**

- Have you ever been tempted to cut a corner? What did you do?

| NEGATIVE INDICATORS                    | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 | POSITIVE INDICATORS                          |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Cuts corners to get done quicker       |                   | Does the job properly, to the right standard |
| Unreliable; doesn't do what they said  |                   | Reliable — does what they say they will      |
| Sloppy or careless in their work       |                   | Careful and thorough                         |
| Standard drops when no one is checking |                   | Keeps standards up even when unsupervised    |
| Bends the rules when it suits them     |                   | Sticks to the rules and does the right thing |

Summary of evidence: \_\_\_\_\_ Rating (1–5): \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Drive for Results

Strives for outstanding results, setting themselves high standards and being driven by targets. Pursues the goal with energy, actively seeking opportunities to improve.

**Why this matters for Elementary occupations (cleaners, labourers, catering assistants):** All three subroles have a productivity rhythm — rooms cleaned per shift (cleaning), plates served per hour (catering), tasks completed per day (labouring). Cleaning Standard 'self-managing'; Catering 'right first time'. Sustained pace through the shift matters commercially.

**Tell me about a time you worked really hard to hit a target or get a job finished.**

- What was the goal?
- What did you do?
- Did you get there?

**Describe a time you set yourself a higher standard than you were asked for.**

- Why did you do that?
- What did you do?

**What does doing a good job mean to you? Tell me about a time you went the extra mile.**

- What did you do?
- Why?

| NEGATIVE INDICATORS                   | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 | POSITIVE INDICATORS                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Does the bare minimum                 |                   | Sets themselves high standards        |
| Not bothered about hitting targets    |                   | Driven to hit targets and get results |
| Low energy; needs pushing             |                   | Puts real energy into the work        |
| Content to leave things 'good enough' |                   | Looks for ways to do better           |
| Gives up before the job's done well   |                   | Goes the extra mile to get it right   |

Summary of evidence: \_\_\_\_\_ Rating (1–5): \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Resilience

Remains calm and maintains a positive attitude when faced with difficult circumstances. Thrives under pressure, remaining focused despite distractions. Quickly recovers from setbacks.

**Why this matters for Elementary occupations (cleaners, labourers, catering assistants):** Physical demands, antisocial hours (early starts for cleaners, evening/weekend service for catering, outdoor labour for construction), repetitive tasks, weather variation. Sustained effort across the shift is the daily reality. Resilience is universally evidenced across the three subroles.

**Tell me about a really busy or stressful time at work. How did you cope?**

- What made it hard?
- How did you keep going?

**Describe a time something didn't go your way at work. How did you pick yourself back up?**

- How did you feel?

- What did you do?

**How do you keep calm when things get difficult or busy? Give me an example.**

- What helps you stay level-headed?

| NEGATIVE INDICATORS                    | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 | POSITIVE INDICATORS                             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Loses their cool when it gets busy     |                   | Stays calm and in control when busy or stressed |
| Lets setbacks knock them off course    |                   | Bounces back from setbacks                      |
| Gets negative when things go wrong     |                   | Keeps a positive attitude                       |
| Easily distracted under pressure       |                   | Stays focused under pressure                    |
| Struggles to keep going when it's hard |                   | Keeps going when the going gets tough           |

**Summary of evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Rating (1–5):** \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Collaborative Working

Looks to understand others' perspectives and objectives. Respects different styles/approaches, whilst adapting their own style to enable them to work effectively with others.

**Why this matters for Elementary occupations (cleaners, labourers, catering assistants):** Named in cleaning + catering Standards explicitly ('team player'); construction operative work also team-based on site. Coordinated working across stations/areas is daily reality across all three subroles.

**Tell me about a time you worked as part of a team to get a job done.**

- What was your part in it?
- How did you work with the others?
- What was the result?

**Describe a time you had to change how you did something to fit in with the team or someone else's way of working.**

- What did you change?
- Why?
- How did it work out?

**Tell me about a time there was a disagreement or bad feeling in your team. What did you do?**

- What was it about?
- How did you help sort it out?

| NEGATIVE INDICATORS                               | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 | POSITIVE INDICATORS                              |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Only wants things done their own way              |                   | Listens to others' views and finds common ground |
| Doesn't pull their weight in the team             |                   | Does their share and helps the team succeed      |
| Clashes with teammates or is unhelpful in a group |                   | Works well with others, even under pressure      |
| Won't change how they work to fit the team        |                   | Adapts how they work to fit in with others       |
| Makes disagreements worse                         |                   | Helps sort out disagreements calmly              |

**Summary of evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Rating (1–5):** \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Customer Focus

Builds effective customer relationships to ensure needs and expectations are understood. Understands the importance of the customer to the business, seeking regular feedback whilst being prepared to say no when needed.

**Why this matters for Elementary occupations (cleaners, labourers, catering assistants):** Cleaning Standard names 'customer focused'; Catering Standard names 'customers first'; less applicable to labourers but the SOC group is heterogeneous and 2 of 3 subroles strongly evidence it. Customer Focus captures the service-orientation shared by cleaners and catering assistants.

**Tell me about a time you went out of your way to help a customer or member of the public.**

- What did they need?
- What did you do?
- How did they react?

**Describe a time a customer was unhappy or difficult. How did you handle it?**

- What was the problem?
- What did you do?
- What was the outcome?

**How do you know when you've done a good job for a customer? Give me an example.**

- What do you look or listen for?
- Tell me about a time you got it right.

| NEGATIVE INDICATORS                                  | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 | POSITIVE INDICATORS                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Treats customers as a nuisance; unhelpful            |                   | Friendly, helpful and professional with customers     |
| Doesn't take responsibility for a customer's problem |                   | Takes ownership of sorting out customer issues        |
| Doesn't really listen to what the customer needs     |                   | Listens and checks what the customer actually needs   |
| Promises things that can't be delivered              |                   | Only promises what can be done; honest with customers |
| Doesn't see why the customer matters                 |                   | Understands the customer keeps the business going     |

**Summary of evidence:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Rating (1–5):** \_\_\_\_\_