



Assessment centres tend to take place towards the end of the recruitment process, often after you have sat online tests and had a first round interview.

They contain different exercises designed to test your suitability for the job and organisation.

Recruiters can see how you operate in a variety of situations, to get a fair and comprehensive picture of your abilities. They give YOU the opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills, not just your effectiveness at being interviewed.

A relatively small percentage of candidates gets to the selection centre – maybe only 5-10% of the original applicants, so if you get this far, you've done well!

1. Assessment Centre Activity – Tests

May re-test aptitude tests completed at an earlier stage and/or test an ability not tested before.

Tests cover –

- Personality - explore how you deal with situations (no right or wrong answer)
- Verbal - reasoning with written information
- Numerical - reasoning with numbers, charts and graphs
- Logical - ability to deal with shapes and abstract figures

TOP TIPS

- Read all instructions carefully.
- Read sample and complete practice.
- Work quickly and accurately.
 - Be aware of time.
- Don't spend too long on a question.
 - Avoid wild guessing.
 - Never panic.
- Don't worry if you don't finish the test.
 - Practice before assessment day.

Practice, Practice, Practice

TOP TIPS

- Keep the group on time.
- Value the contribution of others and build on it.
 - Be supportive and encourage everyone to contribute.
- Stand your ground without becoming argumentative.
- Propose different approaches to any problems.
 - Be prepared to compromise.
 - Don't dominate.

2. Assessment Centre Activity – Group Work

As a group you will be given information and a task to complete within a set period of time. You will be assessed against a set criteria. Examples include your ability to –

- Summarise key points
- Listen carefully
- Use clear, concise language
- Respect others
- Resolve conflict
- Set and commit to objectives
- Contribute and develop ideas and negotiate well
- Influence others effectively

3. Assessment Centre Activity – Case Study

Tests your ability to assimilate written materials and draw out the important points.

Assesses analytical skills, creativity, problem-solving and team work (if group) ability.

- Clarify the Problem – understand the information.
- Structure the Issue – break problem down logically.
- Analyse the Data – study each part of the problem.
- Synthesise and Conclude – draw together your findings

TOP TIPS

- There is no 'Right Answer' however wrong answers can be reached by ignoring important facts.
- Take the time to read and understand the case study.
 - Get an overview of the issues first.
 - Structure your response.
- Keep cool and use logical analysis to argue your case.



TOP TIPS

- Ensure handwriting is legible.
 - Produce a SWOT.
- Carefully read the brief in details.
 - Allow plenty of time.
- Provide only what you're asked for.
 - Pay close attention to detail.
 - Work quickly and stay calm.
 - Prioritise the tasks.
- There isn't usually a wrong or right answer
 - Focus on key points

4. Assessment Centre Activity – E-tray Exercise

Simulated business situation usually administered on a computer. You will be given all the information needed. Respond to questions and prioritise data under specific time constraints and consequently make rationalised decisions.

Evaluates additional skills which cannot be measured through ordinary aptitude tests. Its main objective is to assess managerial abilities, prioritisation, problem solving, manage workload and time management.

5. Assessment Centre Activity - Presentations

You'll be given a topic either on the day or a few days beforehand.

Preparation - What is the Question? How long have you got? What equipment can you use? Who is your audience? Do your research, check your facts, focus on 3 -5 points and practice.

Structure – Split your presentation into three sections -

1. Introduction - What going to tell them.
2. Middle - Tell them and get your points across.
3. End - What told them and any questions.

TOP TIPS

- Brush up on your presentation skills.
- Anticipate questions in advance and be prepared to answer them.
- Make good eye contact with audience.
 - Speak slowly, clearly, and enthusiastically!
 - Don't overrun - this is very unprofessional, and you may be stopped by the assessor.
- Don't read directly from slides or notes
 - Keep it simple, less is more.

TOP TIPS

- Remember you are still being assessed.
 - Introduce yourself with confidence – your elevator pitch!
- People are happy to talk about themselves – show an interest.
 - Have an opinion on news/trends/industry.
 - Put your phone down!
- You'll do much better nervous and sober than well-oiled and fearless.

6. Assessment Centre Activity – Social Activity

This could be lunch/dinner/coffee break as part of the day or an evening event as part of a two day assessment.

Questions to ask recent graduate employees –

- What do you like best about working here?
- What projects have you been involved in?
- What professional training have you undertaken?

Could ask potential work colleagues –

- About their careers and background with company.
- What they like about working for the company.

Further Resources

- www.qub.ac.uk - Homepage > Students and graduates > CVs, making applications and interviews > psychometric tests
- www.prospects.ac.uk - Homepage > applications & interviews > test yourself
- www.gradireland.com - Homepage > Careers Report
- www.shldirect.com
- UK Civil Service – Civil Service Fast Stream, <http://faststream.civilservice.gov.uk/How-do-I-apply/>
- Company specific examples - Deloitte / PriceWaterhouseCoopers / Bain & Company / Target Jobs