

University of Surrey

Careers Service

<http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers>

Psychometric Tests

You are quite often asked to sit a test as part of an employer's selection process. This is most common with larger employers.

Tests often take place at an early stage of the recruitment process and are online. This is usually after you have completed the application form and it has been reviewed by the company. If they are interested in you then the next stage can be an online test. You have to pass the tests to proceed to the next stage of selection, either an interview or an assessment centre. To check that it was really you that completed the online test, they will often ask you to take a further test later on in the selection process, this time in person, before finally offering you the job. Alternatively, the employer will run test sessions for you to attend at their premises. These are usually taken under exam conditions with an invigilator.

Some employers prefer for you to sit tests alongside an interview or as part of an assessment centre, when your results will be considered with all the other evidence the employer has gathered. The employers may send you some sample questions in advance, but often this will not be the case. However, most tests have some practice questions at the beginning to get you into the swing of things.

Tests fall into two main types:

- **Aptitude/Ability Tests**

These test your capabilities, usually in numeracy, understanding text and logical problem solving. They are generally multiple choice, timed, lasting around 30 minutes each with 20-30 questions to be completed. Exact timing and structure vary from one test to another. These are the most common type to be found online.

- **Personality Questionnaires**

These seek to establish your preferred style of working; e.g. are you happiest working in a team or independently? Do you prefer working with people or handling data? The usual format of the question is to ask you to choose, from several statements, the one that best describes you. They're usually not strictly timed but you are expected to work through them quite quickly. The Careers Service offers the opportunity to take these sort of questionnaires – see below.

Tips on doing well**Aptitude Tests in General:**

- You need to be both quick and accurate

- There's not usually time to check each answer as you go. If you have time left at the end, that's your opportunity to look again at questions you're not sure about.
- Work steadily; questions tend to get more difficult as the test progresses, although an easier question can be placed amongst harder ones.
- It may not be possible to answer all the questions in the time given.
- 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 arithmetic. Numerical tests are not purely arithmetical but it will help. See **Further Information** for sources to help with this. You need to be completely comfortable with working out percentages, exchange rates, time differences, time/speed/distance calculations, reading charts, graphs and tables.
- Revise your multiplication tables.
- Practise mental arithmetic by working out prices/weights/values when shopping.
- You may not be able to use a calculator. Your results will always be compared with candidates who have had the same access, or lack of, to a calculator as you.

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.

Take practice tests online

The Careers Service offers a complete practice test for free online – with sections on numerical, verbal and abstract reasoning. You can access these tests at <http://www2.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/work/psychometrictests/tests/>. You will need to log-in (please contact Careers at careers@surrey.ac.uk to get the login details), and then follow the instructions on the pages to get to the tests. After you have taken them you will receive a report via email with your results. If you are concerned about your results then you can make an appointment with a careers adviser to discuss them.

You can also take an online personality questionnaire which is similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – find details at <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/currentstud/notsurewantdo/personality>.

We offer this primarily to assist you in making decisions about Career choice, but you may also find it useful preparation to familiarise yourself with the format of this sort of questionnaire, which are used by some employers during the recruitment process. We also offer the actual Myers-Briggs personality questionnaire, although not online. Ask in the Careers Service for details of how to take this questionnaire.

Other websites with practice tests and helpful materials

- SHL Student Direct www.shldirect.com - major producer of tests used in UK graduate recruitment.
- PSL, www.psl.co.uk. Go to Practice Tests.
- BPS Psychological Testing Centre www.psychtesting.org.uk including test taker's guide and some practice tests. Go to The PTC, then Guidelines and Information
- TARGETjobs <http://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/psychometric-tests>
- Educational Testing Service www.ets.org, then Tests and Products
- Psychometric Success www.psychometric-success.com
- Cubiks <http://practicetests.cubiks.com/>

Further information

Improve Your Numeracy - aimed at students facing selection tests. Available online: <http://mathcentre.ac.uk/resources/exercisebooks/mathcentre/mathcentreNumeracy.doc>

Other books

Reference copies of the following are available in the Careers Service:

How to Pass Advanced Aptitude Tests, Kogan Page

How to Succeed in Psychometric Tests, Sheldon Press

How to Pass Selection Tests, Kogan Page

How to Master Personality Questionnaires, Kogan Page

Management Level Psychometric & Assessment Tests, How To Books

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