



Assessment Centre Guidance



What is an Assessment Centre?

An assessment centre is a combination of tasks and activities that test your suitability for the job. It gives you the chance to demonstrate a wider range of skills than you would have been able to during a traditional face-to-face interview.

Features of a good assessment centre

- Simulates tasks and situations in target jobs
- Ensures multiple opportunities to observe participants
- Ensures multiple assessors to reduce bias
- Provides an opportunity for candidate feedback post assessment centre
- Provides the candidate with a better insight into the job and culture of the organisation

What activities are included in an Assessment Centre?

Formal Assessment

1. Group exercises
2. Presentations
3. Role-play scenarios
4. Written exercise
5. In-tray / E-tray exercises
6. Psychometric Testing
7. Interview

Informal Assessment

- Icebreakers / opening exercises
- Site tours
- Breaks / lunch

Group Exercise

Group Roles

INITIATE - Suggest new ideas and approaches

PROVIDE OPINIONS - State beliefs

ELABORATE - Build on others' suggestions

CLARIFY - Give examples and probe for meaning

TEST - Help test out whether group is ready for decision

SUMMARISE – Re-cap discussion content

TRACK – Keep the group on track with task and time

HARMONISE - Mediates and reconciles different points of view

ENCOURAGE - Praise and support others

COMPROMISE - Yield in the interest of the group

LEAD – Direct the group towards a solution

Group Exercise – Top Tips!

- Don't dominate
- Help others to join in
- Take on a role e.g. time keeping (wear a watch)
- Don't be limited by that role
- Make decisions but with consensus
- Keep the group on task
- Listen
- Participate! (early on)

In Tray Exercise

- Simulates the work you will be doing if selected
- You will be given a number of messages which could be letters, memos, reports either in paper or electronic format
- Need to sort, prioritise and take or recommend action
- Often a related task e.g. summarising a report, replying to an e mail or using the calendar to book a meeting room.

Typical skills they are looking for are:

- Decision making and prioritisation
- Organisation skills
- Time management
- Leadership – taking responsibility

In Tray Exercise - Top Tips!

- Read through the instructions and information thoroughly
- Decide which tasks are essential, require immediate attention or are a lower priority
- Filter out extraneous information
- Optimise the time available – be aware of the length of the exercise and calculate how much time you will allocate to the different tasks
- Do you have the power to delegate in this scenario?
- Be aware new additional tasks or information can be introduced at any time in the exercise

The activity is likely to be situational. The broader your understanding of the organisation the better prepared you will be able to cope with the exercise

Know about the:

- Role
- Culture, ethics and values
- Organisation and the staffing structure

Psychometric/online tests

What are they?

- Used to assess if you have the right skills, knowledge & personality for the job
- Normally three types:
 - Personality (e.g. your values, motivations)
 - Situational Judgement (e.g. your behaviour)
 - Aptitude (e.g. your knowledge, skills)
- Usually taken after initial application submitted
- Done on-line, may be at short notice

Why are they used?

- Considered single most effective predictor of job performance
- Screen out unsuitable candidates
- Objective and standardised – considered fair
- Performance usually measured against 'norm' - minimum pass mark to proceed
- Test your ability to work accurately under pressure

1) Gamification – Interactive Assessment Games

- Growing area –on-line games either as informal way to attract candidates, but more often now as formal part of selection process
- Games usually allow the candidate to experience a number of scenarios set in a virtual office. Able to learn more about various aspects of the business.
- Games will also assess specific traits and characteristics through candidate behaviour in the game
- Results compared to those of high performing employees
- Companies using this are Royal Bank of Scotland, Deloitte and L'Oréal.

2) Personality Tests

- Assess your natural character and behaviour for 'personality fit' to role/organisation
- May take 'strengths' approach
- Designed to explore your preferred working style and what drives your behaviour at work
- Usually presented with set of statements to choose most / least like you or agree / disagree

Personality Questionnaire Examples

- i) For the following statement, please rate yourself: *Strongly disagree, disagree, Unsure, Agree, Strongly Agree*
 - **I enjoy meeting new people**
- ii) From statements below – choose one most like you and one least like you:
 - **I conceal my feelings**
 - **I am nervous before big events**
 - **I review work critically**

Personality Questionnaires – Top Tips!

- There are no right or wrong answers – be honest and consistent
- Be true to yourself
- Don't over think and try to 'second-guess' what employers want
- Know the company values and culture and how your personality / values match

3) Situational Judgement

- Assess how you would respond in certain workplace scenarios
- What you consider to be appropriate and effective behaviour in the job role
- Usually given a list of possible responses – rate, rank, choose most/least effective or most/least like you
- May be presented as a video scenario and then choose multi-choice answer or video your response back

Situational Judgement Example

“You are a graduate trainee at a large logistics company. You take a call from an angry client who has not received his delivery on time, even though he has called once already and your colleague promised him that it would be there by now. The client is getting increasingly more frustrated and raising his voice. What do you do?”

Possible Answers:

- A. “I will do all I can to help you. If you give me your details, I will investigate what has happened and come straight back to you”
- B. “Let me check with my colleague – if you can hold for a couple of minutes...”
- C. “I can hear that you are upset, if you could calm down, so that I can help you”
- D. “I am sure there is a logical explanation, if you give me your details, I will look into it for you”

Situational Judgement – Top Tips!

- Fully research the organisation’s values and culture
- Understand the preferred behaviours for that job role
- Read each scenario carefully and what you are being asked
- Know yourself and be honest

4) Aptitude/Ability Tests

- Assess your cognitive ability = knowledge / skill set for the role
- Test ‘Can you do the job?’
- 3 main types:
 - Numerical reasoning
 - Verbal / Critical reasoning
 - Logical reasoning
- Usually multiple-choice and one single correct response

5) Numerical Reasoning

Test ability to interpret & manipulate data and numerical information – usually averages, ratios/comparisons and %.

Question: This table shows your predicted sales figures for this month and the percentage of these sales expected to come from each department. Half way through the month, London has only achieved 29% of their target for Beauty.

How much more will they need to sell to achieve this target?

	Predicted Sales	% Leisure	% Health	% Beauty	% Other
London	£750,000	42%	28%	22%	8%
Manchester	£500,000	54%	20%	20%	6%
Bristol	£625,000	48%	25%	20%	7%

A: £47,850

D: £117,150

B: £165,000

E: £71,000

C: £63,800

6) Verbal/Critical Reasoning

Assess ability to understand, analyse and interpret written information

- Typically a paragraph of text with a question below for comprehension
- Read the question first and pay attention to what is written, beware of 'reading between the lines'

Statement:

A study of vocabulary growth in children from ages eight months to six years old shows that the size of spoken vocabulary increases from zero words at age eight months to 2,562 words at age six years.

E12

Proposed Conclusion:

None of the children in this study had learned to talk by the age of six months.

7) Logical Reasoning

Test ability to think logically and analytically

- Typically pictures - can you see the sequence?
- Removes cultural and linguistic differences, so more impartial

Choose the image that completes the pattern:

The puzzle consists of two rows of boxes. The top row contains six boxes with the following symbols from left to right: a cross, a semi-circle, and a dot; a question mark; a dot, two horizontal lines, and a cross; a semi-circle, a dot, and a cross; a semi-circle, two horizontal lines, and a dot; and a cross, a dot, and two horizontal lines. The bottom row contains five options: a dot, a cross, and a semi-circle; two horizontal lines, a dot, and a semi-circle; a cross, a dot, and two horizontal lines; a dot, two horizontal lines, and a semi-circle; and two horizontal lines, a dot, and a cross. A 'Next Question' button is located in the bottom right corner of the interface.

Aptitude Tests – Top Tips!

- Read the question carefully
- Balance speed with accuracy
- Work out timings
- Find out scoring method if possible
- Choose time of day when most alert
- Choose quiet place where you won't be interrupted
- Ensure you are familiar with basic mathematics such as arithmetic, percentages, ratios and fractions.
- Do the test yourself. Don't get a friend to help, you may be retested at the centre.
- At assessment centre – Don't get stopped by one difficult question. Keep your eye on the time.
- **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!** First untimed, then introducing test conditions (time yourself)

Aptitude Tests - Practice websites

www.assessmentday.co.uk

warwick.ac.uk/careers/applications/testing

prospect.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/psychometric-tests

targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/psychometric-tests

www.graduatesfirst.com

www.practiceaptitudetests.com

<https://tinyurl.com/y99gy67b>

