NOTES ON RESPONDING TO A COMPETENCY-BASED COVER LETTER REQUEST  
(adapted from Oxfam GB’s Application Guide)

Notes to Applicants:

Section 1 – Prepare, review your current skills set
We encourage you to spend time reviewing your current skills, achievements and experience. By doing this you are more likely to apply for positions that you will be suitable for. Your previous experience, interests and skills should help direct your job search. Once you know more about what sort of opportunities you want to apply for why not view our current vacancies or sign up to receive job alerts that match your interests.

Section 2 – Suitability – Are you right for the vacancy?
Read the job description. This will provide you with detailed information about the position. It should include basic information such as the role title, location and salary. It will also include in-depth detail about what the job will entail and the skills and competencies that we are looking for in the successful candidate.

Think about your achievements in the past, whether at school, at work, in the home or in social settings to see if they will have provided you with sufficient knowledge and skills that the role requires. If you believe you have the skills, experience and knowledge you could consider applying. If you feel you don’t, why not search for other opportunities.

Section 3 – Apply – Getting your application submitted
Once you are confident that you have the skills and competencies that the role requires you can start the application process. Read carefully about our application process.

Here are some explanations about some of the difference aspects of the process:

• Screening questions
  These ensure that potential candidates have the very essential skills that the role requires or to ensure that you have the correct right to work requirements for the country in which you are applying.

• Criminal Records Checks
  Not all roles require individuals to have a criminal record check, but where a post will involve unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults we take our obligation to protect them very seriously. If the post is subject to a check it will notify you in the job description.

• Personal Details/Main details
  As part of the application process we collect some basic details from you. These are stored so that we can contact you about your application.

• Sending a cover letter and CV
  We allow candidates to upload a letter of application (a cover letter) and a personal CV. Here are some hints and tips on how to tailor your CV. We want you to take this as an opportunity to emphasis your suitability for the position you are applying for.

  o Don’t be too broad in how you describe a specific skill or competency; we advise that you give us an example to demonstrate how well you meet each one. For example:

  If the role states: ‘Good IT skills, especially strong knowledge of Microsoft Word’
  Your response could be: ‘I use Microsoft word and excel in my current job and have used other similar packages over the years. I am confident at writing, formatting, merging and
editing word based documents; I frequently do this when writing letters to our supporters’

- Recruiting Managers will want to see a concise and informative application. For example ‘I am an experienced manager having been responsible for monitoring and controlling expenditure against a budget of X’.

- Plan your time – CV’s can take time to write. It’s always a good idea to save a copy of your work in progress. Once you are happy with the content present it neatly and review it one last time before you submit.

- In the cover letter, we want you to briefly state why you think you are suitable for the role and why you want the job. You need to be able to convince the recruiting manager that you will add value to the team and appointing you will make a difference to our organisation. You should show the manager that you have noted the competencies required for the role and are able to demonstrate that you possess them.