

Careers Service

Assessment Centres

Maynooth University

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CAREER CONSULTANTS

Agenda – Assessment Centres

- What are Assessment Centres?
- Why are they used?
- Who uses them?
- Activities in an Assessment Centre
- How are they marked?
- Advice for candidates

What are they?

- A number of exercises, interviews and tasks completed on either a group or individual basis.
- Designed to assess the skills and competencies of candidates and how well they match what is required in the job.
- Allow assessors to see the candidate in several situations and judge how they perform in each.
- Focus is on *doing* as well as *talking* unlike a traditional interview
- Average length is a full day but can involve an overnight stay and dinner with candidates and managers

What are they?

- Usually held in company offices or in offsite hotel/training centre.
- Not unusual to run from 8.45am to 6pm with zero breaks.
- Candidates are ALWAYS being assessed, even when they are at lunch/coffee etc..
- Assessors will have a list of competencies they are scoring against and will look for evidence across each activity
- Average number of candidates per assessment centre is 8 – they will be assessed by up to 4 assessors.
- No “quota” to reach from each Assessment Centre – could be all or none!

Why do employers use them for selection?

- Extremely expensive to run but seen as **the most accurate and reliable method** of assessing candidates.
- The extent and range of selection tools used increases the **predictive validity** of assessment centres
- Candidates must prove to be strong and consistent across multiple tasks.
- Almost all graduate recruiters will use some form of assessment centre – main differential is whether or not they use group or individual assessing

Assessment Method	Predictive Validity
Assessment Centres (multiple methods)	.65
Behavioural Interviews	.4 – .6
Work-sample Tests	.54
Ability Tests	.53
Modern Personality Tests	.39
Biographical data	.38
References	.23
Traditional Interviews	.05 – .19

Who uses Assessment Centres as part of selection process?

(List not exhaustive!)

Public Service (IRL & UK)	Central Bank	AON	EY	Tesco	Barclays
Kerry Group	AIB	Allianz	Electric Ireland	United Drug	ICON
Diageo	Bol	Accenture	HSE	Northern Trust	Lidl
Ford	Ulster Bank	Deloitte	ING	Vodafone	
SIG	GSK	Coca Cola	KPMG	Musgrave	
Davy	Aer Lingus	Credit Suisse	Marks & Spencer	Enterprise Ireland	



Graduate Attributes



JANE BLOGGS	Group Discussion	Skills Test	Individual Present'n	Group Present'n	Social Interaction	SeniorMgt Interview
Communication	3		2	1	4	4
Teamwork	4	4				
Organisation		5	2	3		
Initiative		4			3	4
Leadership	4			2		
Work under Pressure		4		2		

5: Outstanding , 4: Very Good, 3: Satisfactory,
 2: Below Average: 1: Unacceptable

Group Discussion

Assessors in every corner!



Group Discussion

Formats

- Given a text and ask to decide on the solution to a problem,
 - eg *Lost at Sea – who to save?*
 - *EU bringing in new rule about driving on left hand side- discuss merits and obstacles*
- Usually leaderless discussion
- Always timed and an outcome must be reached
- Sometimes presentation to be made on your group conclusions

Skills Activity

- Also can be used as ice-breaker activities.
- Given a task and asked to “think creatively and outside the box”
- Build a tower with straws...
- Roleplay – lead a group of blindfolded people to a place in the room with use of only whistles
- Create a 3D structure with paper, cardboard etc..

Presentations

- Can be provided with a topic in advance (night before!) or given one on the day.
- If asked to role play then get into character
- They are looking for Communication Skills, Ability to Withstand Questioning, Ability to work with Ambiguity.
- They are not expecting a TED Talk!
- Remember the 3 T's of presentation making

Group Activities - Tips for doing well

- **Before you go:** identify what competencies will be tested
- **Contribute** – if you say nothing you cannot be scored.
- Get in early – it's more difficult to get into the discussion the longer you leave it before speaking-leaders will emerge and you can lose confidence.
- Offer to be timekeeper and summarise where group is at every 10 mins
- **Listen**, encourage participation from quieter members
- Offer validation and encouragement *“That’s a great idea John....”*

Group Activities - Tips for doing well

- Don't hog the discussion – look for consensus but be prepared to stand up for your viewpoint.
- Try to have fun – humour can ease the tension and lead to a better discussion – use peoples names.
- Practise group discussion in small groups with friends – take a turn acting as observer
- You are competing with yourself!

