



Creating an Immersive Candidate Experience

for Early Stage Talent



The challenge for organizations is to design and develop an early careers hiring program that engages with candidates, immerses them within the ethos, culture, values and expectations of the organization and assesses their future capabilities and skills.



Contents

Radical Change Is Shaping Early Careers Programs	5
Five Steps to Develop Your Early Careers Program for the Next Generation	6
1 Opportunity Immersion	8
2 Statement of Interest	12
3 Culture Immersion	16
4 Role Immersion	20
5 Skills Immersion	24
Take the Next Step	28



Radical Change Is Shaping Early Careers Programs



The early careers landscape is changing. Organizations are facing new challenges and increased candidate expectations, and are planning for an uncertain future.

Graduates, apprentices and interns are applying to more organizations than usual and yet may be chasing fewer opportunities. Furthermore, this is the first 'digital-native' generation of graduate jobseekers and candidates have high expectations from a digital selection process.

Employers are hiring those who will navigate the future – and whatever that may bring. Our research shows that nearly 90% of organizations that hire early careers talent are looking to measure each candidate's growth mindset.

Competition in the hiring marketplace emphasizes the need for brand-supporting attraction and selection processes to engage with those candidates who have the strongest alignment with the firm.

Candidates are keen to better understand an organization and its opportunities. Candidate engagement and connection is a bare minimum. Recruiters need to immerse candidates in the firm itself, showcasing roles and experiences. They need to share the organization's values, strategy and purpose with candidates.

In this guide we look at how to build an immersive candidate experience that goes beyond engagement to also educate prospective employees. If you have any questions or want to discuss any of the themes or products in details please reach out to me at suzanne.courtney@aon.com.

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Aon

Five Steps to Uplevel Your Early Careers Hiring for the Next Generation

There are three reasons for the focus on creating an immersive early careers candidate experience.

- Typically, candidates have not been exposed to the world of work and they need to gain an insight into what the role and firm could be like if hired.
- They need greater guidance as to what opportunities or programs an organization can offer – and which are most suitable for them.
- To make sure that they ‘hit the ground running’, they need some upfront coaching and development.

When recruitment and selection is carried out almost entirely virtually, hiring teams need to be more thoughtful about how they can build this immersive experience for early career program candidates.

Five-step candidate journey with candidate immersion at the heart of each step

Step 1: Opportunity Immersion

Candidates are attracted and engaged using our pathway explorer to match the individual with the right opportunity that best fits their interests and motivation.



Step 2: Statement of Interest

Candidates complete an application form expressing interest in their desired area.



Step 3: Culture Immersion

Combination of gamified job simulations and video journals to identify those with the highest potential.



Step 4: Role Immersion

Aon's virtual exploration center creates day-in-the-life simulations and identifies those who are a best fit for the role using engaging assessments.



Step 5: Skills Immersion

Creating a skills passport enabling active learning before starting in the role, creating a culture of self-driven learning and providing individuals with development areas.



1

Opportunity
Immersion





Immersing Candidates in Your Company Before They Apply

Potential candidates need to understand which of the available programs best suit their interests and motivation before they apply. This is difficult to do when you have little knowledge or experience of what a role involves.

Aon's Match Me is an easy-to-use tool that gives candidates insight into their own interests, preferences and motivation, as well as how these may apply to future opportunities. It creates an air of excitement about the role and the organization by providing details on the types of projects they can be a part of and the impact they will have.

The individual is taken through a range of questions that covers their interests, preferences and motivations. Once completed, the potential candidate is shown those programs that best match their responses.

It gives candidates greater confidence that the application they go on to choose aligns with their drives and interests. Also, the hiring team can feel confident that the candidate is making an informed decision. The tool can also increase the talent pool's diversity by encouraging those candidates who may not have previously considered your organization.

Even at this early pre-hire stage, Match Me can sow the seeds of evidence-based career ownership.

10 million

early careers candidates assessed each year.



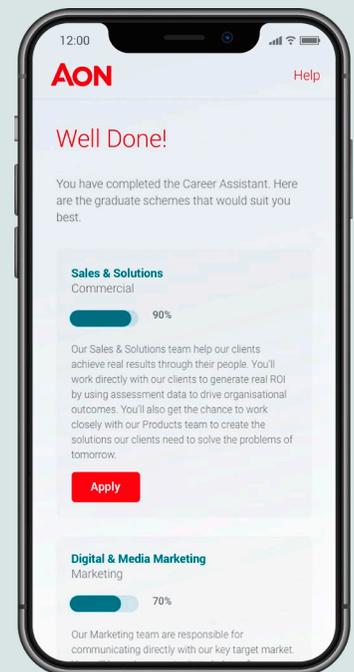
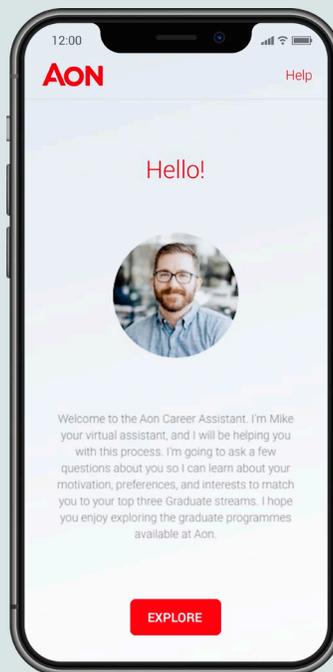


Providing Future Opportunities

Aon's Match Me tool will provide candidates with insight into their **future opportunities** in the organization.

Candidates are attracted and engaged using our Match Me tool. Candidates will be asked questions about their interests and motivations in the workplace.

After competition, candidates will be informed of their **top three** roles that suit them and guided towards the application stage.



2

Statement of Interest





2

Immerse Candidates When They First Apply to the Role

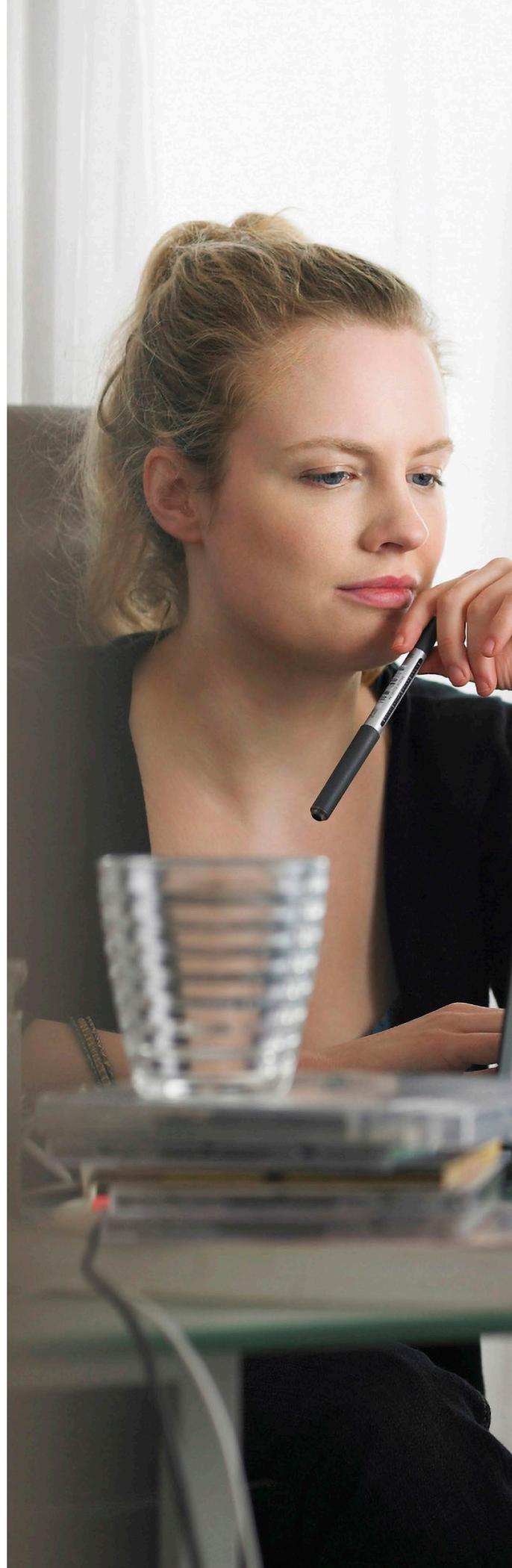
This statement of interest pushes past the traditional application form. Shorter, branded and providing more information, it gives the hiring firm the ability to screen applicants based on specific constraints of the role (e.g. the right to work in the UK) to make sure that those applying meet the minimum requirements.

The talent team can share core activities, what the relevant skills are, which qualifications are being sought, what the program or role offers and the next steps in the process. Chatbots help to gather information and provide instant feedback to candidates' questions.

Rather than a broad-brush approach to applying, a Statement of Interest encourages applicants to consider specifically why they are applying and takes the immersive experience further. It helps to focus the candidate's thinking and consideration for the specific application.

#1

First-to-Market and driving ethical AI, diversity and inclusion throughout our assessments.

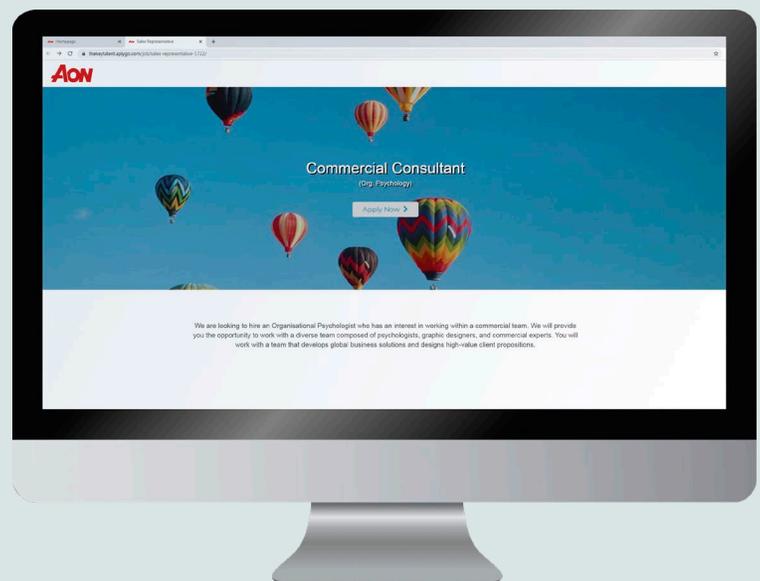


Immersion Into Your Organization

Candidates complete the application form expressing interest in their desired area. Organizations can use this to inform candidates about:

- Core activities for the role
- Relevant skills and qualifications
- What the role offers
- The next steps

This allows for further immersion for the candidate into the organization by creating a transparent process from the start.



3

Culture
Immersion





Immersing Candidates at the Assessment Stage

This is the first step in the formal assessment process. Here, robust psychometric tests that measure specific behaviors, attitudes, motivations and skills relating to the firm are taken and a wrapper is around them to create an engaging story.

This story is conveyed through emails sent to candidates. In other words, instead of a candidate being asked simply to complete assessments, they are asked to step into the shoes of a graduate as part of a day-in-the-life simulation.

This gives the hiring firm the opportunity to share more information about the organization, its purpose and values, and what to expect during the assessment in order to start building the candidate's excitement about the opportunity and organization.

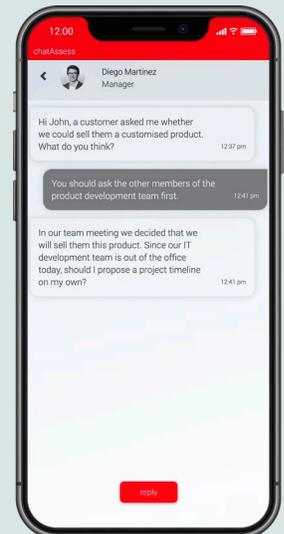
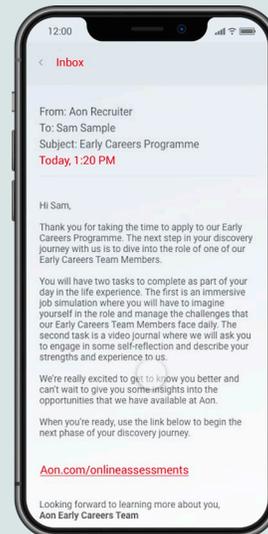
The overall assessment process is immersive, engaging, valuable to both the candidate and recruiter and also provides reliable identification of the best-fit early careers talent.

Early Careers OTS SJT

Aon can provide an OTS SJQ focused around early careers to **assess role fit, potential** and work behaviors. It also helps to stream candidates into roles. Aon's assessments are mobile enabled to boost **candidate engagement** and ensure high-quality completion.

Functions of the OTS SJT:

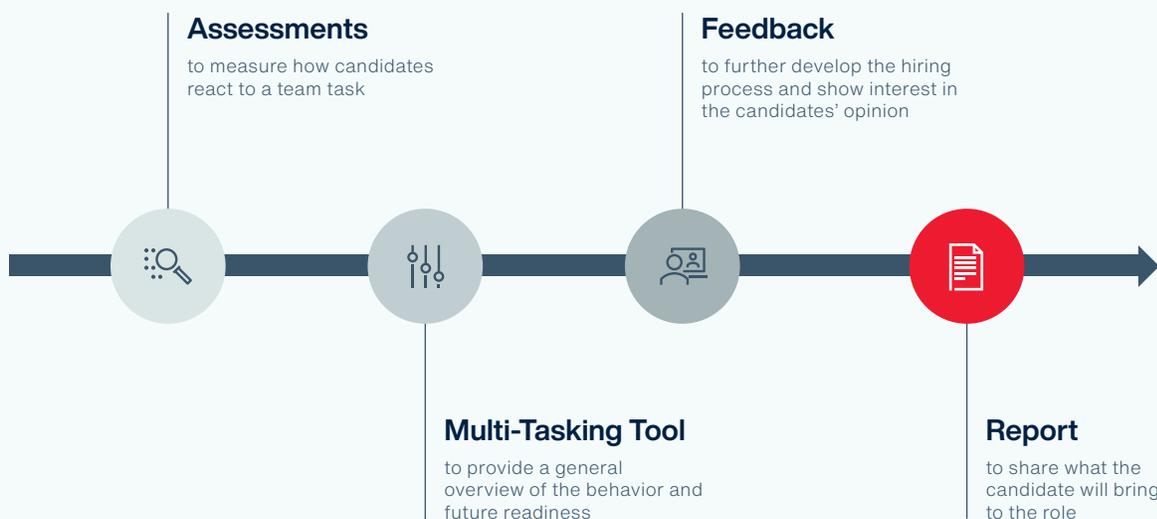
- Assess
- Report
- Develop



Candidate Stages

- 1 Multiple assessments embedded within a single story line, e.g. job simulations, scenarios or situations which measure how candidates react to a team task, innovation or a personal development scenario. Designed to be highly realistic, these receive high candidate acceptance ratings and completion rates of up to 98%.
- 2 A multi-tasking tool is included as prioritization and juggling of multiple responsibilities are important in fast-paced early careers roles. Candidates will also complete a personality questionnaire that, as well as providing a general view of behaviors, includes a specific measure of future readiness and the potential to develop within the organization.
- 3 Feedback from candidates is important. It means that the hiring process can be further developed – and the company can demonstrate its interest in candidate opinion. We would recommend collecting feedback at every stage of the process.
- 4 Once the assessments have been completed, the candidate then records their self-reflection vlog or journal in order to share what they will bring to the role. At the end of the journey, candidates will receive a feedback report.

The Four Steps of the Candidate Journey



4

Role Immersion





Immersing Candidates During the Assessment Center

This is the final stage of the recruitment process – and immersion is deeper via this virtual assessment and exploration center.

Here the candidate invests more time in getting to know more about the role and interact with other candidates and hiring team members. Assessment continues to be built around the organization's narrative to augment the realism and immersion within the firm.

Aon's tool includes a collection of off-the-shelf exercises that can be customized to reflect the sector or specific challenge. The goal is to link this with the firm's organizational strategy and encourage active engagement of candidates with what you are trying to achieve as a business.

98%

is the average completion rate on of our assessments.

By truly learning more about the role or program and understanding how your graduates contribute to your organizational strategy, you will create excitement among candidates which leads to increased offer-to-acceptance ratios.

Tips for Building a Truly Digital Assessment Center



Incorporate Strategic Vision and Purpose

Build upon the immersive narrative and incorporate your strategic vision and purpose



Enhance Social Mobility and Neurodiversity

through online delivery
embedded with best practice



Challenge Creativity and Delight Candidates

through highly-engaging,
digitally-native exercises



Day-in-the-life Simulation

Aon's virtual exploration center creates a day-in-the-life simulation and identifies those best suited for the role using engaging assessments. Clients can customize the landing page to represent their **brand and values**.

Candidates are given useful information around:

- What to expect?
- Hints and tips
- A planned assessment journey



5

Skills
Immersion





Immerse Candidates in the Preboarding and Onboarding Stage

With the offer made and accepted, the time before start date can feel long for candidates. You will want to nurture the excitement you created during the assessment process. This ensures that they remain engaged with you.

You can offer opportunities to develop and hone the skills that are required for future success at your organization.

At Aon we can link in with training providers to support a learning journey for prospective employees. Employees in waiting can work through the content to build their skills before they begin working, reducing day one nerves while simultaneously reducing time to productivity. It also reinforces a culture of continuous self-development and career ownership.

Skills Immersion



Learning Journeys

Use insights from the recruitment process to create curated learning journeys for those who have received an offer.



Skills Passport

Provide candidates with a skills passport to explore learning content and create a culture of continuous self-development.



Drive Engagement

Drive engagement in the stage between offer and onboarding.

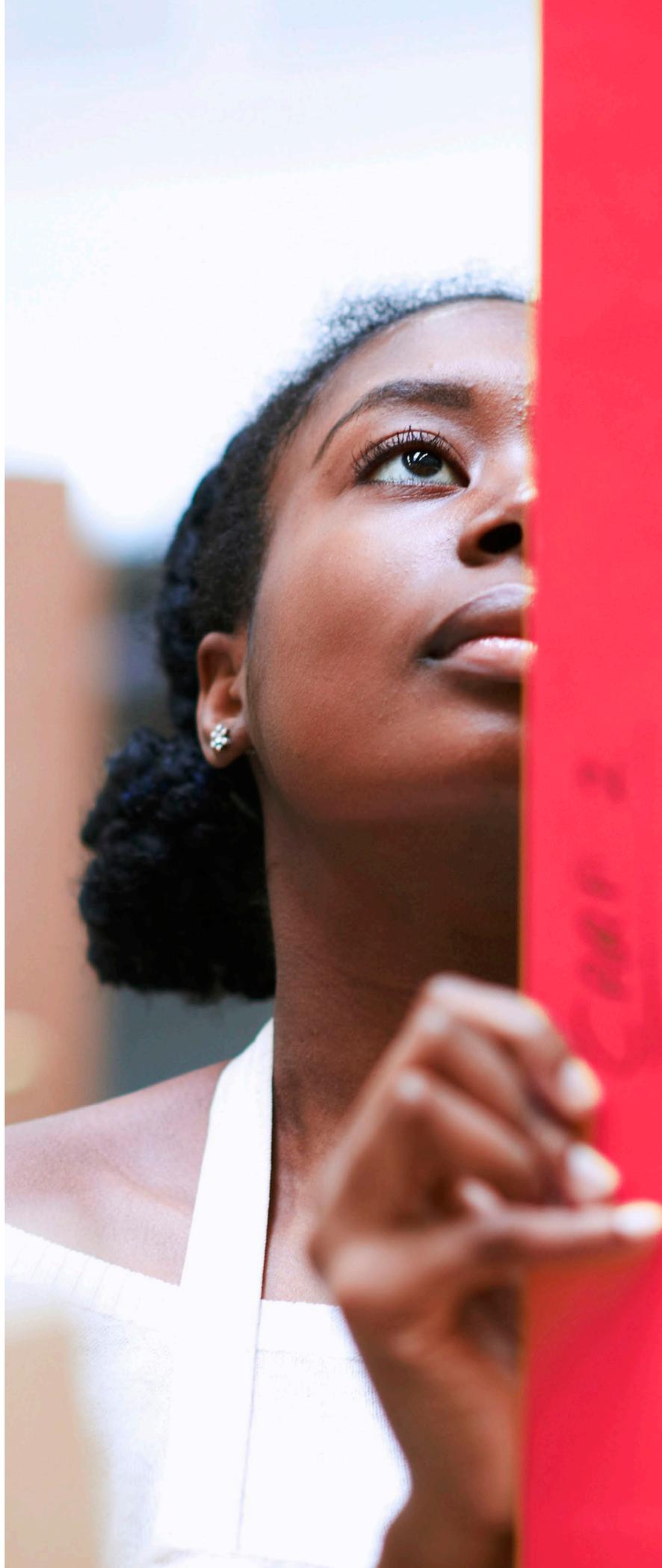


Immerse in the Skills

Immerse candidates in the skills required to thrive in the future world of work.

Confident New Hire Learning Journey

- **Hitting the ground running** – how to survive and thrive from the outset, create and leverage networks, understand your purpose and win.
- **All about you** – take a deep dive and explore who you are. Your personality traits, how you make decisions and what holds you back to relate to others effectively.
- **Perform in the storm** – understand how you can measure your success, handle feedback and learn from it.
- **Showing up like you mean it** – how ready do you feel when you show up to participate, rather than sit on the safe sidelines? It is time to make an impact!
- **Working with humans** – great teams do not happen by accident; learn to have meaningful, team-building moments.
- **Where the rubber meets the road** – learn how volatile, complex and ambitious times affect business performance and why 'being agile' is more than a buzzword.



Take the Next Step





Early Careers Assessment: The Next Steps

There has been a shift towards the need for stronger candidate engagement.

We have witnessed an increased demand for assessment that reflects both employer brand and opportunity. Hiring young talent to take an organization forward requires an understanding of each candidate's potential to learn. It also requires the candidate to understand their own connection to and alignment with the organization and its strategy.

The cancellation of face-to-face careers fairs and university visits in 2020 forced hiring into the virtual environment and this underscored the importance of candidate connection. Our ongoing research shows that the majority of organizations are not clear about the next steps to take and the role that virtual processes will play. No respondents in our survey have reported a definite return to the days of non-virtual assessment.

The challenge for organizations is to design and develop an early careers hiring program that engages with candidates, immerses them within the ethos, culture, values and expectations of the organization and assesses their future capabilities and skills.

Contact Us

if you are ready to revisit how you select and develop your young talent.



Book a Free Consultation Now

Are you ready to revisit how you select and develop your young talent?

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Aon plc (NYSE: AON) exists to shape decisions for the better—to protect and enrich the lives of people around the world. Our colleagues provide our clients in over 120 countries with advice and solutions that give them the clarity and confidence to make better decisions to protect and grow their business.

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