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Administering and scoring work sample exercises

There are a range of different types of work sample exercises including written tasks, role plays, group activities and case interviews. The role of assessors in administering and scoring exercises will depend on whether the exercise requires observation (e.g. group activity, presentation) or reviewing a written response (e.g. in-tray activity).

Administering work sample exercises

It is important that your work sample has clear instructions for the assessor and the candidate. These should be developed when you are developing the work sample exercise.

The time limit and conditions for completing an exercise need to be the same for all candidates, unless you are making an adjustment. Where a workplace adjustment is to be made, this needs to be communicated to assessors so they can adjust the administration of the exercise.

The assessor instructions contain details of how to administer the exercise. This includes:

- resources the assessor will need – e.g. paper and pen
- resources to be given to the candidate – e.g. case study materials
- equipment needed by the candidate – e.g. computer for a written exercise, login and password details in case the computer goes to sleep
- time limit – full time allocated for the task (e.g. 60 minutes) and how the time is split up (e.g. 10 minutes reading time, 50 minutes to complete the task)

It is a good idea to read the candidate instructions aloud to make sure candidates fully understand what is required and have the opportunity to ask questions.

Work sample exercises involving observation

During role-plays, group activities and presentations the assessor needs to both observe and record behaviours so that they have the evidence necessary to support their ratings. This process should be done in the same way for each candidate.

Before the activity:

- Familiarise yourself with the rating scale you are using and apply it consistently across all candidates (See: **Setting the standards and rating approach**)
- Understand how the evidence relates to the rating scale

During the activity:

- Observe, look and listen –if you are assessing more than one candidate, make sure you are clear on who's who
- Record what you see (body language) and hear (word-for-word is best) –if you are observing more than one candidate, make sure you can differentiate between each in your notes. You could use a work sample response template to assist in rating responses.

After the activity:

- Sort the recorded behaviours according to the capabilities being assessed (this is completed after the assessment and not done in the presence of candidates)
- Evaluate based on objective, observed behaviours using your agreed rating scale (this is completed after the assessment and not done in the presence of candidates)
- Integrate your evaluation with the other assessors and be prepared to explain your ratings based on the behaviours you observed.

Work samples involving a written response

Work samples that require a written answer are assessed against the capabilities. You are looking for the response to demonstrate the behaviours you have identified for each capability you are assessing.

Ticking off behaviours as you find them in the response will further assist you to determine whether the capability is demonstrated and, if so, to what extent.

Quick guide to administering and scoring work sample exercises

- determine rating scale and benchmarks
- use a work sample response template to capture evidence
- sort evidence into the relevant capabilities
- tick off the behavioural indicators observed in the responses
- apply a rating to each capability based on the evidence
- discuss and consolidate scores with other assessors
- progress candidates who meet the benchmark to the next stage

