

Chefs

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. Technical Capability

Has the necessary knowledge, skills and proficiency to conduct their role. Demonstrates mastery in their area of technical capability. Stays up to date with advances in their field and commits to their continuous development.

Why this matters for Chefs: The Senior Production Chef Apprenticeship Standard knowledge covers ingredients, recipes/techniques, equipment, food safety, allergens. The named behaviour 'a passion for and pride in producing high-quality food' centres craft. Mastery of the physical art and the regulatory science of food production is foundational.

Tell me about the skills or know-how you need to do this kind of job well.

- How did you learn them?
- How do you make sure you do the job to the right standard?

Describe a time you had to learn a new machine, system or way of working.

- How did you get to grips with it?
- How long did it take you?

How do you keep your skills up to date for your work? Give me an example.

- When did you last learn something new for the job?

NEGATIVE INDICATORS	1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5	POSITIVE INDICATORS
Lacks the know-how the job needs		Has the skills and knowledge the job needs
Struggles with the equipment or systems		Confident and capable with the tools of the job
Makes avoidable mistakes in the work		Does the technical parts of the job to a good standard
Lets their skills get out of date		Keeps their skills current and picks up new methods
Won't learn new equipment or ways of working		Willing to learn new kit and ways of working

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 Chefs: Service pace is the central operational reality — peak hours (lunch/dinner rush), high covers, tight ticket times, quality at speed. The kitchen lives or dies by tempo, and chefs who cannot maintain high standards under throughput pressure do not last.

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 Chefs: The Standard's named behaviour 'resilient' is explicit. Long shifts, hot environments, repetitive prep, busy service, split shifts, antisocial hours. Sustained focus and recovery from setbacks (a missed ticket, a wrong order, a delivery issue) is constant.

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. 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 Chefs: The Standard's named behaviours 'takes responsibility for own actions', 'safety conscious' and 'supports the business'. Food safety, allergen compliance, hygiene regulations — all carry serious consequences for breach. Reliability is the regulatory floor.

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): _____

5. 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 Chefs: The Standard's named behaviour 'team player' is foundational. The brigade structure (sections, stations, pass) only works through coordination; the kitchen team is one of the most interdependent teams in any sector.

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):** _____