In-Basket Testing Considerations

In-basket tests are used to assess whether a candidate has the specific skills needed for a job. These tests also help familiarize the candidate with some of the responsibilities of the role.

**Considerations**

* Be aware that some candidates might need accommodation in order to take the test so ask ahead of the interview if they will need any special arrangements.
* In-basket tests should be measurable so it always good to have a shared rating scale for all the interview panelists to use in the evaluation. E.g. a scale of 1 – 5 with 5 indicating an excellent response and 1 indicating a poor response.
* In-basket tests are timed so ensure that you allocate enough time as you plan the interview for the candidate to complete it.
* Ensure that the test is appropriate and relevant to what might actually occur in the position.
* Inform the candidate that they will be taking part in an in-basket test, format of the test, and how much time they will have to complete it.
* Let the candidate know that they can opt out of taking the in-basket test; however, should they decide not to do the test, they will not score any points in that portion of the interview.

**Examples**

***Specialized knowledge test***: this can be done online or on paper and is a great way to test a specific skillset/knowledge required for the position e.g., using SPSS to analyze data, questionnaire.

***Administrative skill testing***: this is a good strategy to use in assessing a candidate’s ability to perform administrative tasks e.g., responding to a difficult email, answering telephone questions, mail merge.

***Case Study***: case studies are a great way to get an understanding of how the candidate processes new information and is also used to evaluate the candidate’s ability to analyze and solve a problem.

***Presentation***: if the position requires a lot of public speaking or presentation, having the candidate prepare a 5-10 minute presentation is a great method of assessing verbal communication.

***Role play***: role playing is an interactive way to evaluate the candidate for handling unusual situations and interactions. This is a great test to use if the role involves a lot of interpersonal skills. The interviewer can play the role of a specific character (e.g. difficult customer) or characters can be played by other members of your unit/department.