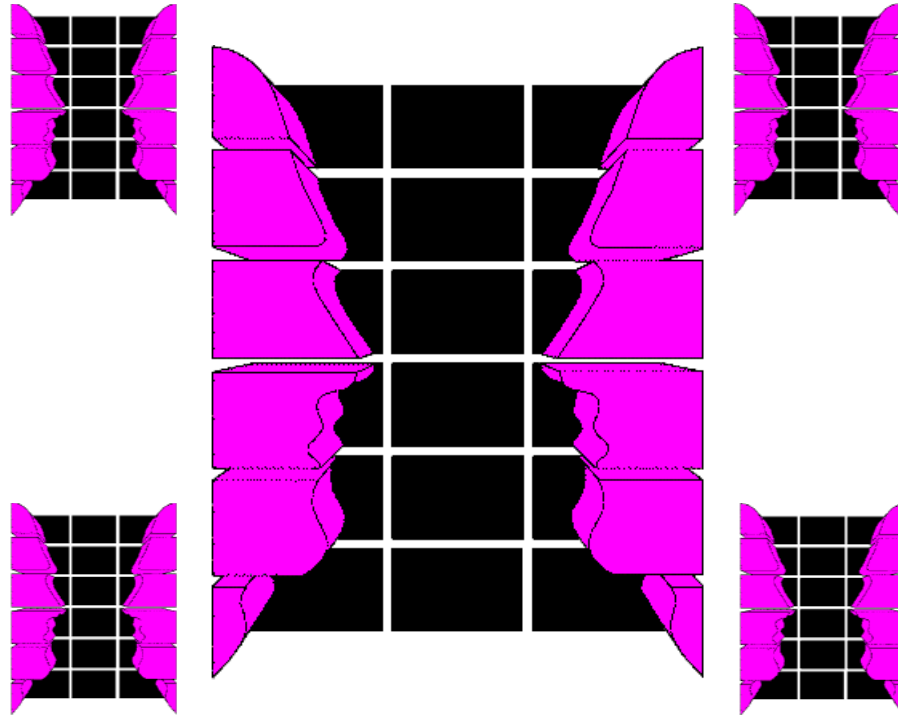


The Simulation Assessment Series



Guidance Notes for Candidates

KCP

Knight Chapman Psychological Ltd

Simulation Exercises

Most major employers have rightly turned to the use of more objective measures of competence when considering people for jobs, promotion or in determining developmental needs. These measures typically include aptitude tests, personality questionnaires and work simulation exercises.

Simulation exercises are extremely powerful techniques because they involve you in actually performing some aspect of the job. So, for example, if teamwork is an important component of job success, a group exercise that allows you to demonstrate how you actually go about working with others is generally a fairer and more realistic assessment technique than asking you questions at an interview.

Nevertheless, you should remember that these techniques form only ONE part of what you have to do when applying for a job or a promotion.

What is the Simulation and Assessment Series?

The SAS is a series of exercises developed by Knight Chapman Psychological Ltd, a specialist consultancy of Chartered Occupational Psychologists. The SAS consists of a broad range of simulations that have been designed for use with different types of people - school leavers, clerical and administrative staff, customer service personnel, graduates, professionals, managers and senior executives.

There are a number of different types of exercise in the SAS (although please note that you may not be required to take all of them).

- Group Exercises - a realistic, work based scenario where you will be required to work in a team to achieve specific objectives. The group exercise will be observed by specially trained assessors.
- In-tray Exercises - these simulate someone's in-tray, so you will be given a number of letters, memos, reports, faxes etc. Typically you will be asked to complete a number of structured tasks which might include planning and organising, decision making or written communication.
- Presentation Exercises - here you will be given a topic to deliver a presentation to trained assessors. You will receive a full brief and background information, as well as being given appropriate materials for you to design visual aids.
- Scheduling Exercises - these exercises require you to construct a schedule of activities in order to achieve a particular goal. You will be given details on what has to be done, normally within a tight timeframe, and then it will be up to you to set out a detailed plan.

What do the exercises measure?

Each exercise has been designed to measure specific aspects of a job. However, some common areas of competence that can be explored through simulation exercises include:-

- Leadership and influencing
- Negotiating
- Planning and organising
- Creative problem solving
- Decision making
- Team membership
- Communication
- Persuasiveness
- Innovation

What do the exercises look like?

Each exercise is based on a work-related scenario. Generally, you are not expected to have any prior experience of the type of organisation represented in the scenario. Even if you have, it will **not** give you an advantage over other candidates.

Each test is either presented in a booklet or on a PC. Before you start each exercise you will be given full instructions on what you have to do.

Most of the activities are strictly timed and typically range from 15 minutes for a presentation exercise (plus preparation time!), through to 40 minutes for a group exercise and up to 2.5 hours for an in-tray exercise.

How to do your best

Your assessors are not trying to trap or trick you. They want you to do well and they will help you as much as possible. Here are some things that you can do to help yourself:-

- Have an early night - you want to feel at your best!
- Plan to arrive early - there's nothing worse than rushing at the last minute.
- Remind yourself that this is only one part of the selection or development procedure. Most people feel a little nervous - this is entirely natural.
- If you wear glasses or need a hearing aid, make sure you take them with you.
- If you have a disability or there are other circumstances which may affect your ability to do the exercises or give of your best, tell the assessor **BEFORE** you attend the session.
- Make sure you are comfortable before you start - avoid being hungry, thirsty or needing to use the lavatory.
- Listen carefully to all the instructions. If you are not sure about anything, please do **ASK**.
- Remember that each exercise is timed, so keep an eye on the time.
- Approach each exercise positively. If you didn't enjoy one activity, put it out of your mind and tackle the next task optimistically.
- Be yourself! It is difficult to behave consistently in a way that is not natural for you.
- Don't try to second-guess what the exercise is measuring. You might be wrong!
- If the exercise is being observed, e.g. a group discussion, try to ignore the assessors and concentrate on the task in hand.
- If the exercise is based on a scenario you are familiar with, try not to get bogged down by your preconceptions about the situation.
- Work with the data that you have been given. Treat this data as accurate even if you think that things would be different in the "real world".

BEST OF LUCK!