

Overview

This Guide provides trained Assessors with the information needed to assess Participants in a fair, objective, and standardised way. The Guide includes 2 main sections:

Section 1: The Behavioural Assessment Process

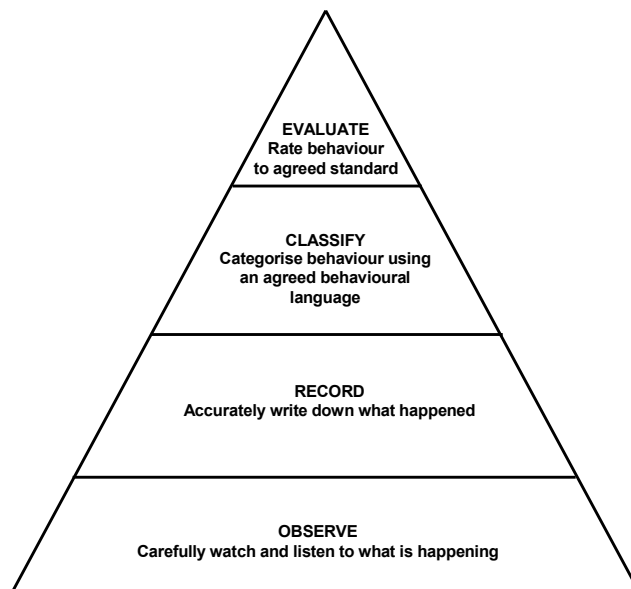
This provides a summary of the principles of best practice in behavioural assessment.

Section 2: Assessing Each Exercise (Case Analysis, Assigned GD, Internal/ External Role play)

This provides the specific details of the Exercise, including positive and negative examples of behaviour against appropriate criteria, and guidance on marking.

Section 1: The Behavioural Assessment Process

As an Assessor, your role is to assess Participants' behaviour in a fair and objective manner that is free from bias and stereotypes. To ensure this, the assessment of behaviour should typically follow the four stage 'ORCE' process: **Observe, Record, Classify and Evaluate**. This process is often illustrated as a pyramid to reinforce the fact that each stage of the process is only as solid as the foundation below it:



When assessing Participants in Group Discussion Exercises, Interview Simulations, Fact Find Exercises, Analysis Exercise Presentations or Oral Presentations, or any other exercise where there is

a 'live' interaction with the Participant, all four stages of this process apply. When assessing In-Basket, Scheduling and written Analysis Exercises, the behavioural evidence provided by the Participant is in written form so the Assessor is concerned primarily with the 'Classify' and 'Evaluate' stages. Each of these four stages will be discussed in turn.

Observe

In order to observe behaviour it must first of all be defined; put simply, behaviour is "what someone says or does, or does not say or do when something is expected of them". Therefore what you are looking for as an Assessor is not just what Participants do, but also what they fail to do under certain circumstances.

The challenge when observing in an assessment situation is to avoid the tendency to jump to conclusions and start evaluating what is being observed. It is astonishing how easily people can be confused about what they truly observe; many so-called observations are littered with judgemental comments that reflect the biases, prejudices and interpretations of the observer. For example, remarks such as 'wasn't interested', 'wasn't listening', 'he was bored' are invariably based on assumptions, and are not supported by any tangible observations.

Assessors' observations should therefore be like a video camera: they should simply reflect what happened, and be free from interpretation. Thus, recording observed behaviour is all about recording what **is** observed, not what is **thought** to be observed

Record

Although the Behavioural Assessment Process is shown as a four-stage process, the first two stages – Observing and Recording – are barely separable, as they go on simultaneously.

During the exercise, the Assessor's role is not to evaluate the performance of the Participant, but simply to collect data. Therefore, the challenge at this stage is to create an accurate record of the Participant's behaviour, as the ability to classify a Participant's performance later will be greatly impaired if the notes of what took place are not suitably accurate and detailed. Recording copious notes of a Participant's behaviour in an exercise is regarded by most Assessors as an irritating and difficult task; however it is extremely important. A failure to take notes may result in the Assessor making an evaluation of a Participant on the basis of a 'general impression', which in turn results in an attempt to justify or rationalise it after the event.

When recording behaviour, it is helpful to adhere to the following guidelines:

- ✓ Write verbatim quotes wherever possible.
- ✓ If it is necessary to paraphrase or summarise, be sure to write key words, so as to be able to reconstruct what was said.
- ✓ Note the time at regular intervals, particularly if you are observing a Participant who speaks infrequently in a Group Discussion Exercise.
- ✓ Record as much non-verbal behaviour as possible.
- ✓ Develop a form of shorthand for speed, ie use initials for Participants in a Group Discussion Exercise.
- ✓ When the person being observed is quiet, go back and fill in any incomplete notes, but be ready to resume writing if he/she starts speaking again.

Things to avoid when recording:

- X Making value judgements rather than direct observations.
- X Making vague and general notes rather than recording specific evidence.
- X Taking notes only when you think the information is 'important' rather than throughout.

Remember, note taking is a skill that can be learned and becomes easier with practice!

Classify

For all of our exercises, and assuming you are using our criteria, the output of the Classification and Evaluation stages is recorded on the Assessor Report Form.

For interactive exercises, it is generally recommended that Assessors start classifying the observed behaviour against the criteria as soon after the completion of the Observing and Recording phase as possible. (This is not as critical for written exercises where the issue of inaccurate recall does not apply.)

Although the mechanics of classification are easy enough, it is this stage which most inexperienced Assessors tend to find difficult. To be effective at classifying, it is vital to know the criteria well. Key points to bear in mind are:

- Remind yourself of the criteria definitions and how they might be displayed by the Participant in a given exercise.
- Many observations fit under more than one criterion.