

The UK Assessment Centre Conference 2016

Assessment Centres: Global, Cultural and Diversity Challenges

Sponsored by:









12th - 13th May 2016 Beaumont Estate, Old Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 2JJ

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Conference organisers



The UK Assessment Centre conference has been organised by the UK Assessment Centre Group (UK-ACG) with input from the following:

The UK-ACG Committee

Nigel Povah, **a&dc**Sonia Pawson, Civil Service Specialist Recruitment
Charlie Eyre, Independent
Daryl Murray, Penna
Dan Hughes, JCA
Holly Sands, CEB-SHL Talent Measurement Solutions
Louise Meade, College of Policing
Max Choi, Quest Partnership
Phil Wilson, Civil Service Fast Stream
Philly Riley, **a&dc**

Supported by

Rachel Chandler, a&dc

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the numerous other people, too many to name, who have contributed to this conference.

Welcome message



It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the 3rd UK Assessment Centre conference.

The conference has a different format this year and we've managed to pack more content into the schedule, assuring you of even greater value than before. There are still three impressive keynotes for you to enjoy but these are now interwoven with 5 breakout slots spread across the two days with two parallel sessions running in each slot; see the schedule and list of activities on pages 6-7.

Our theme for this year's conference relates to how global, cultural and diversity challenges impact assessment centres. There is little doubt that assessment centre practice is becoming increasingly global and we are delighted to reflect this in our conference this year, with five of our 12 sessions covering AC activities in Egypt, Kenya, Turkey, the Middle East and the US. It is therefore no surprise that the themes of diversity and cultural differences feature in at least half of the sessions.

We have three exciting but different keynote sessions this year. Firstly, we have Steve Isherwood, the CEO of the Association of Graduate Recruiters, whose members are amongst the most active users of ACs within the UK and Steve will be discussing some of the challenges currently facing his members. Secondly, we have Brian Hoffman, a leading AC academic from the University of Georgia who will highlight the challenges we face when using ACs to predict effective leadership behaviour. Finally, we have Simon Mitchell, General Manager from DDI UK, who will share with us the research findings from a survey conducted by DDI into the qualities required of leaders in a globalised world where they face a constantly accelerating pace of change.

We are also delighted to show our ongoing support and commitment to the principle of best practice and in particular the recently published BPS Assessment Centre Standards and we are therefore delighted once again to be joined by Helen Baron, the Chair of the British Psychological Society committee responsible for the Standards, who will be providing us with further insights into how the standards can benefit us all. There are also several other sessions covering issues aligning to the standards.

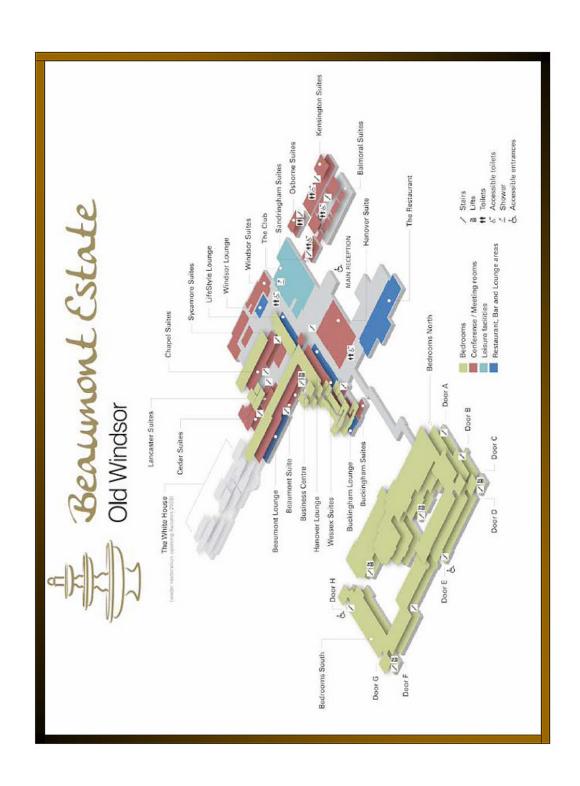
We hope that the conference will help you to further your understanding of assessment centres with all of the fascinating challenges that they present and provide you with the opportunity for networking with fellow AC advocates.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to wish you all a successful and enjoyable conference.

Nigel Povah, Chair of the UK Assessment Centre Group (UK-ACG)

Floor layout





The schedule



Thursday 12th May

13.30	Conference registration begins
14.00	Welcome and opening address by Conference Chair
14.20	Keynote 1: Steve Isherwood <i>Graduate recruitment: Driving innovation and diversity in the assessment world</i>
15.15	Tea break
15.35	Breakout session 1
16.20	Comfort break
16.30	Breakout session 2
17.15	Plenary summary
17.30	Adjourn
18.30	Drinks reception
19.30	Dinner plus entertainment

Friday 13th May

08.30	Conference registration begins
09.00	Welcome and opening address by Conference Chair
09.20	Keynote 2: Brian Hoffman Assessment Centres are deficient predictors of effective leadership
10.15	Tea break
10.35	Breakout session 3
11.20	Group photo
11.40	Breakout session 4
12.25	Conference update
12.45	Lunch
14.00	Keynote 3: Simon Mitchell Leadership in a globalised world: Keeping up with the accelerating pace of change
15.00	Tea Break
15.20	Breakout session 5
16.05	Summary & close

Index of activities



Activity		Presenters	Title	Page
Opening address day	y 1		I	
Keynote 1		Steve Isherwood, AGR	Graduate recruitment: Driving innovation and diversity in the assessment world.	7
Breakout session 1	1a	Jo Parkes, IBM	Round table discussion on Exercise Effect at Assessment Centres with specific focus on Group Exercises.	
	1b	Howard Clemence, College of Policing	The validity and diversity of police recruit assessment centres.	9
Break				
Breakout session 2	2a	Crispin Garden-Webster, Oman Oil Company	"We shall test them"Assessment centres in different cultural contexts.	10
	2b	Helen Baron, Independent	Eight recommendations that could improve your practice.	11
Day 1 close				
Opening address day	y 2			
Key note 2		Brian Hoffman, University of Georgia	Assessment centres are deficient predictors of effective leadership.	12
Breakout session 3	3a	Tracy McNeill, a&dc and Eileen Brown, Northern Gas Networks	Talent Centres: Speaking the right language to engage stakeholders and align to organisational culture.	
	3b	Helen Slimmon, The College of Policing	Using Assessment Centres for the Selection of Senior Leaders in the National Police Service Kenya.	14
Group photo	·			
Breakout session 4	4a	Max Choi, Quest Partnership and Nigel Evans, Nigel Evans Consulting	The Assessment Centre Standard: Practical Recommendations on Getting the Effort Right.	
	4b	Dr Nadia El Shafei & Dr Nahla Radwan, R&S Management Consultancy	Demonstrating the profitability of assessment centres in the MENA region.	
Conference update	·			
Keynote 3		Simon Mitchell, DDI	Leadership in a globalised world: Keeping up with the accelerating pace of change.	
Breakout session 5	5a	Sean Keeley & Matthew O'Sullivan, IBM	A Review of AC Decision Making (Wash Up) Options; Striving for Fairness.	
	5b	Eren Suna, Assessment Systems	Fairness of Adapted Assessment Centre Exercises: A Case Study from Turkey.	20
Summary & close				





Keynote 1: Graduate recruitment: Driving innovation and diversity in the

assessment world

Speaker: Steve Isherwood, **Association of Graduate Recruiters**

Location: Tudor Room

When: Thursday 12th May at 14:20

Summary

For a number of years approaches to graduate recruitment and development strategy have remained broadly static. But as recruitment targets climb ever higher, organisations are embracing contextual screening, blind applications, non-competency based interviews and removing academic criteria in efforts to reach talent. Using the AGR's research data, market insights and knowledge of educations policy, Stephen will explore the pressures driving change and the new approaches many organisations are adopting.

About the speaker

Stephen Isherwood was appointed Chief Executive of AGR in June 2013 following seven years as Head of Graduate Recruitment UK & Ireland at Ernst & Young, one of the largest recruiters of graduates in the UK. Stephen started his career at Coopers & Lybrand recruiting experienced management consultants before moving into graduate recruitment when the firm merged with Price Waterhouse to form PwC. After PwC he lead the graduate recruitment and development programme at Safeway before working in the public sector where he developed and managed a number of careers related programmes. Stephen has extensive experience in the recruitment and development of students, both graduates and school leavers. He has worked closely with Higher Education throughout his career with a focus on the career development and employment of students. In addition to his current role Stephen sits on a number of steering groups related to higher education and employment including the HEAR Advisory Committee, the Plotr Advisory Council and the GPA Advisory Group. He has presented to various committees in the Houses of Parliament and often appears in national and local media.



Breakout 1a



Breakout 1a: Round table discussion on Exercise Effect at Assessment Centres with

specific focus on Group Exercises

Speaker: Jo Parkes, **IBM Location:** Tudor Room

When: Thursday 12th May at 15:35

Summary

It is the author's experience that Group Exercises are the 'marmite' of Assessment Centres with clients, candidates and assessors either loving or loathing them. Something that frequently occurred during wash-up sessions was discussion of candidate performance in the context of the group as a whole. It is because of this that the analysis has gone one step beyond assessing exercise effect at a candidate level by reviewing the collective candidate performance in order to identify IF in fact it may be the case that a candidate's score is more reflective of those of the group than that of the individual.

About the speaker

Jo Parkes is a Senior Talent Consultant within IBM's Smarter Workforce team with experience of designing and reviewing customized cognitive assessments, interview questions, assessment centre exercises, realistic job previews and situational judgement tests to meet bespoke client requirements. Tests produced have been used for selection and development of candidates ranging from school leavers through to managers and graduates across public and private sector markets. Jo also has an interest in inclusivity and diversity, particularly with regards to the impact that assessment used for selection may have on applicants with additional needs.

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Breakout 1b



Breakout 1b: The validity and diversity of police recruit assessment centres

Speakers: Howard Clemence, **College of Policing**

Location: Beaumont Room

When: Thursday 12th May at 15:35

Summary

The session will focus on the diversity-validity dilemma and will touch on political validity. The session will cover how subgroup differences in police recruitment procedures make it difficult for the police service to simultaneously maximise the validity of their selection procedures and select a diverse workforce. The session will explore the advantages and disadvantages of options open to the police service around balancing a valid design methodology against differences in how subgroups perform when a design model is delivered as a live assessment centre. The session will outline how police assessment centres contribute towards meeting the strategic direction of the police service around building a diverse workforce.

About the speakers

Howard Clemence is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist who is employed by the College of Policing. Howard has worked for over a decade within Selection, Assessment and Development of police officers. In recent years Howard has been involved in a large scale job analysis of advanced officer characteristics which has fed into a review of policing's competency framework. Since September 2015 Howard has led a review of police initial recruitment. It was in Howard's later project that he developed an interest in the validity-diversity dilemma surrounding the design and delivery of police assessment centres.



Breakout 2a



Breakout 2a: "We shall test them"... Assessment centres in different cultural

contexts

Speaker: Crispin Garden-Webster, **Oman Oil Company**

Location: Tudor Room

When: Thursday 12th May at 16:30

Summary

An exploration of the role played by diversity variables in Assessment Centre design and implementation. The session will address multiple factors including: capability-maturity in terms of organisational readiness; power-distance effects; leadership endorsement and support; opportunities and challenges around language; normative data; candidate authenticity; managing feedback and information security. Three tcase studies will illustrate the key points for design and execution in different cultural contexts.

About the speaker

Crispin is an Organisational Psychologist. He began his career as an Officer in the New Zealand Army, working on assessment and operational support. Upon joining the private sector in 1994, Crispin worked as Manager HR Development with Telecom New Zealand before embarking on a consulting career in 2001. His projects encompassed public and private sector change, organisational development, assessment and international development, with assignments in Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam. Crispin's interests are in simulation design and leadership assessment. He currently leads the talent management and assessment practice at Takatuf Oman LLC. and lives in Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman.

crispin.webster@takatuf.om



Breakout 2b



Breakout 2b: Eight recommendations that could improve your practice

Speaker: Helen Baron, **Independent**

Location: Beaumont Room

When: Thursday 12th May at 16:30

Summary

The BPS Standard for The Design and Delivery of Assessment Centres (BPS, 2015) was published in 2015. The process of developing the Standard included some 'back to basics' thinking about what we actually know about how assessment centres work and what techniques are effective. It became evident that design features that can increase centre validity by up to 50% are widely ignored. This paper discusses the reasoning and evidence behind elements of the standard and its implications for improving practice and enhancing the effectiveness of centres.

About the speaker

Helen Baron is a Chartered Psychologist with over 30 years' experience in the design and implementation of effective selection and assessment systems. She has a particular interest in equal opportunities policy and the promotion of fairness in selection and other areas. An independent consultant and leading UK psychometrician, she has developed many original tests and questionnaires. Her current committee work includes being co-convenor of the BPS Working Group on Assessment Centre Standards and General Secretary of EAWOP as well as being a consultant editor for BPS test reviews.

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Brief Descriptions of Presentations - Day Two



Keynote 2: Assessment centres are deficient predictors of effective leadership

Speaker: Brian Hoffman, **University of Georgia**

Location: Tudor Room

When: Friday 13th May at 09:20

Summary

Assessment centres are widely accepted as valid predictors of task-oriented aspects of performance, but past studies have not investigated whether ACs are efficacious predictors of more relational forms of leadership. This is an important omission, given the established importance of relational behaviors to effective leadership. This presentation summarizes five studies that investigate whether ACs predict different types of relational behaviors. Together, the results show that ACs were a significant correlate of traditional, task-oriented behaviors but not various forms of relational behaviors. Potential explanations for these troubling findings are offered, and approaches for designing ACs to better capture relational behaviors are proposed.

About the speaker

Dr. Brian Hoffman received his doctorate from the University of Tennessee in 2006 and is the Chair of the Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program at the University of Georgia. Dr. Hoffman currently serves as an Associate Editor of the Journal of Management and has served on the Editorial Boards of the Journal of Business and Psychology, Journal of Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior, and the Journal of Personnel Psychology. Dr. Hoffman has published over 50 articles, chapters, and books on a range of topics, including the changing nature of work and workers, the assessment and prediction of effective leadership, and the application of management principles to sports settings. His research has been covered by CBS Sports Network, ESPN's Sports Centre, National Public Radio, Cracked.com, and the Washington Post. An experienced assessor, role player, and AC administrator and designer, he has authored two books on assessment centres, co-chaired the development of the most recent International Guidelines on the Ethical Use of Assessment Centres, published multiple studies supporting the multifaceted interpretation of assessment centres, and twice received the Anne Howard and Douglas Bray Grant for Assessment Centre research.

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Breakout 3a



Breakout 3a: Talent Centres: Speaking the right language to engage stakeholders

and align to organisational culture

Speakers: Tracy McNeill, a&dc and Eileen Brown, Northern Gas Networks

Location: Tudor Room

When: Friday 13th May at 10.35

Summary

As practitioners we know that it is important to use the right language to describe the purpose of a Centre, but what about a consideration for the language used to align with the organisation's current or desired culture? How can we create an engaging experience for Participants using the right language whilst applying best practice? This session will present how **a&dc** achieved that with Northern Gas Networks to deliver 'Talent Centres' with a Formula 1 theme! We also present our initial evaluation to illustrate how this project provided the greatest certainty about Northern Gas Network's talent.

About the speakers

Tracy McNeill is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist and works as a Principal Consultant at **a&dc**. She has worked in the assessment and development field for almost 10 years, including living and working in the Middle East. Tracy has a particular interest in applying assessment principles to support leadership development and in ensuring that all involved have an engaging and beneficial experience. tracy.mcneill@adc.uk.com

Eileen Brown has 15 years' experience of working in the utilities sector, and has led the customer strategy team for Northern Gas Networks for the last 5 years. During this time she has been involved in transforming the service delivery of NGN by really striving to go above and beyond what our customers are expecting. She has led voice of customer programmes, and also conducted extensive customer research. She has experience of working in a heavily regulated environment, but has also spent time with many different organisations outside of utilities, to identify current best practice and future market trends.





Breakout 3b



Breakout 3b: Using Assessment Centres for the Selection of Senior Leaders in the

National Police Service Kenya

Speaker: Helen Slimmon, The College of Policing

Location: Beaumont Room

When: Friday 13th May at 10:35

Summary

The College of Policing holds responsibility for the design and delivery of a range of assessment centres for the national recruitment, promotion and executive selection for the police service of England and Wales. Through our International Academy we support international partners to develop professional and accountable policing by delivering effective selection assistance. This session describes the process of supporting the National Police Service of Kenya in running an assessment centre to select senior leaders and encourages delegates to reflect on the challenges of implementing BPS standards for the design and delivery of assessment centres in a different cultural context.

About the speaker

Helen Slimmon is a Senior Occupational Psychologist at the College of Policing Selection and Assessment Unit where she is responsible for managing the provision of assessment and selection related services for the Police Service in the UK. Her work encompasses the design of national examination systems, assessment centres and bespoke assessment projects to support promotion and selection for specialist roles.

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Breakout 4a



Breakout 4a: The Assessment Centre Standard: Practical Recommendations on

Getting the Effort Right

Speakers: Max Choi, Quest Partnership and Nigel Evans, Nigel Evans Consulting

Location: Tudor Room

When: Friday 13th May at 11:40

Summary

The evidence is that many organisations are not running assessment centres as effectively as they could. Therefore, the Assessment Centre Standard was developed and was recently launched. This paper provides practical guidance on ensuring key problem areas are managed well. Assessment centres are not working well because 1. Our efforts are not effective e.g. assessing too many competencies, or 2. We are not making sufficient effort in key areas e.g. quality training of assessors. These key issues are explored and practical guidance is provided that helps assessment centre practitioners run more effective assessment centres.

About the speakers

Max Choi, CPsychol, CSCI, AFBPsS is Managing Director of Quest Partnership Ltd. He has been involved in Assessment and Development Centre activities for over 25 years during which time he has designed and implemented centres and programmes for many clients. He is currently the co-convener of the BPS group working on the Assessment Centre standards. He has designed many assessment centre exercises and psychometric tests focusing on introducing new innovations. Some of his psychometric and leadership research has been published and presented at conferences.

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Nigel Evans is a Business Psychologist with 20 years' experience. He is a recognised expert in psychometrics and behavioural assessment and is truly international in his approach, having delivered assignments in over 35 countries. Clients have included AXA, BT, GKN, HM Government, HSBC, NOKIA, SONY and UBS. Nigel is a Chartered Psychologist with the British Psychological Society (BPS). He is currently the British representative for the International Test Commission presenting at global conferences and is a core member of the Division of Occupational Psychology working group, formulating and applying the new Standard for Assessment Centres alongside ISO 10667.

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Breakout 4b



Breakout 4b: Demonstrating the profitability of assessment centres in the MENA

region

Speakers: Dr Nadia El Shafei and Dr Nahla Radwan, R&S Management Consultancy

Location: Beaumont Room

When: Friday 13th May at 11:40

Summary

The Assessment Centre is an integral part of Human Capital Activities. It generates extra profit for organizations (financial and non-financial). It applies the human capital management activities star (Acquire talent, Develop, Retain, and Reward) along with planning and assessing. We will share our practical experience in the MENA region on how we converted an assessment centre to be profitable, despite financial challenges, and how the outcome led to productivity enhancements and initiated a culture of innovation amongst employees.

About the speakers

Nadia El Shafei, has built her expertise in the Human Resources & Talent Management with more than 30 years' experience with multinational organizations. Nadia obtained her PhD in Human Resources Development - Nixon University USA, and a MD in Management of Learning and development - EAMS at Granada - Spain. She is a holder of B.Sc. commerce - Alex University-Egypt and awarded EXPERT title for Enterprise Managements Development Program by ITC-UN. Currently she is a lecturer for MBA program at Arab Academy for science and Marine, and has her own "R&S" Management consultancy company in partnership with R&S in Belgium (www.rsconsultancy.com). She has held different positions as HR Director in Rhone Poulenc Rorer (SANOFI), Glaxo, Schering Plough (MSD) & Bank of Credit Commerce international.

Dr. Nahla Radwan graduated from faculty of Medicine, Ain Shams University, Cairo in 2006. She has her MD in Neuropsychiatry in 2011 and the Egyptian Fellowship in Psychiatry 2015. She started R&S Management Consultancy in 2005. Nahla is a senior assessor and has conducted multiple assessment centres for different pharmaceutical companies, for internal development and for recruitment.





Keynote 3



Keynote 3: Leadership in a globalised world: Keeping up with the accelerating

pace of change

Speaker: Simon Mitchell, **DDI**

Location: Tudor Room

When: Friday 13th May at 14:00

Summary

Increasingly, C-level leaders are looking at their organisations and coming to the conclusion "Our leaders learn, but they don't grow". More accurately they should conclude that leadership isn't growing fast enough to navigate a rapidly changing business environment. Using data from over 15,000 assessments, DDI's research illuminates what it takes for leaders to be ready to meet the challenges of today's globalised world; what are leaders struggling with most, how can their growth be accelerated so it's fast enough and what happens when organisations get it right. The talk will cover the role of talent professionals in organisational effectiveness and the catalytic impact of other leaders.

About the speaker

Simon is General Manager of DDI UK based in London. He also leads the European marketing team and is a member of the DDI European Leadership team.

Before joining DDI in 2006, Simon held various sales, marketing and general management roles for organisations including manufacturing and business services group Reed Holdings, asset management organisation Microlease plc. and healthcare group Whatman plc. (part of GE).

At DDI he designs and delivers executive assessment and leadership programmes for several global organisations. Simon is a regular commentator in business and HR media including the BBC, The Times, The Financial Times, and The Economist.

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Breakout 5a



Breakout 5a: A Review of AC Decision Making (Wash Up) Options; Striving for

Fairness

Speakers: Sean Keeley and Matthew O'Sullivan, **IBM**

Location: Tudor Room

When: Friday 13th May at 15:20

Summary

Fifty years after their introduction the debate around the construct and criterion validity of assessment centres continues. However, consensus is emerging on which decision making processes should be used with many suggesting an arithmetic approach to finalising dimension ratings. This break-out session will examine the strengths and weaknesses of this and a number of other approaches in terms of how each supports managing fairness, as well as the utility of the assessment centre process. The session will engage the audience in a debate on these differing approaches looking at the different benefits and drawbacks of each.

About the speakers

Sean Keeley is Global Psychometric Lead at IBM Smarter Workforce. He is passionate about applying experience, expert knowledge, science and technology to help provide the most accurate and useful assessments and processes to his clients and colleagues for the last 25 years. In the past few years, he has worked on test development, assessment centre and talent analytic projects with a large number of clients in a range of sectors including banking, professional services, public sector, IT, retail and FMCG. Sean is a Chartered Psychologist, and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society.

Matt O'Sullivan is a Managing Consultant at IBM Smarter Workforce. He works primarily in the design and delivery of solutions focused on employee selection, engagement and development. He has managed and consulted on a wide range of client assessment projects from graduate selection to senior manager promotion working across a range of different industries (automotive, banking, FMCG, real estate, government, insurance and defence sectors). Matt started his career working in HR for a telecommunications company. He has over 13 years of experience of delivering assessment centres and remains passionate about finding new and better ways to do this.





Breakout 5b



Breakout 5b: Fairness of Adapted Assessment Centre Exercises: A Case Study from

Turkey

Speaker: Eren Suna, **Assessment Systems**

Location: Windsor Room

When: Friday 13th May at 15:20

Summary

The Assessment Centre (AC) is widely-used in selection and vocational promotion procedures and it is no different in Turkey. However, a number of these ACs, which are used for making such decisions, include the use of adapted exercises. There are many advantages for using exercises which yield valid and reliable results in different cultures. However, the adaptation process of these established exercises has many potential threats: unqualified translation of content, biased implementations, oversimplification of the context, etc. A comparative method is suggested to investigate fairness of adapted AC exercises with the data which was gathered from a national bank company in terms of gender groups.

About the speaker

Eren Suna has been working as Measurement and Evaluation Manager at Assessment Systems Turkey since January 2015. They focus on structuring and developing psychometric tools, AC exercises and adapting the products of our global partners into Turkish culture. Up until 2015, Eren had been working as lecturer in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation in Ba kent University, Ankara, Turkey. Concurrently, Eren studies for his doctoral dissertation and is a PhD candidate in the department of Measurement and Evaluation.

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General information



Badges

Please wear your name badges at all times during the conference.

Bank facilities

These can be found at the BP garage just along the road from Beaumont.

Catering

Tea and coffee breaks will be in Tudor Lounge. Lunch will be served in the main restaurant.

Enquires / Information Desk

If you have any enquiries, please direct these to the Conference Registration Desk which can be found in the main reception.

Rooms

The main conference will be held in Tudor Room. The breakout sessions will be held in the Tudor Room and the Beaumont Room.

Mobile Phones

We respectfully request that all mobile phones are turned off or turned onto silent whilst you are in any of the conference sessions.

Toilets

Toilets can be found just outside the Tudor Room.

Twitter

Please feel free to tweet any comments during the conference using #ukacg.

Wi-Fi

There will be Wi-Fi available throughout the duration of the conference. The access codes will be:

Username: adc1 Password: adc1

Note pages

