



## **The Digital Evolution of Assessment Centres**

*How Virtual Assessment Centres Improve Governance and Compliance*

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*This white paper aims to showcase how Assessments Centres have evolved from traditional paper-based models to smart online or virtual versions thanks to the emergence of new and improved technologies.*

*Most importantly, this white paper explains how a Virtual Assessment Centre can help support effective compliance and governance such as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and PoPI (Protection of Personal Information), within organisations.*

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## Introduction

Organizational success is largely driven by the acquisition of the best talent available. Statistically, it has been noted that often a high percentage of business-critical positions remain unfulfilled after several months. As many businesses compete for top talent, they invest large sums of money, time and other resources in advertising and recruitment. Research shows that the careful use of talent assessments can result in increased productivity, cost savings and better retention of top employees.

Technology has fundamentally transformed the way many businesses large and small, in varying sectors, design and manage their recruitment processes. Paper-based assessments are becoming more redundant and being replaced with online technology that can manage the application process more efficiently for both organizations and candidates.

Digital innovations such as online assessments are being used to assess and manage talent in a fast, and fairway, all of which, ultimately enable organizations in making better hiring and developmental decisions. Interestingly, all too often the investment in technology-led solutions in the early stages of the hiring process is not matched when it comes to the assessment centre.

This digital disconnect meant that traditional assessment centres came with an array of challenges such as logistical hassles; lack of scalability, were investment heavy, became predictable, had assessor bias and most importantly, had questionable accuracy and lacked compliance. Because of this, Traditional Assessment Centres failed to garner centre-stage as a staple methodology to assess candidates either for promotion or selection.

It became increasingly apparent that businesses needed to find an objective, more compliant and convenient way of assessing candidates, and through this need, Virtual Assessment Centres were created.

## **A Virtual Assessment Centre Explained**

Simply put, a virtual assessment centre is a digital simulation of a traditional assessment centre and can be seen as part of an organisation's digital transformation.

It utilises real-life workplace situations to evaluate a candidates' skills in a controlled environment which enables better decision making when it comes to hiring, developing, managing, or identifying organizational talent.

A Virtual Assessment Centre has multiple assessment instruments, mapped to behavioural competencies that measure a multitude of competencies for a particular role. And just as with an in-person assessment centre, activities could include:

- Information sharing
- Question-and-answer sessions
- Data and assessment governance
- Behavioural and cognitive assessments
- Technical ability assessments
- Developmental assessments

As opposed to a Traditional Assessment Centre, a Virtual Assessment Centre makes use of innovative technology to achieve comprehensive results through automated integration of primary results against the world of work and organisational and/or occupational competency frameworks. The tools are administered digitally, followed by automated reports, all of which significantly reduce manual effort, and reduce overhead costs, without compromising on the credibility and effectiveness of the process, as well as the accuracy of the results.

## **Benefits of a Virtual Assessment Centre**

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, the prime intent for every organisation is to capitalize on the benefits of technology by making Assessment Centres scalable, sustainable, convenient, cost-effective, interesting, and engaging without compromising on the core pillars of accuracy, credibility, objectivity, governance and compliance and of course by leveraging on the wisdom of human insight.

*Virtual Assessment Centre (VAC) offers:*

- **Scalability** – Compared to Traditional Assessment Centres that have a limited capacity for participants as well as assessors. VACs allow for an unlimited number of participants to take part in assessments at different locations at the same time, without hampering the quality of the engagement or the results.
- **Cost-Effectiveness** - A traditional assessment centre can work out to be quite costly if one considers certain logistical requirements. A VAC can however provide a simulated environment, virtually, and offer the same level of engagement at a much lesser cost.
- **Impartiality** - A VAC assures a standardized online assessment, with little or no involvement of an assessor, leading to minimum bias, better employee performance, and results.
- **Improved Compliance and Data Protection** – Another benefit of a VAC is greater security, as all assessment results are digitally stored. Besides, only the people who should be able to access exam information can be granted the appropriate system access. It is more difficult to control access, storage, and manage the results with paper-based exams.
- **Improved Practice Governance** – One of the challenges faced by assessment centres is to promote consistency, reliability and validity of interpreted results, and adherence to legislative and regulatory frameworks of assessment governing bodies such as the **Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)** and the **European Federation of Psychologists' Association (EFPA)**.

The benefit of a VAC is built-in functionality to manage practice governance and compliance thereby allowing professional practitioners to focus confidently on meaningful data interpretation based on ethical and good governance practice considerations.

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPI) and Compliance**

Many countries have specific laws, regulations and compliance requirements that govern hiring practices and employee rights, and data protection (GDPR and PoPI) compliance is one of the major benefits of converting a Traditional Assessment Centre into a Virtual one. In addition, various governing bodies play a vital role in compliance management such as the HPCSA and EFPA.

When it comes to confidentiality and security of their assessment materials online, many organisations may feel less in control when candidates are not in front of them. However, Virtual Assessment Centres are often more secure as everything is stored in one central place, compared to traditional ones, where papers can be misfiled or left lying in the open. With personal information being handled throughout the hiring process, having a centralised digital system to manage the assessment process ensures data is secure and minimises the risk of non-compliance.

Ultimately, as all the assessment activity takes place in the virtual world, there becomes less of a need to have to securely store the paperwork that assessors must maintain in a physical assessment centre. A VAC facilitates standardization of assessments, provides easy benchmarking, and simple extraction of results. Additionally, results are instant and automated with little to no manual efforts required.

Not only does digitising the assessment process reduce compliance issues, but it also reduces human bias by providing assessors with a positive and negative description of the candidate's competencies and behaviours, thus balancing the way observations are recorded.

While thinking about the candidate and assessor experience, another significant advantage of a Virtual Assessment Centre is data quality. Having a digital assessment platform improves the data collected, as everything is recorded automatically, in real-time, in the same format. This not only removes the chance of human error but enables the collection of consistent, reliable data accurately mapped against a candidate's application. All securely stored and managed.

## **Conclusion**

Virtual assessment centres are transforming workforce management in the digital world. They enable organizations to continue with their hiring and development practices by evolving from a Traditional Assessment Centre to a Virtual one. With technology acting as an enabler, a VAC allows organizations to extend opportunities for growth to all their employees in a streamlined manner.

By using a Virtual Assessment Centre, businesses can enhance the face-to-face experience for candidates and assessors. Additionally, a well-developed and validated online assessment solution helps further mitigate legal risk and exposure.

## About the SimplyMustard Virtual Assessment Centre

SimplyMustard is a robust virtual assessment centre and provides a digital simulation of a traditional assessment practice, powered by pre-selected, best-in-class cognitive, behavioural, technical, and developmental assessments and world-class technology.

The platform evaluates candidates' skills and behaviours in a controlled environment. It enables businesses to make the best decisions about recruiting, developing, and optimising their organisation's talent.

The SimplyMustard Virtual Assessment Centre not only removes the administrative burden, but also removes human bias, reduces costs and time spent, optimises a workforce, is agile and streamlined, provides comprehensive aggregated reporting, and supports good decision making and compliance.

### *How SimplyMustard Promotes Compliance and Governance*

- Built-in regulatory governance to ensure adherence to the latest legislation, EFPA and HPCSA, and Test Developer regulatory frameworks
  - Automated access control based on practice regulatory framework ensures only qualified professionals and accredited users gain access to primary reports.
  - Built-in standards for aggregation of assessment data are defined and managed in a meaningful way to enhance data credibility.
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To learn more about **SimplyMustards' Virtual Assessment Centre**

visit us at <https://SimplyMustard.com>

Or email us at [sales@simplymustard.com](mailto:sales@simplymustard.com)



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