



ASSESSMENTS & TESTING

It is not uncommon for employers to include some form of structured testing or assessment in their recruitment process. Of course every step in the recruitment process is an assessment in some form or other: the standard of your CV, your performance at interview, the results of your reference checks, and more.

WHY ASSESSMENTS?

Assessments are favoured by employers because they can offer the following:

- ⇒ Greater objectivity and rigour when recruiting
- ⇒ Improved accuracy of hiring decisions
- ⇒ Reduced cost of bad hires
- ⇒ Improved organisational success through quicker on-boarding and high calibre performance
- ⇒ Improved engagement retention

The type of testing will vary from company to company, and the type of job you are applying for.

PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENTS

Employers only tend to request psychometric assessments for permanent placements. There are an enormous amount of different psychometric assessments, including work preferences, personality profiling, leadership, sales attitude and aptitude, emotional intelligence and much more. However the most

common assessment is cognitive, which is a combination of verbal, numerical, and abstract reasoning. Most assessments will have three levels of questions from basic to executive, depending on the seniority of the role you're applying for.

Other assessments may take the form of group exercises, problem-solving with set scenarios, role-plays or simulations.

The assessments may be paper-based, but nowadays the majority are PC-based. You may be given the option to undertake the assessment at home, or onsite in a supervised environment. Unless you can be guaranteed zero distractions at home from noise and family, it is a much better idea to take the test onsite.

Most tests have time limits for each section, and the time you take to complete will be taken into account as part of your result. Similarly, breaks in concentration due to interruptions will also impact your result, and produce a final report which is not an accurate representation of you.

The result of psychometric assessments typically only have a shelf life of around twelve months, as things can change significantly in people's lives during that period of time.

A good way of getting yourself mentally prepared for a psychometric assessment is to do puzzles – crosswords, sudoku, brainteasers, word games and anything else which requires mental effort (without the use of a calculator!). Read the newspapers and think about how you would summarise key points from headline articles, and the arguments for and against the subject matter.

TECHNICAL TESTING

Technical testing typically takes place for jobs which require a predetermined skill or level of knowledge in a particular area – this may include typing or data entry speed, computer applications, mathematical or scientific comprehension or more. These tests are almost always timed, and unlike psychometric assessments, where a range of factors are taken into consideration to produce your final report, the answers you provide will either be correct or incorrect. There will typically be a minimum benchmark score, and if you do not meet that score, you will not be considered for the position.

ASSESSMENT CENTRES

Assessment Centres are common in bigger companies, where large groups of people are employed in the same role, for example customer service centres. Groups can be anywhere from 6 to 20 people, and there are normally a range of activities to be conducted over several hours. This may include a brief one-on-one interview, a role play, a technical test (see above) and a group exercise.

The most common type of group exercise is that you will be given a scenario, and you will need to work as a team to come to a decision. For example, your plane crashes and you've got a life raft and a list of items, but they won't all fit on the raft – how do you decide what stays and what comes with you? The key here is to make sure you have a voice whilst listening to others without being too dominant, controlling or opinionated. Don't talk over anyone, don't be aggressive or contradictory, and avoid playing the role of facilitator. And don't sit quietly in the corner without saying a word. There will be a number of observers, either in the room or watching externally, and they will take notes on the frequency, content and style of your input, and how you interact with the different personalities around you to reach a decision.

