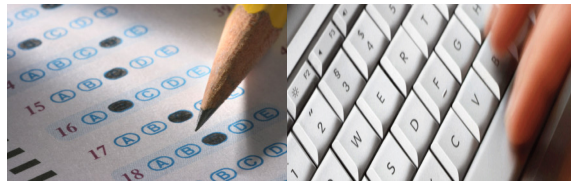


Helping you to prepare for psychometric assessments



The chances are that, as a candidate, you either have or will come across online or offline psychometric tests as part of your job-hunting process.

This guide helps to de-mystify the process for you and contains useful hints and tips, which will help you to prepare, do justice to yourself and to give of your best in those all-important tests and questionnaires.

What are psychometric tests?

The term Psychometric literally means “measurement of the mind”.

Psychometric tests are standardised exercises which compare the responses from the particular candidate taking the exercise with those derived from lots of other people with similar backgrounds to themselves.

The most commonly used psychometric exercises for recruitment include:

- Personality questionnaires
- Ability tests.

What are personality questionnaires?

Personality questionnaires are not strictly speaking tests. They come in two main formats:

- Those which give lots of statements about working life and ask whether you agree or disagree with each of the statements in turn. An example might be: “*I enjoy leading meetings*”.
- Those which give blocks of statements, and you have to pick ONE statement which is most like you, and ONE which is least like you.

An example block of statements might be:

Pick ONE Most like	Pick ONE least like	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I look forward to the future with optimism
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I am a creative problem-solver
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I am competitive in everything I do

What are ability tests?

Ability tests are normally timed and have right and wrong answers. These assess your ability in different areas.

For supervisory, graduate, managerial and professional roles, these tests often include verbal reasoning and numerical reasoning.

For skilled, craft and technician roles, these tests can include mechanical reasoning, spatial awareness and fault finding.

How are psychometric exercises administered?

Traditionally this was via a paper-and-pencil format with a qualified administrator introducing and explaining the test process and invigilating as the exercises are taken.

This still occurs, but online assessment is becoming more and more widespread.

Sometimes the exercises can be completed online by you remotely at a time and place of your choosing (such as at home). On other occasions you might be invited to take the exercises on a PC at the client's premises, or possibly even at a recruitment consultant's premises.

Why do clients like using tests?

Well-designed, well-administered exercises provide very objective and accurate information on a candidate's strengths and development areas.

They are often used for screening out candidates, to save time and money later in the process, before or in conjunction with the interviewing stage.

Sometimes they are used after final interview stage, if a client cannot decide between two or more candidates or if a client wants to know more about their final chosen candidate(s).

What are some of the most common pitfalls of which I should be aware, when taking psychometric assessments?

When taking personality assessments.....

X Regarding the exercise incorrectly as a test and trying to pick what you think are the "right" and "wrong" answers or to second-guess what the client is looking for

✗ Spending too long analysing the statements or, while taking the exercise, trying to cross-reference your later responses to earlier responses given.

When taking ability tests.....

✗ Not reading the questions carefully enough – particularly important in critical reasoning tests

✗ Rushing the questions

✗ Spending too long over questions

✗ Being a bit rusty on basic numerical concepts – particularly important if you are going to be taking numerical critical reasoning tests

✗ Not keeping an eye on the time when taking a timed test

✗ Not having the right equipment such as a watch, reading glasses or a calculator with which you are familiar.

When taking assessments online at home.....

✗ Doing the exercises late at night when tired

✗ Getting interruptions when taking the exercises

✗ Being tempted to get your mates to help with answering the questions!

What can I do to prepare myself?

Before you take reasoning tests.....

- ✓ Brush up on your number skills, particularly using graphs, charts, table, ratios, proportions and fractions, if taking numerical tests
- ✓ Check out the test practice web sites at the back of this document and complete practice tests for the sorts of exercises which you are likely to encounter
- ✓ Read books on preparing for tests.

As you start your test session.....

- ✓ Read the test instructions carefully and ask if anything is unclear
- ✓ Seek to get the balance right between answering as many questions as you can, but avoid rushing the test or getting so focused on completing the test that the accuracy of your work suffers
- ✓ Avoid just guessing answers, in case penalty points are awarded. Some tests look at the accuracy of your work as well as how many questions you got right.

Before you take any personality assessments.....

- ✓ Don't try to second-guess the "right" answers – it is not a test; inconsistent or unrealistic responses will get picked up in the way the exercise is designed
- ✓ Treat each statement, or block of statements, on its own merits; think about what you are like now, and how you would normally behave if at work.

If you plan to complete any assessments at home online.....

- ✓ You may well be asked to re-take any tests later in a supervised or controlled setting, a common technique to guard against cheating
- ✓ Don't leave taking the exercises to the last minute, in case there are any unexpected computer compatibility issues which need to be resolved
- ✓ Arrange a good test-taking environment for yourself, free from noise and interruptions.

After you have taken the assessments.....

- ✓ Find out how you fared through asking for feedback, if this is available.
- ✓ If, for example, you found the ability tests harder than expected, re-visit the tips and suggestions for preparation
- ✓ If you took the exercises remotely, and if you experienced any technical problems or unexpected disturbances during the online assessment process, explore if the session can be re-set / re-arranged with the client's permission.

About Informed Assessment

In essence, we help our clients to arrive at informed, objective decisions about whom to appoint - and how to help those people to develop - through the use of fair and rigorous selection processes and assessment exercises and activities.

Informed Assessment specialises in:

- Assessment for selection - using online psychometric assessment, face-to-face psychometric assessment and Assessment Centre techniques
- Assessment for development – helping individuals and teams to develop through facilitating Development Centres and team development programmes
- Associated training in such areas recruitment and selection skills.

For more information please contact us on 0845 606 6798 or via info@informedassessment.co.uk



Test taker's guide to some useful websites

There are some useful websites for test takers to check out on the internet. Also use Google and enter words like “psychometric”, “psychometrics” and “aptitude tests” to keep abreast of relevant new sites.

<http://www.shl.com>

Click on “try a test” (on the right of the screen) and follow the options.

<http://morrisby.com>

Click on “Practice questions” under “Individuals” for a sequence of practice tests covering different ability areas.

<http://psychometrics.co.uk>

This website has a comprehensive download giving verbal and numerical test practice questions. Click on “Practice psychometric tests”.

<http://www.apititudeonline.co.uk>

This site provides graduate level verbal, numerical and diagrammatic test questions but you may need to pay a fee.

<http://psychometric-success.com>

This website also has plenty of information plus free, downloadable practice tests as well as test questions to buy.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/psychotests.htm>

This is a University site so the exercises are of graduate level.