

University of Leeds Widening Participation Assessment Centre Simulation Case Study



SRS Recruitment and Employability Experts collaborate with the University of Leeds to run a special programme supporting Widening Participation students.

The University of Leeds sought to target support for their Widening Participation students who had expressed a lack of confidence in applying for Placement and/or Graduate positions and who felt anxious about attending an Assessment Centre. The Assessment Centre simulation was open to all years, but aimed more specifically for penultimate and final year students.

The Challenge

Karen Shaw, Mentoring and Widening Participation Manager, explained “University of Leeds Student Careers has a strategic commitment to support students who would benefit from targeted interventions to enhance their employability skills. This year our Widening Participation students fed back that they were worried about attending assessment centres and asked for additional support.”

The Solution

The University of Leeds partnered with SRS to design an Assessment Centre simulation in a safe learning environment to increase confidence levels and aspirations, and encourage more applications to employers from this group of students. We wanted the students to reflect and learn from their experience of the day and become inspired to confidently apply for, and secure, graduate jobs and high-quality placements in the future.

What We Did

Based on our successful, award-winning Assessment Centre simulation format, we ran two events on campus, each scheduled for 30 Widening Participation students. The Assessment Centres consisted of three exercises;

- Group Exercise
- Group Presentation
- 1:1 interview

All exercises were supported with individual typed feedback reports on the students’ performance, including strengths demonstrated and their key development areas.

Following completion of the morning Assessment Centre, the students each received one to one coaching and verbal feedback from professional assessors. This complemented the digital feedback they received from the morning exercises.



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Level 3 Accreditation

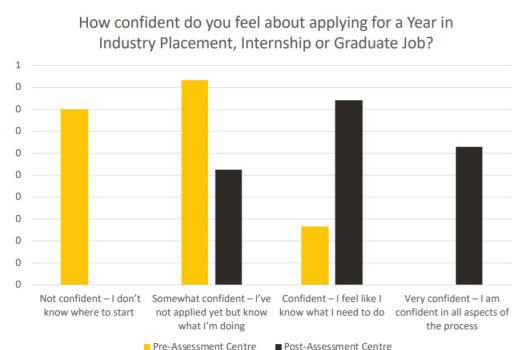
Upon completion of the event and reflection of their learning, the students were eligible to receive a Level 3 AQA accreditation in Employability Skills. We are confident that this nationally recognised accreditation scheme will help support their motivation with applications as it will prove an impressive addition to their CV and LinkedIn profile.

Students said

“The assessor provided me with interesting and thoughtful tips and feedback on how to further my application. I feel much more confident in my application following our session.”

“The day was really good and all assessors provided intelligent and insightful experiences.”

The Impact



74% of students felt either confident or very confident applying for graduate roles post-assessment, compared to 13% pre-assessment.

Students who felt confident or very confident increased by:
83% for group exercises
82% for delivering a presentation
70% for face to face interviews

100%

of students would recommend taking part in the Assessment Centre event to other students.