



Interview testing: psychometric tests

Congratulations! You've passed the first hurdle and have been offered an interview for your dream job. Whether it's a first or subsequent interview, many employers like to ask candidates to undertake tasks or tests to help them in their assessment process.

Hoople has created a number of helpful information sheets on interview testing. This one looks at psychometric tests. For help with other tests or presentations, please refer to our other information sheets.

Top tips for preparing for testing at an interview

What are psychometric tests?

Psychometric tests are used to identify candidates' skills, knowledge and personality. They can be used during the preliminary screening stage, as part of an assessment centre or interview, and are particularly popular with large graduate recruiters.

There are two main types of psychometric tests: personality and aptitude.

Personality

Personality tests explore your interests, values and motivations. They are used to analyse how your character fits with the role and organisation and also to analyse your emotions, behaviours and relationships in a variety of situations.

For personality tests you'll usually be presented with statements describing ways of feeling or acting. Typically, you'll be asked to record how far you agree or disagree on a two, five or seven point scale. There are no right or wrong answers and are not usually timed but your responses will be judged in terms of suitability for the job role.

The best thing to do when completing a personality test is to be as honest as you can, trusting your initial reactions to the questions and trying not to second guess the answers.

Aptitude

Aptitude tests assess your reasoning or cognitive ability, determining whether you've got the right skill-set for a particular role.

The tests are generally administered under exam conditions and your 'intelligence' levels are compared to a standard. This means that you will often be expected to achieve a certain score to pass to the next stage of the interview process.

Aptitude tests take several forms, including diagrammatic and numerical reasoning, spatial ability and verbal reasoning. The more you practise this type of test, the better you will be at answering questions correctly. Search online for sample tests before you have to do them for real.

As a means to screen candidates, psychometric tests have been the subject of much controversy and debate. However, some employers do like them as they enable seemingly objective comparisons to be made between candidates.

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