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Fast Track National Assessment Centre

Overview Document

2019

Fast Track National Assessment Centre Overview Document

College of Policing Limited

Leamington Road

Ryton-on-Dunsmore

Coventry, CV8 3EN

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The College of Policing Selection and Assessment business unit comply with the international standard ISO 10667 2011 - Assessment service delivery - procedures and methods to assess people in work and organisational settings - Part 2: Requirements for Service providers. Clients may wish to consider ISO 10667 2011 - Part 1: Requirements for the Client - as it may apply in their own organisation.

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Fast Track Programme

The Fast Track Programme is a development programme and promotion mechanism to enable the most talented serving police constables to advance to the level of inspector within two years.

Note: The aim of the programme is to:

- Attract, identify and develop the most talented constables from within the police service who will bring new perspectives, diversity of thought and backgrounds, have a positive influence supporting the continuous development of policing, and impact on the management and culture of the service.
- Offer a development programme and promotion mechanism that supports individuals to advance to the rank of inspector within two years, and to reach the senior ranks of the service (at least superintendent).
- Support individuals' continuing development to provide a cadre of officers with the skills, experience and capacity to reach senior ranks of the service. The Fast Track Programme is aimed at attracting the brightest and best from within the police service, who will bring new perspectives and diverse backgrounds to support the continuous development of policing.

The programme focuses on the development of leadership, management and operational aspects to equip individuals with the skills, knowledge and experience required to be promoted to the level of inspector upon successful completion of the programme. Individuals will be supported by their force and will undergo regular assessments, where they will need to meet set standards to remain on the programme.

Overview of the Selection Process

The first stage of the selection process is a National Application Form, where candidates are required to demonstrate the relevant competencies and values for the programme. Some candidates may then sit a further selection process within their force, such as an interview. The final stage of the selection process is the Fast Track National Assessment Centre. Candidates that are 'recommended' for the programme, based on their performance at the Fast Track National Assessment Centre, and then offered a place on the programme by their force, will undertake the two-year programme at sergeant level subject to a satisfactory pass at the NPPF Step Two Legal Examination.

The Fast Track National Assessment Centre

This next section will provide you with an overview of the Fast Track National Assessment Centre, including how you will be assessed, an overview of the assessment centre exercises and details of how success at the assessment centre is determined.

Where is the Fast Track National Assessment Centre held?

The Fast Track National Assessment Centre will be held at the College of Policing site at Harperley Hall. The address is:

College of Policing

Harperley Hall

Fir Tree

Crook

County Durham

DL15 8DS

When am I required to attend the Fast Track National Assessment Centre?

You will select your own session date to attend the Fast Track National Assessment Centre through our online application system, Oleo. You will then receive an email to confirm your session date for the assessment centre and further information about the assessment centre and the College of Policing site at Harperley Hall. Your session will start at 12:15 and will begin with registration and a briefing where you will hear more about what to expect and the logistics at the assessment centre. Your session will finish around 17:00 the following day. When you attend the assessment centre you will be provided with a personalised timetable detailing where you need to be and when. Overnight accommodation will be provided for you at the College of Policing Harperley Hall site on the first night of your assessment centre.

Competencies and Values Assessed

The aim of the assessment centre is to measure your suitability for the programme, including your potential to reach at least the rank of superintendent in the police service. During the assessment centre you will be assessed against all of the competencies and values within the Competency and Values Framework (CVF). The CVF can be downloaded and viewed via the following links;

http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/competency-and-values-framework/Documents/Competency-and-Values-Framework-for-Policing_4.11.16.pdf

<http://skillsforjustice-ppf.com/competency-values/>

Within the CVF, each competency has three levels associated with it and each level is incremental. You will be assessed at level 3 of the relevant CVF competencies. The values

however are not split into levels as they should be demonstrated at every level in the same way.

The competencies and values assessed are as follows:



In order to ensure you are able to perform at your best at the Fast Track National Assessment Centre and more broadly in your policing career you are advised to use the CVF to prepare, alongside this overview document.

How will I be assessed?

At the assessment centre, you will be assessed by a number of different assessors. All assessors are appropriately trained in the principles and skills associated with the objective and fair assessment of others. Your assessors also receive training in the specific exercises used at the assessment centre and agree the assessment standards for the exercises. This ensures that you receive a high quality experience when attending the Fast Track National Assessment Centre that is fair, objective and accurate to enable all candidates to receive equal opportunity.

For every exercise you will be assessed by two trained assessors; one Service Assessor and one External Assessor.

The Service Assessors are:

- Currently serving officers at the level of superintendent or above.
- Currently serving officers at the rank of inspector or above who are members of the High Potential Development Scheme/Fast Track Programme.
- Police staff members at the equivalent rank of superintendent or above.
- Retired officers drawn from a reserve list (which is held to assist where current serving officers may be unable to attend in unforeseen circumstances).

The External Assessors are:

- Individuals entirely independent from the police service who are involved in selection at senior levels within the public and/or private sector.

For every exercise, irrespective of your specific marks, your assessors will complete feedback reports for you in each exercise to aid your personal development.

How are the exercises designed?

The Occupational Psychologists from the Senior Selection team (within College of Policing Selection and Assessment unit) use a structured Exercise Design Model as the basis of the development of the exercises.

The Exercise Design Model consists of a series of stages that each exercise goes through to create a set of exercises that are reliable, valid, relevant, realistic and fair to all candidates. The design model starts with 'Stakeholder Consultation' and progresses through a series of subsequent stages which include 'Critical Scenario Interviews', 'Exercise Writing', 'Exercise Consultation', 'Pilot' and 'Training Development'.

At each stage, senior police officers and stakeholders from England, Northern Ireland and Wales are consulted about the content of the exercises, and their associated marking guides, to ensure that the exercises are realistic and relevant to the target level.

What are the exercises?

There are **seven exercises**. Further information on each exercise is detailed later on in this section. Each exercise contributes equally to your overall assessment centre result.

Five of the exercises are 'work-sample' exercises, i.e. they are exercises that are designed to closely reflect the tasks that a senior police officer does. These exercises are:

- An Oral Briefing
- A Written In-Tray exercise
- A Performance Management exercise
- A Partnership Meeting
- A Values exercise

Note: Non-policing context

The Oral Briefing, Written In-Tray, Performance Management, Partnership Meeting and Values exercises are not set in a policing context. This is done to 'level the playing field' for a candidate pool with varying degrees of different aspects of policing and to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your management and leadership skills as appropriate to the role you are aspiring to.

For these exercises, you will not be expected to be fully familiar with policing terminology or have any specialist knowledge, but the exercises do closely reflect the types of tasks expected of a senior police officer.

The other two exercises are:

- A Presentation and Interview
- Cognitive Ability Tests

Note: Exercise independence

The exercises are not linked and have been designed to be independent of each other. Your performance on any one exercise alone cannot dictate your success in the Fast Track National Assessment Centre. Consequently, it is important to try your best at every exercise as only when taken together, will a full picture of your capability and suitability for the Fast Track programme be determined.

The assessment centre exercises have been designed around the priority areas generated from research into the leadership challenges facing the Police service (see **Appendix A**). They will each measure some of the competencies and values. For each exercise, you will be given a grade for each competency and value it measures and an overall exercise mark which will reflect how well you completed the task/s that were set. **Appendix B** details the rating scales for these.

Each exercise will assess the following competencies and values:

	Oral Briefing	Written In Tray	Performance Management	Partnership	Presentation/ Interview	Values
Emotionally Aware		✓	✓	✓		
Take Ownership	✓		✓			
Collaborative		✓		✓	✓	
Deliver, Support & Inspire			✓	✓	✓	
Analyse Critically	✓	✓				
Innovative & Open Minded	✓				✓	
Impartiality			✓	✓		✓
Integrity	✓					✓
Public Service					✓	✓
Transparency		✓				✓

Oral Briefing

In the Oral Briefing, you will be given information about a fictional scenario and **30 minutes** to read through the candidate materials to prepare. You will then be asked to give a briefing to two assessors on how you intend to address the issues contained in the scenario. You will have **10 minutes** to give your briefing, followed immediately by a further **10 minutes** in which the assessors will ask you questions about your briefing. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- **Value – Integrity**
- **Competency - Take Ownership**
- **Competency - Analyse Critically**
- **Competency - Innovative and Open-Minded**

Written In-Tray Exercise

You will have **two hours** to complete this exercise. You will be provided with a set of documents which you are required to work through in order to complete a number of tasks.

You will be required to type your response to the Written In-Tray Exercise tasks and will be provided with a laptop and a separate keyboard and mouse. The laptop computers contain Microsoft Word® word processing software which will have all the usual functions enabled (e.g. spelling and grammar checking, word count, etc.). You will also be provided with blank paper response sheet documents should you wish to include any additional information that you would prefer to handwrite rather than type (e.g. diagrams or tables).

You should also be aware that the laptop computers run the Microsoft® Windows 8.1 Operating System and are installed with MS Office 2013®. Whilst you will only be required to type onto a blank MS Word® word processing template, if you are not familiar with this operating system or version you may want to explore this in advance of the assessment centre so that you feel confident using it when you are on-site.

The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- **Value – Transparency**
- **Competency - Emotionally Aware**
- **Competency - Collaborative**
- **Competency - Analyse Critically**

Performance Management Exercise

In this exercise, you will be given information about a fictional scenario and asked to hold a meeting with one individual to address the issues presented. You will meet the trained role actor who will take the role of a character within the scenario. Before the meeting, you will have **20 minutes** to read through candidate materials and prepare for the meeting. The meeting will last up to **15 minutes**. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- **Values - Impartiality**
- **Competency - Emotionally Aware**
- **Competency - Take Ownership**
- **Competency - Deliver, Support and Inspire**

Partnership Meeting

In the Partnership Meeting, you will be given information about a fictional scenario and asked to hold a meeting with one individual to address the issues presented. You will meet a trained role actor who will take the role of a character within the scenario. Before the meeting, you will have **25 minutes** to read through candidate materials and prepare for the meeting. The meeting will last up to **15 minutes**. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- **Value – Impartiality**
- **Competency - Emotionally Aware**
- **Competency - Collaborative**
- **Competency - Delivery, Support and Inspire**

Values Exercise

In the Values exercise, you will be provided with some information about a fictional scenario and you will have **20 minutes** in which to read through the materials and prepare. You will then be asked to give a briefing to the assessors for **10 minutes** on your views, plan of action and rationale. The assessors will then have **15 minutes** in which to question you further about your actions and rationale. The exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

- **Value – Integrity**
- **Value - Impartiality**
- **Value – Public Service**
- **Value - Transparency**

Presentation/Interview

This is a combined exercise. Candidates are given **30 minutes** to prepare a presentation. Candidates prepare in the same room as other candidates. The presentation topic is on a contemporary police related topic and is sufficiently generic so as to avoid requiring specialist knowledge. After the candidate has delivered their presentation for **10 minutes**, the assessors have **10 minutes** to ask questions about the content of their presentation.

The interview component lasts for **20 minutes**, with four interview questions focussed on two competencies (5 minutes per question).

The combined Presentation and Interview exercise is designed to assess the following competencies:

Presentation:

- **Value – Public Service**
- **Competency - Innovative and Open-Minded**

Interview:

- **Collaborative**
- **Deliver, Support and Inspire**

All four will be combined to award a single Exercise Mark for the exercise.

Cognitive Ability Tests

You will sit three cognitive ability tests. These are:

- A verbal reasoning test
- A numerical reasoning test
- An inductive reasoning test.

The Cognitive Ability Tests are delivered in pen and paper format under examination conditions at the assessment centre. You will be allocated to a specific time slot within your personal timetable to complete the tests and will do so in one of the larger assessment rooms. Before the start of each test there will be an opportunity to complete practice questions.

All tests are provided by the test publisher SHL.

The **Verbal Critical Reasoning Test** measures your ability to evaluate written statements. Using content that makes use of work place experiences, you are required to draw conclusions from the written evidence. The tasks in this test involve reading a passage of text, and using that information to decide whether a given statement is 'True', 'False', or if you 'Cannot Say' from the information given.

This test has been selected because the following tasks are critical aspects of the role: analysing and interpreting written and oral information, preparing written documents or preparing and delivering presentations. You will have **18 minutes** within which to answer 32 multiple choice questions.

The **Numerical Critical Reasoning Test** measures your ability to make correct decisions or inferences from numerical or statistical data. The test measures your ability to work with numerical data in a realistic workplace context. The tasks in this test involve analysing some data in the form of a graph or chart, performing some kind of calculation and answering a short question.

This test has been selected because the following tasks are critical aspects of the role: analysis and interpretation of numerical data (e.g. crime figures, budgets, costs and data trends). You will have **20 minutes** to answer 20 multiple choice questions.

The **Inductive Reasoning test** measures your ability to draw inferences from, and understand relationships between, various concepts. The tasks in this test involve working out the pattern(s) in a set of images, and identifying the correct next image from the given options.

This test has been selected because the following tasks are critical aspects of the role: dealing with new concepts and approaches, answering questions of 'why' and 'how' and resolving complex and ambiguous problems. You will have **20 minutes** to answer 40 multiple choice questions.

Note: Practice Cognitive Ability Tests

At the assessment centre: As mentioned in the section above, before sitting each test at the assessment centre, there will be an opportunity to complete practice questions for each test.

Before the assessment centre: SHL offer free practice tests to help candidates prepare for their ability tests. These can be accessed anytime prior to your attendance at the assessment centre here: <https://www.shldirect.com/en/practice-tests/>

Please note that unlike the practice tests you will take at the assessment centre, these tests may not reflect the exact type and difficulty of the test you will take at the assessment centre. However, these tests will allow you to gain a 'feel' for completing ability tests. Please note, the ability tests you complete at the assessment centre will not be online and will be conducted using pen and paper.

How do I determine whether I am successful?

Once all the exercises in your intake are finished your overall performance is considered. Candidates who reach the requisite standard will be 'recommended' to go on to the Fast Track Programme, and those who do not reach the standard will be 'not recommended'.

No final decision will be made until you have completed all of the exercises and your performance on each has been evaluated. It is designed to be a challenging process and each exercise in itself is challenging. You are not expected to 'pass' every single exercise or all of the competency or values areas in order to achieve a grade of 'recommended'. With that in mind, even though you may feel you haven't performed as well as you could in a particular exercise, across the seven exercises, you will have ample opportunity to demonstrate your capability. Therefore, it is important to try not to dwell on any exercise you feel did not go as well as you wanted it too. During your preparation we advise you to consider ways to relax during any downtime you have whilst on site.

Note: Gaining a place on the Fast Track Programme for Serving Constables:

In order to be successful and gain a place on the Programme, you must be 'recommended' at the National Assessment Centre **and** be selected by your force.

When will I get my results?

Following the completion of the Fast Track National Assessment Centre and collation of grades, results are ratified by a Debrief Panel, after which the results are issued to candidates and forces by email. Results will be released by close of play on **Tuesday 2 April 2019**.

How will I receive feedback on my performance?

All candidates, whether successful or unsuccessful, will receive a personalised written feedback report on their performance at the assessment centre. This feedback will detail your performance in each of the exercises and you will be provided with a breakdown of the competency grades and exercise marks that you were awarded. This feedback report is aimed to aid your personal development in your current role and on the Fast Track Programme. Your results and feedback may be made available to members of the College Talent team to assist with your progress through the programme.

Assessment Centre staff and visitors

Alongside your fellow candidates at the assessment centre, there will be a number of other individuals on site when you attend the Fast Track National Assessment Centre. All these individuals receive appropriate training in relation to the particular tasks and responsibilities they have at the assessment centre (e.g. role actors, exercise co-ordinators, quality assurance team and site co-ordinators).

Assessment Centre Quality Assurance and On-site Management

The most important aspect of any assessment centre is the accuracy, consistency and fairness of the assessments made. All assessors will be fully trained in the exercises they will assess. Quality assurers will occasionally sit in on live exercises, to review assessments, to monitor standards and to support assessors, thereby adding value to the confidence that you, assessors and the police service can have in the robustness of the process. In addition, the overall management and administration of the Fast Track National Assessment Centre is overseen by an on-site delivery team.

Director and Co-Directors

The role of the Directors is primarily one of quality assurance, to ensure common standards across all candidate groups, but also to assess the process on behalf of the police service. The Directors attend the assessment centre to observe the exercises and ensure assessment standards are being applied appropriately, you may see them undertaking this role during your time on site.

Visitors

The Fast Track Programme is of interest to a number of key stakeholders involved in policing. As a result, there may be visitors interested in observing the process. Therefore in addition to the assessors and role actors, there may be a visitor observing the exercise. They will have no input whatsoever on how the assessors evaluate your performance and are not there to make an evaluation of you.

Enquiries and Further Information

Enquiries: Enquiries and requests for further information should be directed to:

Senior Selection Team
College of Policing
Central House,
Beckwith Knowle,
Otley Road,
Harrogate, North Yorkshire
HG3 1UF

Email: SeniorSelection@college.pnn.police.uk

Appendix A

Priority Areas for the Fast Track Programme for Serving Constables

This information will be used alongside information from role holders on the tasks that are critical to successfully performing as senior officer to help inform the types of tasks and the content of exercise scenarios that candidates will be set.

Top 15 Priority Areas

1. Protecting vulnerable people from harm.
2. Tackling child sexual exploitation.
3. Countering terrorism.
4. Tackling sexual violence.
5. Tackling cybercrime.
6. Building, maintaining and expanding effective partnerships.
7. Upholding key policing principles, integrity and improving public confidence in policing.
8. Understanding and responding to increased demands.
9. Tackling serious organised crime.
10. Improving and expanding victim care.
11. Improving public confidence.
12. Increasing diversity and valuing difference.
13. Increasing the innovative use of technology.
14. Managing culture change.
15. Transforming and reforming services.

The abilities, skills and characteristics needed by future leaders to deal with the challenges the police service will face

1. Personal integrity and commitment to public transparency (e.g. exemplary personal integrity and actions, able to communicate and set standards for others, greater demonstration of transparency).
2. Flexible transformational leadership skills (e.g. move beyond command and control, trusting staff to get on with their jobs and applying discretion, empower and engage staff, leading a corporate organisation over operational management, able to create effective senior teams and manage greater accountability).
3. Resilience and positivity (e.g. a positive attitude to making things work, able to work under pressure and with uncertainty, staying calm under pressure and stick by decisions).
4. Internal business and financial skills (e.g. business acumen, deal with the challenge of on-going budget reductions, able to hold deliverables to account, understanding commissioning and procurement).
5. Building integrated strategic partnerships (e.g. develop partnership working on a strategic level outside policing, more radical and integrated collaboration, sharing power and autonomy with others, utilise a collective leadership style to build alliances, engaging partners in solving problems).
6. Able to lead effective organisational change (e.g. positive to create momentum for change, able to 'pitch' new ideas convincingly and sell the benefits, comfortable with facilitating organisational change, leading and motivating staff through change, using continuous improvement).
7. Holding a long term, strategic, vision (e.g. thinking about the longer term benefits for the organisation/service beyond personal tenure, a strong vision with the ability to translate this, consider alternative strategic visions and how they may be achieved).
8. Creativity and innovation (e.g. demonstrate agility and flexible thinking to identify new ways of doing things, create new opportunities).
9. Open-minded and willing to challenge existing culture and practice (e.g. look beyond what has always been done, creating opportunity rather than waiting for it, open to new perspectives and diversity of thoughts, adapt quickly to new circumstances, challenge the status-quo, learning from mistakes rather than seeking to apportion blame, a willingness to challenge authority).
10. Humility and self-professional development (e.g. reflective of own practice and influence from others, learning from mistakes rather than seeking to apportion blame, a willingness to compromise).
11. Political astuteness (e.g. greater political awareness at local and national level, a more outward facing approach politically, how to influence and persuade political leaders, working together with political leaders to build relationships, understand and engage with the relationship between policing and politics).

The abilities, skills and characteristics that are desirable for candidates on the Fast Track programme

1. Challenging existing culture and practices (e.g. prepared to think independently, ask why things are done this way, less deferential to rank).
2. Taking learning from other organisations (e.g. an outward focus to learn from other organisations, experience of how things can work differently, sharing best practice).
3. Greater creativity and innovation (e.g. able to think of new ways of solving problems, radically innovative, willingness to take risks, supporting the ideas of others).
4. Leading effective organisation change (e.g. positive about change and able to persuade others of its value, able to implement transformational change, delivering rapid change).
5. Financial confidence and commerciality (e.g. commercial awareness and confidence, entrepreneurial skills).
6. Able to lead staff through challenging times (e.g. able to adapt leadership style, making bold decisions, inspire others to achieve goals, have a greater influence).
7. Supportive staff management (e.g. effective general management skills such as performance management, welfare, and development, able to engage staff).
8. Political astuteness (e.g. understanding the political dynamics, able to operate in a more political environment).
9. A focus on customer service and victim support (e.g. understanding victim experience, listening to the public, ingrained customer service ethos).
10. Comfortable with accountability and transparency (e.g. comfortable with public scrutiny, understand public perception of what is acceptable, honesty when mistakes are made).
11. Effective internal and external communication skills (e.g. using language the public understand).

Appendix B

Rating Scales

The assessors will use the ORCE (Observe, Record, Classify & Evaluate) model of assessment, which is a universally recognised and applied model for assessing. The model promotes objectivity and fairness in assessment.

The assessors observe your performance and make a record of what you said and did; then they classify this evidence against the competency or value related criteria. Once assessors have done this they evaluate your performance in each competency or value area using an A to D rating scale (see below). Assessors then award an overall exercise mark using a 1 – 6 Exercise Mark scale (see overleaf). Assessors initially decide upon grades and exercise marks for your performance independently of one another and then collectively agree final competency grades and exercise mark for you for each exercise.

Competency and Value Grade Scale

This scale requires assessors to evaluate both the quantity and quality (strength) of the evidence provided when awarding grades.

A	Substantial positive evidence of the competency or value observed with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence, and few or no areas for development observed.
B	Positive evidence of the competency or value observed and some areas for development but on balance more positive evidence with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence.
C	Some positive evidence of the competency or value observed but on balance more areas for development with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence.
D	Substantial areas for development identified and little or no positive evidence of the competency or value observed, with regard to the quality and quantity of the evidence.

Exercise Mark Scale

The Exercise Mark Scale is used to award you with an overall exercise mark for the exercise. The two statements at each point on the Exercise Mark Scale are intended to be considered together and not as separate statements.

1	<p>Very Effective Task Performance</p> <p>The candidate performed the task very effectively and almost entirely achieved the aims of the exercise. Performance on competencies/ values was exclusively high grades.</p>
2	<p>Effective Task Performance</p> <p>The candidate performed the task effectively and mostly achieved the aims of the exercise. Performance on the competencies/ values was mostly high grades.</p>
3	<p>Satisfactory Task Performance</p> <p>The candidate performed the task to a satisfactory standard and met some of the aims of the exercise although some elements were not satisfactory. On balance performance on competencies/ values was more high grades than low grades.</p>
4	<p>Just Below Satisfactory Task Performance</p> <p>The candidate performed the task to a below-satisfactory standard overall and did not quite meet the aims of the exercise, although there were some areas that were effectively handled. On balance performance on competencies/ values was more low grades than high grades.</p>
5	<p>Ineffective Task Performance</p> <p>The candidate performed the task largely ineffectively and did not meet the aims of the exercise, although there were some areas that were acceptable. Performance on the competencies/ values was mostly low grades.</p>
6	<p>Very Ineffective Task Performance</p> <p>The candidate performed the task very ineffectively and did not meet the aims of the exercise, although there may have been some minor areas that were acceptable. Performance on the competencies/ values was exclusively low grades.</p>