Psychometric Assessments

Employers often incorporate psychometric assessments into selection procedures – both for selection of personnel and for development purposes.

Psychometric assessment looks at a candidate’s:

- **Aptitude/Ability** – problem solving skills; verbal and numerical ability; abstract and mechanical reasoning
- **Personality traits / work style** – assertiveness, reaction under pressure, communication skills
- **Motivation** – energy, drive and job satisfaction factors
- **Long-term potential**

**Aptitude/Ability Assessments:**

These tests measure a candidate’s capacity to make sense of information of varying difficulty. These are timed measures of problem solving and may include verbal information, numerical data or patterns and abstract reasoning questions.

For recent graduates, employers may be more interested in the person’s potential to do a task, and will assess generic skills using reasoning or ability tests.
Abstract Reasoning

A non-verbal test, which uses shapes rather than words or text to measure someone’s fluid intelligence. Each test question includes a series of shapes with common logical rules. Your fluid intelligence is measured by the number of correct answers (i.e. correct identification of the shapes’ logical rules) within the given time.

Example Question:

Question 1: Identify the missing square

Follow this link for further examples of abstract test questions provided by the Institute of Psychometric Coaching:


Verbal Reasoning

This is a timed test that is designed to measure your verbal analytical skills. Verbal reasoning tests generally measure comprehension and critical reasoning. These skills include the capacity to quickly identify critical issues from written material such as reports, and logically derive conclusions from written facts or data. If, for example, you can process written documents and can come up with the most important content fairly quickly, then there is a good chance that you have high verbal reasoning skills.
Example Question:

Your task is to evaluate the statements in light of the information or opinions contained in the passage below:

The big economic difference between nuclear and fossil-fuelled power stations is that nuclear reactors are more expensive to build and decommission, but cheaper to run. So disputes over the relative efficiency of the two systems revolve not just around the prices of coal and uranium today and tomorrow, but also around the way in which future income should be compared with current income.

1. The main difference between nuclear and fossil fuelled power stations is an economic one.
2. The price of coal is not relevant to discussions about the relative efficiency of nuclear reactors
3. If nuclear reactors were cheaper to build and decommission than fossil-fuelled power stations, they would definitely have the economic advantage.

You must select one of the following answers:

True: The statement must be true based on the information in the passage
False: The statement must be false based on the information in the passage
Cannot Say: It is not possible to say whether the statement is true or false without more information

Follow this link for further examples of verbal test questions provided by the Institute of Psychometric Coaching:


Numerical Reasoning

This test is also a timed test. It measures your numerical analytical skills. These skills include the capacity to quickly identify critical issues from numerical data such as graphs and tables. It also includes the capacity to use work-related numerical data such as performance figures or financial outcomes to make effective decisions.
Example Question:

Computer Import Data Europe

If the amount spent on computer imports into the United Kingdom in Year 5 was 20% lower than in Year 4, what was spent in Year 5?

A: 1,080 million  
B: 1,120 million  
C: 1,160 million  
D: 1,220 million  
E: 1,300 million

Follow this link for further examples of numerical test questions provided by the Institute of Psychometric Coaching:


Aptitude Assessment tips:

Tip: Work as quickly and as accurately as you can. The tests are “Speed vs Accuracy” assessments and some are designed for the applicant not to be able to finish. It is as much about how many questions you answer as well as the number of questions you answer correctly. If you get stuck – or if in doubt, move onto the next item and come back to it if you have time.

Tip: Complete as many practice tests as you can. These are widely available online and are the best way to be prepared for the real thing.
**Personality:**

Personality assessments focus on people’s typical or preferred way of behaving, such as the way they approach and solve problems or the way they relate to others. There are no right or wrong answers, although some traits may be more or less appropriate to certain jobs. This is a common measurement technique because it identifies team and organisational fit, and potential areas for development and advancement.

People who try to guess what is wanted may give an impression of themselves that does not fit in with other information. Many questionnaires contain questions which help check whether someone is describing him or herself honestly and consistently, so try to be as accurate as possible when answering the questions.

**Examples of personality test questions:**

**Example 1:**

I am the sort of person who ...

A. Has a wide circle of friends

B. Enjoys organising people

C. Relaxes easily

D. Seeks variety

**Example 2:**

Y/N: I’d rather do things quickly than perfectly.

Follow this link for further examples of personality test questions provided by the Institute of Psychometric Coaching:

Completing an Assessment

Here are some tips on what to do before and during your assessment(s):

Before:

- Complete some practice questions. Note that these may not be identical to what you will complete on the day but will give you an idea of what to expect. Practice questions may be available through the organisation administering the test. They are also easily located online.
- Make sure you have a good night’s sleep and have eaten prior to the assessment.
- Leave plenty of time in your diary to complete the assessments.
- If you experience any sudden or unexpected event and/or distraction that may impact your performance, consider postponing the assessment.
- If you are ill, consider postponing the assessment.

During:

- Treat the assessment(s) seriously. Approach them as you would a university exam.
- Complete the assessment in a quiet area, free of distractions and interruptions.
- Bring a watch in order to keep track of time during the exercises.