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Selecting fit for purpose assessments

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Selecting a mix of fit-for-purpose assessment methods helps give a full picture of a candidate's capabilities, knowledge and experience.

Legal requirements

The legal requirements for assessments are set out in the GSE Rules:

- [GSE rule 17](#) defines the requirements for a comparative assessment
- [GSE rule 18](#) defines the requirements for a suitability assessment.

The minimum requirements for assessment depend on the **kind of employment**:

- [GSE rule 20](#) sets out the assessment requirements for ongoing employment

- **GSE rule 21** and **GSE rule 22** set out the assessment requirements for temporary or term employment
- **GSE rule 26** sets out the assessment requirements for employing eligible persons from designated groups.

About capability-based assessments

Capability-based assessments are used to assess candidates against the capabilities, knowledge and experience at the required level for the role. Using multiple methods helps provide a full picture of a candidate's strengths and development needs and increases the reliability and validity of the assessment process.¹

Principles for selecting assessment methods

The principles that guide the choice of assessment methods are:

- Validity – assessments measure the candidate's capabilities against the capability levels required for the role and predict performance on the job. See: **Predictive validity of assessment methods**
- Reliability – assessments consistently measure what they claim to measure
- Consistency – assessments are administered and measured consistently across the whole candidate pool. An exception is in the case of workplace adjustment. It is a legal requirement to allow candidates with disability to request adjustments to the assessment process to remove any barriers in demonstrating their abilities to meet the requirements of the role
- Fit-for-purpose – assessment methods are well-suited to what is being assessed (i.e. the capabilities at the level required for the role) in the particular context (i.e. functional or subject matter area)
- Inclusive – assessment methods do not indirectly disadvantage a particular group (e.g. Aboriginal people, people with disability etc.) unless there is an essential requirement that is needed for successful performance in the role.

Types of assessments

To select the assessment methods best suited to the role you should familiarise yourself with the range of assessments that are available. Some of these can be designed and administered in-house (e.g. work sample activities) while others, particularly psychometric testing, require accredited experts to design, deliver and evaluate the results.

Some of the common types of capability-based assessments include:

- **Interviews**

- **Psychometric assessments** (e.g. cognitive ability tests, personality questionnaires)
- **Work sample exercises.**

When choosing assessments, particularly psychometric assessments, you need to be sure about why you are using a particular test and how you intend to use the results. Psychometric assessments should be used to inform decisions about which candidates are best suited to the role and the needs of the agency. Assessments should never be used as an easy option for covering many capabilities simply because it is an easy way to tick-the-box.

Suppliers on the **Talent Acquisition Scheme** can give advice on the assessments that are useful for assessing specific capabilities and on assessments that are suitable for use with diversity groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or people with disability.

In designing or selecting assessments consider how you can make them accessible (e.g. for people who use screen readers) or provide practical alternatives for people with disability who cannot complete them but could otherwise effectively perform the role to be filled.

In some cases, a workplace adjustment can be made to help remove barriers in the assessment process. Considering each case for workplace adjustment separately will ensure you can meet an individual's specific needs.

Level of difficulty

Different assessments are designed to measure different skills or abilities at particular levels.

The level of difficulty of an assessment should be appropriate to the specific role. An assessment that is too easy will not differentiate between individuals with good or poor potential. An assessment that is too difficult can result in candidates being wrongfully excluded.

For psychometric tests, an accredited person should advise on choosing a test at the appropriate level of difficulty for the role.

Develop an assessment plan

It is a good idea to develop an assessment plan, which:

- clearly identifies the standards or levels required for capabilities, experience, knowledge and other attributes
- maps out which capabilities you will assess using which methods
- ensures each of the focus capabilities are assessed using at least two capability-based assessment methods.

An **assessment matrix** will help you to meet these requirements.

Tip

It is not necessary to develop separate assessments for every capability as one assessment method can measure multiple capabilities.

Developing an inclusive process

The assessment plan can also be used to establish a process for making workplace adjustments including determining roles and responsibilities. Having a plan is important as candidates may not let you know until the day of the assessment that they need an adjustment.

The assessments you choose should be relevant to the role, pitched at the right level and reflect the type of work done on the job.

You should also consider the accessibility needs for people with disability and consider available adjustments to assessment tasks. Adjustments must be based on individual need so communicate with each person to determine how best to meet their needs.

Using rule 26 to employ people with disability

Government sector agencies are encouraged to use positive measures to attract and employ people with disability using rule 26 of the GSE Rules. For more information about using rule 26 for employing people with disability, view the [rule 26 guidance \(PDF 165.6KB\)](#).

Virtual recruiting

The Virtual Recruiting fact sheet provides information on how to maximise the benefits of technology in recruiting in the NSW public sector. It has information on:

- Types of assessments best suited to delivery virtually
- Ways of adapting existing assessments for a virtual environment
- Key considerations to ensure assessments selected are effective in measuring the capabilities, knowledge and experience for the role
- How to engage providers to assist in designing and delivering assessments.

[Download the Virtual Recruiting fact sheet](#)

Tips on capability-based assessment

For the purposes of a comparative assessment or a suitability assessment, capability-based assessments do not include:

- a review of the resume or application
- a review of responses to targeted questions
- referee checks.

While these provide evidence about a candidate's claims for a role, such as their values, motives and professionalism, they have low predictive validity as a capability-based assessment method.

¹Schmidt, F. & Hunter, J. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and Theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings, *Psychological Bulletin*, 124 (2), 262-274