



## 042 Recorder Narrative Test Feedback

### Communication

Candidates had a stressful and unpleasant experience attempting the 1<sup>st</sup> qualifying test and this I'm sure damaged confidence of many in how the JAC would manage the 2<sup>nd</sup> test any better. Whereas there was a clear understanding that the top 60% would be taken through the 1<sup>st</sup> test there were only rumours and speculation about the 2<sup>nd</sup> test.

In addition, rather than fixing the capacity issue to run the test on-line it was decided to try an untested method of conducting the test by e-mail. This lost the ability to apply a strict word limit and timer and these two additional factors were left for candidates to manage.

It was made clear that there was no flexibility on the date for the test as this had been published well in advance. Yet to manage the volume it was decided to start testing candidates from 6am. This caused considerable concern for candidates who had caring responsibilities and court commitments.

The tone of the communications led candidates to believe that the slots allocated, the 70 minutes and word limits were strict and important test parameters.

### Time Differential

You are prepared for your test at the set time and some candidates didn't receive their tests others found e-mails arriving early. So some candidates in effect had that time as extra before they officially started their test or if they hadn't seen it believed they had less time.

Here is some feedback I have received and seen:

*"I suddenly realised I got the exam about 15 mins before due time. I wasn't quite ready for it. Crazy system."*

*"Recorder test debacle continues. Tests being emailed 44 minutes prior to agreed and booked slot resulting in 1/2 time used before starting."*

*"I have checked with them - they said they will count time from your slot time as opposed to when email received."*

*"That contradicts their email and surely undermines the process. What a mess."*



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*“why on earth they started sending emails before the slot times I have no idea - completely defeated the object”*

*“45mins to 1 hour advantage, when the exam is so time pressured, is a joke.”*

*“Some people are getting their e-mails almost an hour in advance, before their allotted time. They are therefore getting a whole extra hour of exam time. Given the whole exam is just over an hour, that is massively unfair on the rest of us!”*

*“...a speed reading contest!”*

*“Much confusion on timings, looks like some were short changed and others had extra time!”*

*“Looks like there were some issues again. Seems some people may have had a lot more time than others because they got their emails early. I think it's a good thing that candidates don't have to go through the labourious process of completing the very daunting application form just to sit the test, but undoubtedly in the past that did weed out lots of the less keen candidates. I suspect the numbers are so high in part because more candidates are just having a punt.”*

## **Next Steps**

Candidates are anxiously awaiting news of what is going to happen now and whether they will have made it through to the next stage.

I know many excellent Recorders and judges who would not have passed this speed reading/typing test and we will be losing out on many strong candidates.

I hope you will find this feedback constructive and am willing to share my ideas and thoughts.

Tim Collins

8 March 2017