**Statement of Requirements (subject to change)**

**Introduction**

To modernise candidate assessment for officer recruitment for the Royal Navy (RN), Royal Marines (RM), Royal Navy and Royal Marines Reserve Forces (Reserve Forces) and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA).

Initially, to develop the technical solution for, host and operate an online two stage candidate assessment process, comprising of a pre-recorded interview (PRI) for a minimum of 2500 candidates per year and a group planning exercise (GPE) for a minimum of 1600 candidates per year. Hosting refers to the PRI video recordings and the ‘live’ management of candidates during the GPE exercise. Operating includes PRI and GPE candidate assessment, internal quality control of this assessment and reporting feedback on candidates from both PRI and GPE. Both the PRI and the GPE act as a filter to select out unsuitable candidates to go on to the next stage of assessment and selection.

The customer has already developed a set of PRI questions and initial GPE content to form the initial assessments within the supplier’s technical solution at the start of contract operation. The ongoing requirement is for collaboration between supplier project manager and occupational psychologists, Royal Navy Officer Assessment Centre (RNOAC) staff and military occupational psychologists to continuously develop and improve the PRI question bank and GPE assessment content and delivery over the whole contract period. The aim of this new process is to deliver a higher capacity approach than the RN has historically managed, with a quicker timeline for processing candidates through their application and assessment process. Once a PRI is sent to a candidate, they should have 7 days to complete it, 7 days for it to be assessed and scored and then they should complete their GPE within 21 days of the PRI scoring, taking the process to a total of 5 weeks at most.

The contract is for three years with an option for a further one year.

**Background**

The Royal Navy’s Admiralty Interview Board (AIB) within HMS SULTAN in Gosport, near Portsmouth, has for over 100 years conducted officer candidate assessments in person for all candidates for the RN, RM, Reserve Forces and RFA over a 36-hour period. Candidates are predominantly civilian applicants (known as Direct Entrant candidates), but also include serving RN and RFA rating and RM other ranks (all known as in-service candidates) who have applied to commission as officers within the RN. Approximately 7,000 officer applications are received throughout each year, with peaks at certain times of the year and in certain geographical locations. The AIB had a processing capacity of up to 950 candidates per year to select approximately 450 RN officers, 70 RM officers and a smaller number of Reserve Forces and RFA officers.

Due to necessity, during the pandemic period, the AIB assessment moved rapidly online in April 2020 comprising a simple 60-minute interview. While regarded as an acceptable stop-gap solution, the 60-minute interview did not fully assess all the competencies required.

The rudimentary success and efficiency of moving from a traditional face to face (F2F) assessment to a virtual provided an opportunity to use a permanent digital solution. Researching other areas of government and public sector employers, e.g., Civil Service, NHS, Police, Ministry of Justice, the success of a permanent, commercially supported, multi-stage, virtual assessment process was evident.

During 2021 the AIB worked with military occupational psychologists, partner consultants and companies to develop a two stage, virtual officer assessment. This comprised of an online Pre-Recorded Interview (PRI) assessment, with a set of 8 questions for a candidate to answer. The candidate responses were assessed and those who passed were put forward for the Group Planning Exercise (GPE). The basic online GPE assessment was carried out virtually, with four candidates in each exercise. Candidates were provided with a situation, objectives and information and then given 20 minutes to discuss it, to come up with a plan to meet the objectives. They were then given 5 minutes to brief the plan, in whatever format they chose. A facilitator was on screen and gave the candidates information on how the assessment was run. Each candidate was assessed by an individual assessor, who was not visible on screen. A phone number was available for candidates to call if they had technical issues during the assessment.

A Royal Navy officer from the AIB assessed a single candidate in each GPE, they then carried out a moderation process to achieve a single result with the assessor of that candidate. Scores for each candidate were put onto an online system, with evidence for the scoring given. This was passed to the AIB, who carried out the process of informing candidates if they had passed the assessment and if they were subsequently to be invited to join the RN. Dependent on the entry requirements, which change year to year, passing the assessment does not necessarily mean being offered a place at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) for commencement of officer training.

Alongside the two-stage virtual proof of concept, the Royal Navy has been developing two stages of assessments that will be undertaken by candidates before the commercially supported PRI and GPE. The future full multistage assessment process will be: a Defence Aptitude Assessment (DAA), which is a General Mental Aptitude (GMA) test, developed by military occupational psychologists and recently introduced; Situational Judgement Tests (SJT), yet to be developed by occupational psychologists but expected to be in use by the end of 2022. The DAA and SJT will filter 7,000 candidates down to a minimum of 2,500 per year to undertake the PRI, from which a minimum of 1,600 will be selected to undertake the GPE. Until introduction of the SJT, the DAA will be used to filter down to a minimum of 2,500 for PRI. Each stage of the assessment process acts as a filter to select out candidates to ensure the best candidates move forward to the next assessment stage.

Moving to a modern, virtual assessment and selection process will enable the RN to continue to compete as a world class employer in an increasingly challenging recruitment market. The new generation of applicants expect the candidate experience to be a mobile friendly and fast one. The aim is to meet these expectations with a new digital, multi-stage assessment process, ensuring an objective, evidence-based assessment of all candidates, supporting diversity, enabling the processing of a much higher volume of candidates, and significantly reducing the requirement for both dedicated RN infrastructure and AIB staff. As part of the modernisation project, the historic AIB is now known as the RN OAC.

**Requirement**

The Supplier needs to be on contract by 01 Sep 22, with the ability to commence active PRI assessments by 31 Oct 22 and commencing GPE assessments by 28 Nov 22. A pilot scheme for PRI needs to be completed by 14 Oct 22 and for GPE by 11 Nov 22.

The first requirement is for a two-stage, virtual assessment process comprising a PRI and GPE to be delivered as per the dates immediately above.

The second requirement is for a continual development of the PRI and GPE through the course of the contract, to ensure it remains relevant to assessing the requirements of officers for the RN and RM. There must be flexibility in reviewing and adjusting PRI questions for different candidates, such as candidates joining different specialisations of the RN, Royal Navy Reserve (RNR), Royal Marines (RM), and In-Service candidates (those already serving in the RN, known as Upper Yardsmen or Senior Upper Yardsmen and Warrant Officers) noting this list is not exhaustive. The development of different question sets, to form a question bank, must be conducted collaboratively with the RNOAC, with final approval resting with the RNOAC. The associated marking criteria must also be reviewed and agreed accordingly, collaboratively with the RNOAC, with final approval resting with the RNOAC. A minimum of a quarterly meeting between RN OAC and the Supplier would be required to discuss progress, review feedback, review the collaboration process and agree dates for delivery of amendments to the extant PRI. Agreed amendments to the PRI will be made on a minimum of a 3 monthly basis or as deemed necessary by RNOAC.

There must be flexibility in reviewing and developing the GPE format, information scheme, assessment process, marking scheme and feedback scheme to ensure it remains relevant to assessing the requirements of officers for the RN and RM, especially in a changing, post-pandemic, social and recruitment context. The development of different group assessments must be conducted collaboratively with the RNOAC, with final approval resting with the RNOAC. The associated marking criteria must also be reviewed and agreed accordingly, collaboratively with the RNOAC, with final approval resting with the RNOAC. A minimum of a quarterly meeting between RN OAC and the Supplier would be required to discuss progress, review feedback, review the collaboration process and agree dates for delivery of amendments to the initial GPE. Agreed amendments to the GPE will be made on a minimum of a 3 monthly basis or as deemed necessary by RNOAC.

PRI:

The PRI is an online automated video interview to assess a candidate’s motivation to join; awareness of what to expect in training and once in role; and their ability to communicate and influence (oral communication).

The supplier will be required to provide the following:

1. Host online pre-recorded interviews and send the PRI link, which is valid for 7 days, to candidates whose details have been sent to the supplier from the RN Recruitment Information Technology System (RITS) within 48 hours of receiving candidate details. There are different question sets for Direct Entry, In Service and Reserve Forces candidates. The questions to be used initially have been designed by RN OAC personnel and military occupational psychologists. There are currently eight questions in each PRI, with four on motivation and four on awareness. There should be facility to host question banks to enable different questions to be used as agreed between RN OAC staff and supplier as the question sets are developed.

1. PRI to be accessible by candidates via any device which is video conference capable. (Eg. Mobile phone, tablet, laptop, computer) using the operating systems of Android, Apple, Edge and Google Chrome (this list is not exhaustive.) Candidates should be able to undertake the PRI at any time of day, 7 days a week, and from any location with internet access.
2. A technical support facility, available during the daytime working hours that PRI assessments are being run, for candidates to contact in the event of technical difficulty in accessing or completing the PRI. This is required to take the form of availability by a telephone call and availability via an online chat service. Information about this technical support facility must be made available to candidates outside daytime working hours so they know how and when they can gain technical support if they wish to complete their PRI at another time.

1. The PRI is to present the candidate with a pre-scripted question set. PRI must be an uninterrupted process. Candidate cannot pause and complete at different times.

The interview consists of 8 questions: four on motivation and four on awareness. The candidate must be informed of the process and timings before they commence. Each question appears as text on screen only as the candidate reaches the question, i.e., not all visible at once at the start. The PRI should include an unscored practice question for the candidate at the start. The candidate should be able to play this back and review it so they can see how they present on screen. Each question is visible to the candidate for 30 seconds prior to recording starting automatically, or the candidate can start recording within the 30 seconds if they wish. Recording time is 2 minutes and the candidate should have the facility to have two attempts to answer each question, with a review function available to the candidate after the first attempt. After review, the candidate should be able to submit the first recording or record a second attempt at the answer. The candidate does not have the ability to review the second attempt.

1. Interviews to be assessed and scored by suitably professionally qualified supplier staff. Scoring system designed by RN OAC personnel, based on a 1 – 4 scale. Training on the specifics of the scoring system and Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) will be provided to the supplier by RN OAC personnel and the RN OAC contracted training consultant. Scores to be digitally loaded to RITS by the supplier, on the day of scoring. The scoring system consists of 12 elements in three competency areas: four motivation questions; four awareness questions; four oral communication competencies assessed across the eight questions. For each candidate, the supplier is to provide a score from 1 – 4 for each of the 12 elements, plus a total score for each of the 3 competency areas, plus an overall score. RN OAC retain responsibility for the scoring system, though it can be reviewed collaboratively with the Supplier’s occupational psychologists. If the scoring scheme is amended by RNOAC during the course of the contract, the Supplier must accept RN OAC designated training to ensure all assessor staff are competent in the amended scoring system.

1. The recorded interview should be able to be reviewed by multiple assessors at any time. RN OAC personnel to be able to moderate supplier scoring by watching and independently scoring a selection of PRIs. This will be at the discretion of the RN OAC, with every PRI being available to them for moderation. Moderation is to take place prior to the supplier sending the PRI score to RITS, which will require the supplier and customer to agree which candidates will be moderated before scoring takes place. RN OAC staff will discuss moderation scores with the supplier and the RN OAC score is to be used as the score to send to RITS.

1. Military occupational psychologists, nominated by RN OAC staff, and any contracted RN OAC training consultant to be able to access PRI recordings, stored with the supplier, for scoring quality assurance and PRI development purposes. Other RN personnel or RN contractors to be able to access PRI recordings if necessary and directed by RN OAC staff. As per the DPIA, all data is owned by the MoD.
2. Provide occupational psychologists to work with RN OAC staff and military occupational psychologists collaboratively to continuously monitor the performance of the PRI, develop the question bank and improve the experience for the candidates.
3. The PRI to have a candidate survey at the end, designed by supplier occupational psychologists, and agreed by RN OAC, to allow feedback to be provided to support PRI development.
4. The PRI is to be stored on the supplier server for the duration of the recruitment cycle as designated by the RN OAC, which may be shortened during the contract, but which is a maximum of 18 months. At the 18-month point, the supplier is responsible for deleting all PRI in accordance with the DPIA.

GPE:

The GPE is a group discussion exercise initially designed by military occupational psychologists. The intent is for up to 3 different GPE scenarios to be designed and provided to the supplier for the start of the contract. The exercise assesses candidates on: problem solving; teamwork; influence; confidence and resilience; and oral communication.

The supplier will be required to provide the following:

1. Candidates successful at PRI to be digitally loaded to a GPE by the supplier from details sent to the supplier from RITS; the GPE should be within 21 days of PRI scoring. A GPE is to be four candidates, possibly more if a suitable hosting and facilitating design is agreed between supplier and RN OAC Staff and the supplier’s ability to score more than four candidates is proven; an supplier assessor should only have one candidate to assess and score. This would be part of the collaborative development of the GPE, reviewed at a minimum of 3 monthly intervals. A four candidate GPE should be able to run with 3 if one drops out or can’t join on the day. If two candidates drop out, all four candidates should be offered another GPE slot at the earliest opportunity.
2. Supplier to issue link to join GPE to candidates by email at least 48 hours ahead of the GPE.
3. A technical support facility, available during the daytime working hours that GPE assessments are being run, for candidates to contact in the event of technical difficulty in accessing or completing the GPE. This is required to take the form of availability by a telephone call and availability via an online chat service. Information about this technical support facility must be made available to candidates outside daytime working hours so they know how and when they can gain technical support when they do conduct their GPE. Technical support must be made available to candidates so they can ask any questions prior to commencing their GPE.
4. Host and facilitate GPEs and assess each candidate during the GPE. The GPE has been designed as a 20-minute discussion with 15 minutes of independent reading of briefing material prior to the discussion and 10 minutes of candidate briefing of their planned solution after the discussion. The supplier should be able to host, facilitate and assess candidates using all provided GPE scenarios. The aim being to ensure that candidates can not anticipate which scenario will be used and that if a candidate is returning to be assessed after previously being unsuccessful, they do not undertake the same scenario. Supplier must maintain a record of candidate’s names and ensure they identify any individuals returning for a second assessment and ensure they are assessed in a different scenario from their previous GPE.
5. GPE to be assessed and scored by suitably professionally qualified supplier staff, with an allocation of one assessor per candidate. Scoring system designed by RN OAC personnel, based on a 1 – 4 scale. Training on the specifics of the scoring system and BARS will be provided to the supplier by RN OAC personnel and the RN OAC contracted training consultant. Scores to be digitally loaded to RITS by the supplier, on the day of scoring. The scoring system consists of 5 competencies: problem solving; teamwork; influence; confidence and resilience; and oral communication. For each candidate, the supplier is to provide a score from 1 – 4 for each of the 5 competencies, plus an overall score. RN OAC retain responsibility for the scoring system, though it can be reviewed collaboratively with the Supplier’s occupational psychologists. If the scoring scheme is amended by RNOAC during the contract, the Supplier must accept RN OAC designated training to ensure all assessor staff are competent in the amended scoring system.
6. Provide facility for a minimum of one RN OAC staff member to join the GPE to moderate candidate assessment. In moderation, the RN OAC staff member will assess candidates using the same scoring system as the Supplier assessors. There must be the ability for the RN OAC moderator to discuss the assessment outcomes with the Supplier assessor on completion. A single score must be agreed on for the candidate. If there is a discrepancy in scoring, the RN moderator’s decision is final. The moderation process is to be agreed collaboratively with the Supplier and RN OAC. If there is a difference in approach, RN OAC has the final decision.

1. Scores and evidence based feedback is to be digitally transferred to RITS on the day of the exercise. Evidence required is one sentence of text on each of the five competencies to explain the score given based on the BARS. The transfer of scores and feedback on to RITS must be managed via the API.
2. Provide a minimum of 2 occupational psychologists to work with RN OAC staff and military occupational psychologists to continuously monitor the performance of the GPE, develop the exercises and improve the experience for the candidates.
3. The GPE to have a candidate survey at the end, designed by supplier occupational psychologists and agreed collaboratively with RN OAC, to allow feedback to be provided to support GPE development and meet KPIs.
4. There is a requirement for the Supplier to develop new group assessments, to improve on the initial scenarios provided for the start of the contract. Associated scoring and marking schemes may also require adjustment. This would be conducted collaboratively with the RN OAC, with RN OAC having the final decision on changes and implementation. New group exercise assessments would be required to be ready for review, with a training and implementation plan in place, 6 months from the start of contract.

**Training Requirements**

1. To support the initial training of RN OAC personnel, military occupational psychologists, and any RN OAC training contractor to use the PRI and GPE technology and provide training aids.
2. The data integration solution shall have a training function so that RN personnel can be trained on the software functionality and assessment process in a training environment prior to being involved with live assessments.
3. All Supplier staff involved in assessments must receive any training mandated by the RN OAC at any time during the contract. This training will include but not be limited to an understanding of the scoring system, an understanding of the assessment criteria and an understanding of the branches and specialisations of officers in the Royal Navy.

**Technical Requirements**

1. Technical solution for the GPE is to be as user friendly and accessible as possible via a single digital interface.
2. There will be a requirement for the supplier to be able to work with the RN OAC to aid in the development of the PRI and GPE from the initial concept, once feedback is received from candidates and once evaluation data has been reviewed by the Supplier and RN OAC. Development may include but not be limited to: PRI questions, style of delivery, scoring system, timings and presentation; GPE content, style of delivery, timings, numbers in attendance; assessment criteria and moderation criteria.
3. Supplier must provide a business continuity plan to RN OAC, prior to 31 Oct 22, in case of technical faults and staff unavailability. This must include plans for maintaining a PRI and GPE assessment in cases where there are specific software faults, malware attacks, connectivity issues, staff illness, physical damage to supplier infrastructure, national lockdowns as a minimum.

1. The data integration solution shall have representative test environments (RTE) available to enable testing as developments are made during the lifetime of the contract.
2. The supplier is responsible for ensuring Application Programming Interface (API) functionality between the supplier software and RITS. The supplier is responsible for the costs of maintaining any software and any software updates required to meet the security aspects of the contract. The supplier must supply, maintain and support the API through the life of the contract, ensuring it evolves with new software and platform requirements and upgrades with emergent technology, which candidates may use, over the lifetime of the contract.
3. The quality of the connection / data processing capability needs to be high enough to ensure PRIs are operated seamlessly without connection failures and that at least 4 candidates can be online on a GPE at the same time, along with the necessary assessing and facilitating staff.

Note, the users of the product will be:

* applicants applying to join the RN, RM, Reserve Forces and RFA as an officer (both direct entrants and in-service) to undertake PRI and GPE.

* Supplier assessors to score the PRI and GPE.

* RN OAC personnel and any RN OAC contracted training consultant to be able to conduct remote assurance and auditing of interview and group planning exercise processes and assessment moderation.

* Military occupational psychologists to review data collected from the process to continuously develop future interview questions and GPE content, in collaboration with the supplier’s occupational psychologists.

**Deliverables**

Candidates will be made available to conduct their PRI in a trickle-feed method, with the Supplier required to facilitate PRIs and scoring every working day. GPEs should take place for candidates who are successful at PRI within 21 days of their PRI assessment. The PRI and GPE assessment process should take no more than 5 weeks for a candidate. The Supplier must be able to adjust the capacity of PRI and GPE to accommodate surges at particular times of year, notably in September, October, January and February. At the start of the contract there will be a backlog of candidates who require assessment, therefore for the first 3 months of assessments, RN OAC will prioritise candidates for PRI and GPE.

Supplier must send links to PRI and links to access GPE to candidates.

The supplier to provide training to customer staff on how to access and use the supplier’s technical solution. This must be provided prior to 31 Oct 22 and must be provided as required by RN OAC as refreshed training and for any new joiners to RN OAC throughout the duration of the contract.

The supplier will be required to provide a feedback facility for candidates to comment on ease of use and quality of experience. Supplier to produce a weekly feedback report to customer detailing the feedback from the candidates. The feedback questions are to be designed by the supplier but must be approved by the RN OAC, RN OAC has the final decision on the questions asked of candidates and these can be amended at any point as required by the RN OAC. As a minimum, candidates to be asked: did they have sufficient information prior to the assessment; did they understand what they had to do during the assessment; were they able to perform at the best of their ability during the assessment; were they treated fairly during the assessment; did they have a positive experience during the assessment.

The supplier will be required to provide a technical support facility for candidates to contact in the event of technical issues accessing or completing the assessments. Supplier to produce a weekly technical issue and resolution report to customer. Report to include each technical issue from each candidate raising an issue and whether it was resolved and how. If not resolved, what action was taken.

The supplier will be required to provide the RN access to all the recorded data, all marking and feedback data to its full extent upon request of the RN OAC within 1 working day of an RN request having been made. All data is owned by MoD.

*Candidates’ privacy rights include:*

*You have the right to:*

*• withdraw consent to the processing of your personal data at any time;*

*• request a copy of any personal data you have provided, and for this to be provided in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format.*

*REFERENCE: JOINT RN/RAF PRIVACY STATEMENT FOR RITS*

The supplier must have the ability to

* Cease processing of personal data on request by the RN
* Pass a copy of any personal data provided to the RN, and for this to be provided in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format, in order that the RN meets its obligations for data privacy rights.

**Duration**

The contract to start by 1 Sep 22 for 3 years with an option for an additional year. The supplier’s solution is to be developed in time for the assessment process to be operational by 31 Oct 22 until completion of the contract.

**Milestones**

Supplier solution to be piloted and signed off by customer at least 2 weeks prior to 31 Oct 22 go live date for PRI. Supplier solution to be piloted and signed off by customer at least 2 weeks prior to GPE go live date of 28 Nov 22.

**Location**

The solution is to be online and accessible from any location with internet connection.

**Acronyms**

AIB. Admiralty Interview Board. Historic Assessment Centre to assess officer candidates. Now known as RN OAC.

RN R&A. Royal Navy Recruitment and Attraction. The RN organisation responsible for all recruitment into the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Reserves and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

RN OAC – Royal Navy Officer Assessment Centre. The customer organisation within RN R&A that is responsible for assessing officer candidates for the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Reserve Forces and Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

PRI – Pre-Recorded Interview. The first commercially supported stage of the candidate assessment process.

GPE – Group Planning Exercise. The second commercially supported stage of the candidate assessment process.

RITS – Recruitment Information Technology System. The system for candidate management, designed by Pega on behalf of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

DE – Direct Entrant. A civilian applicant to be an officer in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Reserve Forces or Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

I-S - In-Service. A candidate already serving in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Reserve Forces or Royal Fleet Auxiliary, who wishes to commission as an officer.

Reserve Forces. Royal Naval Reserves and Royal Marine Reserves.

**Optional Requirements**

There is an option for an additional year to be added to the end of the 3 year contract, this will be reviewed in time for the end of the 3 years.