

Psychometric Tests

WHAT ARE PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS?

Psychometric tests are used by employers to provide objective and standardised measures of candidate's skills and behaviours. They are carefully designed and rigorously tested. The tests are often used at early stages of the selection process or during an assessment centre. They are common in the large scale recruitment processes typical of the graduate job market. There is an increasing trend for gamification of the candidate experience on these tests. It's important not to lose sight of the fact that although they can have the appearance of games, they aren't. Also, they are designed so that previous experience of gaming won't give you an advantage on the tests.

TYPES OF TEST MIGHT YOU FACE

There are two main types of test:

1. Aptitude tests

These are the most common type of tests encountered in the selection process. They are designed to test for skills required for the job. They can be timed and commonly involve multiple choice. Examples include:

- Verbal reasoning
- Numerical reasoning
- Diagrammatic reasoning
- Error checking
- Spatial reasoning
- Situational judgement
- Inductive reasoning (or logical reasoning)

2. Personality questionnaires

These are designed to assess personal qualities such as personality or motivation. They can provide information about an individual's likely behaviour across situations. They are generally self-reporting and not usually timed, so they feel less like an exam. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, so avoid trying to guess what an employer is looking for and follow the guidelines given, e.g. to answer questions honestly. An example is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Although many of the questions on these tests may appear trivial when compared to the types of exam questions you face during your degree, it's important to practice to get the best result. There are many sources of practice material (see below) - remember that other candidates applying for these jobs will be making good use of them. If you know you are going into selection processes during the busy

term time, plan ahead so you can prepare for the tests during your vacation.

TOP TIPS

As for any test or exam, to get the best result:

- Make sure you are well-rested and relaxed when you take the test
- Ensure you will not be interrupted so you can focus without distractions
- Ensure your web browser is up to date and compatible with the online platform
- Make sure you have everything with you e.g. calculator, notebook, pen etc.
- Follow the instructions exactly as given and read the questions carefully
- Be aware of the time you have available and if you get stuck, move onto the next question. You can always come back later.
- Avoid guessing, as you may be penalised for wrong answers
- If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, and require reasonable adjustments, you can discuss this with the employer in advance of the test session. See www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/disclosure for more on disclosure of a disability.

PREPARING FOR SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT TESTS

In a situational judgement test the candidate will be presented with a hypothetical scenario, typically set in the workplace, and asked what they would do next. They are designed to test the candidate's decision-making or judgement abilities. Usually they take a multiple choice format and can include an element of ranking the best to worst responses. They can include the presentation of data, 3D/multiple views and video formats as well as simple written questions.

To succeed on these types of tests it's important:

- To thoroughly read the job description and find out as much as you can about the role and organisation. The right answer can be different for different roles and organisations, depending on their culture and values. You really need to understand them to understand what they are looking for. You should aim to give the answer that you believe would be the most successful choice in the role and environment you are applying to work in.
- To carefully read the guidance and instructions.
- To make use of any available practice tests that are provided with the invitation to take the actual test.
- Not to rush through the test.



PRACTICE TESTS

Always check the websites of organisations you are applying to as many will supply information and practice tests aimed at preparing you for their selection processes.

For general advice, information and practice tests, visit:

- Graduates First
- Assessment Day
- Cubiks.com
- Institute of Psychometric Coaching
- JobTestPrep
- Psychometric Success
- SHL Talent Measurement

For postgraduate study in the US you will need to complete tests, such as the GMAT, GRE etc. The Fulbright Commission in London has extensive advice on all aspects of applying in the US, including how to prepare for these tests. To find out more go to:
www.fulbright.org.uk

FURTHER SUPPORT

Available from the Careers Service:

- **Explore more resources**, information, top tips and practice resources to help succeed at psychometric tests at www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/psychometrictests.
- **Our events programme** includes a variety of talks and workshops which are designed to enhance your chances of success in the application process - for details see JobsLive*.
- **A variety of 1-2-1 appointments** can be booked via JobsLive*. Please check www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/appointment for further details.
- For information on the disclosure of disability or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia please see information on the Careers Service website www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/services/disability.

* www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/jobslive

