



Assessment Centres

Assessment Centres are either a half or full day event usually held in the organisations' building. You will be required to participate in a number of activities used to assess your competencies related to the position. The activities are observed by assessors who will rate your performance against skills that are required for the role.

TARGETED SELECTION INTERVIEWS

Communication, Desire for work for the organisation, Problem Solving and Organisational skills, Critical self-awareness

PREPARATION PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

- Understand what attributes/skills the employer is looking for by reading through their website or through the questions you answered in your application
- Questions that will be asked target key competencies for the role, so structure your response through the STAR method:

<u>Situation/Task</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Result</u>
A situation that demonstrates your strengths in that competency	Actions you took to address the situation	The end result of your action

- Link your points with a key competency
- Prepare a mini introduction to "sell" yourself to the panel and show your enthusiasm. E.g., thank them for the opportunity to interview, tell them why you're excited about the position, why you are an ideal candidate

DO

- ✓ Dress appropriately
- ✓ Smile, be friendly, be confident
- ✓ Give a firm handshake at the start and end of interview
- ✓ Be straight to the point with your answers – don't waffle
- ✓ Express enthusiasm about the position – be aware of the pitch of your voice
- ✓ Maintain eye-contact to engage with the interviewee
- ✓ Don't answer your questions in a rehearsed and rigidly structured manner
- ✓ Ask clarification on a question
- ✓ Be honest with your answers

DON'T

- ✗ Appear arrogant
- ✗ Fidget – try to stay still and sit up straight
- ✗ Answer phone calls during the interview
- ✗ Ask questions about the organisation – you should have done your research beforehand
- ✗ Avoid using "fill" words such as "um"
- ✗ Have a negative attitude
- ✗ Chew gum

PRESENTATIONS

Communication/Presentation Skills, Analytical Skills and Time Management Skills

When presenting in an assessment centre, you are either able to choose or you may be allocated a topic. In some instances, the employer may give you the flexibility to choose an area or topic you are passionate about.

ASSESSORS WILL LOOK FOR:

- Content, structure, and visual aid which is an indication of how much time you have dedicated to prepare
- Confidence – have an open body language
- Oral communication skills
- Ability to think and answer on-the-spot when assessors ask you questions after the presentation

PLANNING YOUR PRESENTATION:

- Plan ahead! Create a structure on the topic you want to present on (e.g., Headings and key points)
- Create visuals – such as slides to engage your audience
- Practice, practice, practice – either in front of your family or friends

DO

- ✓ Be engaging, have open body language and keep eye contact
- ✓ Familiarise yourself on the topic so you can answer questions that may be asked by the panel
- ✓ Show enthusiasm
- ✓ Project your voice to the audience
- ✓ Maintain your composure

DON'T

- ✗ Avoid using palm cards. If you do, try not to refer to them as often
- ✗ Turn away from your audience
- ✗ Fold your arms or have your hands in your pockets
- ✗ Don't add material that is irrelevant – be straight to the point

APTITUDE TESTS (ABILITY TESTS)

Communication, Problem Solving Skills, Technical Proficiency

Aptitude tests are usually conducted online and measure your ability to complete key competencies of the position. It will also enable you to identify your key skills and weaknesses. The skills that you will be tested on are:

- **Verbal Reasoning:** generally looks at spelling and grammar. Also may measure your understanding of words, sentences and grammar and exploring logical relationships
- **Non-Verbal/Abstract Reasoning:** generally will involve working out a rule or principle and relating it to another set of instructions or the like
- **Numerical Reasoning:** from simple arithmetic to reasoning tests requiring you to draw inferences from some numerical data and using this to solve another problem
- **Clerical Speed and Accuracy:** measures speed and accuracy in checking for errors in data etc. and/or classification of sets of data
- **Spatial Reasoning:** looks at your ability to rotate shapes in space
- **Mechanical Reasoning:** diagrammatic mechanical problems for you to solve

TIPS

- Listen to instructions
- Read questions carefully
- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- It is usually a timed test, so make sure you keep track of time
- Don't dwell on questions for too long. Leave it and come back to it later
- Ask for feedback (unless it has been stated prior to test taking that feedback will not be given)

ROLE PLAYS

Communication, Critical Self-Awareness, Negotiation Skills, Leadership and Influencing

Normally one on one, you will be given a set of information, instructions and time to prepare. You will then be expected to assume the role given. Assessors will be looking for:

- Problem solving skills
- How well you build rapport
- Your understanding of the situation/issues
- Your communication skills

It is important to take this exercise extremely seriously as it will demonstrate how well your skills correlate with the key competencies of the position.

Example: Handling a difficult customer or complaint.

WORK SIMULATIONS

Similar to role plays, you will need to interact in a situation you may encounter in the position. It can be done via computer or paper.

Example: *In-tray activities* – usually simulate administrative duties such as responding to emails, letters, memos etc. **The key is your ability to prioritise, multi-task and analyse information.**

Tip: Find out what work you will be doing in your role and then try to predict what work scenarios may be used. By researching what affects/drives the organisation can assist you in determining tasks that should be prioritised.

PERSONALITY /SELF REPORT QUESTIONNAIRES

Employers want to find out more about you and your motivation, empathy and social skills. It will also enable you to understand how well you can 'fit' into the organisation. The test can be given to you during the beginning of the assessment centre. The key to personality tests is **honesty and common sense**.

Tips:

- Be consistent when answering questions, answer similar questions in a similar way to show a stable personality
- Read through the selection criteria and find out more about the role to determine the type of personality the assessors are looking for in a successful candidate
- Don't dwell on questions as it is usually timed
- Answer all the questions

Practice! There are lots of online personality tests which can help you better understand yourself, your leadership style and so forth.

GROUP EXERCISES

Teamwork, Leadership and Influencing, Communication Skills, and Critical Self-Awareness

Group exercises are similar to a role play, in that you will be given a set of instructions and information regarding a situation/issue. After a set reading time you will gather with your assigned group and work on the situation/issue at hand, whilst the panel of assessors watches on.

Tip: Think of a time you had to work with a team requiring you to solve a problem. Think about the processes and steps you took to achieve a positive result and try to implement it into the exercise.

DO

- ✓ Read instructions carefully – define the problem and if possible, create a project plan
- ✓ Decide the team's priorities and objectives
- ✓ Ensure you get your ideas across quickly – stand out of the group
- ✓ Involve others
- ✓ Read through selection criteria to get an idea of the theories being assessed
- ✓ Keep track of time
- ✓ Actively listen to other people's ideas – smile, nod, keep eye contact
- ✓ Find a consensus
- ✓ Diplomatically argue/defend your ideas

DON'T

- ✗ Sit silently. Try to include yourself in the group by offering to do small tasks if you are shy/intimidated
- ✗ Criticising other ideas
- ✗ Argue with team members – your team may fail to solve the problem if a consensus is not achieved
- ✗ Be domineering

Tip: Focus on group goals and objectives; it is easy to lose sight of these if you are consciously trying to impress the assessors. Also, remember he/she who talks the loudest is not necessarily the most impressive

PRACTICE AT MYMQ CAREER ZONE:

[Assessment Centre Tool](#)

FIND OUT MORE

Macquarie University NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 7372
careers@mq.edu.au

CRICOS Provider No 00002J



MACQUARIE
University