



Government  
Commercial  
Function

# COMMERCIAL ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE YOUR GATEWAY TO A GOVERNMENT COMMERCIAL CAREER



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# Introduction

Welcome to the Government Commercial Function.

This is an introduction to the Government Commercial Function and the Government Commercial Organisation. This brochure details why there is a need for confident and capable public sector commercial professionals, and how the capability standards are established and evaluated through an Assessment and Development Centre.

This brochure provides helpful information about the newly-updated Assessment and Development Centre and why it is an important part of establishing your career path within this specific field.

It will be of particular interest to anyone entering a central government department or wider public sector organisation from either a civil service or public sector upward move, the private sector, a local authority role, career change, university, further education, or as a Civil Service fast streamer.

## It covers:

[Background to the Public Sector Commercial Profession and the Assessment and Development Centre](#)

[The Assessment and Development Centre - what it is and how it works](#)

[The benefits of the Assessment and Development Centre](#)

[A focus on skills and attributes](#)



## GCO vision

We will recruit, develop and retain the best senior commercial talent to lead departmental commercial activities to support the delivery of policy objectives.

# Background

## Background to the Public Sector Commercial Profession and the Assessment and Development Centre

### ■ The need for commercial capability

With the government spending around £84 to £85 billion each year buying goods and services from third-party suppliers, and central government departments and wider public sector organisations coming under intense scrutiny from both the National Audit Office and the public domain, it is now more important than ever that commercial professionals are able to demonstrate an appropriate level of skills, expertise and commercial capability.

The Government Commercial Function, through implementing commercial standards, providing training and development, and assessing skills and competencies, sets the standard for commercial capability.

### ■ How the GCF drives capability standards

Using the established criteria from the [People](#)

[Standards for the Profession](#), the Government Commercial Function drives the standards of commercial capability. It is also at the forefront of the strategy to improve these through training, development, good practice and a specialist resourcing hub for assessing capabilities; the Assessment and Development Centre.

### ■ Why the Assessment and Development Centre is in place

The Assessment and Development Centre helps ensure that anyone joining the Government Commercial Organisation can demonstrate the right level of skills and attributes to flourish in a key commercial role. These include judgement, leadership and technical skills and expertise.

It provides rigour and consistency when selecting senior commercial staff and ensures that the government has people capable of improving commercial delivery and delivering value to taxpayers.

## ■ The commercial profession - structure and grading

The commercial profession comprises eight levels, aligned with Civil Service grades.



## ■ The Government Commercial Organisation

Sitting at the heart of government and with a vision to ‘...recruit, develop and retain the best senior commercial talent to lead departmental commercial activities...’ the Government Commercial Organisation is the employer of a cadre of senior commercial professionals. It provides commercial specialists with a centralised commercial accreditation through the Assessment Development Centre.

Potential employees must attend the Commercial Assessment and Development Centre to become a part of the Government Commercial Organisation.

# The ADC: what it is and how it works

## ■ How does the Assessment and Development Centre help you establish your career?

The Assessment and Development Centre is the gateway to a commercial career within a commercial function in a central government department or wider public sector body. It acts as a benchmark for skills and attributes.

It is a pre-requisite to employment with the Government Commercial Organisation. Many central governmental departments and wider public sector organisations are now placing significant importance on attending the Assessment and Development Centre as standard in their role criteria.

## ■ What is the Assessment and Development Centre?

The Assessment and Development Centre is a day of interviews and simulated role-play exercises. These are designed to be fair, consistent, objective and valid. You will be assessed against a range of attributes across a number of exercises and will

see several assessors to ensure these assessment principles are upheld.

It helps with your individual career path by evaluating strengths and highlighting areas for further development.

## ■ How it works

The Assessment and Development Centre takes place virtually using MS Teams. It is hosted by Government Commercial College - a nationally recognised online learning platform through which courses, master classes, webinars and other resources are delivered.

Designed by commercial subject matter experts and occupational and business psychologists, guided by the British Psychological Society's standard on assessment design and delivery, it is used to assess commercial acumen, skills and capability of individuals against the [People Standards for the Profession](#).

There are four levels: commercial lead, associate commercial specialist, commercial specialist and senior commercial specialist.

# Benefits of the ADC

## ■ For you

Benefits for you include:

- a step forward for your government commercial career
- an insight into the skills and attributes needed to perform effectively and progress in commercial roles
- an understanding of the People Standards for the Profession
- a day that challenges your abilities and thinking
- it puts you in a position to enjoy preferential terms and conditions of employment with the Government Commercial Organisation

## ■ For your organisation

Benefits for your organisation include:

- a robust, objective and independent assessment of individual capabilities
- it helps to raise the standard of commercial capability overall
- it measures against the People Standards for the Profession

- it highlights strengths and areas for development for future training and development
- it enables your organisation to work with you on a personal development plan more easily

## ■ For the public and taxpayer

Benefits for the public and taxpayer include:

- it raises the standard of the government's commercial capability function
- it sets out a level of competence that service users would expect
- it helps to place key people in key roles
- it demonstrates to the public that government departments and the wider public sector are recruiting high calibre people for roles
- it helps to make the commercial profession and civil service an attractive proposition and a great place to work

# A focus on skills and attributes

To help and enable you to progress your career within Government Commercial Function, there is a strong focus on developing skills and attributes, gained through experiential learning.

## ■ About the assessment

The assessment evaluates commercial capability and technical expertise against the Government Commercial Function People Standards for the Profession.

## ■ What we assess

The assessment covers the range of attributes needed to progress your career in a commercial role. The full range of attributes are set out in the [attributes](#) section.

## ■ How we assess

On the day your behavioural attributes will be assessed twice, and technical areas once - meeting different assessors throughout the day.

The Assessment and Development Centre uses a mix of interviews and simulated exercises to assess the attributes. They depend on the level being assessed but will be a combination of:

- judgement and leadership interview
- peer-to-peer meeting
- stakeholder meeting
- supplier meeting
- case study
- technical interview



## Ready to go for your Assessment and Development Centre day?

Take a look at **a guide to the assessment and help to prepare for the day.**

## ■ Skills and attributes

### Group 1: Business acumen and commercial judgement

- Manages risk
- Analyses and provides insight
- Makes effective decisions
- Demonstrates commercial acumen

### Group 2: Leadership skills and capability

- Delivers results and shows resilience
- Communicates and influences effectively
- Builds relationships
- Develops capability in others

### Areas of technical expertise, assessed against four key areas of the commercial lifecycle

1. Strategy and policy development
2. Understanding needs and sourcing options
3. Procurement process
4. Contract and supplier management

## ■ Attribute definitions: business acumen and commercial judgement

### Manages risk:

Identifies and analyses risks, including their potential impact and trade-offs. Takes appropriate actions to mitigate risks, showing a willingness to take balanced risks where appropriate.

### Analyses and provides insight:

Analyses and assimilates information effectively, making links between different sources of information. Evaluates information to draw meaningful insights. Utilises market knowledge and understanding of the wider political context.

### **Makes effective decisions:**

Makes clear and effective decisions, based on evidence. Considers a wide range of different options and provides a clear rationale for the decision made. Recognises when to involve others in the decision-making process. Makes timely decisions and plans how to implement decisions effectively.

### **Demonstrates commercial acumen:**

Applies commercial principles effectively, to deliver solutions which meet wider needs and priorities, and maximise value for money. Utilises financial data and contractual information to guide recommendations, always considering the wider commercial impact and the social or environmental benefits that can be achieved through contracts.

## ■ Attribute definitions: leadership skills and capability

### **Delivers results and shows resilience:**

Takes a results-focused and positive approach to ensuring optimal outcomes are achieved. Demonstrates resilience by remaining calm and composed in challenging situations. Strives to resolve issues, overcoming setbacks and challenges. Shows adaptability when attempting to reach objectives and manages change effectively.

### **Communicates and influences effectively:**

Communicates effectively, ensuring messages are clearly articulated and understood. Influences others to achieve positive outcomes, asserting their position confidently. Takes ownership of, and manages, conversations with stakeholders seamlessly, flexing their communication style based on the dynamics of the situation.

## A focus on skills and attributes

### **Builds relationships:**

Builds positive relationships with stakeholders, and collaborates and consults with others effectively to achieve win/win outcomes. Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills when interacting with others, showing empathy and constructively resolving conflict.

### **Develops capability in others:**

Develops capability and builds confidence in others, understanding their motivations and utilising this to drive positive commercial outcomes. Provides support to address development needs and empowers others to work to their potential. Utilises coaching and shares expertise and knowledge with a range of stakeholders.

