



UK-ACG
ASSESSMENT CENTRE GROUP

The UK Assessment Centre Conference 2014

Assessment Centres; adding value in a rapidly changing world!

25th - 26th November 2014
Wokefield Park, Reading, Berkshire

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Conference Organisers



The UK Assessment Centre conference has been organised by the UK Assessment Centre Group (UK-ACG) with input from the following:

The UK-ACG Committee

Charlie Eyre, College of Policing
Chris Martindale, Power of One
Dan Hughes, **a&dc**
Daryl Murray, Penna
Duncan Jackson, Birkbeck, University of London
Katherine Maynard, CEB-SHL Talent Measurement Solutions
Lucy Buck, **a&dc**
Max Choi, Quest Partnership
Nigel Povah, **a&dc**
Phil Wilson, Civil Service Fast Stream
Sonia Pawson, National Offenders Management Service

Supported by:

Nick Letherbarrow, **a&dc**
Rachel Chandler, **a&dc**
Sarah Flavell, Penna
Stuart Phillips, CEB-SHL Talent Measurement Solutions

Welcome Message



It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the 2nd UK Assessment Centre conference.

Following on from the success of last year's 1st UK Assessment Centre conference we formed the UK Assessment Centre Group (UK-ACG) with a remit which includes the staging of a regular assessment centre conference. After much discussion and careful planning we are proud to welcome you all to what we believe will be another inspirational conference focused on the assessment centre method.

Our theme for this year's conference is all about how assessment centres can add value in a rapidly changing world. The pace of change and its unpredictable nature have led some to coin the term 'VUCA', which refers to a world of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity and this state is now being recognised as permanent, so much so, that it has been referred to as 'the new normal'.

Our conference will therefore consider how the demands of the VUCA world impacts organisations and what this means for the role that the assessment centre method can play in helping organisations to tackle some of the challenges they face. Our theme breaks down into three inter-related strands:

- How is technology impacting Assessment Centres?
- How does the accelerating pace of change affect Assessment Centres?
- How can Assessment Centres truly add value to the organisation?

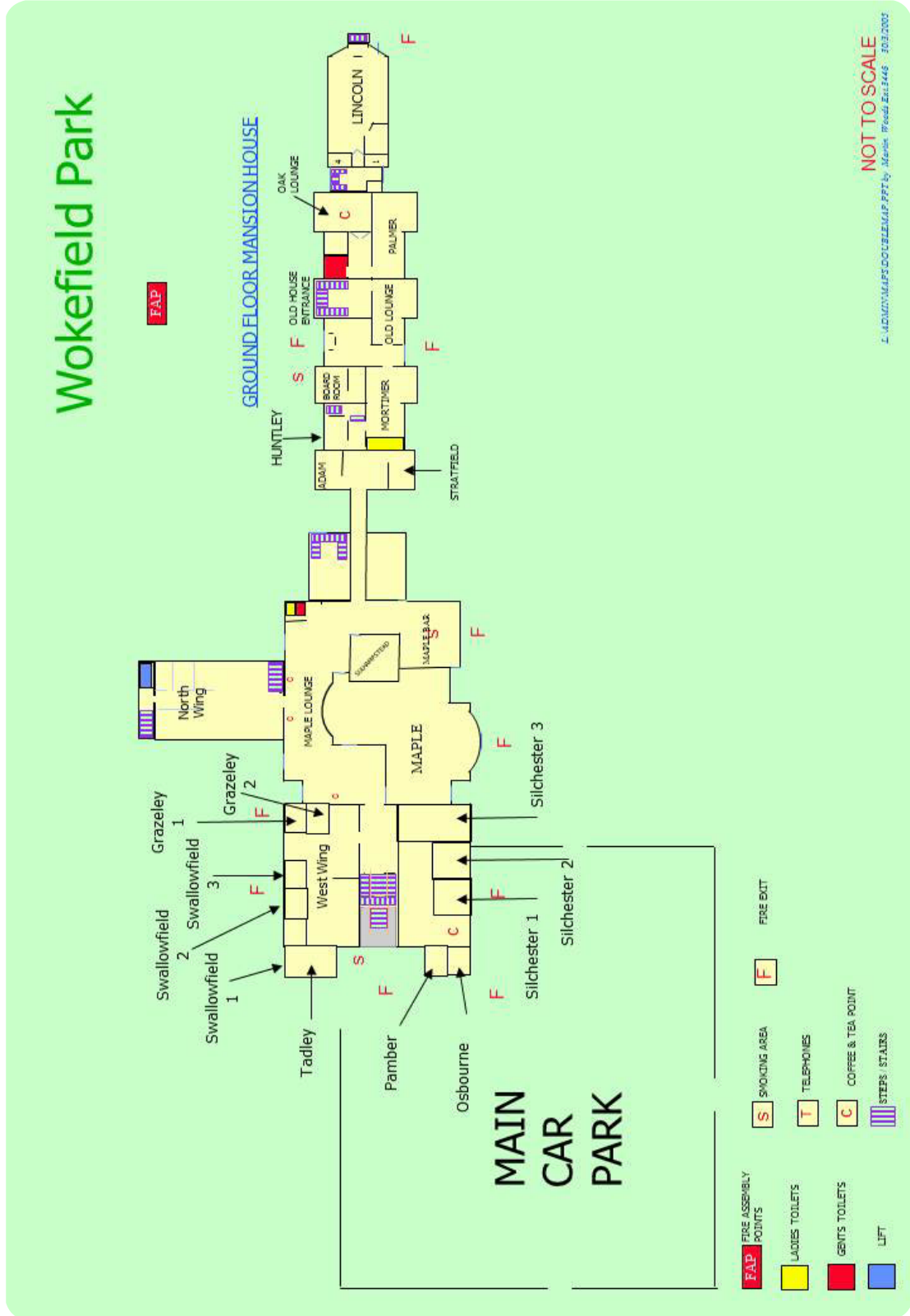
We have an impressive collection of Assessment Centre experts presenting at the conference and we are fortunate to have three fascinating but different keynote sessions. Firstly, we have Professor Filip Lievens, who is one of the world's leading researchers in the Assessment Centre field. Secondly, we have Liam Forde, who will address us on how organisations need to respond to the demands of this rapidly changing world. Thirdly, we have Tim Sandiford, the President of the Army Officer Selection Board (formerly the famous War Office Selection Board), which has been running assessment centres for over 70 years! Finally, we are privileged to have an update from Helen Baron who has chaired a British Psychological Society committee, which has created what is undoubtedly the most comprehensive set of Assessment Centre Standards in the world.

We hope that the conference will help you to further your understanding of assessment centres and all that they can offer and provide opportunities for networking. We aim to make the conference a regular event and hope that it will receive your continuing support.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to wish you all a successful and enjoyable conference.

Nigel Povah, Chair of the UK Assessment Centre Group (UK-ACG)

Floor Layout



The Schedule



Tuesday 25th November

- 13.30 Conference registration opens
- 14.00 Welcome and opening address by Conference Chair
- 14.30 **Keynote 1: Filip Lievens**
"Stirring things up in Assessment: Towards hybrid Assessment Centres"
- 15.30 Tea break
- 16.00 **Breakout session 1**
- 17.15 Plenary summary
- 17.30 Close
- 18.30 Drinks reception
- 19:30 Dinner

Wednesday 26th November

- 08.30 Registration opens
- 09.00 Welcome and opening address by Conference Chair
- 09.20 **Keynote 2: Liam Forde**
"Changing the game to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world"
- 10.20 Coffee break
- 10.45 **Breakout session 2**
- 11.45 Group photo
- 11.55 Conference Update: Helen Baron
"Quality Standards for Assessment Centres"
- 12.45 Lunch
- 14.00 **Keynote 3: Colonel Tim Sandiford, OBE**
"It doesn't seem to have changed much" - How the Army Officer Selection Board has kept pace with the challenge of the ever more complex operating environments.
- 15.00 Tea Break
- 15.30 **Breakout session 3**
- 16.30 Summary & close

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Brief Descriptions of Presentations - Day One



Keynote 1: **Stirring Things Up in Assessment: Towards Hybrid Assessment Centres**

Speakers: Filip Lievens, Ghent University

Location: Maple

When: Tuesday 25th November at 14.30



Summary

Given that the business world is characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) there is increasing consensus that staffing approaches should also become more adaptable. Assessment centres are well suited to this trend towards agile talent management because there are many assessment centre building blocks to play with (e.g. exercises, competencies, assessors, scoring formats, technology). Therefore, this presentation will focus on what will be called “hybrid” assessment centres which combine different building blocks related to various selection procedures into a new assessment centre approach. Examples are remote/webcam assessment centres, speed assessment centres, and Big Five assessment centres.

About the speaker

Prof. Dr. Filip Lievens is currently Professor at the Department of Personnel Management and Work and Organizational Psychology at Ghent University, Belgium. He is a world-renowned authority in the field of selection and assessment. He has published over 150 articles in the areas of high-stakes testing, assessment centres, situational judgment tests, and organizational attractiveness. A number of his publications have won prestigious international awards. He has given presentations, workshops, and invited keynote presentations across all continents (Europe, USA, Asia, Africa, and Australia). He has consulted for private, public, and military organizations and has served as a “meta-consultant” on HR-related topics for national and international consultancy firms.

filip.lievens@ugent.be

Breakout 1a



Breakout 1a: How virtual simulation brings leadership assessment and development ever closer to reality.

Speakers: Janice Caplan and Carolyn Ponder, Scala Associates

Location: Maple

When: Tuesday 25th November at 16.00



Summary

Flight simulators teach pilots to fly an airplane and land safely in stressful circumstances without paying the ultimate price. Leadership simulations allow leaders to practise critical skills such as dealing with a difficult PR issue or an unruly employee all without risking damage to the organization. Simulation-based learning is a time-tested approach to leadership development, painting a more complete picture of a candidate's ability to drive your business goals. Virtual simulation enables you to bring the experience even closer to the reality of how we work today. Moreover, it is fun, challenging, and easy to administer.

About the speakers

Janice is a recognized leader in talent management. She advises many top international organisations. Her work is enriched by her wide experience in practitioner, academic, and advisory HR work. These include her current position as governor of University of Portsmouth, and Chair of HR committee, and her former role as CIPD, Vice-President, Talent and Development. She is also Visiting Professor, University of West London. Janice is author of best selling books: Strategic Talent Development, The Value of Talent, and Coaching for the Future. She is a regular conference presenter and speaks fluent Italian, French and some Spanish. Janice is passionate about the value of leadership assessment in developing individual and corporate potential.

janice@thescalagroup.co.uk

Carolyn Ponder is an international HR consultant, trainer and coach-mentor, all of which are supported by her practice as a Gestalt psychotherapist. She is highly rated for her training and facilitation skills as well as her coaching, and her practical advice on operational HR matters. She has worked with many leading international organisations, as well as small businesses, and has a particular expertise in running management skills programmes for multi-cultural groups.

carolyn@thescalagroup.co.uk

Breakout 1b



Breakout 1b: Assessing for Outcomes not Inputs

Speakers: Hannah Hemmingham and Marija Potter, IBM

Location: Silchester 3

When: Tuesday 25th November at 16.00



Summary

In this session we will share a new approach to assessment centres, using Impact Rating Scales as opposed to Behavioural Rating Scales. Increasingly our clients are stepping away from the use of traditional competency frameworks striving to create open organisations. In open organisations employees are not bound to specific behaviours; rather organisations are focusing on the outcomes they expect employees to deliver, creating freedom to perform in numerous ways. This shift towards open organisations is driven by the recognition that prescribed behaviours are no longer effective in our ever changing world. In this session we will discuss the concept of ‘open organisations’ and share the effect this has had on the way we design and deliver assessment centres.

About the speakers

Hannah Hemmingham is a Chartered Psychologist and Managing Talent Consultant at IBM. Hannah acts as a trusted advisor to clients, creating bespoke assessment and development solutions based on best practice, flexibility and creativity. Hannah is also a coach, who enjoys one to one work to support individuals in their career development. Hannah is passionate about enabling organisations and individuals to be high performing and satisfied, from selecting the right person for a role to developing people throughout the employee life cycle.

hannah.hemmingham@uk.ibm.com

Marija Potter is a Managing Talent Consultant at IBM and a Registered Industrial/Organisational (I/O) Psychologist under the Health Practitioners Act in New Zealand. For almost a decade Marija has worked on enhancing employees experiences throughout their lifecycles with organisations. Marija is a strategic advisor to clients, specialising in creating robust and cohesive hiring solutions including designing assessment/selection processes, authoring and validating psychometric tests and applying her statistical analysis expertise through norm group creation, validation and return on investment studies. Marija prides herself on partnering with her clients to achieve best practice selection processes, ultimately improving business performance by improving employee culture fit, engagement and retention.

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Breakout 1c



Breakout 1c: Centres of Opportunity: Supporting Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Graduate Employability through Assessment Centre Rehearsals

Speakers: Elaine Yerby, University of East London; Duncan J. R. Jackson, Birkbeck, University of London

Location: Sulhamstead

When: Tuesday 25th November at 16.00



Summary

Black graduates are three times more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts six months after graduating (Race for Opportunity, 2012). Leading organizations have sought to respond to this problem and to improve the diversity of their graduate talent intake by launching positive action initiatives for BAME graduates that allow them to practice the tests and conditions of their graduate recruitment assessment centres (ACs). This session explores the experiences and organizational benefits that can be gained from schemes that demystify and provide opportunities for BAME students to practice the conditions and graduate ACs.

About the speakers

Duncan Jackson, Ph.D, CPsychol is a Lecturer at Birkbeck, University of London. He has worked in academia for over a decade, holding posts in New Zealand and in South Korea. He has also worked as a consultant in New Zealand, South Korea, and in the UK, and has worked with major organizations including Morgan & Banks, OPRA Consulting, ASSESTA, and a&dc. He has published in some of the leading journals in I-O psychology, including Personnel Psychology, Human Performance, the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, and the International Journal of Selection and Assessment. He recently co-edited The Psychology of Assessment Centers (2012), with Charles Lance and Brian Hoffman.

duncanjackson@gmail.com

Elaine Yerby is a senior lecturer in HRM in the School of Business and Law at UEL. Prior to this role Elaine worked in a variety of operational and strategic HR roles for the Metropolitan Police Service. Elaine predominantly worked in HR internal consultancy roles advising on the people aspects of major change programmes, including acting as the Engagement and Communication Manager for a large scale Transforming HR Programme. Elaine worked full time whilst gaining an MSc in Human Resource Management and Chartered CIPD status from Kings College London. At the School of Business and Law Elaine is the programme leader for the CIPD accredited MA in HRM and teaches on a variety of strategic HR modules at postgraduate and undergraduate level.

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Brief Descriptions of Presentations - Day Two



Keynote 2: Changing the game to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world

Speaker: Liam Forde, Founder and CEO of The Zone

Location: Maple

When: Wednesday 26th November at 09.20



Summary

How well does a brilliant person perform in a toxic culture? How about a mediocre person in a brilliant culture? Assessment tools and processes have improved, what has happened to the state of the workplace? What has happened to employee expectations? What about Gen Y? What is the future of assessment where happiness and high performance at work are essential to attract and retain talent? Liam will explore these questions and share his 15+ years of experience changing and uplifting workplaces in over 25 countries.

About the speaker

Liam Forde is the Founder and CEO of an international organisation called The Zone. He was born in New Zealand and operated as a serial entrepreneur for 20 years, during which time he successfully led five businesses. In 1999 he founded The Zone, whose aim is to create 'game changing' cultures in organisations worldwide. Their philosophy is that Leaders need to engage their people to unlock the potential within their organisation in order to deliver sustainable business success. He works with leaders as a coach, mentor, facilitator and trainer, encouraging people to create high levels of self-awareness, alignment, collaboration, integrity, and responsibility. His ongoing mission has been to contribute to a future where people work together to create better workplaces, better communities and a better world for us all.

liam.forde@thezone.co



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Breakout 2a

Breakout 2a: Technology-Enabled Assessment Centres – a Framework for Evolving Practice

Speakers: Andrew Geake and Dunstan Arthur, CEB-SHL Talent Measurement Solutions

Location: Maple

When: Wednesday 26th November at 10.45



Summary

The assessment centre format has remained largely unchanged in the last twenty years. This session explores how the technological developments that have impacted on other elements of the recruitment process will exert an increasing influence on the assessment centre approach. We explore the market forces driving changes in assessment centres, the technological advances that make change possible, and the implications for designers, assessors, candidates and organisations. Technology offers a means to enhance the assessment centre process, but it also throws up a range of challenges in respect of psychometric robustness, changing best practice and accessibility.

About the speakers

Andrew, is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist working in CEB's Solutions Consulting Division. He supports a wide range of clients in the development of solutions to support talent acquisition and talent mobility opportunities. His broad based experience has enabled him to deliver a variety of client focused solutions, consultancy projects and interventions both in the UK and overseas. Specifically, he has helped develop solutions that encompass the use of multi media approaches.

andrew.Geake@shl.com

Dunstan's career began playing a key role in many of the first large-scale online psychometric testing projects in the UK, before developing into a broader consultancy role. Over the last 15 years of working in the industry, he has been responsible for designing and implementing assessment and development solutions, including assessment and development centres, interview processes and training interventions.

dunstan.Arthur@shl.com

Breakout 2b



Breakout 2b: How assessment centre methodology can add significant value to identifying and developing leaders in a VUCA world

Speakers: Lucy Buck, **a&dc** and Kim Bolton, Hasbro

Location: Silchester 3

When: Wednesday 26th November at 10.45



Summary

The aim of this session is to highlight how a global organization, Hasbro, collaborated with a talent management organization, **a&dc**, using the assessment centre methodology to identify different levels of leadership talent to aid their succession planning in different contexts, within a rapidly changing world. It will focus on critical skills required of leaders in a 'VUCA world' and how the assessment centre methodology can add significant value in the identification and development of such talent. The design and implementation also uses two differing approaches, with varying use of technology dependent on the population.

About the speakers

Lucy is Consulting Director at **a&dc**, working in partnership with dynamic organisations to deliver tangible business results. Lucy has a strong background in using, writing and speaking about Assessment Centre methodology over the past 10 years; she co-authored the book 'Succeeding at Assessment Centres for Dummies' published by Wiley & Sons in 2009. Lucy's specific area of interest is Context-Centred Leadership and the application of this in a VUCA world. Living abroad and consulting in over 20 countries has given her specific insights into how context and culture must be considered to effectively deliver a talent and business strategy.

lucy.buck@adc.uk.com

As Director of Talent Management for Europe, Kim is responsible for leading the Talent Management function in Europe and is the strategic lead for the Global Talent & Leadership Strategy team. In this capacity, her responsibilities include Succession Planning, Talent Development, Leadership Development, Talent Acquisition, Performance Management and Organisational Development.

Kim is an HR Professional with over 10 years European and International experience and is MCIPD qualified. Kim joined Hasbro in 2006 as HR Manager for the UK and Northern European markets and has since worked in various HR roles including Talent Management and Leadership Development both in Europe and Asia Pacific. Prior to Hasbro, Kim held strategic and operational HR roles delivering people solutions in sectors including healthcare and public sector.

kim.bolton@hasbro.co.uk

Breakout 2c



Breakout 2c: Value = Benefits / Costs

Speakers: John Milsom, Wickland Westcott

Location: Sulhamstead

When: Wednesday 26th November at 10.45



Summary

To increase the value of assessment centres to organisations we need to review the benefits and costs of their use and find ways to optimise both sides of the equation. This session will start with a review of why organisations use assessment centres, leading to a discussion of the main opportunities that exist to increase their accuracy and therefore their value. Drawing on practical experience from a cross section of organisations the session will include examples to illustrate opportunities identified. Attendees will also be encouraged to participate in contributing their own perspectives and sharing their experiences through short brainstorming exercises.

About the speaker

John is Head of Talent at Wickland Westcott, where he leads a team of Occupational Psychologists specialising in leadership assessment and development. John specialises in executive assessment, development and executive coaching. He is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist, with practical expertise in working with CEOs and Directors, as well as High Potential leaders at all levels. John works across a variety of sectors and has extensive experience of designing and facilitating assessment centres with a wide range of organisations. He has led a number of large assessment, development and change projects, supporting organisations through restructures and culture change.

john@wickland-westcott.co.uk

Conference Update: Quality Standards for Assessment Centres



Speaker: Helen Baron, Independent Consultant

Panel: Max Choi, Charlie Eyre, Nigel Povah and Steve Whiddett

Location: Maple

When: Wednesday 26th November at 11.55



Summary

The Assessment Centre Standards working group of the Division of Occupational Psychology of the British Psychological Society is about to publish a standard of practice for using assessment centre methodology. This session will introduce the standards to delegates and promote discussion regarding the impact on standards of practice of recent innovations in Assessment Centre practice including the use of technology, virtual centres and the ability of fixed standards to keep pace with changing practice.

About the speaker

Helen Baron, C.Psychol, C.Sci, AFBPsS has over 25 years' experience in the design and implementation of effective selection and assessment systems. She has a particular interest in equal opportunities policy and the promotion of fairness in selection and other areas. An independent consultant and leading UK psychometrician, she has developed many original tests and questionnaires. Her current committee work includes being co-convenor of the BPS Working Group on Assessment Centre Standards and a member of the executive committee of EAWOP as well as being a consultant editor for BPS test reviews.

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Brief Descriptions of Presentations - Day Two pm



Keynote 3: “It doesn’t seem to have changed much” - How the Army Officer Selection Board has kept pace with the challenge of the ever more complex operating environments.

Speaker: Colonel Tim Sandiford, OBE, President of the Army Officer Selection Board (AOSB)

Location: Maple

When: Wednesday 26th November at 14.00



Summary

The activities undertaken at the Army Officer Selection Board selection events do not appear to have changed over the past 60 plus years yet, as we see across the world, the nature of conflict clearly has. So, why does it look the same? This presentation will explain how the selection process looks beyond candidate competence for today and focuses on their potential for the future, how the Army determines what it wants from its future leaders and how it ensures that there is consistently effective selection behaviour.

About the speaker

Colonel Tim Sandiford, OBE is the current President of the Army Officer Selection Board (AOSB), formerly the renowned War Office Selection Board (WOSB), which was one of the very first organisations to start using Assessment Centres during World War 2. He attended the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1984 and was commissioned into the 1st Battalion of The Staffordshire Regiment in 1985. He has served in UK, Germany, Northern Ireland, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Canada and in Iraq on Op GRANBY and Op TELIC. He commanded 1 STAFFORDS during their final tour in Iraq in 2006/7 after which he was awarded the OBE. His other service has generally been in the training delivery field where he has been responsible for improving individual and collective performance.

aosb-president@mod.uk

Breakout 3a



Breakout 3a: Drivers for utilising technology at assessment centres

Speakers: Paul Smith, Penna

Location: Maple

When: Wednesday 26th November at 15.30



Summary

The session will explore and discuss key themes that can be introduced to or discussed with clients considering implementing technology in their assessment centre. The focus is on defining technological discussion points that will be important for both participants going through assessment and for assessors working on behalf of an organisation. The structure will include setting the scene for participant and organisational perspectives of technology based assessment and will incorporate group discussion of the implications for both sets of stakeholders. We will conclude with discussion on how clients can align potential technological innovations with their strategic recruitment and development aims.

About the speaker

Paul, C.Psychol is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist with extensive experience consulting on and developing bespoke solutions at a variety of different organisational levels within the commercial and public sector. He is experienced in applying psychological research and technological advances to resourcing and talent interventions ranging from early in careers and graduates to management and leadership tiers. Experienced in designing immersive solutions to assess individuals and high volumes of candidates and inform talent management initiatives, he has also worked extensively to implement online assessments that incorporate the latest computer based assessment technology.

paul.smith@penna.com

Breakout 3b



Breakout 3b: 35 years of evolution in designing and delivering ACs

Speakers: Steve Whiddett, WHE UK Ltd

Location: Silchester 3

When: Wednesday 26th November at 15.30



Summary

Assessment Centre methodology established its reputation largely because of process controls exercised over assessment criteria, assessment methods, the participants and the assessors. This suggests a standardised approach and yet some assessment centres today look and feel different from those of a few years ago and radically different from those of 35 years ago. This session will look at real ACs designed and delivered over a 35 year period and at the influences that AC practice has had to address to ensure ACs evolved to stay fit for purpose, drawing a few light-hearted parallels with evolution in other areas.

About the speaker

Steve Whiddett BSc., MSc, CPsychol, AFBPsS, MABP, chartered psychologist and former chair of the Association for Business Psychology (ABP) co-founded WHE (UK) Ltd in 2002. Between 1991 and 2002, Steve was consulting occupational psychologist and partner at Pearn Kandola. From 1985 to 1991 Steve was a senior psychologist with SHL. Steve has over 30 years' experience in the design and delivery of Assessment Centres for organisations that include: TSB, HBOS, BP, Carlsberg-Tetley, Marks and Spencer, Computacenter, T-mobile, British Gas and central government departments. Steve co-authored 'The Motivation Handbook', 'A Practical Guide to Competencies' and 'Tools for Assessment and Development Centres'.

steve@whe-uk.com

Breakout 3c



Breakout 3c: Adding Value when Rapid Assessment Centres are Requested

Speakers: Max Choi, Quest Partnership

Location: Sulhamstead

When: Wednesday 26th November at 15.30



Summary

The potential of Assessment Centres (ACs) is very high but is often not achieved. This is first explored by appreciating the challenges today for rapid recruitment and understanding some key things that might get compromised when running ACs. This paper explores the potential challenges of running ACs quickly and provides a case study of how we have supported an organisation to run high volume, demanding ACs effectively and quickly. Delegates will gain some insights on the issues and gain some useful practical tips on how to run effective ACs even when there are significant time and resource pressures.

About the speaker

Max Choi, CPsychol, CSCI, AFBPsS is Managing Director of Quest Partnership Ltd. He has been involved in Assessment and Development Centre activities for over 25 years during which time he has designed and implemented centres and programmes for many clients. He is currently the co-convenor of the BPS group working on the Assessment Centre standards. He has designed many assessment centre exercises and psychometric tests focusing on introducing new innovations. Some of his psychometric and leadership research has been published and presented at conferences.

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General Information



Badges

Please wear your name badges at all times during the Conference.

Bank Facilities

The nearest cash machine is located in the Executive Centre. Please note there is a small charge for this.

Catering

All tea/coffee breaks will be held in the Maple Bar. A buffet lunch will be served here too. The drinks reception will be held in the Maple Bar and dinner will be served in Lincoln.

Enquires/Information Desk

If you have any enquires, please direct these to the Conference Registration Desk outside Maple.

Rooms

The main conference will be held in Maple. The breakout sessions on both days will be held in Silchester 3, Sulhamstead and Maple.

Mobile Phones

We respectfully request that all mobile phones are turned off or turned to silent whilst you are in any of the conference sessions.

Toilets

Toilets are located just off the Maple Lounge and also at the bottom of the stairs near the Registration Desk.

Twitter

Please feel free to tweet any comments during the conference using **#ukacg**.

Wi-Fi

There will be Wi-Fi available throughout the duration of the conference. The access code is 'venues'.