MANAGEMENT ANSWERS

ASSESS DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
RE: ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Candidate Name…………………………….........................

How do you assess whether these development activities meet organisational objectives? What information would you need to make this assessment?

Organisational Objectives can be described as:

• To give a quality service to the clients
• To manage and contribute to staff competence
• To be financially viable

Without these three objectives, every other objective will fail. Therefore the assessment of the staff member must reflect these objectives. There are thirteen assessment applications. Together, the 13 principles provide a comprehensive framework for conducting an effective personnel assessment programme.

USE ASSESSMENT TOOLS IN A PURPOSEFUL MANNER

Assessment instruments, like other tools, are helpful when used properly but can be useless, harmful, or illegal when used inappropriately. Often, inappropriate use results from not having a clear understanding of what you want to measure and why you want to measure it. As an employer, you must first be clear about what you want to accomplish with your assessment programme in order to select the proper tools to achieve those goals.

Your assessment strategies should be based on both an understanding of the kind of employment decisions to be made and the population to be assessed. Once you are clear on your purpose, you will be better able to select appropriate assessment tools, and use those tools in an effective manner. Only use tests that are appropriate for your particular purpose.

USE THE WHOLE-PERSON APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT

An assessment instrument may provide you with important employment-related information about an individual. However, no assessment tool is 100% reliable or valid; all are subject to errors, both in measuring job-relevant characteristics and in predicting job performance.

Moreover, a single assessment instrument only provides you with a limited view of a person's qualifications. Using a variety of tools to measure skills, abilities, and other job-relevant characteristics provides you with a solid basis upon which to make important career and employment-related decisions and minimizes adverse impact.

USE ONLY ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS THAT ARE UNBIASED AND FAIR TO ALL INDIVIDUALS

Using unbiased and fair tests will help you select a qualified and diverse workforce. Employment decisions based on tests that are biased are likely to lead to unfair and illegal discrimination against members of the lower scoring individuals. You should review the fairness evidence associated with assessment instruments before selecting tools by examining the test manual and independent test reviews.

USE ONLY RELIABLE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

If a person takes the same test again, will he or she get a similar score, or a very different score? A reliable instrument will provide accurate and consistent scores. To meaningfully interpret test scores and make useful career or employment-related decisions, use only reliable tools. Test manuals will usually provide a statistic, known as the reliability coefficient, giving you an indication of a test's reliability. The higher the reliability coefficient, the more confidence you can have that the score is accurate.

USE ONLY ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO BE VALID FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY ARE BEING USED

Validity is the most important issue in selecting assessment tools. It refers to the characteristic the assessment instrument measures, and how well the instrument measures the characteristic. Validity is not a property of the assessment instrument itself; it relates to how the instrument is being used.

A test's validity is established in reference to a specific purpose; it may not be valid for different purposes. For example, a test that may be valid for predicting someone's "job knowledge," may not be valid for predicting his or her "leadership skills." You must be sure that the instrument is valid for the purpose for which it is to be used. Selecting a commercially developed instrument does not relieve you of this responsibility.

The test manual usually provides a statistic, the validity co-efficient, that will give an indication of the test's validity for a specific purpose under specific circumstances. It measures the degree of relationship between test performance and job performance (i.e., job-relatedness of the test).

USE ASSESSMENT TOOLS THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE TARGET POPULATION

An assessment tool is usually developed for use with a specific individual; it may not be valid for other individuals. For example, a test designed to predict the performance of managers may not be valid for carers. The skills and abilities required for the two positions may be different, or the reading level of the test may not be suitable for carers. Tests should be appropriate for the individuals you want to test, that is, your target population.

The assessment should indicate the individual or individuals the test is designed to assess. Your target population should be similar to the individual on which the test was developed. In determining the appropriateness of an instrument for your target individual, also consider such factors as reading levels, cultural backgrounds, and language barriers.

USE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS FOR WHICH UNDERSTANDABLE AND COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENTATION IS AVAILABLE

Are the instructions for administration and interpretation understandable? Is the information sufficiently comprehensive to evaluate the suitability of the instrument for your needs? Carefully evaluate the documentation provided by the test publisher to be sure that the tools you select do

the job you want them to do and furnish you with the information you need. If the documentation is not understandable or complete, you run the risk of selecting inappropriate instruments.

Assessments should provide information about both the development and characteristics of the individual. They should cover topics such as procedures for administration, scoring and interpretation, the recommended uses of an instrument, the individuals for whom the test is appropriate. They should also include a description of the validation procedures used, and evidence of validity, reliability, and test fairness.

ENSURE THAT ADMINISTRATION STAFF ARE PROPERLY TRAINED

Assessment instruments must be administered properly to obtain valid results. Consult the test publisher and administration manual for guidelines on the qualifications and training required for test administrators. These requirements will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the test. Only suitable staff should be selected. Administrators should be given ample time to learn their responsibilities and should practice by administering tests to other staff before administering tests to applicants. Some test publishers may run training sessions for test administration and interpretation.

Administration staff should also be trained to handle special situations with sensitivity. An example would be responding to a request for accommodation based on a disability.

ENSURE THAT TESTING CONDITIONS ARE SUITABLE FOR ALL TEST TAKERS

There are various extraneous influences that may affect the reliability and validity of an assessment procedure. For example, noise in the testing room, poor lighting, inaccurate timing and damaged test equipment may adversely affect test takers. Staff should ensure that the testing environment is suitable and that administration procedures are uniform for all test takers.

PROVIDE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

To ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities have an equal chance to demonstrate their potential, accommodations in the assessment process may be necessary. Under the ADA, reasonable accommodation may involve ensuring physical accessibility to the test site, modifying test equipment or the testing process, or providing qualified assistance to the test taker. For example, administering a braille version of a test, allowing extra time to complete the test, or supplying a reader may be appropriate. It is important to become familiar with the types of accommodations that can be made without invalidating test results. If reasonable accommodation involving test administration cannot be made, consider alternative assessment strategies.

MAINTAIN ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT SECURITY

All materials used in the assessment process, whether paper-and-pencil or computer-based, must be kept secure. Lack of security may result in some test takers having access to test questions beforehand, thus invalidating their scores. To prevent this, test users should, for example, keep testing materials in locked rooms or cabinets and limit access to those materials to staff involved

in the assessment process. Security is also the responsibility of test developers. The security of a test may become compromised over time. To protect security, test developers periodically introduce new forms of tests.

MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Assessment results are highly personal. Employers must respect the test taker's right to confidentiality. Assessment results should only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to know. This would include staff involved in interpreting assessment results and making employment decisions. Personal information should not be released to other organizations or individuals without the informed consent of the test taker.

ENSURE THAT SCORES ARE INTERPRETED PROPERLY

Tests are used to make inferences about people's characteristics, capabilities, and future performance. The inferences should be reasonable, well-founded, and not based upon stereotypes. If test scores are not interpreted properly, the conclusions drawn from them are likely to be invalid, thus leading to poor decision making. Ensure that there is solid evidence to justify your test score interpretations and the employment decisions you make based on those scores. The test manual should provide instructions on how to properly interpret test result