

PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS

What are they?

Psychometric tests are taken as part of some job applications. These tests are developed to strict standards held by the British Psychological Society and are used to assess skills and abilities that are required for the job. They are often used by graduate recruiters when they're assessing a large number of applicants as they provide a quick and cost-effective way to compare candidates. Psychometric tests are usually taken online, although sometimes you'll repeat them in person at interview or assessment centre.

The most common kinds of tests you might encounter include:

- verbal reasoning
- numerical reasoning
- logical/abstract reasoning
- situational judgement
- critical thinking
- e-tray or in-tray exercises

Follow the instructions

When you first get an invitation to take a test, make sure that you read carefully; often you have to complete the test within a narrow period of time for it to count.

When you're taking a test, make sure that you're really clear what the test is asking you to do. Some tests look similar but can be subtly different in their instructions. How many questions do you have to answer? Are there choices to make? Can you go back and change your answers? On verbal reasoning type questions, are you asked to use your wider knowledge, or only the information from the text?

Create a good test-taking environment

Top tips to ensure you have a good test-taking environment:

- Find a room to yourself where you won't be interrupted.
- Put a note on the door if needed to stop people knocking or making too much noise.
- Work on a reliable laptop or computer - i.e. not your phone!
- Set up your computer to maximise your ease of use, e.g. use a mouse/keyboard if this would help.
- Ensure you have reliable power and internet e.g. use stable WiFi rather than 3G, plug in your laptop.
- Turn off electronic interruptions – turn your phone to silent, turn off notifications etc.
- Make sure you have a drink and snack handy to prevent thirst/hunger from becoming a distraction.
- If you don't have access to a good test-taking environment, contact Careers, we'll do our best to help.

Get the adjustments you need

If you have a disability which means that you typically receive some adjustments when taking tests at university, you are entitled to request reasonable adjustments to allow you to access the recruitment process. This might involve additional time, different software, more time to arrange to take the test or an alternative form of testing. Contact the employer directly to arrange this with as much notice as possible. In the UK you are protected by the Equality Act against discrimination by employers in disclosing a disability.

Practice to improve your technique

- Take at least two practice tests before the real thing to help you improve your test-taking technique.
- Manage your time: check for timing and note the number of questions. Often you need to work fast!
- Build familiarity: increasing your familiarity with practice tests can help to reduce nerves.

FREE PRACTICE TESTS

Verbal reasoning:

- 7 practice tests on [Graduates First](#)¹
- 2 free practice tests on [Assessment Day](#)²
- 1 free practice test on [JobTestPrep](#)³

Situational judgement:

- 1 practice test on [Graduates First](#)
- 1 free practice test on [Assessment Day](#)
- 1 free practice test on [JobTestPrep](#)

Logical/abstract reasoning:

- 7 practice tests on [Graduates First](#),
- 2 free practice tests on [Assessment Day](#)
- 1 free practice test on [JobTestPrep](#).

Numerical reasoning (mathematics):

- 7 practice tests on [Graduates First](#)
- 2 free practice tests on [Assessment Day](#)
- 1 free practice test on [JobTestPrep](#)

Critical thinking:

- 1 free practice test on [Assessment Day](#)
- 1 free practice test on [JobTestPrep](#)

E-tray or in-tray exercises:

- 1 free in-tray test on [Assessment Day](#)
- 1 free in-tray test on [JobTestPrep](#)

More tests: you can often find practice tests directly from the publishers too: e.g. SHL, Cubiks, TalentLens. *If your mathematical skills need a refresher, try BBC Bitesize.*

How psychometric tests work

For most tests, the recruiters will have a set of results to compare your score to, this is called the norm group. The norm group can vary – they could be comparing your result with previous year's candidates, or current professionals and managers. Recruiters will usually set a benchmark based on this comparison – for example, they might look for scores better than 50% of last year's candidates, or higher than the bottom 20% of current managers.

Remember:

- Don't panic if you get a question wrong: it's very unusual for a recruiter to set a benchmark which involves getting every question right.
- Telling yourself 'I didn't pass the last test, so I won't pass this one' is not a logical argument! Recruiters might use the same test but have a different norm group and set different benchmark. It's possible to meet a benchmark for one recruiter with fewer right answers than a previous test you didn't pass.

Find practice tests:

¹ Graduates First – reading.ac.uk/careers/graduatesfirst

² Assessment Day - assessmentday.co.uk/

³ JobTestPrep - jobtestprep.co.uk/free-psychometric-test