



WSF Assessor Manual

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Table of Contents

Introduction & Overview	3
General	3
Responsibilities of the Assessor	3
Standards.....	3
Planning the Assessment Process.....	4
Evidence in assessment	4
Non-discrimination	4
Special needs.....	4
Using 'assessment teams'	4
How do assessment teams work?	4
Assessing Competence.....	5
Creating a supportive environment	5
Making an overall judgement	5
Communication in the assessment process	6
Listening and responding	6
Common Assessment Problems	6
Giving feedback	7
Guidelines for providing feedback	7
Encouraging the candidate who has not achieved competence.....	8
Possible reasons for dissatisfaction with feedback	8
Final words.....	9
Recording assessment results.....	9
Exercise 1: Creating a Supportive Environment	10
Exercise 2: Assessment Scenario	11
Exercise 3: Not at the Standard Expected.....	12

Introduction & Overview

Assessments play a major role in quality control; and the debriefing of referees following assessment assists in their continual improvement. Therefore it is important that all assessments conducted by WSF Assessors are of the highest quality and are consistent worldwide.

This Manual has been developed to assist Assessors meet these objectives by following the Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA) principles contained in the CBTA Programmes for WSF Referees (WSFRs), Regional Referees (RRs) and National Referees (NRs) which are kept up-to-date on the WSF website.

General

Responsibilities of the Assessor

An Assessor must carry out assessments in an ethical manner and demonstrate professional behaviour at all times. Some of the responsibilities of an Assessor are:

- **Confidentiality and privacy** - information about assessments must be kept secure and confidential, and only made available to authorised personnel.
- **Anti-discrimination** – see Non-discrimination in Planning the Assessment Process below.
- **Conflict of interest** – the Assessor should not conduct an assessment if any conflict of interest exists (for example, a family or business relationship with the candidate).
- **WSF Code of Conduct** – The WSF Code of Conduct applies to both Referees and Assessors.

An Assessor must ensure that the candidate's rights are observed. These rights include ensuring the candidate is:

- informed that an assessment is scheduled;
- adequately informed about the assessment process;
- not pressured unreasonably to undertake an assessment for promotion if he/she does not feel ready. [A WSFR is expected to accept assessment at all times against the CBTA criteria for WSFR; similarly an existing RR is expected to accept assessment against CBTA criteria for RR and an existing NR is expected to accept assessment against CBTA criteria for NR].

Standards

Assessors should ensure that they are fully informed regarding the required standards to apply on the Assessment Sheet when assessing candidates. The Assessment Sheet and Guidelines for WSF Assessors to use when assessing WSFRs, RRs and NRs are available on the WSF website.

Planning the Assessment Process

Evidence in assessment

Evidence is information which, when matched against the relevant criteria, provides proof of whether the candidate is competent or not. The most crucial role of the Assessor is to look at the evidence provided by a candidate, and make a decision whether the candidate has achieved the required level of competence. There must be sufficient evidence for an Assessor to make an accurate judgement.

Assessors will encounter matches that do not provide enough evidence to assess a candidate. In such cases, the Assessor should inform the candidate what evidence is lacking and how the candidate might satisfy the requirements.

Non-discrimination

Assessors must ensure that the assessment process is fair for all candidates and adaptable to individual situations. Candidates should not be discriminated against during the assessment process as a result of their physical abilities, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language or any other personal bias of the Assessor.

Special needs

For candidates with special needs, the Assessor may need to be flexible with assessment tasks. Special circumstances may include the need for gallery access for a disabled candidate.

Using 'assessment teams'

Usually a candidate is assessed by only one Assessor. However, conducting an assessment with more than one Assessor can be a useful exercise. The assessments gain weight if the two Assessors are in agreement but can also be an intimidating experience for the candidate.

How do assessment teams work?

The Assessors should meet before the assessment to discuss such issues as:

- the roles of each member of the assessment team;
- how the overall assessment decision will be reached (see the next dot point);
- how differences of opinion in regard to any assessment decision will be handled e.g. a majority decision or the decision of the Lead Assessor;
- how feedback will be given to the candidate (i.e. whether each Assessor will provide feedback, or whether both Assessors' opinions will be summarised by one person).

Assessing Competence

Creating a supportive environment

The assessment process should be designed to reduce the stress on the candidate as much as possible. Therefore, the Assessor should be positive and supportive in order to encourage a good performance, and:

- show consideration and regard for the candidate;
- evaluate performance, not personality;
- communicate clearly and effectively with the candidate in a friendly manner, recognising any language barriers;
- respect the candidate's right to have views that may differ from those of the Assessor.

The Assessor should always behave in a way that makes the candidate believe that the Assessor will be just and fair. As part of this, the Assessor should:

- remain close but out of the candidate's view while the assessment is taking place;
- focus attention on the candidate when providing feedback; and
- ensure that, as far as the assessment process is concerned, the circumstances will allow the candidate to perform satisfactorily.

While candidates should be involved in as much of the assessment process as possible, there will be aspects that are not open to negotiation. The context and circumstances of the assessment will determine this. Assessors should make clear to the candidate which parts of the assessment process are open to input and modification, and which are not.

"Exercise 1: Creating a supportive environment", which can be found at the end of this document, may be completed by candidates at this point as a test of their knowledge.

Making an overall judgement

The Assessor needs to make an overall judgement about whether or not the candidate has achieved the required standard. The stages of the process of making this judgement are:

- follow the Guidelines for WSF Assessors when completing the practical assessment form; then
- make the decision as to whether the necessary competence has been achieved.

No decision can be made without a degree of informed, subjective judgement on the part of the Assessor based on evidence. When making the final judgement, the Assessor must document the reasons for the decision. This will form the basis for the feedback to the candidate.

If the Assessor is unable to make a final decision following an assessment (for example, if there is insufficient evidence on which to base a final judgement), the candidate will be required to undergo a further assessment.

Communication in the assessment process

Communication is a two-way process. The Assessor should give clear explanations using language appropriate to the candidate. This is particularly important if the Assessor and Referee do not share a common natural language. During explanations, the Assessor should also look and listen for indications that the candidate is listening and comprehending what is being said. Puzzled expressions, frowns, sighs and other body language are clues that the candidate has not understood what the Assessor is saying.

Encouraging the candidate to ask questions may help the Assessor to overcome problems with communication and to clear up misunderstandings.

The Assessor should allow time for questions during the assessment but explain beforehand whether questions may be asked during the Assessor's explanations, or kept until the end.

Listening and responding

The skills of listening and responding are very important during the de-briefing.

When the candidate is talking, the Assessor should:

- maintain eye contact;
- listen attentively;
- adopt an open, relaxed posture;
- use nods, smiles and phrases such as 'I see', 'go on' or 'hmm'.

Common Assessment Problems

The table below lists some of the more common problems that can arise during assessments.

Assessment Problem	Description
Halo Effect	this involves the Assessor making decisions about a candidate based on previous behaviour, rather than current performance
First Impression	the Assessor makes a decision about a candidate early in the assessment and this colours the Assessor's judgement during the rest of the assessment
Contrast Effect	this arises when the quality of preceding candidates – whether good or poor – affects assessments of later candidates

Stereotyping	this refers to judgements made on the basis of a candidate's personal characteristics rather than performance
Similar to Me	candidates are judged favourably because their personality or approach to refereeing is similar to that of the Assessor
Giving more weight to positives than negatives	this can occur when a candidate performs unexpectedly well in some aspect of the assessment. The Assessor may have excessive expectations of the candidate for the rest of the assessment
Experimental Effect	the presence of the Assessor may affect the outcome of the assessment
Tall Poppy Syndrome	a candidate may be known from previous contact to have exceptional ability and consequently more weight is given to very small errors or differences.

Giving feedback

In assessing performance, it is important that the candidate receive honest, fair and constructive comments from the Assessor.

The first step is to encourage the candidate to assess his or her own performance. Asking the candidate for self-assessment provides useful information and may help the Assessor gauge the mood of the candidate and decide how feedback should be presented. For example, when a candidate has done well, an opening question such as: 'How do you think you performed?' is a good way to start the feedback process. However, this may not work when the candidate has performed poorly, particularly where the candidate fails to recognise this, and should not be used in this case.

Guidelines for providing feedback

The Assessor should:

- choose an appropriate time and private place to give the feedback;
- give honest, clear and constructive feedback;
- focus on performance rather than on personal characteristics;
- not overload the candidate with information;
- use the "sandwich" technique. i.e.:
 - outline the candidate's positive achievements;
 - give constructive feedback on any 'gaps' or errors;
 - finish with a supportive statement.
- suggest ways of overcoming any gaps in competence;
- be confident – if the decision of "not at expected standard on this match" is based on a proper assessment process, there is no need to 'apologise' for the result;
- offer suggestions for future goals / training opportunities;
- encourage the candidate to ask questions and discuss the assessment decision;
- give the candidate time to read and sign the Assessment Sheet.

“Exercise 2: Assessment Scenario”, which can be found at the end of this document, may be completed by candidates at this point as a test of their knowledge.

Encouraging the candidate who has not achieved competence

It is sometimes difficult for an Assessor to tell candidates that they have not performed to the standard expected. This can be especially hard when the Assessor has established a good rapport with the candidate. It is very important that the Assessor offer the candidate the chance for re-assessment at a later stage where available. Candidates should be encouraged to gain further experience through practice and mentoring before they are reassessed.

When giving feedback, Assessors need to:

- be precise about the gaps in the candidate’s competence;
- suggest strategies to the candidate for further learning or practice to fill the gaps;
- be as positive as the circumstances permit, without raising false expectations;
- if possible, arrange opportunities for the candidate to receive further experience or mentoring before attempting to complete the assessment requirements.

Not surprisingly, many candidates who are assessed as having not met the standard expected will feel disappointed or unfairly dealt with.

Possible reasons for dissatisfaction with feedback

- Candidates may feel uncomfortable with face-to-face communication.
- Assessor and candidate may not be skilled in the process of giving and receiving feedback.
- Assessor and candidate perceive that they may have expended too much time and energy with little result.
- Candidates may perceive that they have gained little benefit from the process.

The following table illustrates some of the important aspects of giving feedback and some suggestions which can be given to the candidate on receiving and making the most of feedback:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage openness • Praise good work • Make feedback timely • Give feedback in a manner that conveys respect and support • Keep comments impersonal and related to the task of officiating • Focus on specific tasks • Ensure comments are clear and understood • Support negative feedback with data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link negative feedback to actions for improvement • Listen objectively without interrupting • Take feedback as advice, not as a personal attack • Summarise feedback • Take a problem solving approach • Ask for suggestions for improvement • Thank the person giving the feedback • Practice to improve
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“Exercise 3: “Not at the standard expected” discussion, which can be found at the end of this document, may be completed by candidates at this point as a test of their knowledge.

Final words

At the end, the Assessor should congratulate the candidate (if the assessment was successful), or offer words of encouragement (if it was not). The Assessor should also explain the rest of the assessment process (that is, the recording procedures, etc.).

Recording assessment results

1. Assessors should keep records to assist in clarifying any queries that may arise.
2. The candidate has the right to receive a copy of the assessment.
3. The original and complete Assessment Sheet should be forwarded to the WSF Office within two weeks of the date of the assessment.

Exercise 1: Creating a Supportive Environment

The following exercise is designed to aid Assessors to comprehend the factors involved in creating a supportive environment for the assessment.

1. When introducing himself or herself to the candidate, what three things should the Assessor be sure to communicate?

2. What are some of the most important elements in the Assessor's approach to the assessment, in order to foster a supportive environment?

3. During the course of the match what should the Assessor do to ensure fairness?

Exercise 2: Assessment Scenario

David referees a match with Jane as his Assessor. The match is quite difficult with many interference decisions. David is clearly relieved when the match is over and appears to need time to regain his composure. Jane, however, asks him to join her straightaway for a debriefing session.

Jane sits with David in an area open to players and other officials, and she begins the debriefing with the following comment. "Well, I think you had a number of problems in that match, don't you agree?" When David says he is not sure what Jane means, she opens her Rule Book and begins to read the Interference Rule to him.

She continues by commenting on every decision that, in her opinion, David got wrong. David becomes visibly more and more upset as Jane's monologue progresses, but Jane carries on until she has discussed the last questionable decision. She concludes by saying: "Well, that is a failed assessment, I'm afraid. Would you please sign the Assessment Sheet here?" Then she leaves.

1. In your opinion, is Jane's method of conducting a debriefing acceptable?

2. If you answered no to the above question, what elements of the debriefing were in your opinion questionable?

3. How might Jane have conducted the debriefing in order to create a more supportive environment?

Exercise 3: Not at the Standard Expected

At a debriefing meeting between the Assessor (Jane) and the referee candidate (David), Jane must inform David that, because he made a number of questionable decisions during his match, he has not achieved the required percentage of correct decisions concerning interference and therefore has not passed the assessment.

1. How should Jane 'break the news' to David?

2. What problems may arise in this situation?

3. How might Jane handle any conflict with the candidate?

4. How could Jane help David to improve?

5. What could Jane say to encourage David to try again?
