



Our 2023 Apprenticeship Programme

# How to prepare for your Assessment Centre Day

Apprenticeship Programme Assessment Day Guide



M&G plc is an international savings and investments business, managing money for around 5 million retail customers and more than 800 institutional clients in 28 markets. As at 30 June 2022, we had £348.9 billion of assets under management and administration. Our purpose is to help people manage and grow their savings and investments, responsibly.

With a heritage dating back more than 170 years, M&G plc has a long history of innovation in savings and investments, combining asset management and insurance expertise to offer a wide range of solutions. We serve our retail and savings customers under the M&G Wealth and Prudential brands in the UK and Europe, and under the M&G Investments brand for asset management clients globally.

Our vision is: **to become the best loved and most successful savings and investment business** and we're looking for people who are excited about joining us on our journey.

To help us achieve our vision we're looking for exceptional people who live our values and behaviours:

- inspire others
- embrace change
- deliver results
- keep it simple

## About our Programme

We appreciate that deciding on your career path is an important and challenging decision, but it's also an exciting one. Our apprenticeship programmes offer the chance to gain practical work experience and build core business skills alongside your professional development. You'll be supported to achieve professional or vocational qualifications such as a Business Administration Diploma or CISI Operations Investment Certificate, and earn a competitive salary – all at the same time.

In joining M&G plc, you'll be part of our inclusive and collaborative team. You'll work alongside and learn from exceptional colleagues from a range of backgrounds. Our diverse employee networks and communities will help you to develop new connections and build friendships for your career ahead. It doesn't matter what you've studied before – we're looking for people who demonstrate energy and determination and who are excited to work in a fast-moving workplace.

“Being an apprentice at M&G has been an exceptional experience so far. The strong community, support and guidance has meant that I have had the opportunity to learn, grow and develop personally and professionally. One of the facets of the Programme that I have grown a deep appreciation for, is the early careers community. I am looking forward to what my future at M&G will hold!

**Precious Appiah**

Technology Adoption Support Apprentice

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## Give yourself an advantage and prepare perfectly

OK let's get started! This is the final stage of the recruitment process, designed to help us select the best candidates for the Programme. Typically an Assessment Centre Day will contain a selection of exercises to best assess candidates suitability for a role.

Whilst this may sound challenging and intimidating, we have been running Assessment Centre Days for a number of years and they have consistently been given great candidates feedback. With that in mind and the tips below, we hope you will be fully prepared and confident – ready to face any challenge on the day!

## Why do we use Assessment Centres?

Assessment Centres are an effective, fair and accurate method of assessing candidates against a series of competencies and strengths required for the role you've applied for.

By spending time together we get to learn more about you and really understand where your strengths are.

Our Assessment Centres will be held virtually or in-person and our Recruitment Team will confirm details and dates prior to each event.

## What will be assessed?

You'll complete a number of exercises all of which help us to assess how you're likely to perform at M&G.

As a minimum we'll expect you to have researched:

- Our business and our customers
- The financial services industry
- The role you've applied for
- The apprenticeship qualification that is aligned to the role you have applied for

## Preparation is the key

Research the role that you have applied for thoroughly to ensure you are comfortable outlining the key skills and attributes we are looking for. We will ask you to demonstrate those key attributes through your current and past work/school experience. We will run two virtual sessions with you prior to your Assessment

Centre Day to ensure you are comfortable using the technology and familiar with the Assessment Day structure.

You won't be alone at the Assessment Centre, there will be other candidates and whilst you're assessed individually you'll work together during the group exercise to solve a specific problem. You'll also interact with other business colleagues who'll be there on the day.

Naturally, we want to get to know you personally, and our Assessors will therefore conduct a final interview with you. This will give you the opportunity to learn more about us and the role you are applying for. It will also help you establish if the role is right for you.

We'll use a mixture of competency and strength-based questions (if you are unfamiliar with these, just Google it!). Your answers will need to be backed up with examples.

Please ask lots of questions throughout the day to ensure you understand the role and the overall Programme requirements.

Throughout the day speak to others – they're all going through the same process. Talking to others can help you later on with the group exercise.

Once you are fully prepared, try to relax and have a good night's sleep – resting will help you to be fresh and productive on the day.

- Please test your connection, video and audio prior to the assessment centre. If you have any technical difficulties on the day – don't panic! We will share contact details with you prior to the assessment centre.
- Remember to look out for some necessary documents such as a driving license, a passport or a full birth certificate, record of your NI and all your original records of achievements such as certificates, diplomas, provisional grading sheets. Required documentation will be listed in your invitation

## On the day

Try to engage with everyone, especially the business colleagues with whom we will arrange informal networking activities. Greet the other candidates and try to contribute towards a nice, relaxed atmosphere – you are in it together!

Pay attention to any instructions and tell us if you don't understand. Don't panic if you don't perform particularly well in a specific exercise – there are plenty others for you to shine.

Try to maintain your energy and motivation throughout the day and stay focused whilst being assessed.

Remember you are not in direct competition with other candidates. We are looking for candidates that demonstrate the required skills and behaviours to be successful in the role.

Remember to be free of any distractions.

## What would the day look like?

The day's structure will be as follows:

- Meet and greet
- Speed networking exercise
- Opening presentation
- Group exercise
- Competency based interview
- Optional exercises that could include numerical reasoning, accuracy, written assessment and/or IT aptitude test
- Closing presentation and next steps

## About the group exercise

The group exercise is likely to be 30 minutes and it will involve a group scenario so you'll work with other candidates to solve a specific problem. We want to see your ability to interact and work with other people.

- There is no right or wrong answer. The assessors are more interested in how you interact with other people in the group and the contribution you make
- Participation is key – make sure you get involved in the task
- Be prepared to have your say but listen to others
- Make sure you focus on what is being asked of you – and take note of any instructions

## Optional exercise

We may ask you to undertake an additional exercise that will assess your numerical reasoning skills, your IT aptitude or attention to detail. We'll let you know in the invitation if your Assessment Centre Day will require this.

## Competency based interview

The interview will contain a mixture of competency and strength-based interview questions that will best enable us to assess your suitability for the role. We'll ask you questions relating to your behaviours in specific situations which you should back up with examples.

Below are some of the competencies we may assess you against:

- Team work
- Communication skills
- Motivation
- Managing change
- Problem solving

A typical competency based question may be:

**“Can you give an example of a task or project you worked on that had a strict deadline?”**

## STAR interview technique

One way to prepare for a competency based interview is to practice the STAR technique.

S

### Situation

The interviewer will want to know “What was the situation and when did it take place?” So you need to describe the situation you were confronted with (short and succinct).

T

### Task

What was the task and the objective? What task did you need to accomplish? We expect you to use a specific situation or example. Be sure to provide enough details for the interviewer to understand. You can use an example from school, previous job, even personal life and volunteer experience.

A

### Action

What action did you take to achieve the objective? Explain the tasks you had to complete highlighting any specific challenges.

R

### Result

This is where you describe what happened as result of your action. How did the situation end? What did you accomplish and if you've learnt anything?





### During the competency based interview

- Try to use the best example that answers the question being asked
- Think of examples that illustrate your abilities
- Think about your strengths and weaknesses
- Don't start your answers with "I usually..." instead use specific examples of a situation where you demonstrated your abilities
- Use the STAR technique
- Focus on what YOU did, not anybody else in the team
- Try and think of some questions you would like to ask the interviewer about the company and your apprentice role
- Speak clearly throughout the interview

### Strength-based interview questions

We ask strength-based questions in cases where candidates don't have lot of work experience. These types of questions allow us to gain a genuine insight into your personality and natural ability.

### After your Assessment Centre Day

Make notes on your experience for future reference. Do this as soon as you can after the event while details are still fresh in your mind. Feedback is important even if you aren't successful, it will help you think about skills you could develop and improve upon.

If you receive an offer from us, make sure it is the right role for you before accepting it.

We hope that you find this short guide informative and good luck with your Assessment Centre Day!

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### Contact us

If you have any questions simply drop us a note at [apprenticeship@mandg.com](mailto:apprenticeship@mandg.com) or you can email or call the M&G Apprenticeship Scheme Manager.



For more information please see our careers site [www.mandgplc.com/careers/graduates-interns-and-apprentices](http://www.mandgplc.com/careers/graduates-interns-and-apprentices)



[apprenticeship@mandg.co.uk](mailto:apprenticeship@mandg.co.uk)

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