

## **Preparing for Assessment Centres**

### **What is an Assessment Centre?**

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

You will work both individually and as part of a group on a variety of exercises, including:

- case studies
- group discussions
- in-tray exercises
- presentations
- psychometric tests
- role play
- social events
- written tests

The aim of the assessment centre is to be as objective as possible in evaluating candidates' potential. This means that:

- You will be assessed by several people over the course of the day, in order to reduce bias.
- The assessors will be trained to document everything you do and say in order to evaluate you against a pre-agreed framework of competencies.
- You are usually scored numerically against each of the competencies. Each competency is assessed across a number of exercises. Your scores for each competency are then reviewed by the panel and a decision taken whether to hire.

### **Preparing for Assessment**

Before your assessment centre you should consolidate your knowledge of the firm you have applied to, make sure you are aware of any current commercial awareness issues and re-read your own CV and application form.

Review the job description and any other material the employer may have sent you. Think about the key skills and competencies your assessors will be looking for in you and other candidates during the assessment centre. They will be making selections based on these criteria, so think about ways you can demonstrate these skills during the various tests and exercises you will be involved in.

If you have been asked to prepare any material for the assessment centre (e.g. a presentation) make sure that you give yourself plenty of time to complete and practise this, to ensure you are as confident as possible on the day.

If aptitude tests will be part of your assessment centre make sure you take practice tests to familiarise yourself with the concept. It is important you know what type of tests will be coming up and exactly how to answer the questions that will be asked of you. If you do not know, call human resources to find out. Different types of test require candidates to address question in slightly different ways. You must know exactly how to answer the test you will be sitting to be in with a chance of doing well.

### **On the Day of your Assessment Centre**

On the day of your assessment centre you must:

- Arrive in good time.
- Be polite to everyone you meet, including other candidates.
- Join in with discussions, including informal ones (e.g. during lunch/dinner).
- Be assertive during group and individual exercises.
- Move on quickly, if you make a mistake. Assessors are not expecting you to be perfect in all areas, so try not to dwell on any errors.
- Try to draw others into group discussions. Your assessors want to see evidence of good leadership and teamwork skills as well as your own intelligent input.
- Find out when you can call for interview feedback. If you don't get a job offer this time, you need to know why, so that you can make sure you get an offer next time round.

### **Additional Resources**

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)

<http://www.careerplayer.com/tips-and-advice/general-advice/assessment-centers.aspx>

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/assessment-centres>

<https://gradireland.com/careers-advice/interviews-and-tests/assessment-centres>

[www.assessmentcentrehq.com](http://www.assessmentcentrehq.com)

<https://www.abintegro.com/signin/Ulster-University-CV?returnUrl=/Members&ck=1> (

<https://app.graduatesfirst.com/ULSTER/Account/Login>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wu4ZlledBsg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6nVuwr31wQ>

<http://www.careerplayer.com/tips-and-advice/general-advice/assessment-centers/>

For further advice and guidance contact the Employability and Careers Hubs which are located across all campuses.

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