

Virtual Assessment Centre's

Careers & Employability Service



Welcome ... we will get started shortly

- Please mute your microphone.
- Put your camera on if you are able to do so.
- Please add any specific questions you want to cover in the chat, so I can make sure these are covered at the end.
- Browse other events and book:
Slides will be circulated after the session.

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/events/index.html>

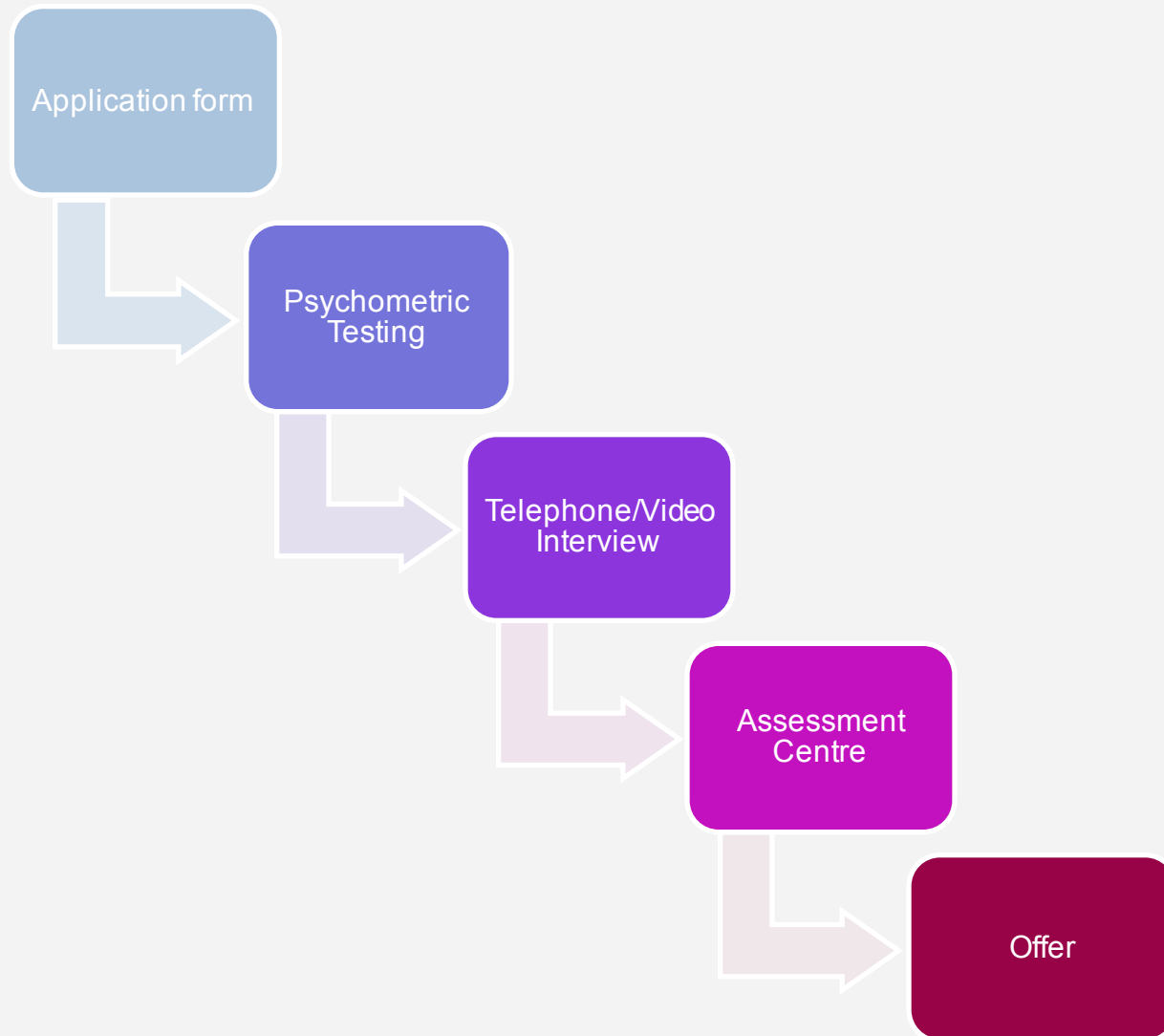
What will this session cover?

- What is an assessment centre?
- Virtual assessment centres and how they work in practice
- Types of exercises
- What are they looking for?
 - Case studies and group tasks
- Top tips for an assessment centre – before and on the day!
- Resources to use when practicing for virtual assessment centres

Assessment Centres – your thoughts?



Standard application process



What is an assessment centre?

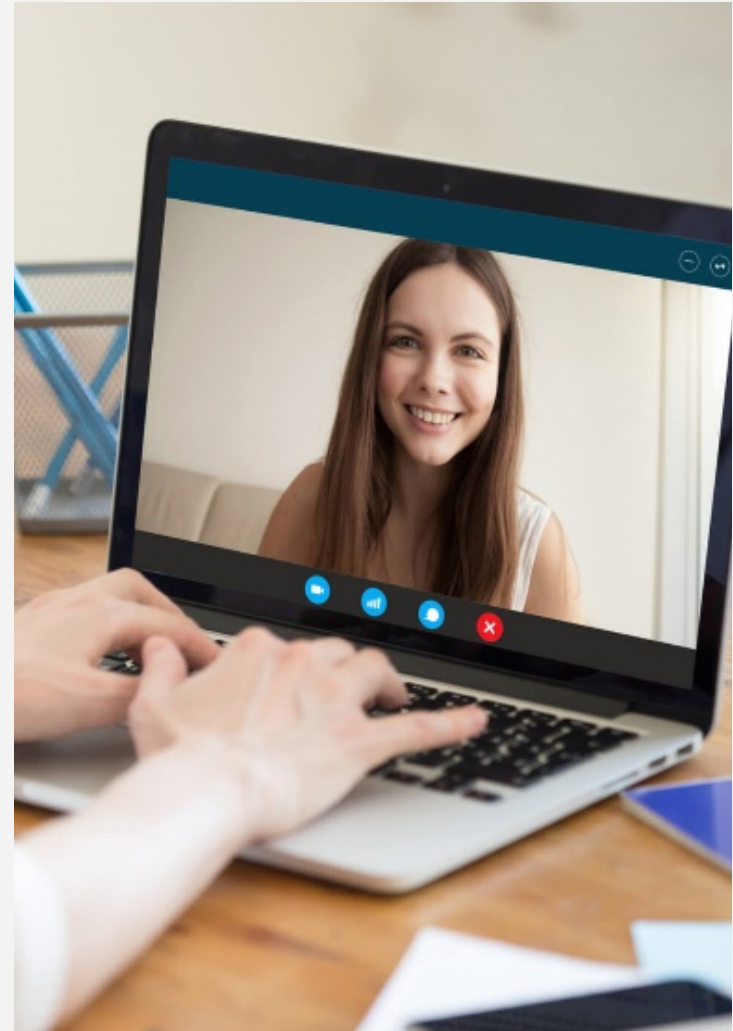
- Exercises designed to assess the full range of skills, behaviours and competencies required for the job
 - E.g. Collaboration (team working)
 - Accountability (taking responsibility for actions)
 - Efficiency (working in the most effective way)
- Pre-Covid 19 would have usually been the first time the employer saw you in person.

Why do employers use assessment centres?

- They are one of the most reliable methods of assessing candidates
- They offer a thorough, in-depth assessment, allowing recruiters to look at many competencies and strengths
- Observe candidates over an extended period of time, not just in one exercise e.g. interview
- They give employers a chance to see how candidates interact in a group setting, usually a simulated meeting or work environment

Virtual Assessment Centres & Covid-19

- Many employers have adapted their assessment activities to assess you online rather, than in person.
- Ultimately, they're aiming to assess whether you have a similar set of competencies as they would in a face to face setting
- Virtual assessment centres include similar activities to face to face assessment centres, but instead, they're delivered through a technology platform.
- Typically, virtual assessment centres last between two and three hours. However, they may last longer, depending on the number of activities set.



Virtual Assessment Centres - How do they work in practice?

- You usually log into a video or specifically designed assessment platform. For certain activities, you may go into separate 'rooms'. In a traditional assessment centre, there could be 15–20 candidates. In a virtual assessment centre, there are likely to be fewer.
- It is usual to be given detailed information before the assessment centre to help you prepare i.e. a briefing pack
- The employer will send a link to a system with instructions on timings, registration and how to complete each of the recruitment tasks.
- Often additional text chat features are available, to enable the candidate to ask questions to the recruiter during the activities.
- Remember to read the instructions carefully and thoroughly.

What are recruiters assessing?

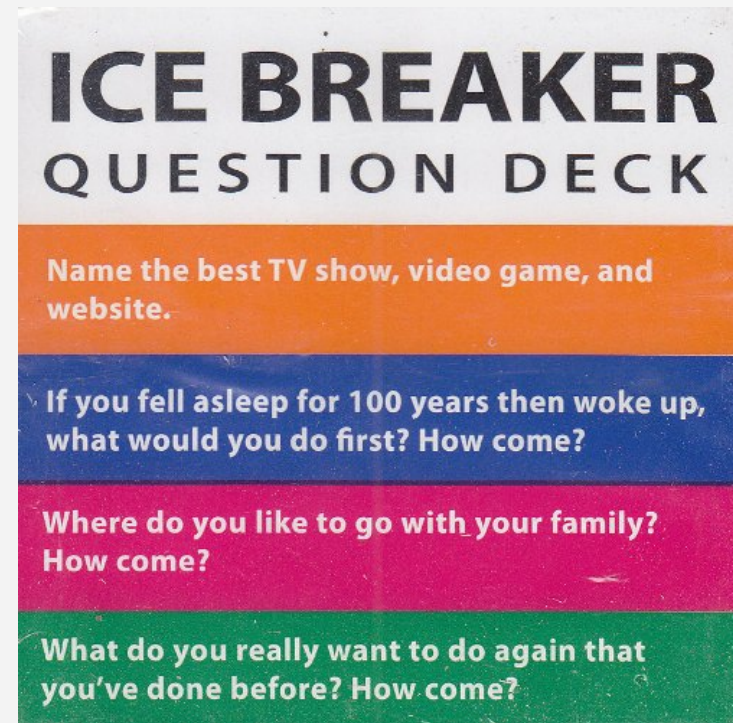
- **Values** – what is important to them / their ethos. E.g. an employer may measure client empathy i.e. picking up on cues, especially for customer focussed roles.
- **Strengths** – their motivations and innate qualities. Looking for energy in their answers and a genuine response.
- **Technical capabilities** – more for engineering, scientific and accountancy
- **Competencies**
 - Communication
 - Teamwork
 - Leadership
 - Problem solving
 - Commercial awareness

Types of exercises used

- Icebreakers
- Interviews
 - Could be competency (experience) or strengths-based (abilities)
- Psychometric tests
 - Could be role-specific or more generic
- Presentations
 - Seen or unseen topic
- Written exercises
- Role play
 - Puts you in a real life scenario to see your reaction
- Group exercise
 - Work-based scenario, discussion, leadership task

Ice breaker!

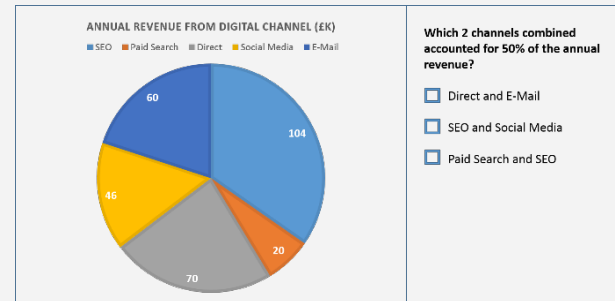
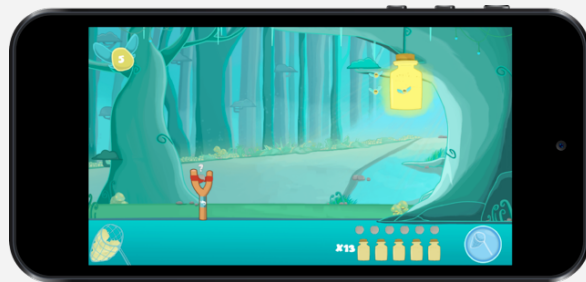
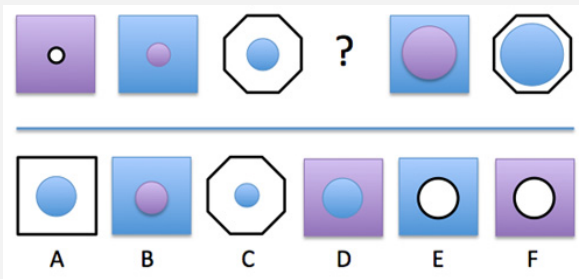
- Usually a feature of an assessment centre
- Used to introduce yourself, create a group bond and help you to feel comfortable so you can perform well in the tasks ahead.
- Always have something prepared for:
 - An interesting fact about yourself!
 - 2 truths and a lie



Psychometric tests

Aptitude tests are structured ways of evaluating how people perform on tasks or react to different situations.

- Numerical, verbal, logical, situational judgement, critical thinking gamification and personality tests
- Objective and good indication of performance
- If you have a disability contact the test administrator in advance as they may be able to make reasonable adjustments.
- Key thing is practice! [Graduate First](#)



Case studies

- Case studies may be an individual or group exercise
- You may be given information in advance of the assessment centre day, to help you prepare
- Usually this will be a work-based scenario

A publisher of scientific journals and books is looking to make a significant acquisition. It has identified a target company and approached a number of investment banks for their views on the merits of a potential deal and a target price. Based on these presentations, the publisher will decide whether to proceed with a bid and, if so, select one bank to act as their adviser.

Your team is one of the investment banks bidding to win the mandate. You need to analyse the figures provided; to review the marketplace, your potential client (the publisher) and the target company; and to prepare a five-minute presentation to the management board, giving your recommendations, e.g. whether to go ahead, go ahead under specific conditions etc.

How to prepare for a case study?

- Read the instructions carefully. Ask yourself, what the problem is, what your role is and what your objectives are.
- Read through the information provided, highlight the relevant parts and list key points to be considered when coming to your solution
- Weigh up the pros and cons to each solution
- Manage your time effectively
- Divide up key tasks between the group
- Articulate your view points to your group, and justify your ideas
- Ensure you come to a decision / meet the objective

The virtual group task

- The exercise will vary depending on the role, company and competencies being assessed e.g. group discussion, business case scenario
- Often it is the task that most people feel nervous about, and the most commonly used at assessment centres
- Shows the employer how you demonstrate skills that are crucial to the role you are applying for e.g. Teamwork, Interpersonal skills, Listening skills, Problem solving skills
- It can also identify negative traits such as aggression, single-mindedness
- 💡 Top tip – be yourself, but make sure you put yourself forward and contribute. Do not take a back seat role!

Group Activity



Virtual group task - what are they looking for?

- **Positive qualities:**
 - Actively contributing
 - Listening
 - Communicating effectively
 - Being inclusive: including quieter members of the group
 - Following the instructions
 - Assisting the team, i.e. offer to manage the time or take notes
 - Showing initiative – take ownership of a part of a task
 - Evidencing your points / ideas
- Good body language, eye contact, gestures of agreement
- **Leadership qualities:** some recruiters may be looking for candidates who are natural leaders, who can guide the team
 - Delegation
 - Using the strength of others
 - Keep focused on the objective

Virtual group task - what are they looking for?

- **Influencing** - some recruiters may consider being able to influence to be critical to success in the job. As a result, they may use a group discussion to see how well candidates influence others. For example, for a sales job where individuals often work competitively.
- **Teamwork** is not about saying the most! It is about respecting other people's opinions, listening, and bringing others into the conversation.
- **For you to participate** - saying nothing makes an assessor query whether the candidate understood the task or is committed.
- **To collectively come to a solution / decision**

Virtual Group Task: Etiquette

- Virtual meeting etiquette is the key to success. **Raise a hand** as a cue that you would like to contribute to a discussion in a virtual setting.
- Make sure your **microphone is on mute** unless you are talking. Background noise is amplified and can make it difficult for others to hear.
- Demonstrate **respect for others** opinions. Use phrases such as 'what I'm hearing is you are suggesting X. I would agree / I had a slightly different perspective of X'
- It's ok if you accidentally talk over, just remember to **acknowledge this** and check they're finished, before continuing to speak
- Ensure your **camera** is switched on!

Before you attend an assessment centre...

Tech

Be aware of the technology you'll be using, download any software prior to the day. Do a sound check too and make sure you can be heard clearly.

Research

Research the role and the company – employers will be testing your commercial awareness and understanding of the role and company. Keep in mind their values / competencies!

Instructions

Re-read any information they have sent you and follow the instructions. Check your junk email for any instructions!

Check your environment

Check your environment before the assessment centre e.g., tidy your room up, tell housemates to be quiet. **You should be the main focus – not your surroundings!**

Before you attend an assessment centre...

Devices

Try and steady the device you are using beforehand, place this on a stable surface – phone, tablet etc. Don't wander around the room with it. Remember to fully charge your device!

Connection

Check your internet connection is fast enough and your webcam works.

Assessment Prep

Find out what exercises you'll be doing on the day, and practice, where possible.

Interview prep

Prepare for a "traditional" interview as well. You can even book a practice interview with the Careers Service!

Mindset

Stay calm – stay positive!

On the day



Turn your camera on! Practise positioning yourself in front of your camera so that you are seen in the best light.



Dress appropriately and act professionally



Stick to time – if an exercise has a time limit make sure you keep to it



Find out as much about the company as you can, you are assessing them as well!



It's OK to be nervous! Don't give up if you mess up on an activity, keep going. This will show you can recover from setbacks

On the day



Be on time! 1pm is 1pm, not 1.05pm



Smile. Speak up and be clear



Avoid using notes



If there are networking opportunities, use them!



Maintain eye contact and positive body language



Don't worry about what is out of your control – e.g., if the tech fails stay calm and try and contact the organisation to let them know. People will understand.



Have some questions to ask them – training, career progression, why they enjoy working there etc.

Afterwards



Find out how long it will be until you hear the outcome and how you will be contacted



If unsuccessful always ask for feedback as to why so you can use for your personal development – do not be afraid to chase for this



Analyse your own performance and work on any improvements

Useful links to prepare!

Further Advice

- <https://nextstepsupport.org/advice-skills/what-are-virtual-assessment-centres-and-how-to-prepare>
- <https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/blog/virtual-assessment-centre-how-to-prepare/>

Practice

- <https://app.graduatesfirst.com/KENT/Account/Login>
case studies, psychometrics, In-Tray exercise, presentations
- <https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/academy/>
- <https://www.shl.com/shldirect/en/practice-tests>
- <https://datahub.arcticshores.com/game/> - game based

Any questions?



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