

Assessment Centres

Companies often use assessment centres as a way of narrowing the field in competitive graduate job markets. It is a chance for employers to observe candidates over a whole day or weekend and to use a variety of assessment techniques, such as interviews, psychometric tests, presentations, in-tray exercises, group activities and social events.

Interviews

*Weblink

Psychometric Tests

Psychometric tests are designed to gauge an applicant's suitability for the position based on ability or personality type.

Personality Questionnaires

Have no right or wrong answer and are used by employers to look at your personality and style of working. These can be used to find out which strand of the company you would be most suitable for or to assess your suitability for the company as a whole.

Aptitude Tests

You may be tested on the following areas of aptitude:

- Verbal Reasoning
- Numerical Reasoning
- Diagrammatic and Spatial Reasoning
- Specific Aptitude Tests – related to the role you are applying for. For example, when applying for a position as a Receptionist, there may be a data entry or telephone test.

Practice Tests

Personality Questionnaires:

<http://www.shldirect.com>

<http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk/myersbriggs.html>

<http://www.psychtesting.org.uk>

Aptitude Tests:

<http://www.numerical-reasoning.com>

<http://www.shldirect.com>

<http://www.psychometric-success.com>

Top Tips

- Answer personality questionnaires as honestly as possible, as they are designed to find out if anyone is not being truthful with their answers.
- Use online practise aptitude tests
- *Speak to Shane

Presentations

You may be given a topic to present on in advance of the day, in which case you will have time to prepare and structure your presentation. Alternatively, you may be given a topic to present on the day. Your topic may be related or unrelated to the job you're applying for.

Top Tips

- Keep to time. If you have the chance, practise in advance and try to keep to your time limit.
- Adopt a beginning-middle-end structure. This means telling your audience what you are going to say, saying it and then summarising what you have just said.
- Set out the aims of your presentation before working on the content.
- When using PowerPoint, do not try to fit too much onto each slide. It should be a visual guide to your main points and not repeat everything you are saying.
- Consider who you are presenting to and pitch your presentation at the appropriate level.
- Use examples and visual aids to illustrate a point, but don't rely on visuals above a well structured presentation.
- Try to speak to all members of the audience, smile and try to relax.

In-tray Exercises

You will be asked to complete a number of tasks in a simulation of a real life work situation. In-tray exercises are designed to assess your competency in the practical elements of the role you are applying for and often involve using a laptop. It is impossible to know the exact exercise you will be asked to complete on the day, though practising online tests will get you used to completing tasks to time limits.

Top Tips

- Practise online in-tray exercises
- Read all the information given to you before completing the tasks and bear in mind the length of time you've been allocated.

Group Activities

Can be in the form of group discussions or tasks to complete. You will be assessed on your ability to work with others and this includes not just your ability to put forward ideas, but also to listen to those of others.

Top Tips

- Try to take on board all the information you're given.
- Concentrate on the quality of your input rather than the quantity.

- Use non-verbal communication to show you're listening to the idea of others, as well as putting forward your own point of view.
- Try to include other quieter members of the group.
- Focus on the group task, as well as your own contributions.
- Keep calm and retain your sense of humour.

Social Events

Social events are a chance for the employer to see you with your guard down. They assume you will have prepared well for your interview and any tasks you have to perform, but these are a chance to see if you are really the person you say you are and whether you would fit in with the company culture.

Top Tips

- Be friendly and inclusive with those around you.
- Demonstrate your interest by asking questions.
- If alcohol is provided, don't indulge too much – remember you are still at a job interview!