GETTING A YES
Guide to Assessment Centres

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Introduction

An Assessment Centre process can be conducted over a number of stages:

- Screening
- Gateway
- Assessment Centre
- Interview
- or any mix of the above.

Assessment Centres are developed as a carefully designed process to assess candidate's competence and commitment to the organisation, the role, and their compatibility with the company, for example organisation culture and values. The organisation will be assessing you to recruit individuals who can demonstrate the necessary skills, competencies, values and behaviours to fit within the organisation, team and role.

The Assessment Centre process is both rigorous and consistent in its application but is developed to be accessible and fair.

Some employers provide Briefing Notes to provide information about the assessment centre process, the activities you will be expected to participate in and the preparation you will need to undertake in advance. If they don't, ask before you attend.

THE ASSESSESSMENT CENTRE

The Assessment Centre is a process. It has been developed to assist the organisation in recruiting and selecting appropriately skilled and experienced staff. At the assessment centre, your performance will be measured against a set of criteria. Most organisations will give you the criteria at the application stage.

The assessment centre improves the accuracy of those staff selection decisions. In the Assessment Centre the overall assessment is based on a collation of data from a variety of tasks and evaluated by a number of assessors. This gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your competence in more than one activity.

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THE ASSESSMENT CENTRE PROCESS

The assessment centre process can be a mix of activities designed by the business in order to secure the right person or people for the role(s).

Typically, the components can be:

- Screening:
  - Application Form
  - Video Interview
  - Telephone Interview
  - Written, Numeracy, or Technical Exercise

Gateway

The gateway exercise is often used to ensure the candidate can undertake the **essential** part of the role or will meet the demands of further study. Exercises can be written papers, numeracy assessments, or technical exercise. Where further study is required there may be an exam as part of the gateway process.

If an organisations approach to recruitment includes a screening or gateway process, both provide entry to or exit from the assessment centre process.

Assessment Centre

The activities included in an assessment centre will depend on both the organisation and the role. Assessment activities may include any of the following:

- A presentation followed by a scripted interview or Q&A.
- A semi-structured interview, assessing certain competencies, for example, problem-solving abilities, critical or analytical thinking skills, values, etc.
- Group Discussion or Activity.
- Psychometric or Personality Profile.
- Social Meet & Greet.
- Speed Interviews.
- Competency Interview.
- Technical Test.
- On-the-job Assessment.

You may not be required to sit all of the components of the Assessment Centre in one day. The components you are required to complete will usually be outlined in your invitation and any candidate briefing materials.

Always ensure that you arrive promptly and as candidates who arrive late may not be seen.

Assessment Criteria

Most organisations will have competencies or criteria they are assessing against. Make sure you are aware of and familiarize yourself with it before the day.

Examples of criteria can be:

- Communication
- Teamworking
- Analytical Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Innovative Thinking
- Openness to New Ideas
- Values
- Ability to Relate to Others
- Planning and Organising
- Response to Feedback
- Problem Solving
- Motivation and Commitment.

This list provides common assessment criteria, however, every organisation will have their own approach, therefore, it is important to check.

ASSESSMENT CENTRE SCORING

The assessors have a score sheet. They score the positive and negative indicators observed during the assessment activity.

Assessment centres are designed to enable candidates to demonstrate competency over a number of assessment areas assessed by an assessment panel. Research shows assessment centres are an accurate approach to achieving an accurate assessment across competency areas.

For example:

CRITERIA	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	AGGREGATE SCORE	AVERAGE
Ability to Relate	✓	✓	✓	(9)	
Team Working	✓		✓	(6)	
Communication skills	✓	✓	✓	(9)	
Ability to Plan and Organise	✓	✓	✓	(9)	
Response to and use of feedback	✓	✓	✓	(9)	
Motivation and Commitment		✓	✓	(6)	
Values	✓		✓	(6)	
Openness to new Ideas	✓		✓	(6)	
Problem Solving Skills	✓	✓	✓	(9)	

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

If you have a disability, as defined under the Equality Act 2010, you should make the contact within the company or HR Department aware in order that they can make reasonable adjustments.

PREPARING FOR AN ASSESSMENT CENTRE

Research roles within the company carefully. Think of the skills you will need for the post for which you are applying. Consider how you can demonstrate the skills required and show your competence in the required areas, generating as many examples as possible.

Structure and prepare a presentation carefully. Ensure any visual presentation is clear and not too complex. Your presentation should be as close to the allocated time as possible. If your presentation is too short or too long you are likely to lose points. Practice your presentation to get the timings rights and to build your confidence.

Think of and try to generate as many examples as possible and be yourself.

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