

How the Ministry of Defence (MoD) benefited from an innovative psychometric tool

Keywords: assessment and development centres, PSG framework, psychometric tests, emotional intelligence, video-taped exercises

→ The challenge

We have been working with the MoD since 2004 in the development and delivery of an assessment process, to identify Senior Civil Service potential and thus eligibility to join their development scheme.

→ The solution

The assessment team comprised of 6 Psychologists to ensure continuity of approach and assessment. For each round of selection, we delivered 5 assessment events utilising an assessment team of 5 plus 4 role-players, assessing 6 managers a day.

Mendas' independence meant we could use the best psychometric tool to meet the clients' needs and therefore we selected an innovative computer based psychometric tool that, as opposed to more traditional tests, was able to make a reliable measure of learning potential. The project team was trained on the use of the tool, the client was briefed as to the technical merits of it and all candidates were provided with a briefing as to what to expect from this test.

The assessment centres also included:

- in-depth interview
- assessment of Emotional Intelligence
- video-taped group interactive exercise
- one-to-one feedback session

As the project unfolded, the requirements of the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) agenda became clearer, and we have been working with the MoD to ensure that our assessment approach covers these areas, and provides some continuity with the existing SCS competency framework. To this end, last year we ran a round of events that

provided a parallel assessment of the existing competency framework and the PSG framework. This work helped reassure us that our existing assessments were relevant to the changing needs of the Civil Service.

→ The achievements

- We ensured we were providing good value for money by continuously checking the delivery against the client's needs, and by encouraging the client to speak to the Senior Managers who had been through the process.
- In-depth feedback reports were provided on time to meet the relevant Selection Boards.
- The use of the psychometric tool was very successful as it also predicted the ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity- essential skills for the role of senior civil servants.

This project allowed us to show how being a small agency allows us to deal very effectively with changing needs throughout the life of a project.

