

Values Based Recruitment



How to Design and Deliver Selection Centres for Values Based Recruitment

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Work Psychology Group has over 20 years' experience of designing and evaluating assessment and recruitment methodologies for high stakes selection in healthcare, finance, engineering and professional services. The team is made up of experienced consultants who have worked in both research and industry, giving a unique blend of organisational and academic expertise, ensuring the latest research can be turned into practical, innovative solutions. For more information, please see www.workpsychologygroup.com.

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Overview

The following guidance is designed to highlight key considerations NHS employing organisations and admissions staff within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may need to take into account in the delivery of selection centres (SCs). It is intended to be used as a guide to assist with the planning, development and implementation of selection activities whilst recognising the need for individuals to tailor their approach to meet the needs of their own organisation.

It is recommended that utilisation of recruitment methods for assessment of values need to be considered with regards to the national core requirements, as set out in the national VBR framework. This recommends that an individual structured interview (including Multiple Mini Interviews) to assess values must be conducted as part of the overall recruitment process to effectively recruit for values. This may occur in isolation or as part of a wider process such as a selection centre or in conjunction with a screening method such as an SJT.

See the [HEE website](#) for more information about the national core requirements and to learn more about structured interviews.

Summary

- A good practice selection centre (SC) is based on a thorough and accurate identification of the relevant knowledge, skills, attributes and values associated with successful performance in the organisation and in the target role.
- A values based SC enables assessment of an applicant's values alongside assessment of their competence via a series of carefully selected or developed selection exercises with clearly defined selection criteria against which applicants are measured. To adhere with the national VBR framework, the SC should also incorporate a structured interview to assess values.
- The development of standardised SC documentation for all the component exercises, including guidance and materials for conducting the exercises, exercise scoring frameworks and reporting templates, enables the consistent, fair delivery of the SC.
- The reliability and validity of an SC is improved through ensuring assessors are trained appropriately in best practice assessment principles as well as the specific nature of the individual SC exercises.
- There are a number of phases of activity in SC development, including: role analysis and definition of criteria, identification and development of SC exercises, development of an assessment matrix, SC timetabling and logistics and training.
- Applicants' performance should be discussed at the end of an SC as part of an integration session; assessors should conduct a discussion led by the evidence (i.e. observations) and focusing on the key criteria being assessed. A consensus decision, clearly supported by the evidence from the SC exercises, should be reached for each applicant at the end of the integration session.

What is a selection centre?

Selection centres (SC; also referred to as assessment centres) are a method of selection involving a combination of selection techniques such as written exercises, interviews, and work simulations to assess applicants across a number of key skills, attitudes and behaviours (competencies). As part of an SC, an applicant will be observed by different assessors in the various selection exercises and the independent assessments are combined to provide an overall rating or score for the applicant. SC exercises or selection techniques are designed to measure different competencies of relevance to the target role; a single exercise may assess multiple competencies although not all.

There are a number of key features which typically define the nature of an SC:

1. **Clearly Defined Competencies Derived from a Role Analysis:** An SC is designed to assess a range of competencies (key skills, knowledge and behaviours) which have been identified as necessary for performance in the role or course, as a result of a thorough role analysis.
2. **Multi-Method:** SCs consist of multiple selection techniques used to provide information relevant to the competencies considered of importance for the target role. The selection techniques will each target different aspects of the role and therefore assess different competencies.
3. **Multiple, Trained Assessors:** Delivery of an SC requires multiple assessors trained in best practice assessment and selection principles, to observe and evaluate the performance of each applicant.
4. **Systematic, Standardised Processes:** A standardised procedure for recording observations is required for each selection technique used as part of an SC. In addition, standardised frameworks for evaluating performance against the selection criteria for each selection technique are also used to enable fair and objective assessments.

The exercises within an SC are typically designed to reflect the content of the role and therefore have high levels of face validity for applicants. SCs are also considered to deliver fair and reliable assessments of an applicant's skills and values as a result of the multiple observations of key behaviours captured by a number of trained assessors.

What is the evidence base for selection centres?

Research suggests that carefully designed and delivered SCs can be effective at predicting job performance across a wide range of occupations. Robust levels of reliability and validity are achieved as a result of the multi-trait, multi-method approach and use of standardised scoring systems to measure the selection criteria.

SCs tend to receive positive reactions from applicants who often feel they achieve greater insight into the role. Applicants also perceive the assessments to be fair as a result of their job-

relevance. However, in comparison to other selection methods, SCs can be resource intensive as costs are associated with design and development of the SC for specific roles, training and attendance of assessors, as well as potential costs associated with logistics (i.e. venue hire, production of materials). For these reasons they may be considered to be more appropriate for selection for certain roles.

For a more in-depth summary of the evidence-base relating to SCs please see the **VBR literature review** available on the [HEE website](#).

What makes a selection centre values based?

A well-designed SC consists of a series of exercises designed specifically to assess the key attributes considered important for performance in the target role, based on an analysis of the role itself. These key attributes commonly relate to skills or abilities; however they are also concerned with an individual's attitudes or behaviours, and therefore their underlying values. A values based SC is designed specifically to enable the assessment of an applicant's values alongside an assessment of their competence or skills in relation to the target role.

It is possible to measure an applicant's values as part of an SC by incorporating values based assessments in the SC design. For example, in the same way that selection criteria is defined for competencies, clearly defined criteria in relation to the relevant values can be developed for applicants to be assessed against. To adhere to the national VBR framework, an SC must incorporate a structured interview which may incorporate values based questions alongside competency-based questions to assess certain values. See the [HEE website](#) for more information about designing and delivering a structured interview for VBR. In addition, a group-based exercise may provide an opportunity to assess values such as collaboration or respect.

If designed appropriately, SCs can be good indicators of the extent to which an applicant's values may be congruent with those of the organisation or the NHS Constitution. SCs provide multiple opportunities for applicants to be observed in different contexts through the use of a combination of exercises with different delivery formats for example individual or group-based, oral or written. Assessment of some values may be better suited to particular selection methods, for example, respect may be assessed better as part of an interactive exercise. SCs can be designed accordingly to allow for assessment of a multitude of values across the various selection techniques incorporated.

Key considerations for implementing a selection centre for VBR

When looking to implement or refine SCs within an organisation, there are a number of key considerations to be aware of. Recognition of such considerations will enable the delivery of an effective VBR approach.

Definition of key criteria

- Entry requirements or person specification and competency model are the foundation of designing a good practice SC.

- The effectiveness of an SC is based on a thorough and accurate identification of the relevant knowledge, skills, attributes and values associated with successful performance in the role and in the organisation. A role analysis, using key stakeholders including service users, should be used to accurately identify the criteria to be assessed during the SC.
- The relevant criteria should be reflected in entry requirements, person specifications, job descriptions and attraction material so that applicants are aware of what they will be assessed against.
- The relevant criteria, competencies or values should be mapped to each exercise or selection technique incorporated in the SC, so it is clear what is being assessed in each individual exercise. The same competencies and values may be assessed multiple times during the SC across different exercises, and individual exercises will typically assess multiple competencies or values.
- Specific indicators describing positive and negative demonstrations of behaviour should be developed for each competency and value assessed.
 - For each exercise, a scoring framework with specific indicators for each competency assessed in the exercise should be developed. This is used to evaluate the performance of applicants during the course of the exercise.
- Defining the criteria in this way will ensure a fair SC process as all applicants applying for the same role are assessed against the same standard set of relevant criteria and indicators for each exercise.

Standardisation of selection centre documentation

- All applicants should experience the same SC process in terms of its delivery and execution. This ensures a fair, reliable and defensible process in accordance with best practice selection principles.
- The development of standardised SC documentation for all the component exercises, including guidance for conducting the exercises, enables the consistent delivery of the SC.
- Each exercise should have a set of standardised instructions for delivery to be used by the facilitator. Exercise materials should also include guidance for assessors, information for applicants, standardised scoring frameworks for each exercise and a standardised reporting template.

Development of the selection centre

- There are a number of practical considerations for planning the implementation of an SC:

- What budget is available for the SC?
- What length of time is available and how many exercises will be incorporated?
- How much time is required for design and development of exercises?
- How many assessors are required?
- How many applicants need to be or can be assessed during the SC?
- How many rooms are required for delivery of the SC?
- Are applicants required to do anything in advance of the SC?
- Will the SC process be piloted? If so, what are the requirements for piloting?
- What plan is there for data collection to inform validity and reliability analysis of the SC process?

Development of selection centre exercises

Depending on the resources available (financial and time), an SC could be delivered over the course of a few hours or a whole day, and therefore the number of exercises contained within a process may differ. Some possible types of SC exercises are outlined below in table 1.

Table 1 Overview of possible selection centre exercises

Exercise	Description
Presentation	Individual or paired exercise; presentation on pre-prepared or unseen specified topic.
Group Exercise	Group or team-based interaction exercise; typically a group-based discussion with pre-defined information and group objectives.
Role-Play Exercise	One-to-one interactive, simulation exercise between applicant and role-player; typically focuses on communication/negotiation based exercise.
In-tray Exercise	Individual exercise; simulation of role-based in-tray/in-box exercise typically requiring action and prioritisation.
Written Analysis Exercise	Written problem solving/analysis exercise designed in relation to a work-based issue.
Interview	Structured interview, gathering information against key criteria; can include values based questions alongside competency based questions.
Psychometric Assessment	Standardised assessment of cognitive, personality, motivational or interest profiles; typically off-the-shelf assessments obtained from established test publishers.

- SC development involves the design of a series of exercises that (1) are able to

assess the required behaviours in relation to competencies or values; (2) reflect the actual content of the role; (3) assess applicants' performance in a variety of situations; and (4) allow for different assessors to assess the relevant competencies and values across different exercises.

- The process for designing and developing an exercise may include research into background information (i.e. aspects of the role activities), designing and writing the exercise, trialling or piloting and final production of the exercise material, administration, scoring and evaluation guidelines. It can also be beneficial to involve a range of key stakeholders in the exercise development process, for example service users and NHS staff.
- **Structured Interviews:** These may be competency-based with the inclusion of some values based questions, or it may be appropriate to include a separate values based interview (VBI) as part of the SC process. See the [HEE website](#) for guidance regarding how to design and deliver a structured interview for VBR.
 - Whilst interviews can be used to assess an applicant's skills, knowledge and likely behaviour, they also offer the opportunity to assess an applicant's values through specific questioning techniques which focus on gaining insight into the reasons and drivers for behaviour.
 - Interviews can be conducted by a single interviewer, pairs of interviewers or a panel. Where resources allow, it is good practice to use multiple interviewers as this helps to minimise bias and enhance fairness.
- **Interactive Exercises:** These include presentations, group-based exercises and role-play exercises and have the benefit of providing an insight into how an applicant may actually behave in a situation, as opposed to a self-report of how the applicant suggests they would behave in that situation. Some considerations for interactive exercises are outlined below:
 - Exercises should be long enough to adequately cover content and allow time for eliciting relevant competency or values based evidence. Consider if dedicated time should be made available for applicants to read through instructions or exercise materials.
 - If the exercise is group-based, consider how much 'air-time' each applicant in the group will have as a proportion of the overall exercise time. For example, if a group exercise lasts for 20 minutes with four applicants, assuming the time is split equally that would equate to around 5 minutes 'air time' per applicant. Consider if this is sufficient time for each individual to demonstrate the required competencies and values. If not, the exercise time may need to be increased or the number of applicants in the group reduced. Piloting the exercise in advance is a useful way of checking the appropriateness of the time available.

- If role-players are used as part of an interaction, they should be appropriately trained to ensure consistent delivery across interactions with different applicants.
 - Exercise content should be quality assured to ensure it provides an accurate reflection of the relevant role, as applicants have been found to report positive experiences in simulations which reflect the nature of the actual role.
 - Interactive exercises may be more costly in terms of time and resources to deliver; ensure the SC timetable accommodates interactive exercises appropriately.
- **Desk-Based Exercises:** These include in-tray and written analysis exercises. Completion is monitored by a facilitator but the exercises do not need to be observed by assessors, thus reducing assessor contact time and making desk-based exercises a more cost-effective option.
 - It is necessary to consider whether assessment of these exercises will be built into the SC time or conducted afterwards, and who will be involved in this assessment. If assessment occurs after the SC, consider the implications for integration of applicants' performance across exercises.
 - Exercises should be long enough to adequately cover content and allow time for effective assessment of the relevant competency or value. The content should be quality assured to ensure it accurately reflects tasks directly relevant to the role in question for validity reasons.
- **Psychometric Assessments:** These are typically off-the-shelf tests or questionnaires developed by established test publishers and can provide additional information in relation to personal preferences, motivation, values and behavioural tendencies. However, it is important to consider the self-report nature of such tools.
 - Consider the reliability and validity of the test as well as the available information ('norm groups') against which applicants' scores will be compared.
 - Use of psychometric instruments can have higher costs associated where an external supplier is required to provide the psychometric feedback directly to applicants.
 - Personality tests are recommended to be used in combination with other selection exercises rather than in isolation when making selection decisions. See Guidance on Personality Tests on the [HEE website](#) for more information.
 - If you are introducing an SC as a new selection method it is often

beneficial, where possible, to pilot the SC using a diverse pool of individuals. This will enable you to ensure the component exercises operate effectively and fairly and that the SC overall operates according to the timetable.

- Some example exercises are outlined on the following page for illustrative purposes. In order to ensure relevance, exercises and associated behavioural indicators should be developed based on an analysis of the specific target role.

Figure 1 Example selection centre exercise

Presentation	“What are the key qualities required for effective team leadership?”		
Exercise time	40 minutes (20 minutes preparation, 10 minute presentation, 10 minutes Q&A)		
Exercise overview	<p>Applicants are given 20 minutes to prepare their presentation; no external resources are allowed and preparation time is invigilated. Applicants are then asked to individually deliver their presentation to two assessors. A short Q&A session will follow the presentation.</p> <p>Applicants are asked to consider the following as part of their presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why effective team leadership is important • Their previous experience of leading teams • How key qualities are evident to others 		
Example criteria/ value and indicators	Integrity	Positive indicators	Negative indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a willingness to address challenging situations • Recognises sensitivity required for managing difficult situations • Understands importance of trust for building effective teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to consider need for proactivity in addressing difficult situations • Seeks to blame others • Does not appreciate the need to build trust within a team

(continued overleaf)

Figure 2 Example selection centre exercise

Group exercise	Integrating values		
Exercise time	40 minutes	Number of applicants	4-6
Exercise overview	<p>Applicants are provided with a summary of the organisational values and asked to consider how they can integrate them as part of the role for which they are applying, considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the values be evident in your role? (Examples) • What support is required to ensure values are integrated? • What actions will you take? <p>Applicants are asked to spend 5 minutes individually reviewing the values before spending the remaining exercise time discussing as a group. The group should agree on some key actions to support integration of the values by the end of the exercise.</p>		
Example criteria/ value and indicators		Positive indicators	Negative indicators
	Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is respectful of all viewpoints • Maintains an open approach during discussion • Demonstrates active listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is negative in response to others' suggestions • Demonstrates a lack of engagement with the discussion • Interrupts or talks over others
	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers the needs/perspectives of others • Shows willingness to cooperate with others • Seeks input from others • Builds on suggestions from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is dismissive of the views/perspectives of others • Dominates the discussion without inviting contributions from others • Does not attempt to build on or demonstrate support for others' suggestions

Assessor training

- Assessors should be trained to deliver selection and assessment activities according to best practice principles. Assessors should also be specifically trained in the techniques and approach for delivery of the values based SC. Training should be regularly refreshed to ensure that assessors' skills and knowledge remain up to date and to enhance the reliability of the selection process.

- Following formal training, assessors should familiarise themselves with the standardised SC documentation associated with the target role, in particular the behavioural indicators and key criteria differentiating effective and ineffective performance in each of the exercises. Assessors should also familiarise themselves with individual scoring frameworks for each exercise to ensure evidence can be evaluated accurately and efficiently.
- The use of multiple assessors as part of the selection process can assist with enhancing the reliability and validity of the process. Consideration should be given to the assessor-applicant ratio and assessors should observe different applicants across the SC exercises to provide multi-rater observations. Ideally assessors should be responsible for observing and making notes for no more than two applicants at a time.
- If role-players are being used as part of SC exercises, they will also require training. Role-players should receive a full briefing in relation to the exercises they are involved in and their role, including an opportunity to practise delivering the exercise in preparation for the SC.

Stages of the selection centre process

An overview of the key stages involved in developing and delivering an SC is provided to support managers considering the implementation of an SC or the commissioning of an external provider to develop this. Individual organisations will need to tailor their approaches according to local needs and available resources. Therefore the following information is provided as a guide to outline some of the practical considerations.

For managers considering the commissioning of an external provider, it may be useful to contemplate what role your organisation might take and where external input would be best utilised whilst reviewing the different stages involved.

Selection centre planning

Before delivering an SC it is important to ensure sufficient planning is conducted to ensure effective delivery within the required timescales. As part of the planning process it may be useful to consider the following:

- The SC may form the second and core phase of a broader selection process, for example, it may follow an initial phase of screening activity in which applicants complete an application form or psychometric tools. It is important therefore to consider the criteria against which applicants' eligibility to progress to the SC is determined.
- Ensure the entry requirements, person specification and job description are up to date, reflective of current/future needs, and aligned to the criteria being assessed for and the values of the NHS Constitution.
- Identify an appropriate venue for the SC to be conducted. This may be using existing

facilities in-house or may involve using an external venue depending on the number of applicants and assessors attending and the selection techniques utilised. Where SC services are commissioned and external venues are required, consider who takes responsibility for arranging this.

- Consider the space required, particularly for interactive exercises involving multiple individuals (applicants, role players, assessors). Rooms should have capacity to comfortably accommodate applicants with sufficient space for assessors to observe, unobstructed and without being too close so as to distract applicants during exercises.
 - It is beneficial to have a room or breakout area for applicants and assessors to return to separately between exercises. This provides a quiet space for assessors to finalise any notes and also ensures the SC facilitator can easily locate applicants and assessors during the course of the day.
- Identify appropriately trained assessors and ensure their availability.
 - What are the timescales for the recruitment process? For example, when does the applicant need to be in post and how long will it take to complete a recruitment cycle (i.e. attraction, screening, and selection)?
 - The approach to attracting applicants and required advertisement for the target role.
 - If using an external supplier, what is the process and how much time is required to commission these services?

Selection centre design and development

To ensure delivery of a robust and defensible SC, the constituent exercises should be designed and developed in accordance with best practice selection principles. The following activities are likely to be involved in the design and development phase of an SC:

- **Role/job analysis:** The design of an SC begins with a clear specification of what the SC needs to measure i.e. what are the skills, attributes, behaviours and values considered important for performance in the role or course. Typically competencies form the foundation of an SC process and a role analysis is used as a systematic procedure for obtaining detailed and objective job-related information which will inform the competency definitions and descriptors. This should include information about the values considered to be important in effectively undertaking the target role. Ideally a range of stakeholders should be involved in the role analysis to provide a broad perspective of the target role. Stakeholders may include (but are not limited to); role holders; those that manage or work closely with the target role; service user or patient representatives; senior stakeholders or policy makers; and those involved in training or development for the target role.

- **Definition of criteria and competencies:** The key criteria or competencies to be targeted as part of the SC should be defined with positive and negative behavioural indicators. For a values based SC, this stage will also involve definition of the values to be assessed including the behavioural descriptors which define the nature of the value and how it is demonstrated in practice. Well-defined selection criteria are linked to specific, observable behaviours as well as discrete and reflective of the organisational culture and values.
- **Identify the SC exercises:** Once the key criteria, competencies and values have been defined, exercises that simulate key elements of the role and which will effectively assess applicants in relation to the key criteria should be identified and should include a structured interview to assess values.
 - These may be bespoke exercises designed specifically for the SC in question. Alternatively, managers may consider the use of off-the-shelf exercises if these are appropriately aligned to the competencies and values to be assessed as part of the SC and will allow effective assessment of applicants.
- **Development of an assessment matrix:** Once the key criteria or competencies have been defined and exercises identified, an assessment matrix should be devised. This helps to identify which criteria will be assessed by each of the individual SC exercises. It is recommended that where possible competencies and values are assessed by at least two or three different SC exercises, and that no one exercise has an excessive number of competencies to be assessed. An example assessment matrix for an SC incorporating four exercises and measuring four criteria is provided below:

Figure 3 Example selection centre assessment matrix

Exercise Criteria	Structured Interview	Written Task	Interactive exercise	Group Exercise
Compassion	X	X	X	
Respect and Dignity	X	X		X
Working Together	X		X	X
Communication Skills (inc. written)		X	X	X

- **Development of the exercises:** Developing bespoke or tailored exercises will ensure that the criteria being measured, as well as the content of the exercise, will be directly related to the role or course and the organisational culture. Whilst this is likely to have positive implications for validity and fairness, the costs (in terms of time and resources) are likely to be higher.

- When developing bespoke exercises it is important to consider the extent to which they accurately reflect the nature of the role, as well as the extent to which they allow opportunities for applicants to demonstrate the relevant competencies and/or values.
- The use of off-the-shelf exercises may be considered more efficient in terms of time and resources as they do not require the design and development time allocated to bespoke exercises. However, managers should consider the possibility that applicants may have been exposed to the exercise before and that it may not accurately reflect the specific values of importance to the role and/or organisation.
- **Development of the SC:** Once the component parts of the SC are defined, it is necessary to develop the timetable and consider logistics for delivery of the SC. Some practical considerations for SC timetabling are as follows:
 - Overall time allocated for SC delivery.
 - Time required for an introduction and briefing.
 - Number of assessors available – ensure sufficient assessors are available to observe applicants. Ideally assessors should be responsible for observing and making notes for no more than two applicants at a time (for example, in a group exercise).
 - Rotation of assessors and applicants – ensure applicants are observed by different assessors across the SC.
 - Rooms available, their layout and proximity to each other.
 - Administration and delivery time for each exercises.
 - Sufficient breaks for applicants without leaving lengthy gaps between exercises.
 - Time allocated for assessors to write up observations and conduct the final integration/moderation session (see below for more information).
- **Delivery of training:** Training should be designed and delivered for all individuals involved in delivery of the SC, including assessors and role-players. The coordinator or facilitator for the SC will also require a detailed briefing to ensure the SC is delivered in accordance with the timetable. Core assessor training may include the following:
 - SC principles and process; this may include an overview of the principles of values based recruitment.
 - Best practice assessment principles for example equal opportunities, confidentiality.
 - Best practice assessor skills (for example the 'FORCE' principles detailed below)

- Specific SC exercise training.

Selection centre preparation

Following the design and development of the SC and its content, there are a number of considerations in relation to preparation for delivery.

- Applicants should be provided with a briefing to prepare them for the SC once selected to attend. Typically this is in the form of written information distributed to applicants in advance of the SC. Briefing information may cover the following: *What is an SC? What can I expect on the day (i.e. activities)? How long will the SC be? Who will be assessing me? Will I receive feedback on my SC performance?*
 - Applicants should also be provided with practical information in relation to the SC i.e. venue location, timing and any necessary documentation they need to bring with them.
- Ensure any relevant equality and diversity issues been identified and attended to (see 'Equality and Diversity' section of **Choosing a selection method for Values Based Recruitment** on the [HEE website](#) for more information).
- Assessors should receive a thorough briefing in relation to the SC. This may form part of assessor training, or be delivered as written guidance in advance of the SC where assessors are already trained accordingly.
- The standardised documentation should be provided to assessors in advance of the process. Assessors should be provided with all the relevant documentation including guidance and any supporting documentation.
- In preparation for delivery of the SC, it is important that the venue is set up accordingly. This may require a visit to the venue in advance of the SC to ensure facilities are sufficient and instructions being provided to the venue in relation to room layout.

Conducting the selection centre

- It is often beneficial to arrive at the SC venue with sufficient time to check all the rooms that will be utilised for delivery of the SC. It is important to check room layout as well as temperature and noise (which may impact on the applicant experience).
- Best practice assessment principles (FORCE) should be followed when conducting the SC.
 - **F – Familiarise:** Ensure that you are familiar with the SC materials to be used as well as the entry requirements or job description/person specification and values of importance for the role.
 - **O – Observe:** The key skill in observing is not to make judgements, but to be aware of what the applicant is saying or doing. Be aware of possible

assessment bias.

- **R – Record:** Make written notes of the applicant's responses and behaviour during each of the SC exercises. An observation/recording sheet should be used.
 - **C – Classify:** Evidence of the required competencies and values should be identified through examining the information provided in the applicant's responses. Some comments will include evidence - these should be identified. Some comments may not be directly relevant to the target criteria.
 - **E – Evaluate:** The evidence identified in the recorded observation now needs to be evaluated. Look at the scoring indicators to decide on the quality of the evidence relevant to each criterion.
- Begin the SC by welcoming the applicants and providing an overview of the SC process and timetable. Ensure that the applicants are at ease, and allow time for building rapport.
 - Inform applicants of the assessors' roles and remind them that they should try not to pay attention to the assessors during the course of exercises but instead remained focused on their tasks.
 - Ensure any housekeeping rules (for example, use of mobile phones, fire alarms) are covered as part of an introduction to the SC. Remind applicants of the importance of time-keeping to avoid delays in the running of the SC and ask that they return to the applicant room between exercises.
 - Applicants should be provided with name badges so assessors can easily identify the applicants they should be observing during each of the SC exercises.
 - Ensure assessors and facilitators are appropriately briefed – this may be done prior to the start of the SC. If using an external venue, it may be necessary to liaise with conferencing staff to ensure refreshments are delivered accordingly and assessments are not disturbed during the course of the SC.
 - Before SC exercises begin, ensure applicants are informed if audio recordings will be used to assist with recall of information. Applicants' consent to being recorded should be obtained prior to commencement.
 - During the SC, it is important to adhere closely to the timetable to avoid delays or extended periods of inactivity between exercises, as the delivery of the SC will create an impression of the organisation for applicants.
 - Allow some time immediately after each exercise for assessors to finalise their notes as leaving this until later can result in distorted information. It is recommended that observations and comments for each exercise remain separate until the integration

session.

- The integration session should be conducted upon completion of all exercises at the end of the SC. Sufficient time should be allowed for the integration session to ensure the data gathered over the course of the SC for each applicant is considered in sufficient depth.
- Ensure the applicants leave at the end of the SC process with a clear understanding of the next stages of the process and when they might be contacted again.

Decision making and feedback

- During the course of the SC, assessors should finalise observations for each exercise they observe; evaluations are then completed independently before an integration (also known as moderation or 'wash-up') session.
- Based on the notes taken during the exercises, evaluate the applicant's performance using the associated scoring framework. Ensure all scoring information is complete and any summary comments are recorded prior to the integration session.
- The integration session, often led by the SC facilitator, should provide all assessors with an opportunity to summarise and evaluate the behavioural evidence obtained. Typically the performance of each applicant is discussed and commented on in turn by all assessors who observed them.
- The integration discussion should be led by the observations gathered during the course of the SC rather than simply by numeric ratings applied or any other knowledge. The discussion often focuses on the key criteria being assessed but could also be structured on an exercise by exercise basis. The important aspect is to ensure a consensus decision, clearly supported by conclusions from the SC exercises, is reached for each applicant at the end of the integration session.
- The outcome of the SC should be communicated to applicants as soon as a decision has been made and in accordance with timeframes communicated to applicants at the start of the SC.
- Once applicants have been informed of the selection decision, ensure that they are provided with appropriate feedback. Successful applicants may be given feedback as part of their induction to the new role.
- How feedback is provided to applicants should be defined as part of the SC planning and may be provided verbally or in writing. Provide constructive feedback to the applicant using examples gathered throughout the selection process. Be sure to describe the applicant's performance based on the behavioural indicators when providing feedback on their SC performance.
- Where possible it is recommended that verbal feedback is provided to applicants.

This is more efficient for allowing the applicant an opportunity to respond to the feedback.

Evaluation, monitoring and review

- It is important to consider monitoring the outcomes arising from an SC to determine its success; planning for monitoring, reviewing and validating the effectiveness of an SC should form part of the initial project planning phase. Considerations for evaluating the outcomes of an SC are as follows:
 - An initial review of the SC should examine whether it is fit for purpose. For example, consider whether the exercises are reflective of aspects of the role; are the indicators for competencies and values clearly defined for assessment; are assessors operating in accordance with best practice principles (the 'FORCE' principles outlined in 'Conducting the Selection Centre' above).
 - A review of the SC content, particularly whether the centre fulfils the intention of the design in practice, is also important. Consideration should be given to whether exercises provided sufficient opportunity for applicants to demonstrate the intended competencies or values? Were there any difficulties obtaining information to allow effective assessment of any particular competencies or values? Was there enough time for each exercise? Some exercises may also need to be refreshed periodically to ensure they remain up to date.
- Differentiating between applicants' performance in an SC should only be on the basis of demonstrated attributes only. It is important to be aware of differential performance associated with membership of a particular ethnic group, gender or other protected characteristic.
- It is beneficial to consider the approach for data gathering and statistical evaluation of the SC process to determine the extent to which the SC measured what it intended to measure. Procedures for efficiently and accurately capturing data should be put in place in order to inform evaluation. This will determine the validity and reliability of the SC.
- Evaluation of SCs should be rigorous and scientific as far as possible. This may include qualitative content analysis, statistical analysis and applicant/assessor reactions. Validation studies (matching SC outcomes to work-performance outcomes) should also be considered where possible.

Example case studies

[NHS Blood and Transplant](#) uses a selection centre for **high volume recruitment areas**. During the events applicants move through different stages which test various aspects of the job. This also gives the applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their values through the

behaviours exhibited in the various activities. NHS Blood and Transplant report various positive outcomes since the introduction of this values based approach to recruitment including reduced staff turnover, increased staff satisfaction and reduced cost per hire.

[Chesterfield Royal Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#) has been using selection centres to recruit **facilities staff** in line with organisational values. The event is split into two halves with only applicants that are successful during morning activities being invited to the interview which takes place in the afternoon. A variety of tasks are used which require applicants to work alone and in teams; all are observed by recruiting managers and are assessed against set criteria.

[North Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust](#) used an SC approach incorporating practical, job relevant scenarios, drugs calculation tests and a values based interview to assess **Nurses** internationally, with a plan to introduce this approach in the recruitment of all nurses and healthcare assistants

The [University of Worcester](#) uses an SC as part of the selection process for the recruitment of **Nursing** students. The selection process involves six stations lasting between five and 20 minutes with each addressing three of the 6C's from [Compassion in Practice](#). There is a mix of interactive and written stations and each is scored against set criteria. A number of practical challenges were identified, including issues relating to timetabling and room availability but overall the SC has been received favourably. This approach is referred to as an MMI however as the process involves a variety of assessment formats (for example interactive/group/written exercises), which each assess multiple competencies, it could also be categorised as a Selection Centre (SC).