

Psychometric Tests

Psychometric tests are used as a part of the selection process by many recruiters as a way of objectively assessing your suitability for their graduate positions.

Tests generally take place online at an early stage of the recruitment process. This is usually after you have completed the application form and it has been reviewed by the employer.

You have to pass the tests to proceed to the next stage of selection, either an interview or an assessment centre. Employers will often check your test scores by retesting you at the assessment centre

Psychometric Tests fall into three main types:

Aptitude/Ability Tests

These test a range of skills and abilities that are needed in order to effectively undertake a particular job role. There are a wide range of different types of test and those you will be asked to sit will vary depending on the nature of the job.

Tests are generally multiple choice, have definite true/false answers and are strictly timed. Your scores will be compared to a suitable 'normal' group such as previously successful candidates.

Examples of aptitude / ability tests include:

- **Numerical Reasoning** - *Interpreting data, graphs or statistics.*
- **Verbal Reasoning** - *Understanding of written information, evaluation of arguments often using comprehension exercises.*
- **Abstract Reasoning / Inductive Reasoning** - *Commonly used for IT / Engineering posts – test ability to quickly identify patterns and follow diagrammatic instructions.*

*A longer list of aptitude test types can be found on the **Assessment Day** Website.*

Situational Judgement Tests & Critical Thinking Tests

These tests can be used to assess candidates' ability to make appropriate judgements when solving typical work problems.

Answers may not always be right or wrong, the employer is looking for candidates who show that they are the right 'fit' for them. To answer questions effectively you will need to have researched, in detail, the requirements they have which will give you some clues as to how they would like you to behave when faced with a particular set of circumstances.

Personality Questionnaires

These are not strictly speaking tests as there are no right or wrong answers and they are not timed. They seek to establish your preferred style of working; e.g. Are you happiest working in a team or independently? What is it that motivates you? How do you relate to others?

Whilst there may be certain personality characteristics that are more or less suitable for a particular job role most employers will **not** be looking for just one rigid personality profile.

The usual format of the question is to ask you to choose, from several statements, the one that best describes you.

The best approach when completing personality questionnaires is to be honest and not to overthink your answers. There is no point in pretending you are somebody you are not. If you are not selected due to the answers you have given to the personality questionnaire it probably means it wasn't the right job role for you.

Some tips on doing well

Aptitude Tests in General:

- You need to be both quick and accurate.
- Work steadily and answer as many questions as you can in the time available.
- Don't worry if you do not have time to answer all of the questions – it is the number of correct answers that will count.
- Practise by doing puzzles, answering quizzes, playing cards, "Test your IQ" books etc. All provide experience of answering short questions at speed.
- See below for details of practice tests and useful websites.

Numeracy Tests:

- Brush up your basic arithmetic with and without a calculator. Numerical tests are not purely arithmetical but it will help.
- You need to be comfortable working out percentages, exchange rates, time differences, time/speed/distance calculations, reading charts, graphs and tables.
- Try revising your GCSE Maths and use the resources mentioned in this useful guide produced by the University of Leicester:
www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/numerical-data
- Number puzzles such as Sudoku can help you recognise numerical patterns.

Did you know? You can access our full leaflet series online: www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/leaflets/

Verbal Reasoning:

- You are generally given a written passage of text and asked to use that information to answer questions.
- Use **only** the information given in the text to decide on your answer - it's not a test of your general knowledge but a test of understanding.
- It's quickest to read the questions first, then read the passage, seeking out the answers to the questions. Be sure to read the whole passage though.
- Develop your skills in quick comprehension by reading an article in a serious newspaper and summarising each paragraph in a sentence or two.

Students with Disabilities and Dyslexia

- If you have dyslexia or a disability that may affect your performance in these tests make sure you alert the recruiters so that they can award extra time or make suitable adjustments to the test conditions.
- Test publishers should be able to advise employers about the appropriate adjustments they should make.
- The British Psychological Society (BPS) provides some useful guidance here: <http://ptc.bps.org.uk/ptc/guidelines-and-information>

Take practice tests online

- **Profiling For Success**

The **Employability & Careers Centre** offers this online practice test package for **free**. It includes **numerical**, **verbal** and **abstract reasoning** tests as well as a **personality questionnaire** similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator:

To sit these tests first obtain the **access codes** from the ECC (careers@surrey.ac.uk). The tests can then be accessed from here: www.profilingforsuccess.com/take-an-assessment.php.

The personality questionnaire, mentioned above, can be used both to familiarise you with the format of this kind of questionnaire and to help you gain greater self-awareness in order to make more informed career choices.

- **PwC E-learn Resource**

www.pwc.co.uk/careers/student/employability/employability.html

Useful practice whichever career or graduate recruiter you are interested in and covers the following types of aptitude test – *Numerical Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning and Inductive Reasoning (also described as diagrammatic or abstract reasoning)*.

The PwC e-learn resource also includes a free *Work Style Preference Questionnaire* which is a type of personality questionnaire.

- **Resources for Situational Judgement (SJT) and Critical Thinking Tests**
University of Sheffield have produced a helpful leaflet which may help you with your preparation for these tests.
www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/sjts.pdf includes links to example tests.
www.assessmentday.co.uk/situational-judgement-test.htm
www.cubiksonline.com/FastStream/Assessments/Views/Assessment.aspx
www.jobtestprep.co.uk/sjt
<https://www.practiceaptitudetests.com/situational-judgement-tests/>
<https://www.psychometrictest.org.uk/sjt/>

Law Firms often use the Watson Glazer Critical Thinking test, practice questions:
www.linklatersgraduates.co.uk/application-process/critical-thinking-test
www.jobtestprep.co.uk/watson-glaser-sample-questions?

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Useful Resource Including Practice Tests

The **TargetJobs** and **Prospects** pages link to many useful free example tests

- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/psychometric-tests>
- www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips/psychometric-tests
- www.cebglobal.com/shldirect/en example tests from a leading test publisher
- www.assessmentday.co.uk Good range of practice tests.
- www.cubiksonline.com/cubiks/practicetests/
- www.psychometric-success.com
- www.jobtestprep.co.uk/freeaptitude.aspx
- www.kent.ac.uk/careers/tests/verbaltest.htm example verbal tests
- <http://ptc.bps.org.uk/roles/public> including a useful test taker's guide.

Further information

Reference & loan copies of the following books are available in the Employability and Careers Centre:

- *Advanced Numerical Reasoning Tests*, by David Isaacs
- *How to Pass Advanced Aptitude Tests*, by Jim Barrett
- *How to Pass Graduate Psychometric Tests*, by Mike Bryon
- *Management Level Psychometric Assessments*, by Mike Bryon
- *Management Level Psychometric & Assessment Tests*, How To Books
- *Practise & Pass Professional: Numeracy Tests*, by Alan Redman
- *Practise & Pass Professional: Verbal Reasoning Tests*, by Alan Redman
- *The Aptitude Test Workbook*, by Jim Barrett