

A Bit About Psychometric Testing

Why is Psychometric Testing Used?

Psychological Assessment has a variety of uses, but most typically is used to assist in the appropriate selection of people applying for a role. In addition to giving employers useful information about a candidate's suitability for a position, assessment can be a valuable tool for employers wanting to make decisions about promotions, individual's development needs and team dynamics within an organisation.

How do assessments help employers?

- They provide objective information about you that may not be gained from other techniques such as an interview and reference checks.
- They can indicate whether your style and abilities are suited to the role, organisation, or team.
- It is important to note that assessments **ARE NOT** the 'be all and end all' and they form only part of the selection process. Decisions are rarely made on assessment results alone. Rather, they may form a basis for further interviews and reference checking.

How do assessments help you?

- They will assist you in finding a role for which you are suited.
- Sitting the assessments enables you to demonstrate your strengths and style.
- You are entitled to get feedback, which may help you clarify your ideas about your suitability for different kinds of work and identify areas you may want to develop.

Types of Psychometric Assessments

The main types of psychometric assessment used are Ability Assessments and Personality Questionnaires.

Ability Assessments

These are usually timed and measure skill in a specific area. The most common categories of ability tests used in occupational assessment are:

- Verbal - depending on the level being tested, this may include spelling and grammar, completing sentences and definitions or reading written passages and responding to questions.
- Numerical - depending on the level being tested, this may include completing numerical sequences and calculations or interpreting tables and data.
- Abstract - this assessment is made up of 'shapes and puzzles' and looks at your ability to solve problems that you haven't seen before.

Doing your best

- Ensure that you feel your best on the day - have a good sleep, eat well, and if you are ill call to reschedule.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to get there, and to sit the assessments themselves. When booking a time, ask how long they will take - make sure you do not have another appointment booked immediately afterwards.
- At the session, listen carefully to the instructions. Most ability tests are timed - ensure that you know how long you have.
- Try to be calm. It is normal to feel a little nervous before doing something different but there are no hidden tricks in the assessment.
- Read each question carefully before answering. Look for a balance between speed and accuracy. If you are not sure mark your best choice, but avoid wild guessing.
- The administrator should offer you breaks- feel free to take them.

Personality Questionnaires

Personality questionnaires provide information about how you would typically behave at work. Questions are aimed at discovering your preferred working style. There are no right or wrong answers in personality questionnaires. There is usually no time limit, but you should work quickly through the questions.

Doing your best

- Remember **there are no right or wrong answers** - do not answer the questionnaire according to what you think the employer is looking for.
- You may find it difficult to respond to some items, as you will feel that your behaviour will really depend on the situation. Go with your 'gut instinct' about how you would behave at work, rather than in a personal situation (this is what the employers are interested in).
- Some questions will be slightly similar to others. Do not feel that you have to answer all of these in the same way, and do not miss any questions out just because they are similar.

Practice

You may wish to practice some assessments so that you feel more comfortable with the format. **It is important to note that you will not get exactly the same questions.**



For practice tests and more information, two useful websites are:

http://www.shldirect.com/example_questions.html

<http://www.opragroup.com/candidates/candidates.php>