



Resource Pack

Assessment Centres



What is an assessment centre?

An assessment centre is a combination of tasks and activities that test your suitability for the job. It usually consists of up to 50 people in a room or an online meeting (if virtual) depending on how big the recruitment drive is for the role and you'll sometimes be split into smaller teams or tables who you'll work with throughout the day. You'll have the chance to demonstrate a wider range of skills than you would have been able to during a face-to-face interview.

Hosted over anything from an afternoon to two days, assessment centres are often the final stage of the selection process.

What happens at an assessment centre?

Assessment days can be held anywhere from the employer's offices to a hotel or training facility. They can also be carried out online using platforms such as Zoom, WebEx and Microsoft Teams. You will work both individually and as part of a group on a variety of exercises, including:

- Case studies
- Group discussions
- Group exercises
- Presentations
- Psychometric tests
- Role play
- Social events
- Written tests
- Interview

Not all of these activities and tasks will take place in every assessment centre, it will always vary depending on the role that you've applied to and also the type of role you're going for whether that's an entry/graduate/management level role.



Example of an assessment centre

Assessment centres vary in length, style, and content, but below is an example of some of the activities that could take place in a typical assessment day.

Introduction and pre-employment checks
Employer presentation and group ice-breaker exercise
Psychometric tests
Individual task
Group exercise
Assessment interviews
Individual presentations
Evaluation

This is just an example but also a typical set up on an assessment centre day. As mentioned before, it could even be a few hours to half a day or a couple of days but you will find all the information available in the email or letter you receive from the employer inviting you.

How will I be assessed?

You will generally have a handful of employees from the organisation hovering around the room which is usually a mix of members from HR and line managers. They will be assessing everyone individually throughout the day and will aim to assess you on some key skills that you may or may not have demonstrated throughout the assessment centre day so don't worry if you haven't performed well on one task, you still have the rest of the day to excel at another task.

HR and line managers will all usually come together at the end of the day and score your performance individually and in turn decide whether to hire you. The important thing to remember is, you are being assessed throughout the whole day, and that also means through your lunch break or any additional breaks so always be wary of what you say or do.

Some key skills employers may look for are:

Teamwork
Time management
Organisation
Leadership
Communication
Decision making
Creativity



Top tips on how to prepare for your assessment centre

Call the organisation at the first instance if you feel something is unclear from the invitation. Identify which skills, interests and experiences the employer is looking for by revisiting the job description and any other material that the company has sent you. Glassdoor and the student room are great places to hear other people's first hand experiences.

Research and read the organisation's website, social media profiles and LinkedIn ensuring that you're prepared to share your views and ideas and come equipped with some questions to ask.

Review your CV and application form as you may get asked questions about your answers or about your CV at the interview.

Choose your outfit well in advance so you know if you need to go out shopping for a better sized shirt, trouser, suit etc.

Get plenty of sleep, it'll only help you feel more mentally and physically prepared for a whole day's assessment centre.

Plan your journey, aiming to arrive at least 15 mins early. If the event is online, make sure all your equipment works and you are familiar with the software that the assessment centre is being held on.

Be a good leader. When it comes to the group exercises, the employers are not looking for a person who dominates the group. You are better finding out where each individual's strength lie, and then delegating tasks based on their strengths. Always make sure that everyone in the group is included. There is usually a quieter person in the group, so try to encourage them to participate in the discussion.

Look online for free practice tests see psychometric tests or get advice on preparing for and answering some of the most common interview questions.

Here's a great place to start: <https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/>

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Get a head start with assessment centres

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<https://www.bt.com/workready>

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Whether you're getting ready for the world of work or supporting someone who's preparing for employment, there's lots of ways that we can help.

Want to see what it's like to work at BT, learn practical skills to make yourself more employable or apply for a work placement? You'll find everything you need right here.

Getting Work Ready from home

We've paused our face to face Work Ready programme, but at BT we didn't want the support to end there, so we've designed a series of short, interactive webinars on four different topics so you can use your time to make sure that when the chance comes along you'll be ready to succeed.



Useful links

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/>

LinkedIn have made some relevant parts of their learning catalogue free to all. LinkedIn is not just another social media profile, you can use it to create new connections, get connected with a company that you want to work for so when they have a new role or opportunity they will most likely advertise on LinkedIn first. You can also use this link to learn something new with LinkedIn, once you finish that course, it automatically gets added to your LinkedIn profile so employers can see when they visit your profile.

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/young-professional-training/>

Young professional content for Youth Employment UK. Youth employment connects young people to youth friendly employers, some free advice tips and regularly updated graduate roles and apprenticeships on here.

<https://www.barclayslifeskills.com>

Free online tools to help jobseekers. Includes a CV generator, help with cover letter, your skills and much more.

<https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/telephone-interview-tips-dos-and-donts/>

This is one of many sites that have guidance on phone and video interviews.

<https://www.bt.com/careers>

You can find all our live vacancies here including apprenticeships and grad roles.

www.nhs.uk/live-well

NHS Live Well - Advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing. If you are suffering in any way mentally/physically there is help and support available.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-courses-for-jobs>

If you are aged 19 or over you could access a course for free, as part of the support available from the government to help you gain the skills you need to get the job you want