

Preparing for an Assessment Centre

At assessment centres, employers are looking for competence in a range of skills. University life provides many opportunities to develop these skills, both within and outside your degree programme.

The following list suggests ways to increase your confidence and competence in some key areas, particularly interpersonal effectiveness, teamwork and creative thinking.

Interpersonal effectiveness

- Contribute to seminar discussions on a regular basis. Reflect on your performance and identify ways to improve in the future.
- Ask for feedback on your performance from trusted individuals on a specific activity, e.g. presentation, group work.
- Practise describing an important piece of academic work/personal interest/significant experience to a range of people in two minutes.
- If you have a tendency to do much of the talking in a group situation, practise listening and keep your contributions to a minimum.
- If you usually remain quiet in group discussions, set a target to make at least one contribution on each occasion.
- Practise expressing your views in unfamiliar situations where you are likely to be challenged by others, e.g. seminars, public lectures.
- Attend [employer presentations and recruitment fairs](#) and practise talking to graduates and recruitment staff.
- Observe others – what are the behaviours of an effective communicator? Would any work for you?
- Volunteer to be student rep on your School/course staff/student committee.

Working in a team

- Get involved in [clubs or societies](#), preferably taking on a role of responsibility.
- Volunteer to organise an activity or event with others.

- Take on a different role in a group situation e.g. implementer, leader, collaborator, completer.
- Attend the careers workshop '[Have a go at an assessment centre](#)'.

Creative thinking

- What is the most enterprising thing you have done?
- Consider what could be done to improve the experience of students on your degree programme? How might you achieve this?

Drive for results

- Regularly set personal goals for yourself. Review your progress and plan how you will improve in other areas.
- Introduce a new way of doing something which results in an improvement. This could be in your studies, work or extra-curricular activities.

Ability to deal with pressure and uncertainty

- Test proven skills in an unfamiliar environment, e.g. deliver a presentation to a new audience, accept a new role or new responsibility.
- Test your ability to complete tasks under pressure. Set a specific (and realistic) time frame for a piece of work and complete it against the clock.
- Complete and practise [online recruitment tests](#).
- Try something new and challenging.

Strategic capability (ability to see the bigger picture)

- Keep up to date with [industry news and current affairs](#) and discuss topics with others.
- Think about your studies or research. What are the current issues and trends in your discipline? What relevance do they have to the outside world?

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