Is your dream to become a Royal Air Force Officer? Have you ever wondered what life is like in the RAF? Do you know the stages of selection for joining this branch of the Armed Forces?

For years now, the Armed Forces has enforced a rigorous selection process before accepting candidates to train as an Officer. This selection process ensures only the best of the best are successful, and thus, if you want to stand a chance of passing the selection process, you need to be fully motivated and fully aware of how to go about passing selection.

The majority of people reading this RAF resource should already be familiar with the RAF Officer Selection Process. However, for those who are just thinking about a career as an Officer, or those who want to gain a thorough understanding, will find this resource extremely invaluable.

Within this publication, we have outlined all of the important information that you need in order to assist you with your preparation for the Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre.

Applicants who have successfully passed the filter interview and preliminary checks will then be asked to attend the Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC), which will take place at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell in Lincolnshire.
The Royal Air Force has been assessing candidates for Officer Selection at Cranwell for many years now. In total, there are approximately 95 ‘boards’ every year, during which 2,400 candidates will go through to selection, with only 500 places being offered. That means, only 1 out of 5 people who attend the OASC, are successful.

During your stay:

During your stay, you will undergo numerous assessments in order to assess your ‘suitability’ to the RAF.

The OASC is not strictly formal, but you will need to demonstrate a certain level of professionalism. That said, the boarding officers want to ‘get to know you’, too. You need to make yourself memorable.

Of course, the OASC is not going to be easy. It will be complex and demanding, and therefore a great deal of preparation will need to go into it if you wish to be successful. You can prepare for selection by researching prior to your assessment, know what to expect during each stage of the application process, and practice sample tests and interviews to better your chances.

In order to assess your potential, you will be assessed against a range of different qualities and core competencies.

The RAF need to ensure themselves that they are selecting candidates who show strength, stamina, integrity, professionalism and merit.

There are five KEY core competencies which you will be assessed against:
• Confidence and Resilience
• Oral communication
• Influence
• Problem solving
• Teamwork

Other qualities that the RAF board will be looking for include:

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During each assessment, you will be assessed on a range of personal and professional qualities. These assessments are primarily used to determine whether or not you show the mental and physical skills required for a job in the RAF.

Not only will you need to think about the skills you need to demonstrate (thinking on your feet, handling stressful situations, strong physical health, leadership, adaptable and enthusiasm), but other factors need to be considered such as:

• Moving away;
• Maintaining a professional lifestyle;
• Serving in areas of conflict;
• Following strict guidelines and procedures.
All of these qualities are essential in the day-to-day life of the Royal Air Force, and therefore you need to be certain that this is what you want. Remember, the Armed Forces is a lifestyle choice, not just a career.

BEFORE THE OASC

If you are applying for a position in the RAF that deals with aptitude elements, you will also have to complete the Computer Based Aptitude Tests (CBAT). Specialist branches do not usually require this assessment beforehand.

The CBAT usually consists of the following elements:

- How well you respond physically to visual information;
- Your ability to interpret information in two dimensions and devise a three dimensional solution;
- Your ability to complete several tasks simultaneously;
- Deductive reasoning;
- Spatial reasoning;
- Work rate and concentration tests;
- Verbal and numerical reasoning.

Candidates who have to undertake the CBAT, will need to pass this stage before they are able to move on to the next stage of the application process.
Before the OASC, you will be required to undertake a medical examination. This will be arranged by the Armed Forces Careers Office. You will be provided details of the medical by the medical staff.

Of course, the medical fitness levels for joining the RAF are extremely high, and therefore you need to be aware of just how rigorous the examination will be. Even the smallest of medical conditions can cause your application to be rejected.

During the medical, you will be measured (both height and weight will be recorded), asked to provide a urine sample, undergo a hearing test, and have an eye examination.

All eye wear should be brought with you on the day of your medical. People who wear soft lenses should not wear them for at least 48 hours prior to the examination, and those who wear hard lenses should not wear them for 10 days. Failure to do so, will result in the medical team being unable to continue with their medical assessment.

Both men and women might be asked to complete a physical medical, which can be carried out by the same sex, if asked.

For those who are applying for Aircrew, other medical assessments will be required, including an ECG, a lung function test, further eye examinations and blood tests.

The results from your medical will be discussed at the completion of the examination.
The Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre, more commonly referred to as the OASC, is the next stage after the filter interview.

During your time at the selection process, you will encounter an array of different tests and assessments in order to determine whether or not you meet the exceptionally high standards that are required for an Armed Forces career.

During your stay, you will need to undertake the following assessments:

- A Group Discussion;
- A Group Planning Exercise;
- A Hangar Familiarisation;
- A Leaderless Exercise;
- A Command Situation Exercise;
- An Individual Planning Exercise
- An Interview;
- A Selection Fitness Test.

*(PLEASE NOTE: the Hangar Familiarisation will not be assessed)*

➢ **A GROUP DISCUSSION**

The group discussion element of the OASC is designed to assess your ability to communicate and interact with other people. RAF Officers are required to communicate effectively, and discuss topical issues with other members of the RAF.

There will be up to 8 people in the discussion, which will consist of a mix of age, genders and ethnicities. It is important that you demonstrate your ability to get on with a range of different people, no matter what their background.

The discussion will last for 15 minutes, during which you will be given 2 or 3 topics to talk about, with each topic being discussed for approximately 5 minutes. These topics will not require any prior knowledge, but simply require you to voice your views and opinions, and make yourself heard.

Remember, you will be assessed on the following:

- Oral Communication;
The board need to hear that you are taking an active role in the discussion. However, it is not all about speaking. You need to show that you are able to listen to others and get them involved in the conversation, too. If somebody disagrees with you, you should listen to their viewpoints and consider them thoroughly. If you still think you are right, can you persuade them to change their minds?

➢ A GROUP PLANNING EXERCISE

The group planning exercise will comprise a scenario with the aim of solving the problem/s. You will study the scenario individually, and then discuss the findings and resolutions with the rest of the group.

It is more than likely, that there will be more than one possible solution to the problem. As a team, it is your task to determine the best course of action. Based on individual interpretations, it is guaranteed that everyone will have a different opinion, and therefore you need to be willing to get stuck in with debates.

Remember, the solution needs to be practical; it needs to be realistic. And therefore, listening to other people’s ideas might be stronger than yours. However, if you still believe that your idea is the best course of action, you need to be prepared to make your views heard.

Finding a resolution is not always plain-sailing, and therefore you should be prepared for errors that occur in your proposed solution. This is where you need to reconsider and rectify and errors and discuss how these can be avoided.

You will be assessed on the following:

• Teamwork;
• Influence;
• Confidence and Resilience;
• Problem Solving;
• Oral Communication.

Make sure you express your thoughts and views, and make yourself heard. The board will want to see that you are making an effort to get involved.

➢ HANGAR FAMILIARISATION

The un-assessed hangar familiarisation exercise is used to familiarise you with the procedures, rules, equipment and safety of each exercise. A member of the board will give you a brief on each task, which outlines the rules and allows any questions to be answered.

During these exercises, you will need to take into consideration the following:

• General rules
  These are applied to the exercises, and must be adhered to. These rules usually signify places that are out-of-bounds.

• Special rules
  These rules are applied to ‘certain’ exercises, and will be enforced during the briefing before the exercise. For example, in one exercise, jumping may not be permitted, but long strides are.

• Safety
  This ensures everyone follows the correct procedures and guidelines to prevent any danger or hazards to you or other members.

• Penalties
  Should any rule be broken, a penalty will be given.

• Bridging Obstacles
  Consider ways in which you tie the planks together. How can you distribute the weight load equally? How to let your team members know what to do and what not do?

• Survey
  This comprises a 2 minute survey on all exercises which allows you to ignore the general rules, move around the entire exercise, use all of the allotted time, etc.
A LEADERLESS EXERCISE

For this exercise, no leader is selected. Instead, you will need to work in a group and undertake a practical task which will include some sort of obstacle course. This exercise will last approximately 30 minutes, during which you will need to tackle problems and resolve the issue.

Make sure you put your ideas across to the other members in your team. Not only do you want to show the board that you are able to handle the equipment and follow the rules, but you also want to show that you are an active team member. Don't be afraid to follow other people's directions, but don't be afraid to also persuade them with your ideas.

A COMMAND SITUATION EXERCISE

Similar to the leaderless exercise, this assessment will again use an obstacle course to assess everyone's skills and qualities. What makes this exercise different, is that the success of the task will be down to the appointed leader.

When you are appointed as leader, you need to be able to motivate and support your team members. You will be given 2 minutes to analyse the course, and then 13 minutes in which to complete it.

You need to show your authority, your ability to remain calm and remain vigilant throughout the exercise.

INDIVIDUAL PLANNING EXERCISE

You will be given a scenario that you will need to carefully study and then try to come up with some resolution. You should try to provide as much detail as you can in this exercise.

You will need to present your resolutions to the board after the allotted time, and they will question you in regards to your solutions.
You will need to demonstrate that you are able to justify your decisions, and voice your opinions. However, if their questions cause you to see an error in your solution, you are able to rectify this, and show that you are able to adapt your solution accordingly.

PRACTICE EXERCISES

PLANNING EXERCISES – PRACTICE 1
LOGISTIC MAGESTIC

You are the dispatcher and driver for an Army Military Transport Unit based at UPSHOT BARRACKS (see attached map). Your normal operating hours are from 07:30 to whenever the last job is completed. However, this evening your Commanding Officer wants all members of the unit, in uniform, for a photograph at 17:05 hours. Nonetheless, the unit directive requires that all requests for same-day transport received before 15:00 hours be met; after that time, tasks will be held over for the following day.

With 2 tasks left to complete today and the 15:00 hours deadline approaching, the telephone rings. A Royal Engineer, not affiliated to your unit is needed urgently at Garrick Barracks outside the town and he needs to take a large, bulky tank part with him.

A lack of fuel, due to a petrol tanker drivers' strike, means that he can only get as far as your office so he needs onward travel; he will be with you any moment now and he expects to stay at Garrick barracks for 45 minutes. You already have a 150kg package to collect from one of your regular customers, a supply depot in RIGBY, to be delivered to the barracks next door to your office, and the wife of the Commanding Officer needs to be collected from home in HAMPTON by 15:25 hours to attend a civic reception in the Town Hall opposite the office at 15:45 hours.

Due to other tasks, the only vehicles now available to you are an estate car similar to that used by the specialist engineer and with 30 litres of fuel in the tank, a small truck with 17 litres and a courier motorcycle complete with panniers with 9 litres. In addition to you, there are 2 other drivers available. The previously mentioned petrol strike means no further fuel is available. The estate car can average 30 mph at 2½ miles/litre; the truck can average 40 mph at 5 miles/litre and the motorcycle averages 50 mph at 10 miles/litre. You also know that major road-works south of the town will add 20 minutes to the direct journey between UPSHOT and RIGBY.

By the time you complete your plan and brief the other drivers it will be 15:00 hours.
QUESTION

Find a solution that allows all tasks to be completed in the allotted time.
POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Important – The following solutions are just examples of a possible way to complete the tasks in hand. They should only be used as a GUIDELINE ONLY.

Let’s work out the estate car movements:

Estate car to Commanding Officer’s house ETD 15:00 (10 miles at 30 mph = 20 mins).

• ETA 15:20 and departs at same time for Town Hall (another 10 miles at 30mph = 20 mins).

• ETA 15:40 (5 mins to spare unless departure was delayed to 15:05).
Estate car now departs to Garrick Barracks ETD 15:40 (19 miles at 30 mph = 38 mins)
• ETA 16:18, collects Royal engineer

Estate car returns to unit (19 miles at 30 mph = 38 mins)
• ETA 16:56

Let’s work out truck movements:

Truck to Garrick Barracks with Royal Engineer ETD 15:00 (19 miles at 40 mph = 28 mins)
• ETA 15:28 – Royal Engineer will be ready to depart at 16:13

Truck to supply depot (via South East route) (23 miles at 40 mph = 34 mins)
• ETD 15:28 for supply depot
• ETA and ETD supply depot 16:03

Truck return to barracks via road works (15 miles at 40 mph – 22 mins)
• Add 20 mins for road works
• ETA 16:45

Let’s work out motor cycles:

If the Royal Engineer has fitted bulky tank part and has no part to return, he could be collected by the motor cycle and would not, therefore have the 4 min wait at Garrick Barracks. However, even his tools might not fit in the panniers.

Motor cycle to Garrick Barracks (ETD as required) (but at 15:50 if there was no wait by either party) (19 miles at 50 mph = 23 mins)
• ETA 16:13

Motor cycle back to Upshot Barracks (19 miles at 50 mph = 23 mins)
• ETA 16:36
Other Solutions:

One option would be to send the motor cycle to the Station Commander’s house, the Estate car to the depot and the truck to Garrick Barracks, where it waits for the engineer. The Station Commander would not be very happy with his wife being on a motor cycle, though! All 3 drivers are also used, so there is no one to take the orders for tomorrow’s tasks.

A second option would be to take the engineer to Garrick Barracks by truck, which then drives on to the supply depot, returning to Garrick to pick up the engineer up by reverse route. The estate car could then be used for the Commanding Officer’s wife. However, the truck would be late arriving back (ETA 17:06) and you are under orders to be ready for the photograph by 17:05.

ATTEND THE UK’S LEADING 1-DAY RAF OFFICER OASC TRAINING COURSE IN KENT TO MASTER THE ENTIRE OASC:

http://www.RAFOfficerCourse.co.uk

SPEED, DISTANCE AND TIME EXERCISES – PRACTICE 2

Q1. Joe, David and Dan take it in turns driving from London to Dover, a total distance of approximately 80 miles per driver. Joe drives for 1 hour, David drives for 1 hour and 20 minutes, and Dan drives for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

   a. Calculate the average speed for Joe.
   b. Calculate the average speed for David.
   c. Calculate the average speed for Dan.

   ANSWER A: ____________________________

   ANSWER B: ____________________________
Q2. Lucy drives 310 km in 5 hours. Calculate her average speed correct to the nearest km/h.

ANSWER:

Q3. On a flight from New York to London, the plane is cruising at a speed of 525 mph. The distance from departure is 400 miles, and the time remaining to reach London is 1 hour and 20 minutes. What is the distance, in miles, from New York to London?

ANSWER:

Q4. Emma can type 840 words in 15 minutes. Calculate her typing speed in:
   a. Words per minute;
   b. Words per half an hour;
   c. Words every 4 hours.

   ANSWER A:

   ANSWER B:

   ANSWER C:
All candidates will be required to stay the night having completed the exercise phase of the assessment.

The following day, candidates will be told whether or not they have been successful during the exercise phase.

An individual who has been successful, will continue on with the process, and need to complete an interview and a fitness test. For those that are unsuccessful, will be sent home. These individuals will be debriefed as to why they were unsuccessful and areas that they need to improve on.

AN INTERVIEW

The interview will last for 45 minutes, and will be broken up into 2 sections. You will be interviewed by 2 officers, who will assess you on the following core competencies:

- Confidence and Resilience
• Effective communication
• Influence
• Teamwork
• Motivation
• Awareness

FIRST PART

The first part of the interview will assess you based on your initial application form. This will include your general interest for applying and your achievements. This is the time to make yourself look really good. You will be required to look back at past dates when you achieved certain things, and therefore you want to ensure that you can remember all of the key areas that will benefit you in the interview.

This is the easiest part of the interview because it is all about you. This is your chance for the board officers to get to know you, and determine what you are like as a person, and whether this is suited to a role in the RAF

SECOND PART

The second part of the interview is much more intensive. This will require strong knowledge of the military and current affairs. These questions will be more specific in terms of military life, and therefore you will be expected to know and understand key elements of the branch in which you are applying for.

Questions could be on the topic of the following:

• Knowledge of the structure of the RAF;
• Roles within the RAF;
• Air Power;
• RAF aircrafts, equipment and future developments.

You need to prepare for this stage of the selection in as much detail as you possibly can. Take note of national and international goings-on. Watch TV, listen to the radio and read newspapers to ensure you are fully aware of current affairs regarding military, economic, social or political.
A fitness assessment will be required if you pass the exercises and interview. This fitness assessment reflects the fitness standards which are required from the Royal Air Force Fitness Tests.

All candidates who wish to join the RAF, no matter what position, will need to undergo a fitness test. The reason why the Armed Forces use a fitness test as part of their assessment is to ensure that candidates meet the required fitness levels for anyone serving in the Royal Air Force. Any candidate who is unable to achieve the required standard will not be accepted on to training.

This test comprises a Multi-Stage Fitness Test, more commonly known as the Bleep test, followed by a short interval. The next fitness test will see how many press ups and sit ups an individual can achieve in one minute.

The Multi-Stage Fitness Test (MSFT)

- A candidate will be assessed by running between two lines/markers, which is set 20 metres apart. The individual must reach the marker before the pre-recorded beep is sounded. These beeps will become much closer together, and therefore a candidate will finish the test when they are no longer to keep in time with the beep;
- Measure a candidate’s aerobic fitness levels;
- The test allows individuals to increase their speed and stamina as the assessment progresses.

The Press Ups

- All candidates, both male and female, will be required to do as many ‘full’ press ups as possible in one minute or until they fail to complete anymore;
- Any press up that is not correctly completed will not count as a press up;
This test allows endurance and strength of the upper body to be assessed;
It is better to do fewer press ups but maintain the correct technique, as opposed to attempting lots of press ups but not using the correct techniques.

The Sit Ups

- All candidates; both male and female, will be required to do as many sit ups as possible in one minute, or until they fail to complete anymore;
- Any sit up that is not correctly completed will not count as a sit up;
- The test allows muscular strength and endurance of the abdomen to be measured.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

After you have completed the OASC, your performance will be carefully analysed by the boarding officers of the RAF. It is then up to them to determine whether or not you are successful in the process.

The boarding officers and the Board President will submit one final grade for your overall results. Your results will be assessed based on what branch you are applying for, and if your results suggest you are more suited to a different branch, you may be offered a place in an alternative branch.

Any offers you receive can be rejected – it is up to you to make that final decision as to whether or not a career in the RAF is rightly for you.
How will I know if I’ve been successful at the OASC?

- The OASC will write to you and let you know if you have reached the required ‘selectable’ standard;
- Generally, it will take about 3 weeks to hear from them after you attended the OASC;
- Sometimes, they may write to you informing you that they have not made a decision on your application, and therefore you’ll be competing for those final few places;
- It can take up to 3 months before you receive a definitive answer, and therefore you need to be patient.

If you are serious about joining the RAF, I highly recommend that you take a look at our ‘How to become a RAF Officer’ Training Course:

https://www.how2become.com/courses/raf-officer/

Our 1-day intensive training course takes you through the entire selection process for joining the RAF and will improve your chances of passing the OASC.

During this course, we will teach you the following:
The Scoring Criteria used for the RAF OASC including the assessable qualities, the Behavioural Anchored Rating Scale (BARS – used to assess candidates), and how to increase your chances during each stage of selection;

- How to pass both the Filter Interview and the OASC Interview;
- How to pass the Planning Exercise Phase including group and individual exercises;
- Talk you through the ENTIRE selection process, which will allow you to ask questions, understand the process, and build your confidence in applying to the RAF!

This professional 1-day training course is the UK’s leading OASC course with an average rating of 9.5/10 on TrustPilot.

Get the edge on other candidates and secure your future as an RAF Officer with our 1-Day OASC Training Course in Kent. Book now:

http://www.RAFOfficerCourse.co.uk