

Succeeding at Assessment Centres: A Guide

CAREERS ESSENTIALS PROGRAMME

2020 - 2021





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Accessibility

If you would like this document in plain text or any other format then please contact emilypacker@careers.cam.ac.uk

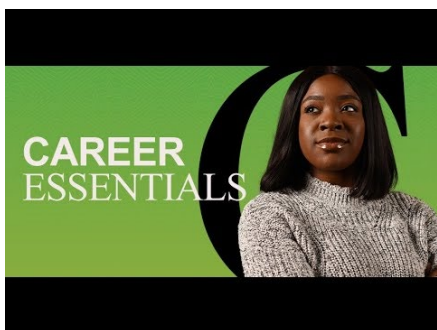
Virtual Assessment Centres: A guide to success factors

	You are not in competition	Other candidates are not competition - you could all be successful or none of you. Collaboration is key to your performance.
	Read all your documents carefully	Ensure you have any documents downloaded or are aware of how to do this online. You should have a copy of the job specification if you have it.
	Check your technology	Ensure the platform the employer is using suits your computer and that your camera and mic are working well. Download any apps in advance.
	Get comfortable with features	Practice using features, such as screen sharing, chat boxes and file sharing in advance.
	Take help offered	If the employer offers a practice session do take up their offer.
	Take a break and have refreshments	Concentration can start to slip through the day and so screen breaks are vital. This includes having a drink available and prepare your food.
	Things go wrong – have a back-up plan	Internet cuts out regularly and your employer will understand. Ensure they have your mobile number so that they can get in touch with you.
	Understand the role	Understand the role you have applied to and the behaviours that role would require. Be sure of your motivation to apply to that employer.
	Practice	You can practice timed presentations alone and ask friends to practice group activities to time. You can practice recorded interviews at home. The careers service has support for this (see resources)

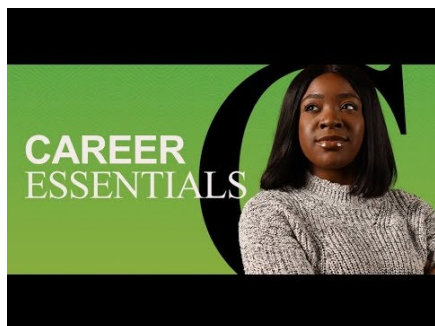
Videos to help your preparation

These videos hosted on the Careers Service YouTube Channel are recorded overviews of the sections in this document.

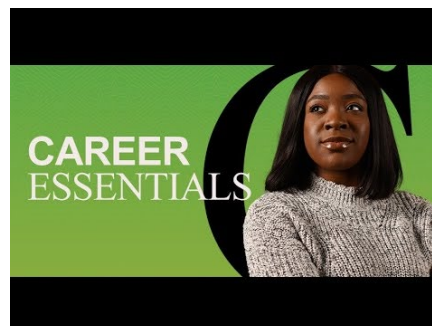
[Preparation](#)



[Types of Assessment](#)



[Frameworks for Success](#)



[Approaches to Group Work](#)



Preparing for your virtual assessment centre

As with any stage of the recruitment process, preparation is key. In the context of virtual assessment centres, your preparation will change from knowing how to get to a venue, to ensuring you have a suitable location to undertake the assessment centre, ensuring you have stable internet, a decent camera, headphones and phone connection as well as the right links to join the session.

It is also important to re-visit your CV, the description of the role and any organisation particulars (value, locations areas of specialism, projects and clients). This will enable you to feel confident with your own experience, prepare interview answers and behaviours in relation to the role. It may be some time since your applications, so being familiar with these factors will refresh your memory.

It is also important to be vigilant with the communications you receive from the recruiter regarding the assessment centre. They will stay in touch before the day and likely offer you the opportunity to practice using the software beforehand. Do ensure you check all your email folders and add their details to your 'safe senders' list. It's important that you do let them know if you live in a busy household, a rural area with poor internet connection or have any additional needs that might require adjustments, if you should wish to.



Location

Find a suitable location to spend the duration of the centre



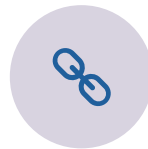
Test

Minimise potential issues by having chargers to hand and test your video/audio



Time + Date

Ensure you have the correct time and date for the session



Links

Ensure you have the right link to join the session and a passcode if needed.



Apps

Ensure the platform works on your device and install any apps needed



Contact

Provide another means of contact, such as a landline or mobile, if your internet goes down.



Emails

Ensure you check emails and alerts in the days running up to the session.


Technical Preparation

let's test your equipment

Before we start, we need to check that everything works properly.

1	Bandwidth test Bandwidth OK	✓
2	Recording test Recording OK	✓
3	Playback test Playback OK	✓
4	Confirm playback Did you see and hear yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>

[start interview](#)




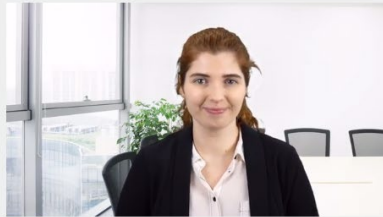
Pre-session

You will be asked to check your equipment on the platform the employer has chosen to use. They will likely do this with you in a phone call, but they may also ask you to do this via link and testing platform. It is very important that you do this to ensure your device, bandwidth and software is suitable for your employer.

If you need any reasonable adjustments to help you succeed in the assessment centre, due to a disability or illness, then you can discuss this with your employer at your discretion.

management consultancy practice

Abort interview



☐ Don't show me this preview while answering

1:46

What kind of tasks and activities do you both like and dislike at work? How do these likes and dislikes match the kind of role you would like to work in?

[decline this question](#) Question 1 of 6 [i've finished answering »](#)

Recorded interviews

Recorded interviews, where you are asked to record your answers to time can be a part of a pre-assessment centre task or form part of the assessment centre itself. You will have the text on-screen and perhaps a person asking the question too. The time will show at the bottom of the screen. You will also have some 'thinking time' (appx 30 secs – 2mins).

You can [practice recorded interviews](#) via the Careers Service with [ShortlistMe](#).

Camera and lighting



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Camera, lighting and background

Check how close you are to the camera, the lighting in your chosen room and what you have in your background before you undertake the official assessment centre.

- Consider the time of day and the light available.
- Ensure your background is not too cluttered or offer distractions
- Ensure your camera is angled so you can look into it directly
- The assessment platform may choose your 'back facing camera' so ensure you change this to 'front facing camera'
- **Tip:** practice looking into the camera and not at yourself



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Sound

Using headphones, especially noise cancelling headphones, can help you to stay focused and make you sound clearer to your interviewers and group members.

This is useful if you live in a busy house or on a busy road.

Headphones also eliminate any voice echo or reverberation, so they are worth considering if you do not currently use them.

How might the day run?

Just as with an in-person assessment centre you will undertake a range of activities during the time spent with an employer. This could be a whole day or a half day (see examples below). The range of tasks will be designed to check your suitability for the role and to ensure this process is robust you will likely be tested on the same competencies more than once. You will be offered technical checks to ensure you can join the session securely, so do take those opportunities. You will also be given breaks, either to chat to other candidates over lunch or of course, to take a break away from the screen and get refreshments.

Some employers have even been known to ask you what lunch you would like delivered to your door for the day and will ask you to choose from a menu beforehand – just as they would provide lunch for an ‘in-person’ experience. If this is the case they will send an online form to complete – delivery will depend on social distancing measures in your area.

Tip: When offered a short break do take the time away from the screen – concentration is key in the virtual space so don’t feel like you will be missing out by taking some time away.

Full Day

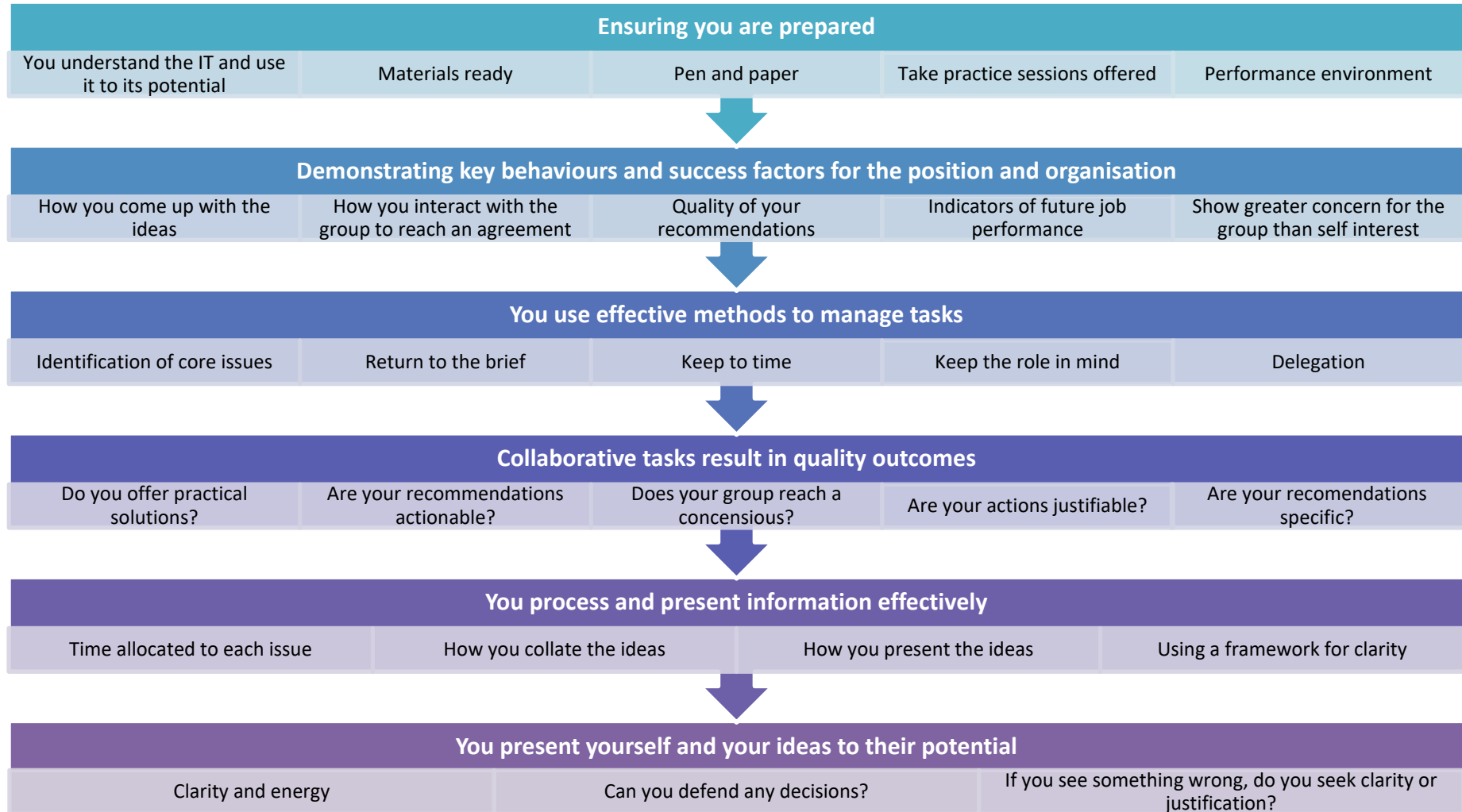
- 08.30 Technical check-in
- 09.00 Welcome and ice breaker
- 10.15 Company presentation
- 10.45 Individual assessment task
- *11.15 Break*
- 11.30 Group Task 1
- *13.00 Lunch & Networking Q&A*
- 13:45 Presentation
- 14.15 Individual interview
- 15.00 End of day

Half Day

- 08.30 Technical check-in
- 09.00 Welcome and ice breaker
- 09.15 E-Tray Task
- 10.15 Individual interview
- *11.15 Break*
- 11.30 Group Task 2
- *12.45 Presentation*
- *13.15 Lunch & Networking Q&A*
- 14.00 End of day

Success Factors

There are some core success factors to be aware of when you take part in a virtual assessment centre. Whether it be in a group or an individual task, there are some key factors to consider. You can pay attention to the following framework to support your preparation and performance.

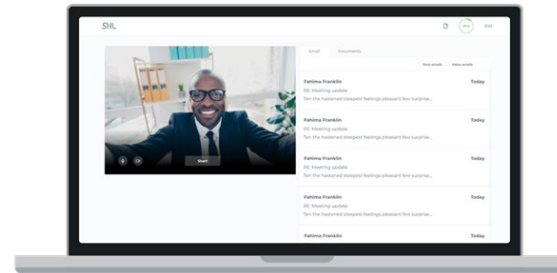


Activities and methods of assessment

Virtual assessment centres take place online via a meeting software platform, commonly Zoom or Teams, but increasingly organisations are buying specialised platforms. You will be given an induction to any technology you are going to use. It's important you take up any offer to test your internet and technology with your employer before the day. It is important to remember that the key values, attributes and skills that would have been tested in-person will be tested in the virtual space – many tasks will remain (group work, presentations, interviews) but the way you interact with them will be different.

What types of activity will you encounter?

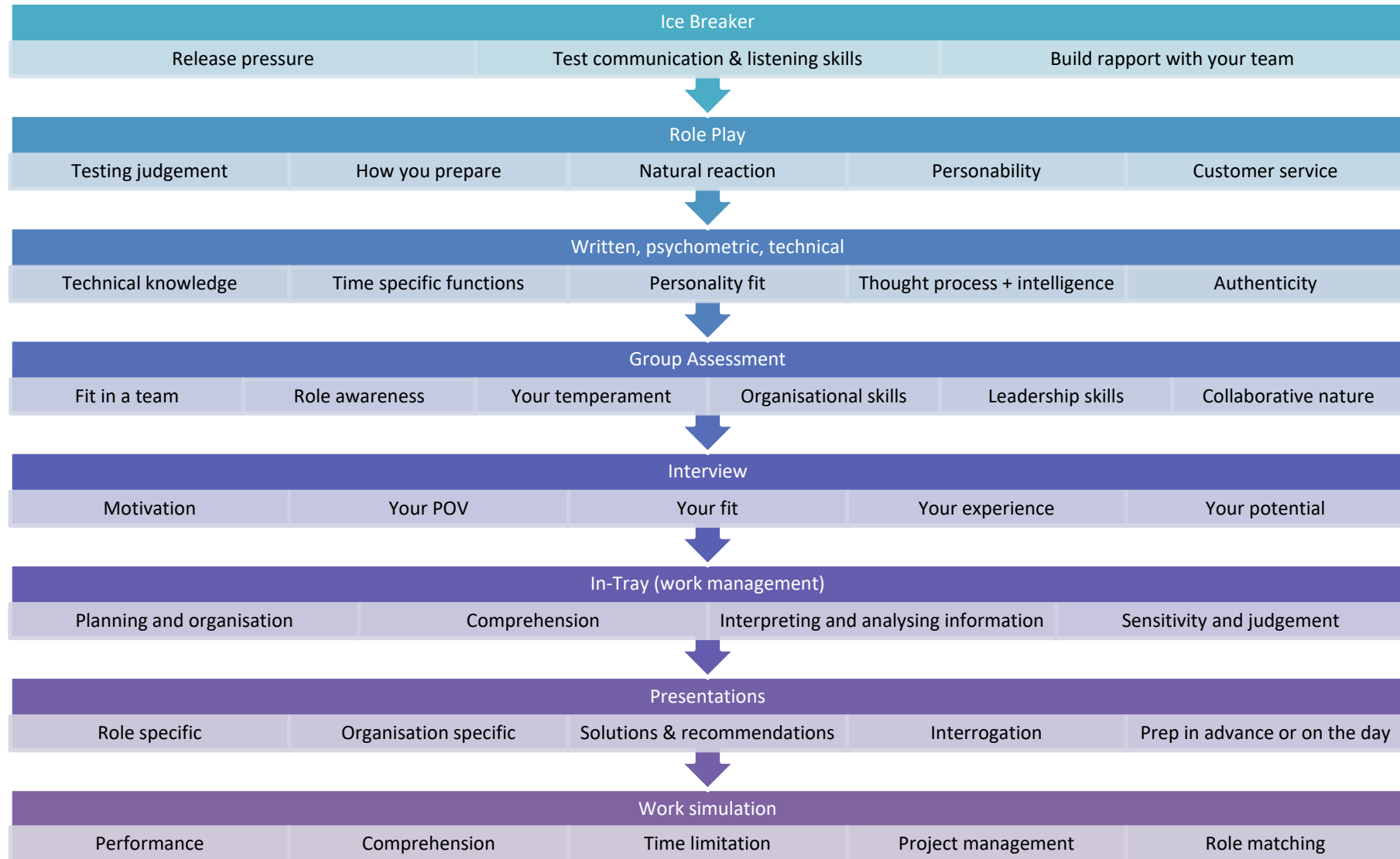
- Individual presentation
- Group assessment
- Interviews (both live and pre-recorded)
- Case interviews
- Psychometric testing
- Networking
- Virtual tours
-



There are many ways you can take part in the above activities to measure your skills, competency and attributes for a role.

- **Ice Breakers:** short 'get to know you' tasks that enable you to get to know others taking part in the day
- **Role play:** An observed interaction between you and another candidate or assessor to assess how you would deal with a scenario
- **Written, psychometric, technical:** individual tests taken online through an external platform that test core skills needed for the role - usually to time
- **Group assessment:** this can take the shape of a debate, problem-solving task, a presentation and/or a focus on making recommendations to a client. Often you will need to read materials, decide on delegation, make decisions and create a presentation.
- **Interview:** interviews can be to a pre-recorded set of questions via video or a live interview with a panel of representatives, or a 1:1 discussion.
- **In-Tray:** In-Tray or E-Tray require you to organise information, perhaps an email inbox and meeting schedule, to test your logistical and organisational thinking. They can be done individually or as a group.
- **Work simulation:** some assessment centres will be set up to test your approach to actual activities undertaken during the working day in the role. This could be managing meetings, data analysis, collaboration in projects etc and will usually use real-life scenarios faced in the role.
- **Presentation:** presenting can form a part of any group or individual task. When it is used for an individual assessment you will have either been given materials to prepare beforehand (on a particular topic) or you will be given the topic on the day. You will be asked to present and then asked follow-up questions.

What are various activities testing?



How might you be assessed?

As you are taking part in the assessment centre and undertaking the activities mentioned above, there will be several ways information and data is being collected on you. Some of this will be via data collection (AI) and some will be via observations by representatives from the organisation. As a basic rule, if the activity is being undertaken through a technology platform (a recorded video or gaming test) then they will be collecting data which they will then add to any other observations. In group activity, presentations and interviews it is more likely the assessor will have an observation score sheet and notes section. They will silently observe any suitable tasks and then use this feedback, collected with and test scores and other assessor feedback to make a final decision.

Data from online tasks

Data from online tasks can be downloaded, including time taken and accuracy. This is valued when a role relies on a core set of technical skills and abilities. Data can be downloaded and then matched with any other observations to build a picture of your suitability. Of course, some tests will have a minimum pass score.

Group Observations

As in person, you will be observed by a representative in a group setting. The observer will have a set criteria on which to base their judgement. You will normally have a small ratio of assessor:candidate (e.g 1:2 or 1:4). You can see an example of an assessment score card in this document. Assessors will have a list of core criteria to adhere to, to ensure parity.

Interview in-person

As in person, you will be assessed on your answers given as well as your general performance and engagement. This will be less about your behaviours and interactions and more geared towards your personal experiences, professional views and motivations. Assessors will have a set of values and criteria frameworks, as in group assessment. This doesn't mean you won't also have a general chat too.

Interviews pre-recorded

Interviews can also be conducted through recorded software. The recordings are then watched back and reviewed, but reviewers may also use elements of AI to assess key indicators. You will be given time to consider your answer before recording and your recorded answer is likely to be timed.

Judgement

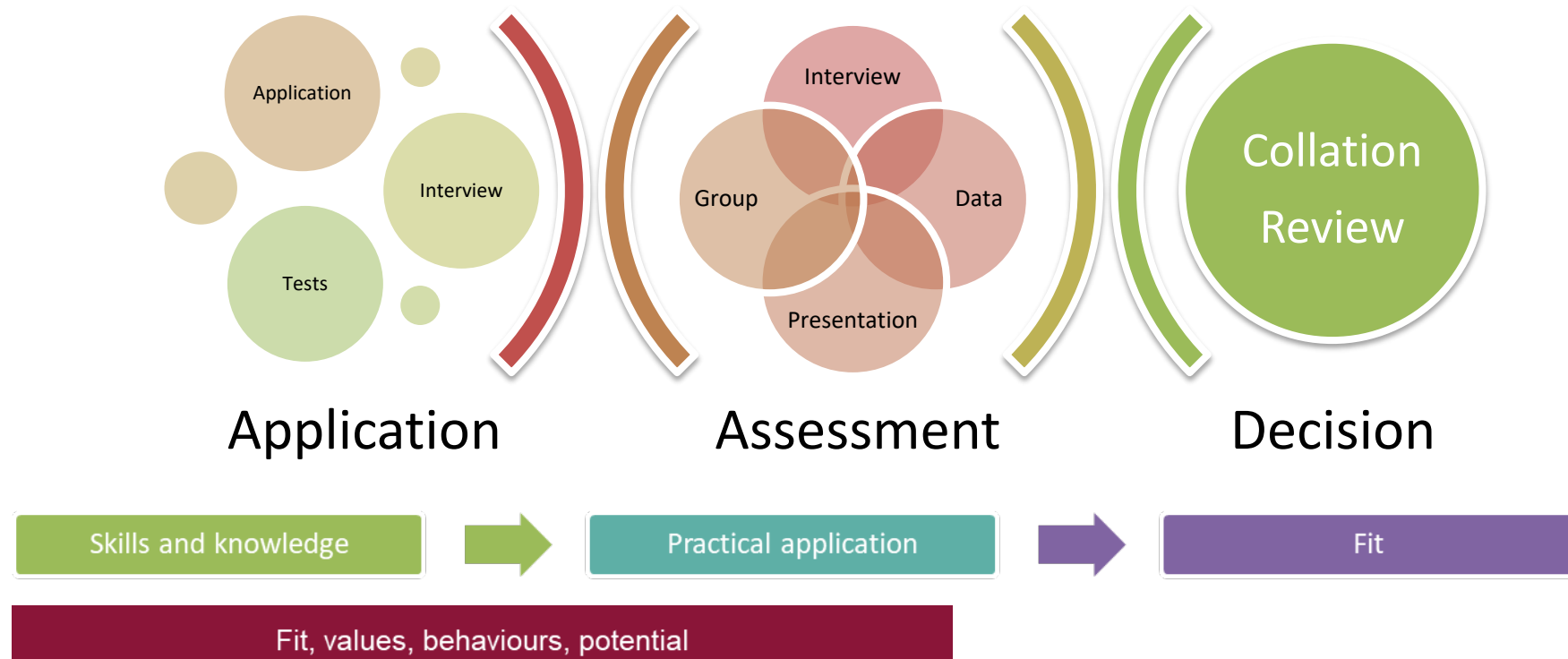
Sometimes known as 'situational judgement' tests, case studies or case interviews. You are assessed on your judgement on a real or fictional scenario which explores knowledge, intellect, commercial awareness and role-specific factors. These can be taken through a digital test but also through a group or individual task.

Informal

Polls, Chat box texts and feedback from any staff you meet in networking are not used formal assessment criteria usually but it is possible they can be downloaded (for polls and chat text) or staff have a wash-up about anyone who made a particularly positive impression. They will not override any formal assessment, but worth mentioning all these functions play a part.

Succeeding at Virtual Assessment Centres

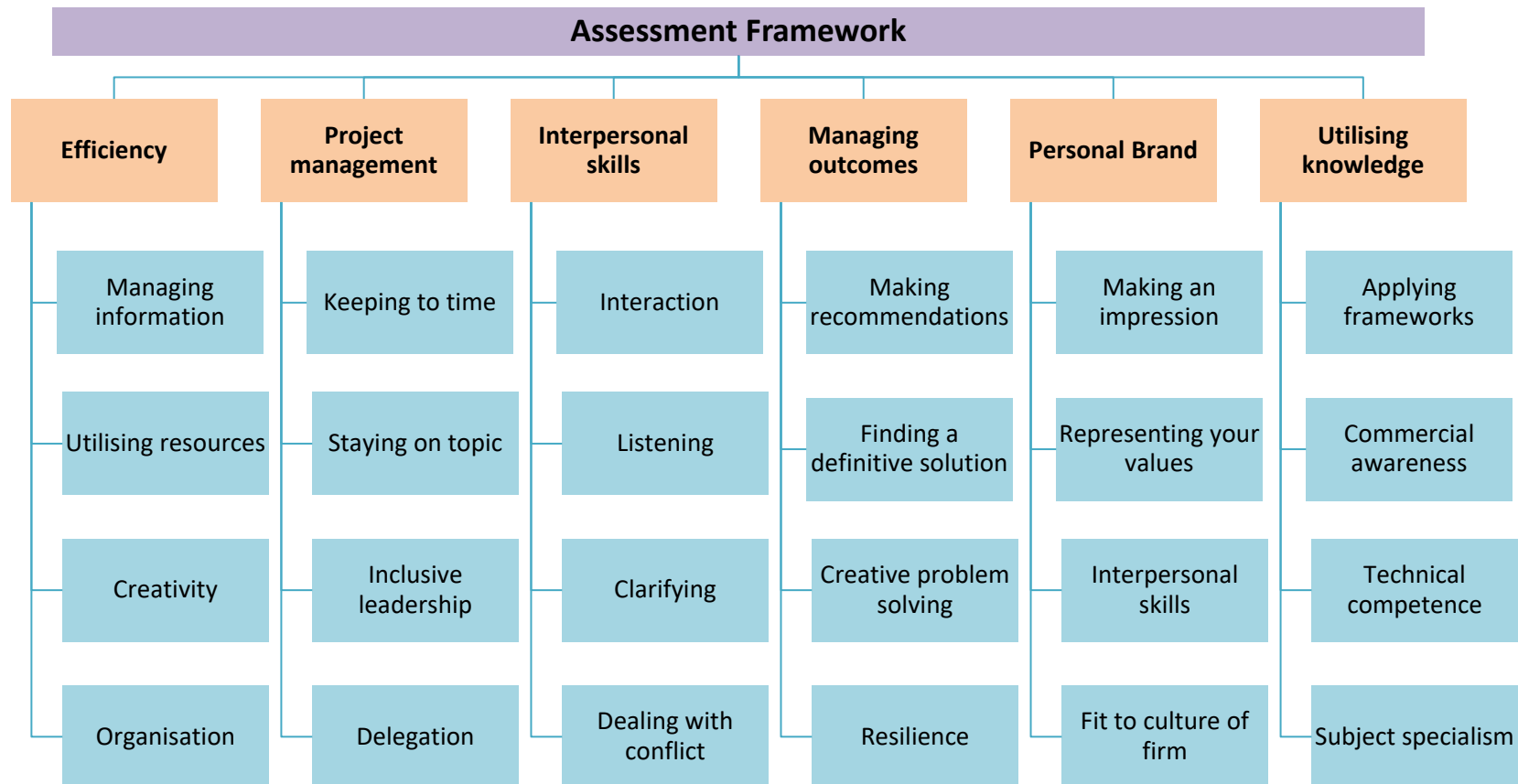
There are multiple points at which you are being assessed and observed throughout the recruitment cycle. The Assessment Centre is about the practical application and observation of, the skills and behaviours needed for a role.



What is being assessed in group activities?

Group activities are primarily designed to observe how you fit into a working group of people, the quality of your suggestions and how you manage a project. The key to performing a group task is to understand the role and the values of the organisation and display suitable attitudes and behaviours.

The values of the organisation	Do you display an understanding and sympathy for the values of the organisation (e.g. inclusive leadership)
Skills needed for the role	Do you display the technical or 'soft' skills needed for the role? (e.g. negotiation, managing data, problem solving)
Character	Do you present the character of a suitable employee? (e.g. inclusive, collaborative, focused, kindness, honesty, confidence)



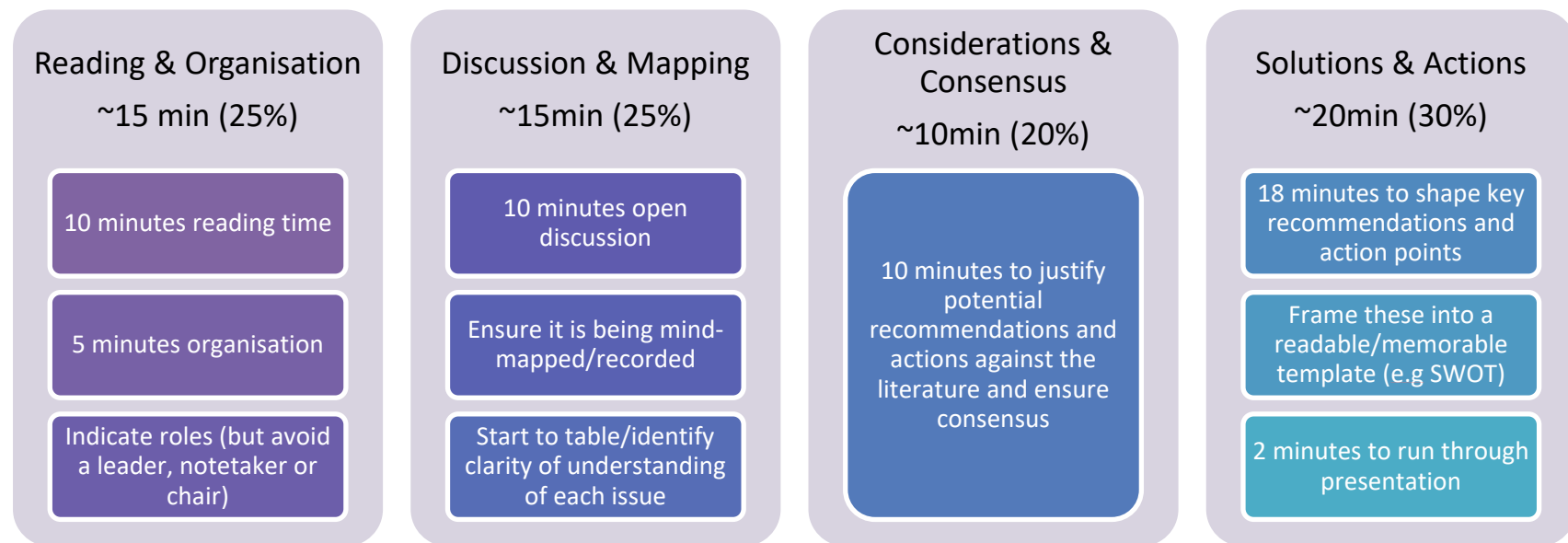
Managing your time in tasks

It goes without saying that managing your time during tasks is a key responsibility for you and for everyone involved in the task. It is likely the most obvious point to make but one that is easily forgotten in the moment. A way to manage your time in a task is to take few moments at the beginning at think about how you will break the task down. If you know about the task beforehand then this is something to think about in pre-preparation.

Whatever the task or the time available, it is never a bad idea to think about your time – you can have the best ideas in the world, but if you are not finished on time it gives a poor impression of your project management and professionalism.

Here is an example of how to break down a 60-minute task which you could adapt for shorter or longer tasks.

Task: Read through the documentation provided for a business who is asking for support with launching a new product. Identify key issues and provide recommendations and actions. You should consider the pros and cons of your recommendations. Create a 2-minute presentation to be given.



Example group task observation sheets

Assessors will use a score sheet to enable them to observe each candidate and offer consistent feedback to help decision making. Right from the outset of the vacancy going live they will have had criteria they would like to see being met to a high standard to ensure they are hiring a candidate with the ability to do the role, a candidate who is motivated to work in the chosen sector and a candidate who is a positive fit to the culture of the organisation.

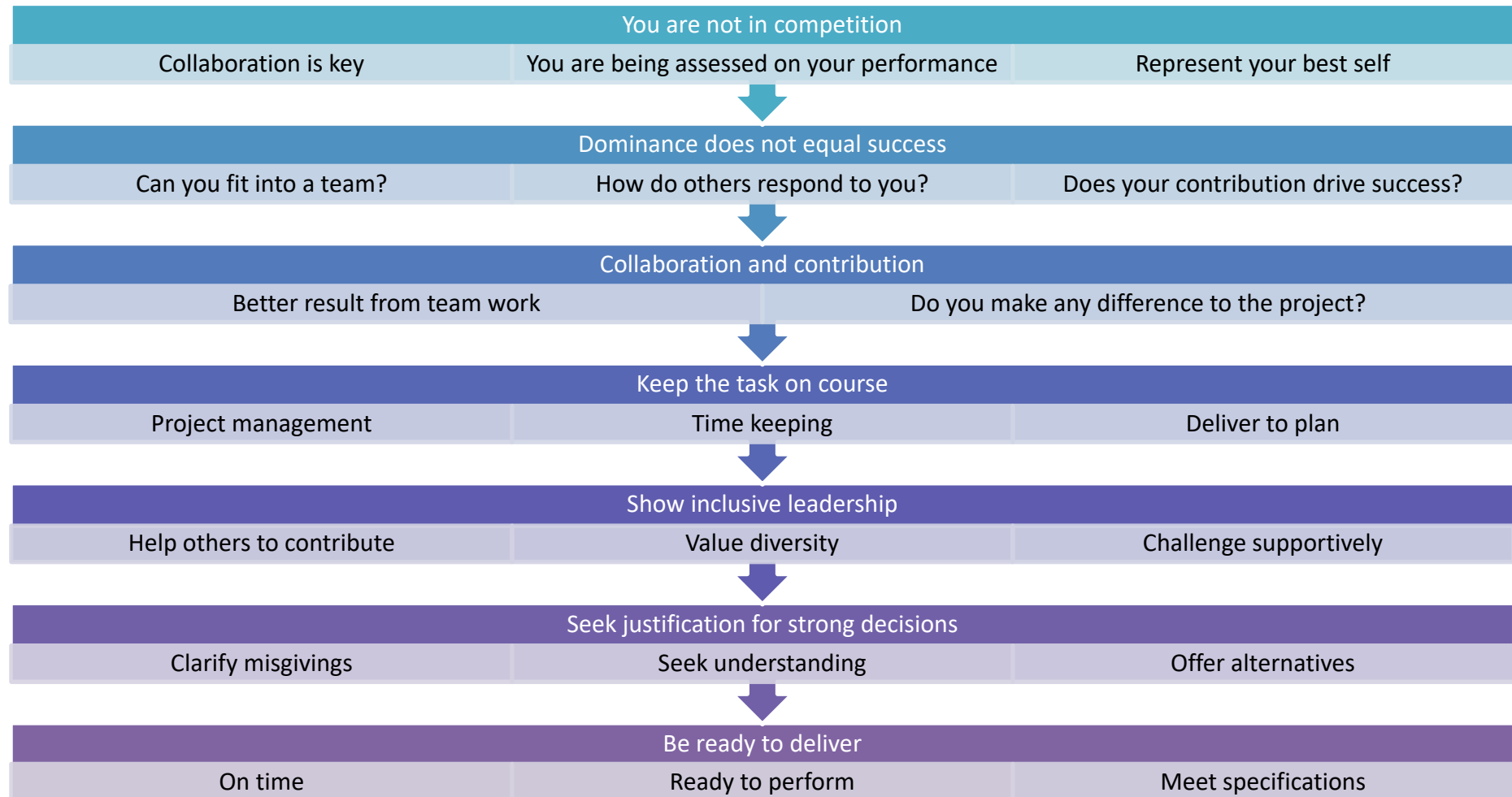
Scoring Guide				
4	3	2	1	NE
Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	No Evidence
Demonstrates most of the positive indicators	Demonstrates many of the positive indicators	Demonstrates sufficient positive indicators but is inconsistent	Demonstrates a number of the negative indicators or concerning indicators	
Problem solving and decision making				
Positive indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes decisions holistically taking into account research, experience, views of others and fact Conducts some research Able to accurately analyse and make sense of data or information Able to find creative and innovative solutions to problems Shares ideas and insights or better ways of working Uses techniques such as SWOT, PESTL, or rating against criteria 		Negative indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes decisions based on little or no information Draws down incorrect assumptions from the information available Does not generate or contribute insights, solutions or ideas Accepts the views, opinions or decisions of others without further exploration or debate Responsibility for decision making is avoided 		
Notes				Scored awarded (4-1)

Succeeding at Virtual Assessment Centres

As they cannot write down everything you do and say they will be looking at ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ indicators shown in your behaviour within tasks. This will be scored, with comments and added to any other test scores, interview notes and other monitored observations to enable a decision to be made about who progresses.

Scoring Guide				
4	3	2	1	NE
Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	No Evidence
Demonstrates most of the positive indicators	Demonstrates many of the positive indicators	Demonstrates sufficient positive indicators but is inconsistent	Demonstrates a number of the negative indicators or concerning indicators	
Criteria	Positive indicators		Negative indicators	
Problem solving and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes decisions holistically taking into account research, experience, views of others and fact • Conducts some research • Able to accurately analyse and make sense of data or information • Able to find creative and innovative solutions to problems • Shares ideas and insights or better ways of working • Uses techniques such as SWOT, PESTL, or rating against criteria 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes decisions based on little or no information • Draws down incorrect assumptions from the information available • Does not generate or contribute insights, solutions or ideas • Accepts the views, opinions or decisions of others without further exploration or debate • Responsibility for decision making is avoided 	
Working with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds trust with a variety of people • Able to find solutions by working with others • Treats others with respect and courtesy • Offers support and help to others • Contributes and participates in the activity positively • Builds on the ideas of others • Encourages less participative team members to get involved 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has difficulty working with other people, causing offence or upset • Wins at the expense of others • Dominates a group • Makes no contribution to the group • Prefers to work alone • Completes own work first before helping others • Dismisses or ignores the ideas of others 	
Ability to plan to deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans their time and activities to ensure tasks are completed • Breaks up a task into smaller chunks • Monitors the time available in a task • Keeps themselves and others focussed during the task • Prioritises tasks according to importance as the exercise progresses • Delivers the required output at the end of the task • Demonstrates a genuine interest, energy and enthusiasm for completing the task, getting through it quickly and effectively • Is pro-active and makes things happen • Pushes themselves and others to achieve a high standard 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of planning, prioritisation or time management • Allows others to manage their time, waiting to be allocated tasks or told what to do • Has to be followed up by others for their contributions • Does not have the required output at the end of the task • Demonstrates little or no interest or enthusiasm for completion of the task, making lack lustre or poor quality contributions • At points is sat doing nothing • Personally has, or is happy to accept poor quality standards 	

Approaches to Group Activity: Overview



Approaches to Group Activities

Working in a group with people you have just met can be challenging at any time. It is important you make the most of any ice breakers or lunchtimes to get to know people, which will make collaboration easier. The most important thing to remember is that you are not necessarily in competition with others in your group and effective collaboration, rather than being the most dominant person, is the key to success. They will be using a group assessment to observe your collaborative approaches and not your individual intelligence. Of course, even if you take a collaborative approach, not everyone will and so having some methods to help you get the best from group assessment can be helpful.

These are some helpful tips and advice for virtual group activities, including how to organise your information.

You should always follow the guidelines given by your organisation for the technical aspects of the session but having some practice and methods for effective group work online can help you feel confident.

Issue	Skill	An Approach
Managing information: (multiple documents or scenarios)	Efficiency	<p>Assign a document/scenario to each member of the team, ask them to make notes and then feedback on the key information.</p> <p>This can be useful if you must organise documents into date order, prioritise or get a handle on a lot of reading quickly. You can then discuss as a group what needs prioritising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give your solutions structure a table, SWOT analysis etc. <p>You will likely need to create a presentation – the organisation will give you full instructions on this, but it useful to practice using the following features on Zoom and Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing your screen• Sharing a presentation• Using a whiteboard feature for shared annotations• Using the chat box feature• Using the 'hand-up' feature

Issue	Skill	An Approach
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uploading and downloading documents from a chat box • Using the 'files' feature on Teams
Keeping to time	Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must keep to time. • If you are put into a virtual breakout room it is likely you will be given a 1-minute warning when your time in the room is about to be over. You will need to be ready as a group to return to the main session. • An assessor will likely be in the breakout room with you. Do not ask an assessor how much time is left. • The time on your screen might be impeded by screen sharing so have a watch or stop-watch on your desk. If you are using your phone, then ensure it is on silent and that the screen is as active for as long as possible. • It can be helpful to have a person who is 'assigned' to keep the time, it's a vital responsibility. If you are the person assigned to keep the time, be proactive. Don't let a conversation run on – but if you don't feel comfortable interrupting, write the time remaining on a piece of paper and hold it up or put it in the chat box. You can let your group know you will do this at the beginning. If you can be vocal, do so "We have 20 minutes remaining...". • Decide at the beginning of the task how much time you are going to assign to each part: Reading, discussion, considerations, agreement, solutions, actions. Give time checks at a sensible interval (not every 5 minutes).
Staying on topic	Project Management	<p>It is important that all your team understand the task and their role in the group. It is important you stay on topic and complete all sections of the task. Ways to do this in a virtual space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for a word document to be open or a note pad that is then shared with the group, either by using a function in the app (such as a whiteboard) or someone opening a document and sharing their screen • Agree what needs to be done and if necessary, who will do it • Ensure you all agree on what needs to be done in the timeframe – note this down • Tip: you may need to swap between sharing screens so communication between your group on who is looking after which documents and sharing which screen is key

Issue	Skill	An Approach
Dealing with conflict	Interpersonal Skills	<p>Assessments are meant to put you under pressure, and this can cause some difficulties in groups. This can be difficult when dealing with technology on top, but having a plan, helping others and keeping calm is key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't lose patience or retreat. If someone is particularly dominant, then try and <u>separate their approach from their idea</u>. Clarify with them what they are saying and make a visual note of their idea. Then you have a record of it and can either move on, or, action it further. • There are two extremes to avoid: sitting back and giving up or trying to be as dominant as you can • Note: Don't panic that if someone is truly domineering and overbearing that it will limit your performance – they are being watched the same as you are, and it is unlikely that the assessor will favour this behaviour.
Finding a definitive or 'right' solution	Managing Outcomes	<p>When finalising your solutions/recommendations focus on 5 elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do your team have a majority consensus? 2. Are your recommendations justified by the literature and defensible? 3. Where appropriate, are your recommendations actionable? 4. Have you presented your recommendations in a clearly defined manner? 5. Have you set actions for any of your recommendations? E.g. you need to find out more about something? <p>Tip: Unless it is specifically stated in the task instructions that you must have the 'correct' answer to a problem (mathematical, statistical, scientific etc) then it can be fruitless to focus on getting the 'right' answer to the problem you have been set. Instead, focus on recommendations you can make with the information in front of you and pose further questions to find the information you do not have.</p>
Making an impression (when everyone wants to make an impression)	Personal Brand	<p>Contrary to instinct, you are not in competition with the other candidates in your group. You may all perform well enough to make it through, or none of you. The best approach to being successful is creating an inclusive and collaborative environment in your group. Your assessor will value efforts to be collaborative and set group guidelines to manage this collaboration.</p> <p>Utilising the technology to do this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on how you will interact, you can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the 'hand's up function' to make a point

Issue	Skill	An Approach
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Use the chat box to make comments and suggestions 3. Ensure you are on mute when not speaking and unmute yourself when you would like to talk (to avoid jumping in or too much background noise) 4. Agreeing who and how you will keep notes and put together your presentation 5. Ensure you know how to share your screen and jump between documents <p>Focus on your own behaviours, interactions and your contribution to the task.</p> <p>Approaches to interactions in an observed environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>If someone is not making any contribution:</i> “Does anyone else have a view of this?” [remember it isn’t your job to manage their involvement, but shows that you are sensitive to others] 2. <i>To show your listening skills:</i> “Sam, you made an interesting point earlier about considering location – shall we consider that before we finalise the recommendation?” 3. <i>To clarify the solution meets the objective:</i> “Shall we take a moment to pinpoint the resources we are using to justify our recommendation?” 4. <i>To move on from a dominant idea, that you see is not useful or could be useful but you need to explore more ideas:</i> “It’s clear that idea has some merit for us to consider – let’s get that noted and see how it compares to other solutions” 5. <i>If you need to reach a group consensus and are sharp for time:</i> “I think we have discussed this as much as we can, let’s take a vote for each option”
Great ideas, but no format or presentation	Project Management/	<p>It is easy for time to run away with you in a group activity and this can mean you can gather excellent discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the presentation as you go along – it can be edited at the end, but it means you’re guaranteed to have something to present. • Use a framework as you go (SWOT Analysis, PEST/LE) so that you have something to present and clarity over discussions.

Issue	Skill	An Approach
Improvising and Making Assumptions	Efficiency	<p>Stick to the information provided in your briefing documents and don't make assumptions or bring in your interpretations of the scenario, particularly facts and figures.</p> <p><i>If someone in your group is doing this: "That's an interesting context, but we don't know that for sure – to justify our argument, let's stick to the information in the briefing"</i></p>

How to organise your information in group or situational judgement tasks

When you are taking part in a time, group activity where the focus is on collating information to make a judgement on best practice, rank the information or offer recommendations it is normal that you and your group will feel some pressure. In the discussion period you may find there are lots of ideas and suggestions but they are not captured, or time can run on quickly meaning you have discussed your ideas and made a few notes but your group have not been able to put together a presentation or cohesive argument.

Organising your information as you discuss each idea can help you to stay focused and ensure you have something to share with your assessor at the end of the task.

Let us use 'Task 1: Silverman and Briar' as an example in how we might be able to organise our suggestions and recommendations.

The recommendations below are given in note form which can be quick but not always useful when you are hoping to put together a presentation or give a clear suggestion when you are feeling nervous.

You can easily organise your information as you discuss it. This not only means you stay organised, but you have the beginnings of your presentation and can respond effectively if called upon.

Suggested outcomes (assessmentday.co.uk)

Pros:

- *Once live, should be a low-cost service to operate. **Action:** research what costs and resourced are involved in running an online banking service. What expertise do they need to bring in?*
- *Provides future flexibility for S&B; this revenue stream should not be affected if S&B must close physical branches as part of future scaling back.*
- *Online customers may be drawn to other services provided by S&B (e.g. mortgages, financial advice, credit cards, etc.)*
- *The convenience of online banking may help retain existing customers who were thinking of leaving for another bank anyway, regardless of whether they are moving out of the north east area.*
- *May reduce staff workload in the physical branches if customers use online banking instead of cashier banking.*
- *Global audience; gives access to a much larger market.*

Succeeding at Virtual Assessment Centres

- *The online platform may help develop new products because customer feedback can quickly be sought from online surveys, new ideas can quickly be trialled, and changes can generally be rolled out faster online. i.e. this might prove a useful testbed for future product changes and customer feedback.*

Cons:

- *Unknown technology; will either have a steep learning curve in-house or will have to buy in outside expertise to implement the online service. **Action:** research costs of hiring a consultancy service. **Action:** investigate what outsourced online banking services are available. Also investigate the possibility of white labelling someone else's online service, at least until a firmer idea of customer interest is obtained.*
- *Current account banking is likely to be a low profit margin business, so how much cross-selling can be done online? For example, online loan applications should be investigated.*
- *What are the risks and protections against online fraud? **Action:** research figures for losses through online fraud.*
- *For relocating customers who want a physical bank branch, online services will not prevent them changing to a bank which has branches in their new local area. **Action:** conduct customer survey to establish how many customers this case might apply to.*
- *Will need to investigate regulation of online banking, for example do account holders need to come into the bank in person as part of fraud prevention regulations? This would negate a lot of the benefits to the online proposition. **Action:** research applicable legislation surrounding provision of online banking services.*
- *New service will work best if there is no resistance from board members. There should be no internal politics or agendas at board level.*
- *Promotion of new online service will be difficult beyond existing customers; the competition for online banking is fierce and online advertising in this area is expensive. **Action:** research the acquisition costs of new online customers and the potential new income they will bring, with a view to produce a cost-benefit analysis.*

Below you will see an example of how this information could be organised.

Here is a suggestion on how this information could be more thoroughly organised.

Splitting your information into a table makes it easy for you and your assessor to read – it also helps you to give answers quickly if you are quizzed on your decisions.

Suggest an **action** to further clarify your opinion. You won't have all the information you need in a brief so further research

Pros	Actions	Cons	Actions
Once live, should be a low-cost service to operate.	Action: research what costs and resourced are involved in running an online banking service. What expertise do they need to bring in?	Unknown technology; will either have a steep learning curve in-house or will have to buy in outside expertise to implement the online service.	Action: research costs of hiring a consultancy service. Action: look into what outsourced online banking services are available. Also investigate the possibility of white-labelling someone else's online service, at least until a firmer idea of customer interest is obtained.
Provides future flexibility for S&B; this revenue stream should not be affected if S&B have to close physical branches as part of future scaling back.		Current account banking is likely to be a low profit margin business, so how much cross-selling can be done online? For example, online loan applications should be investigated.	
Online customers may be drawn to other services provided by S&B (e.g. mortgages, financial advice, credit cards, etc.)		What are the risks and protections against online fraud?	Action: research figures for losses through online fraud.
The convenience of online banking may help retain existing customers who were thinking of leaving for another bank anyway, regardless of whether they are moving out of the north east area.		For relocating customers who want a physical bank branch, online services will not prevent them changing to a bank which has branches in their new local area.	Action: conduct customer survey to establish how many customers this case might apply to.

Other examples of information organisation






ASPECT	ADVANTAGE	CHALLENGE
 Out-of-the-box features	You get a rich set of customizable features	You have to choose features fitting your business context best
 Intranet customization	You can create a unique SharePoint intranet	Customization requires your time and investments
 Integration with enterprise systems	You can enable organization-wide and cross-department collaboration and connect employees using different systems	You have to be ready for extra development effort and additional investments into your integration solution(s)
 SharePoint services	You can get comprehensive services at multiple service providers	You should select service providers carefully to ensure stable service quality
 SharePoint intranet pricing	You can choose from different intranet deployment and payment models	You have to align your IT budget with the selected intranet deployment model (one-time vs ongoing payments)

Figure 2 <https://www.scnsoft.com/blog/pros-and-cons-of-a-sharepoint-intranet>



Figure 1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis

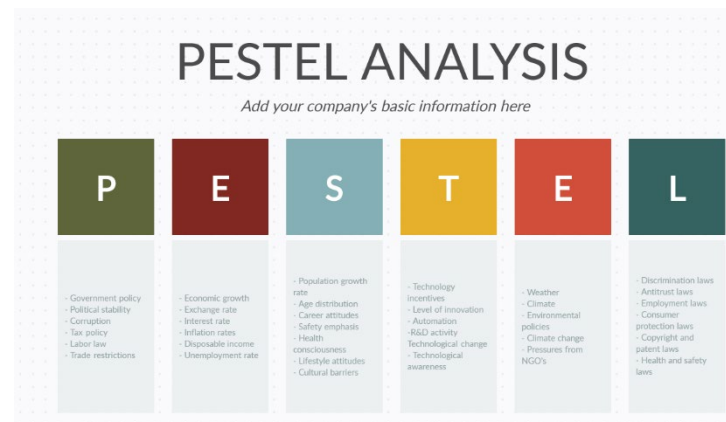


Figure 3 <https://app.creately.com/diagram/LLMRB0LqU7u/edit>

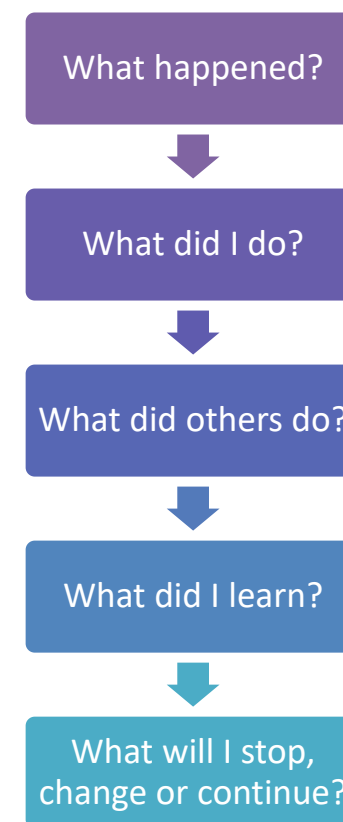
PESTLE considerations

Political, Economic, Social,
Technological, Environmental, Legal

Reflecting on your experiences

Reflecting on your practice experience and the real ‘thing’ is important to make progress in your performance. Whether you feel you did well or not, reflection and self-evaluation can help you improve and put negative performances behind you. Often, reflection enables you to put your experience in perspective and you realise you did a lot better than you thought. Evaluating your experiences is more than ‘what you did well’ but can be valuable when done in three stages. Here are some questions you might like to ask of your performance to help you reflect.

Initial observations	Interpretation	Putting reflection into practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • What did you observe during the activity? • What did you notice about what you did? • What did you notice other people doing? • Did you notice anything that changed during the activity? • How were decisions made? • What, exactly, did you (or someone else) say or do at that point? • What was the effect of that behaviour? • Were you aware of any pattern in the behaviours demonstrated e.g. “Person A asked a lot of questions?” If not, can you think of any patterns now as you reflect? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think a person acted the way they did? • What influence do you feel you had on the group? • Why do you think Person A was able to influence the group so well? • How successfully do you think the group worked together to achieve X? • What might you do differently if you were to do this activity again? • What is important to you about the experience you’ve just had? • Is there anything that we’ve talked about that is particularly relevant or useful to you? • What is that and how might you start to use that new insight? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will you stop, start or continue as a result of this experience? • Is there anything you will try that will be a big change for you? How do you feel about that? • What support might you need from others? • In what situations would it be useful to apply this new learning? Where, when, with whom? • How will you know if you are being successful – what measures can you use to check? • What do you see as the benefits of applying this learning? What is “in it for you”? • How will you continue to learn from the new experiences you will undoubtedly have as you implement these changes?



Resources to support your preparation

Useful resources to support preparation		
Interview preparation		
ShortlistMe	Virtual interview preparation for pre-recorded and live virtual interviews	https://go.shortlister.com/marketplace/cambridgeuni
Interview preparation information	Careers Service webpages	https://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/interviews
CaseCoach	Preparation for case interviews for consultancy and a range of other interviews that use case structuring	https://app.joinhandshake.co.uk/articles/15 (access via Handshake)
Psychometric Testing		
Careers Service support pages	Through the basics and practice sessions	https://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/psychometric-tests
Practice tests	Via the Careers Service	https://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/psychometric-tests
AssessmentDay.co.uk	Practice tests available online	https://www.assessmentday.co.uk/
Interacting with employers in virtual settings		
Speculative approaches - Interacting with employers in a virtual world	Careers Service YouTube – video that talks through general tips for interacting with employers outside of formal assessments	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xg0vMRK8sGs
Formal interactions: Interacting with employers in a virtual world	Careers Service YouTube video that talks through general tips for interacting with employers in formal environments, such as interviews and assessments	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jylgNeBLzZQ&t=4s
Useful articles		
Virtual Assessment Centres: what to expect and how to prepare	Blog from the Careers Service	https://unicamcareers.edublogs.org/2020/09/04/virtual-assessment-centres/

Useful resources to support preparation		
How to stand out at a digital assessment centre	Blog from Bright Network	https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/graduate-career-advice/how-impress-virtual-applications/how-stand-out-digital-assessment-centre/
What are virtual assessment centres and how can you best prepare?	Blog from Next Step Support	https://nextstepsupport.org/advice-skills/what-are-virtual-assessment-centres-and-how-to-prepare
Virtual Assessment Centres: Everything You Need to Know to Prepare	Blog from Ratemyplacement	https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/blog/virtual-assessment-centre-how-to-prepare/