

## Assessment Centre

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It is a method of selection in which applicants are evaluated in detailed and structured manner using variety of instruments and techniques.

It was developed in USA in WW-II, for the selection of spies, but gradually the concept moved to organizations and in industries for the selection of managerial people. Earlier, assessment centers were being used for executive hiring but these days these centers are used for the purpose of evaluating supervisory or executive potential.

The Assessment center facilitates to assess applicants' skills and abilities in very detailed manner. It is primarily used for selection of people for managerial position. In assessment center, assessment is done to know people / applicants' skills.

### **An assessment centre evaluates the following**

- Oral and written communication skills,
- Planning, organizing and decision making skills
- Creativity
- Emotional aspects
- Uncertainty tolerance
- Mental alertness
- Resistance to stress
- Self-confidence
- Interpersonal relationship skills etc. etc.

In it variety of instruments and tests batteries are used to assess the applicants and not just one technique / method of assessment.

In Assessment centers, applicants are evaluated on a number of job related variables using variety of techniques. Applicants also take part on a number of situational exercises which are related to the work samples.

Some of the situational exercises used in the centers are:

1. **“In-basket” Test:** It is a popular exercise which requires the applicant to deal with a stack of memos, letters and other materials which are required to deal with by the applicant/s. The applicant is given some basic information about the job which is required in the “in-basket” problem solution, like agendas, planning, policies, decision etc. A group of observers assess and assign scores to the applicant’s In-basket solution.
2. **Leaderless Group Discussion:** This is another technique used in the assessment center. It is a situational exercise in which applicants are put together in a small group to discuss some work related topic/ issue. The goal is to see how each applicant handles the situation and who emerges as a discussion leader in the group.

Other exercises in the Assessment centers include presentation, role play etc. Trained observers rate applicants on each roles/ test/ exercises. At the end observers come out with a detailed profile of each applicants’ which helps in taking decision in selection.

#### **Advantages:**

1. Collection of detailed profile of each applicant of their performances- skills and abilities
2. Reduced subjectivity; Rater’s personal bias is reduced as the employees are evaluated by a team of trained evaluators under similar conditions.

3. Assessment centers help in determining the training and development needs of the employees.
4. They provide data for human resource planning.
5. It can be used for the selection of candidates for the entry level positions.
6. In this method, all the candidates get equal opportunity to prove their merit.
7. The assessment is based on the direct observation of relatively large sample of the assesses behaviours which provides more accurate information about them.

**Disadvantages:**

1. Assessment centre is a time-consuming and expensive method.
2. The ratings of this method are said to be strongly influenced by the participant's interpersonal skills.
3. Raters tend to evaluate the quality of the individual's social skills rather than the quality of decisions themselves.
4. The candidates who receive a negative report from the assessment centre may feel demoralized.
5. Requires trained observers
6. Can be used by large organizations and not small organization because of the high cost and more time involved