**Assessment centres and the NSW assessment centre trial**

**What is an assessment centre?**

Assessment centres are a method used in recruitment where several similar positions are vacant, and/or a talent pool is required for the future. They are typically used when the focus of the selection process is **values based** recruitment. Sometimes known as selection centres, they comprise several selection stages, culminating in one or more group exercises.

Assessment centres are considered one of the most reliable methods of assessing candidate employees. Interviews, or any other method, taken alone, may be as low as 15 per cent accurate in terms of the fit between the job and the candidate. However, when scores from a number of different selection exercises are combined, their accuracy can rise to over 60 per cent.

**What are the specific benefits?**

The main benefit of assessment centres is improved accuracy as they allow a range of complementary selection methods to be used during the process. They facilitate an assessment of existing performance as well as helping to predict future job performance.

Other benefits include:

* the opportunity to distinguish between candidates who seem very similar
* giving candidates a better insight into the role as they are tested on exercises focused on the job they have applied for
* help in building the employer brand. Even among unsuccessful candidates, an organisation often impresses candidates who attend centres because the process is well-organised and informative
* costs associated with an assessment centre are usually lower compared with the cost of multiple recruitment phases conducted separately. Given assessment centres also reduce poor fit recruitments, turnover will be lower and future recruitment reduced. Collaborative assessment centres spread costs over several employers to maximise efficiencies for all.

**Are assessment centres fair?**

When correctly established and run professionally, assessment centres are accepted as a fair method of selection, providing equal opportunity for all candidates and selection based on merit. A typical assessment centre provides much more information about job and culture fit, skills, competencies and future potential than most other methods of recruitment.

**The NSW collaborative assessment centre trial**

The trial will run from May to September 2018 with an assessment centre in South-West Sydney and a regional location, possibly the Hunter region.

Davidson HR, the recruitment consultants for this NDS project will work with the participating organisations to confirm how the recruitment process is structured. However, it is anticipated that the main stages will be:

* Advertise positions
* Initial screening for suitability (online):
* eligibility
* situational judgement test including cultural and values assessment
* Psychometric Diagnostic assessment (online)
* Assessment centre:
* group task
* individual simulation
* behavioural interviews
* Selection and offer

More information about assessment centres and other aspects of values-based recruitment is available in the NDS Values Based Recruitment Toolkit https://www.nds.org.au/value-based-recruitment.

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