

INVESTATE



# ACE YOUR ASSESSMENT CENTRE

APPRENTICESHIP  
EDITION



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# INTRO/GROUP TASK

Guidance on Assessment Centres coming from someone who secured 5+ Assessment Centres.


## **What is a group task?:**

A group task is normally a fictitious business problem or scenario given to you that resembles the type of work you would do within the firm. You typically work in groups of 3-7 to identify key problems, come up with solutions and present back to the assessors who will normally be seniors within the company.

## **So how do you stand out?:**

- **Lead:** The easiest way to stand out is to lead, and this does not mean speaking first. It means steering the direction of the discussion and delegating roles to the group which shows great initiative and leadership skills.
  - **Impact over unnecessary noise:** Do not speak in a group discussion if you have nothing useful to say, assessors do not give you credit for unnecessary dialogue. Instead, add impact onto the discussion, offer unique perspectives or challenge status quo with good questions and consider key stakeholders such as employees or the wider community who are affected by the scenario.
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# GROUP TASKS

- Read the scenario carefully: Do not overlook the task and look at key elements of the scenario too. Assessors give a lot of credit to those who reference key details that no one picks up on in the scenario, especially when you use the scenario to form part of your rationale.
  - Reference company values: Some fictitious companies with have their own core values within the scenario, pay attention to these and use them to back up your reasoning; it looks brilliant to the assessors and the group too.
  - Consider both sides of the argument: Critical thinking is always something that assessors pick up on. Although being able to form an opinion is important, recognising that your point may have weaknesses shows assessors that you are evaluative and extremely logical.
  - Add onto what others say/praise people: Praising other people in your group good ideas and incorporating their ideas into your own shows great teamwork skills. Covering for your teammates when they forget to mention something is also noticed a lot by assessors; this is what allows a lot of applicants to stand out.
  - Answer as much questions as possible: The assessors will always ask thought-provoking questions after you present to you or your teammates. Try to answer as much questions as possible. You look great for being able to handle pressure from seniors without backing down.
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# INTERVIEWS

Face-to-face interviews during an assessment centre can either involve one person interviewing you, or potentially 2-3 people interviewing you, and it is not always just HR.

If not specified in your email before the assessment centre, you can 100% expect both motivational and competency (scenario-based) questions revolving around situations within the workplace.

Some final interviews will be technical to some extent but this tends to be more within high finance/fintech-firm interviews.

## **How do you guarantee success?:**

- **Know your role:** understanding what your role is should be the biggest priority in preparation for the interview i.e. whether it has high client exposure or not, typical responsibilities etc. Understand your role to the point where if someone asked you to explain it to them, you could explain it as if you work for the firm. Having the job description of your role saved is extremely useful for this.
- **Learn/know your CV:** While this is very rare, recruiters may ask the question “walk me through your CV.” Recruiters invite candidates to ACs so that they can learn more about them, part of this means asking questions about what you’ve put on your CV.

# INTERVIEWS


- Learn the common questions: Recruiters follow a script, meaning most questions will be similar with differences only being because of the skills required for the role. This means that the following questions are extremely common:

- **Tell me about yourself?**
- **Why are you interested in this company?**
- **Why are you interested this role?**
- **Why you/What are your strengths?/How do your strengths align to the role?**
- **Why Degree Apprenticeships over University?**
- **Tell me about recent company/industry news?**

Having well-prepared responses to the questions above will allow you make a good first impression on the interviewer.

- Be authentic and confident: They want to interview you, for you. Prioritise authenticity over trying to act like someone that is not you. Confidence and clarity when speaking always stands out to them in interviews, tonality and how you communicate your story to interviewers helps them understand your character more and resonate with your personality more.

- Know your stories: This does not necessarily mean have like 10 different scenarios on standby, but generally 3-5 key scenarios whether in school, the workplace, or during work experience placements that you remember will help you with competency questions. This will allow you to tailor the scenarios to the different skills required without much preparation needed.




# INTERVIEWS

- Show signs of engagement: There are various ways to do so, but nodding your head when the interviewer says something important or smiling when answering questions/saying exciting thing shows engagement.

Additionally, asking questions based on what the interviewer says at the start (normally they introduce themselves and their role) shows high levels of attentiveness which will not go unnoticed. Most importantly, remember to prepare and ask good questions about the company or the role to leave a good lasting impression.

## **In the unlikelyness of technical questions how do you prepare?:**

- Reach out to current apprentices/people in your role: Ask them about the role in more detail, what they do? What type of clients do they work with? Get the inside information that is not on the job description.
  - Look at the team you will work with: This is not widely applicable to every role, but some companies may tell you what team you will be working in, this may give an indication as to what they might ask.
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# INTERVIEWS

For example if a job in asset management stated that you would work with the High Yield team, question you could prepare are:

- **What is an asset class?**
- **What is High Yield?**
- **How is it used?**
- **What type of clients/companies use it?**
- **How does it compare to other asset classes such as Fixed Income?**
- **Why is High Yield important and why would asset managers use it?**

Though there are not many companies that ask technicals, the top companies may ask technicals, especially if you are interviewing with associates/analysts at the firm instead of HR.

Interviews become less stressful with practice, which is why conducting as many mock interviews as possible with current apprentices who have been in your position before or older family members is extremely useful.



# FAQS

Other FAQs about Assessment Centres below:

- **What should I wear to any Assessment Centre?:** Always wear business formal attire unless they specify otherwise. This will show assessors that you are serious about the role which could impress them before they interview you.
- **When should I arrive at my Assessment centre?:** It is always beneficial to arrive 10-30 mins early to Assessment Centres. This is because punctuality is extremely important. If you show up late, assessors will assume that you will show up to the real job late too, reducing your chances of getting the role. Additionally, it helps with calming your nerves since you could socialise with other candidates who are also early.
- **Should I socialise during breaks/lunches?:** You should aim to be social to an extent but this does not have to be forced. It is great to make connections with other candidates rather than viewing them as competition. Assessors like candidates who are able to socialise well within a working environment and what is the worst that can happen if you network with other people there?

# FAQS

- **What do you do against a candidate that tries to force leadership?:** Most of the time, it is best to just let them attempt to force leadership. Assessors will notice minor problems such as these and those candidates will not receive offers.

Candidates that try to take the lead do not always do better. Another way of combating forceful leadership is teaming up with other people within a group task to shut them down through disagreeing (professionally) with what they say to stop them from trying to dominate the group task.

- **How do I act during an interview?:** Be confident, smile (when necessary), hold eye contact, and remember to ask questions at the end. Through acting professional and being confident, you are more likely to leave a lasting impression and therefore receive the Apprenticeship offer.

