

SWISS 
assessment

**EVALUATION
REQUIREMENTS**

Starting point and aims

Standard 9, Checkpoint 19

The AC provider evaluates their AC for each certification period. A report covering either criterion validity (i.e. the correlation of the AC measurements with relevant success criteria) or social validity (e.g. acceptance of the procedure by the participants) can be submitted for the evaluation. However, at least one evaluation report on criterion validity must be submitted over two certification periods (i.e. within six years from initial certification). The AC provider can decide whether to submit a report on social validity twice over two certification periods or to submit one social validity report and one criterion validity report. For example, if the initial certification took place in 2020, a criterion validity report must either be submitted for initial certification in 2020 or for recertification in 2023; the following two certification periods will cover the 2026 and 2029 recertification, and so on.

Social validity

Social validity describes the perception of a diagnostic procedure from the perspective of the participants. According to Schuler (1990), social validity comprises four components: information (e.g. information shared in advance, possibility to prepare for the AC), participation (e.g. possibility to exercise control over the situation), transparency (e.g. clear assessment criteria) and communication of the outcome (e.g. detailed, understandable feedback). Gilliland (1993) also identifies the following factors that influence the perception of fairness: (1) the relevance of the procedures to the job, (2) the opportunity to present their own skills, (3) the perceived interpersonal communication (e.g. appreciative communication, opportunity to ask questions) and (4) the suitability of the questions asked (e.g. no personal, discriminatory, or otherwise irrelevant or inappropriate content for the purposes of selection). The perceived fairness must also be recorded from the perspective of the AC participants for the evaluation of social validity (see also "Minimum standards" below).

Personnel selection from the perspective of applicants: experiencing aptitude diagnostic. *Zeitschrift für Arbeits-und Organisationspsychologie*, 34, 184-191.

Gilliland, S. W. (1993). The perceived fairness of selection systems: An organizational justice perspective. *Academy of management review*, 18(4), 694-734.

Criterion validity

Criterion validity is generally understood to mean the correlation between the performance during the selection process (assessment in the AC) and a specific success criterion (e.g. professional performance, assessment by managers or direct reports, career development). The selected success criterion must be relevant to the position(s) or role(s) to be filled.

Aim

Regular evaluation studies enable the establishment of a culture of quality review and long-term quality management, leading to a continuous improvement in the use of assessment centers. The evaluation studies are a visible sign for customers that certified AC providers regularly subject their procedures to a systematic review, whilst following up on the necessary measures suggested by the analysis.

Minimum standards

Social validity

The questionnaires are addressed to direct participants of the AC carried out by the company. Usually these are the AC participants; depending on the questions, the study can be supplemented with the views of assessors and/or clients. In order for the results to have a specific statistical significance, the number of AC participants surveyed must be at least 40. There are no requirements regarding the choice of the survey instrument. However, one or more components of social validity (e.g. information, participation/control, transparency and judgment communication/feedback, see also above) must be recorded and the results of the evaluation must be presented and discussed in a comprehensible manner (see also notes on the preparation of the report).

Criterion validity

Considering the different areas of activities, functions and hierarchy catered for by the AC of the Swiss Assessment members, there are minimum standards defined for the assessment of the criterion validity. These are essential in order to objectively review compliance with this quality standard during the certification process. Although great care was taken when drafting these specifications to ensure the feasibility of the study, a significant additional effort may be required from the company concerned, especially when carrying out this evaluation for the first time.

Criterion validity data

The Assessment Center produces assessments of the individual dimensions, of the individual exercises and/or an unweighted total or mean value calculated therefrom (AC overall assessment; overall assessment rating, OAR), which will be used as a predictor for the evaluation. The external criterion must have a clearly recognisable relationship to the AC assessments (e.g. professional performance overall or in relation to specific performance dimensions) and/or be relevant to the relevant selection process (e.g. professional success, satisfaction of managers/direct reports, objective performance data).

The following requirements also apply to the collection of data:

- Existing data may be used (e.g. performance assessment, objective data), or specific data may be collected (e.g. interview of the direct manager of the candidate).
- To evaluate the criterion validity, both the predictor data and the criterion data must be made available in quantitative form.
- The sample must cover at least 40 candidates. Should the sample for a single AC be smaller, it is possible to summarise similar AC with comparable performance dimensions, so that a closed validation study with the required sample size can still be presented.
- The period between the candidate starting the job and the criteria being collected must be between six months and a maximum of three years.
- Individuals who assess the candidate in the workplace must have worked with them for at least six months.

Social validity or criterion validity report

The reports on social validity and criterion validity share the same structure (initial situation - method - results - consequences). The written validation report, which will be approximately ten pages long, may be structured as follows:

- *Starting point*: description of the AC to be evaluated; brief overview of the exercises and dimensions; implementation as a selection or development tool; client's objectives and expectations from the AC
- *Method*: approach taken for the validation study; justification for the approach, i.e. data collection or processing of existing data, instrument for data collection, description of sample and, for criterion validity reports, choice and definition of the criterion.
- *Results*: descriptive values; for criterion validity reports: any correlation between AC results and external criteria; interpretation and review of the results and if applicable, a comparison with previous evaluation results.
- *Impact*: deduce specific measures for further development and for the optimisation of the relevant AC

Should there be a recognised academic study available from the certification period covering one or more AC carried out by the company (e.g. a master's thesis, a dissertation, a journal article), the study will be considered a valid report and only the impact will have to be listed separately.

Recommendations

Social validity

Usually it is possible to rely on existing, internal evaluations of customer satisfaction; the procedure can then be extended with specific questions and with a more detailed data analysis.

For a broadly based survey instrument and the ability to have a comparison with other companies, we recommend the AKZEPT-AC questionnaire from Kersting. The current version can be requested directly from Martin.Kersting@psychol.uni-giessen.de. This procedure ensures that the current and appropriate version is being used. An SPSS evaluation syntax is also provided. This guarantees the quality of the evaluation and facilitates the potential merging of the data.

Kersting, M. (2010). Akzeptanz von Assessment Center: Was kommt an und worauf kommt es an? *Wirtschaftspsychologie*, 12, 58-65.

Criterion validity

There are numerous options available for the selection of the external criterion. Using existing performance assessments seems an obvious choice, though these often show less variance, usually due to leniency errors. It may therefore be advisable to instead collect data specifically for the evaluation study. Since the assessments in question can be carried out anonymously and are of no relevance to either the assessor or the assessed, they are more appropriate. The examples below provide additional information on how the data may be collected.

1: 1 Comparison based on the AC profile of requirements and on the AC dimensions

Survey on the workplace of the candidate covering the dimensions recorded in the AC (e.g. planning and organisation assessed in the AC and then validated on the workplace). The questions to the relevant direct managers and/or peers and/or direct reports can be structured as follows:

Rate the behaviour of the employee against the job requirements based on the dimensions listed below.

Planning and organisation

Has a well organised daily routine. Makes use of planning tools. Is able to make decisions under uncertainties.

Organisation skills

Recognises changing framework conditions and actively influences them. Tries to remove obstacles. Implements his ideas quickly. Acts independently.

Diligence

Produces accurate work, taking details into account. Acts in a reliable and responsible manner.

etc.

	Clearly does not meet the requirements	Does not quite meet the requirements	Meets the requirements	Slightly exceeds the requirements	Clearly exceeds the requirements	Cannot be appraised
Planning and organisation Has a well organised daily routine. Makes use of planning tools. Is able to make decisions under uncertainties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation skills Recognises changing framework conditions and actively influences them. Tries to remove obstacles. Implements his ideas quickly. Acts independently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diligence Produces accurate work, taking details into account. Acts in a reliable and responsible manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Based on this data, it is possible to correlate the individual dimensions and the calculated total values.

Measurement of job performance against set tasks

The measurement of job performance against set tasks has the advantage that it can be used for many different activities with different contents and that there are established, reliable measuring instruments.

A simple and widely applicable instrument to measure job performance is the questionnaire scale called 'task-based performance' (Bott, Svyantek, Goodman & Bernal, 2003).

Compared to peers ...	Does not apply at all	Does not apply	Does not quite apply	Neither nor	Largely applies	Applies	Fully applies
... achieves the objectives in own job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... shows expertise in all job-related tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... takes on more responsibility than is necessary for own job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... is competent in all areas of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... plans and organises their approach to achieve own professional goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bott, J.P., Svyantek, D.J., Goodman, S.A., & Bernal, D.S. (2003). Expanding the performance domain: Who says nice guys finish last? *The International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 11, 137-152.

Jansen, A., Melchers, K.G., Lievens, F., Kleinmann, M., Brändli, M., Fraefel, L. & König, C.J. (2013). Situation assessment as an ignored factor in the behavioural consistency paradigm underlying the validity of personnel selection procedures. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98, 326-341.

Additional information for the selection of criteria

Overall, it must be ensured that the criterion has a recognisable relationship to the success in the job. As mentioned, this allows to measure the task-related performance, be it generic or dimension-specific.

In addition, existing internal data can be used, e.g. standardised performance assessments, promotions, salary development or other objective data such as sales, number of complaints, new customers for sales roles etc. It should be noted that objective data also depends on external factors, which can only in part be influenced by the candidate (e.g. cyclical influences). The relationship between the performance in an AC and objective data can therefore be different than the relationship between the performance in an AC and subjective data (e.g. task-related performance).

Data collection for social validity or criterion validity

Survey methods can be questionnaires, online surveys or, if necessary, interviews. An online survey is recommended, since easy to use tools are nowadays available on the internet (e.g. SurveyMonkey, Lime Survey, Questback, Google Forms, Doodle, etc.). The process can be easily administered by sending an e-mail with the corresponding link, whilst guaranteeing anonymity for the respondents. In addition, the data is made available in real time and can be quickly evaluated. Interviews should not be ruled out, though it is important to note that the gathered information received must be available in quantitative form, in order to evaluate the correlation.

Additional information for the preparation of an evaluation study on criterion validity can be found in the slide set "**Evaluation of Assessment Centers - A Guide to Evaluate Criterion Validity**" by Dr. Pia Ingold. This document is available on the Swiss Assessment website under the heading 'Publications/Expert Contributions'.