



Post Selection Day Evaluation and Feedback Report

**00208 – Senior Member (Chair) and Member of the
Valuation Tribunal for England**

November - December 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the selection days for Senior Member (Chair) and Member of the Valuation Tribunal for England as well as capture general feedback on candidate performance. The report describes how selection days were undertaken by both panels and candidates; including what characterised stronger and weaker demonstrations of the competencies needed to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Competency Framework

At selection day, the situational questions were designed to assess the following competencies:

- Exercising Judgement
- Possessing and Building Knowledge
- Assimilating and Clarifying Information
- Working and Communicating with Others (for Senior Member (Chair) candidates)

The competency-based interview assessed candidates for the following competencies:

- Working and Communicating with Others
- Managing Work Efficiently

The assessment criteria were developed so that candidates could demonstrate the proficiency and capability transferable to the role from other contexts. The specific behavioural indicators under each competency were designed to reflect the aptitude and faculty that an effective Senior Member (Chair) or Member is expected to have. This enabled us to assess candidates in a fair and consistent way.

Performance of candidates

A total of 108 candidates applied for this exercise. Following eligibility checks, 106 candidates were invited to selection day. There were 53 candidates recommended by the Judicial Appointments Commission to the Lord Chancellor for appointment, this was made up of 30 candidates recommended for Senior Member (Chair) and 23 candidates recommended for Member. In making this decision the Commission took into account all relevant character checks, and all evidence provided by the candidates at selection day as well as the candidates' independent assessments.

Selection day

Selection days were held remotely via Microsoft Teams between 25 November 2024 and 06 December 2024. Candidates who took part in remote interviews were provided with technical support to get ready for their selection day as detailed on our [website](#).

Situational questions

Development

The situational questions were drafted by the President and a clerk of the Valuation Tribunal for England. In common with all the selection tools developed for this exercise, the situational questions were designed to assess relevant transferable skills and to minimise the extent to which candidates might be advantaged or disadvantaged by their professional

background. The JAC Advisory Group, which is composed of members of the judiciary and representatives of the legal professions, and chaired by a lay JAC Commissioner, offered advice and guidance during their development.

The effectiveness of the situational questions was assessed by means of a mock assessment with a range of volunteers from relevant candidate groups. This provided an opportunity to trial the test material and make any necessary amendments.

Structure of the situational questions

There were four written scenarios with a series of questions on each scenario. The first three scenarios were for all candidates, and the fourth scenario was for candidates applying for the role of Senior Member (Chair).

The first scenario related to a council tax liability appeal where the appellant was seeking a single person's discount. Candidates were asked to identify their questions for fact-finding, and to give their likely decision. They were expected to consider a range of questions exploring which was the appellant's wife's primary residence and, depending on those answers, would likely refuse the appeal.

The second scenario related to a non-domestic rating appeal where a reduced assessment was sought due to roadworks. Candidates were asked to assess if a reduction could be considered, under which article from the relevant Act, and to outline the evidence the ratepayer should produce to support their appeal. They were expected to conclude that a material change of circumstances did apply, the correct Act and effective date, and a range of factual evidence that should be provided.

The third scenario related to the rating appeal on a vacant shop due to disrepair. Candidates were asked which evidence was needed for any prospect of success in the appeal. They were expected to outline relevant factors, the essential evidence, and which was likely to be decisive.

The fourth scenario was only asked for candidates applying for the role of Senior Member (Chair). They were asked how they would proceed with hearings where a panel member was missing, where a panel member was arriving late, and where a panel member had a conflict of interest. They were expected to show knowledge of the tribunal's business arrangements for sitting alone, decide how to proceed, explain to parties, and communicate with colleagues appropriately throughout.

Advance preparation

One week before their selection day, candidates were provided with the following pre-reading:

- Material Change of Circumstances Guidance
- Example Case: Williams v Horsham District Council
- VTE Consolidated Practice Statement Excerpt (for Chair candidates)

On the day, candidates were given the scenarios and situational questions to prepare. All candidates received three scenarios and related questions. Candidates applying for the role of Senior Member (Chair) received an additional (fourth) scenario and questions. Candidates for the role of Member had 30 minutes of preparation time. Candidates for the role of Senior Member (Chair) had 45 minutes of preparation time.

Assessment of candidates' responses to the situational questions

The evidence for each competency is assessed as either outstanding, strong, sufficient, or insufficient.

Outstanding evidence included:

- Provided the necessary information with focus on the facts in a structured and concise manner.
- Used their judgement to make clear, structured, evidence-based decisions.
- Explained with full reasons how they weighed up the competing evidence.
- Correctly understood and identified what constituted a material change of circumstances and how it would impact the rateable value of properties.
- Fully absorbed the information provided in the brief and made use of this in their answers, identifying most of the clarifying questions.

For Senior Members (Chairs), additionally, outstanding evidence included:

- Showed a full understanding of the tribunal's business arrangements.
- Explained with reasons why they would hear and decide the appeal alone.
- Decisive in recognising they must hear and decide the appeal alone, without needing to check with the clerk.
- Communicated all points clearly and concisely, at a pace that was easy to follow.
- Explained matters to the parties and showed sensitivity in addressing panellists.

Strong evidence included:

- Used their judgement to make clear, reasonable decisions which were based on relevant evidence.
- Comprehensively identified most expected clarifying questions.
- Explained with reasons what evidence they found compelling and what attracted weight, although not always precisely focused.
- Understood how properties are valued for non-domestic rating purposes and identified what constitutes a material change of circumstances.
- Absorbed most of the key parts of the brief, missing only smaller or more nuanced points.

For Senior Members (Chairs), additionally, strong evidence included:

- Recognised that, under the circumstances, they must hear and decide the appeal alone but may have needed advice from the clerk on the logistics.
- Showed a full understanding of the tribunal's business arrangements and explained why they would hear the appeal alone.
- Communicated the key points clearly and concisely but may have missed minor points.
- May have missed when conversations would more appropriately be held privately.

Sufficient evidence included:

- Used their judgement to make decisions, and explained what evidence would be helpful for a decision.
- Took a commonsense approach and considered a few factors.

- Showed some knowledge of the rating hypothesis and identified the material change of circumstances.
- Absorbed some key parts of the brief but missed some issues or got them wrong.
- Identified about half of the clarifying questions.

For Senior Members (Chairs), additionally, sufficient evidence included:

- Showed some understanding of the tribunal's business arrangements and correctly identified that they would have to hear the appeal alone, but needed input from the clerk to confirm that was correct.
- Needed advice from the clerk on logistics when retiring to make their decision.
- Communication clarity was mixed, with some points and decisions less clear.
- May have been indecisive or unsure how to approach issues with the other panel members.

Insufficient evidence included:

- Missed or got decisions wrong, made decisions that were not logical or based on the information, and/or gave decisions without clear supporting reasons.
- Unaware of the rating hypothesis and failed to properly identify the material change of circumstances and/or failed to correctly identify why it would have an impact on the rateable value.
- Had not grasped the essential aspects of the scenario, were unprepared, or missed major issues from the brief.
- Identified few of the clarifying questions, used an unstructured, unfocused approach and provided limited responses.

For Senior Members (Chairs), additionally, insufficient evidence included:

- Incorrectly allowed the late arriving member to sit or allowed the conflicted member to share the retiring room.
- Failed to understand that under the tribunal's business arrangements, they can sit alone when necessary.
- Communication was unclear, failed to explain matters to the parties, or did not work cooperatively with other panel members or the clerk.

Assessment of candidates' responses to the competency-based interview

Each candidate then had a competency-based interview. Here the panel was seeking further evidence and examples from the candidate of two competencies, Working and Communicating with Others and Managing Work Efficiently, in the context of the role of Chair or Member of the Valuation Tribunal for England.

Working and Communicating with Others

Outstanding evidence included:

- Specific examples that were complex and taxing and clearly demonstrated the candidate's own actions.
- Answers delivered in a highly structured and organised manner with evidence fully aligned to the competency requirements.
- Demonstrated sensitivity by assisting vulnerable individuals and ensuring fairness in legal proceedings.

- Adapted communication effectively, providing specific examples of positive outcomes, and showcasing their communication skills.
- Worked collaboratively with stakeholders to manage a significant increase in workload, delegating tasks fairly, and handling sensitive cases with consideration and creativity.

Strong evidence included:

- Specific examples of complex situations with clearly explained evidence of the candidate's actions.
- Worked with senior stakeholders to identify and address policy gaps, adapting communication styles as needed.
- Created safe environments for vulnerable individuals, adapting communication and collaborating with stakeholders.
- Engaged with diverse stakeholders, demonstrating sensitivity and receptiveness to contributions, and effectively managing differing opinions.
- Encouraged reluctant team members to adopt new approaches by demonstrating benefits and reassuring colleagues.
- Led cross-functional teams to implement new systems, fostering a positive and inclusive team culture.

Sufficient evidence included:

- Examples setting out situations which were not complex or demanding.
- Provided evidence of routine or straightforward activities.
- Demonstrated sensitivity, empathy, and effective communication but answers were not developed enough.
- Evidenced the ability to alter their approach and style to communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, but examples lacked depth and challenge.

Insufficient evidence included:

- Did not answer the particular question asked.
- Did not provide details of specific actual examples to demonstrate the competency.
- Provided hypothetical, assertion-based or generalised views instead of actual examples.
- Provided examples which were underdeveloped, unstructured and lacked detail or depth.

Managing Work Efficiently

Outstanding evidence included:

- Specific examples that were complex and taxing and clearly demonstrated the candidate's own actions.
- Answers delivered in a highly structured and organised manner with evidence fully aligned to the competency requirements.
- Led on complex projects, reviewing numerous cases and identifying missing documents, avoiding wasted court time.
- Used software to collate and filter documents for complex reports, significantly reducing the time needed.

- Managed additional caseloads, communicating effectively with others and ensuring cases proceeded and conflicting deadlines were met.

Strong evidence included:

- Specific examples of complex situations, with clearly explained evidence of the candidate's actions.
- Implemented a new efficiency improvement, leading to significant financial savings.
- Showed focus and resilience by organising workload and delegating tasks under high-pressure, changing conditions.
- Improved efficiency by redesigning and implementing a new process, making further enhancements based on feedback.
- Achieved positive outcomes, resulting in increased team engagement and improved performance.

Sufficient evidence included:

- Examples set out situations which were not complex or demanding.
- Demonstrated resilience and the ability to prioritise to deal with competing workloads.
- Described the methods used to manage clients and prioritise what was urgent.
- Provided evidence of routine or straightforward activities.

Insufficient evidence included:

- Did not provide details of specific actual examples to demonstrate the competency.
- Provided hypothetical or generalised views instead of actual examples.
- Answers were irrelevant or did not address the questions which had been asked.
- Provided a low-level or ineffective examples which lacked evidence of demonstrating resilience under pressure.
- Cited routine or universally adopted IT measures to demonstrate IT-related work efficiencies.

The panels then make a final overall assessment of the evidence to find candidates outstanding, strong, selectable, or not presently selectable.

Feedback from Candidates

After the selection days, candidates were invited to complete an anonymous candidate survey. There were 50 candidates who responded to the survey. The questions and results of the survey were:

How would you rate the quality of customer service you received from JAC staff on selection day?

- 96% of candidates rated it excellent or good.
- 2% of candidates rated it fair.
- 2% of candidates marked the question as not applicable.

The instructions provided beforehand enabled me to prepare for the remote selection day.

- 78% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 10% of candidates neither agreed or disagreed.
- 12% of candidates either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

I understood what was expected on the selection day.

- 78% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 12% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 10% of candidates disagreed.

The situations discussed in the situational questioning were realistic and relevant to the role.

- 92% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 6% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 2% of candidates marked the question as not applicable.

The situational questioning gave me a chance to display how I would react to various tribunal situations.

- 82% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 12% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 2% of candidates disagreed.
- 4% of candidates marked the question as not applicable.

I am confident in the situational questions as a JAC selection tool.

- 80% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 12% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 6% of candidates disagreed.
- 2% of candidates marked the question as not applicable.

The interview questions gave me the opportunity to demonstrate my skills, abilities, and competence for this role.

- 54% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 32% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 14% of candidates either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

I am confident in the interview as a JAC selection tool.

- 74% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 20% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 6% of candidates either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The panel behaved professionally and treated me with respect.

- 98% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed.
- 2% of candidates disagreed.