

We ask 3 recruiters to explain psychometric test. This is what we found out.

"Psychometric tests help to identify a candidate's skills, knowledge and personality. They're often used during the preliminary screening stage, or as part of an assessment centre. They're objective, convenient and strong indicators of job performance; making them very popular. Unlike most examinations, these don't require right answers; however, they do require your honesty."

Most psychometric testing is completed online, though some paper questionnaires remain. Most tests are timed, but some can be completed online.

There are two main types: personality tests and aptitude tests:

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

Aptitude tests assess your reasoning or cognitive ability, determining whether you've got the right skillset for a role. Usually administered under exam conditions, you'll often be given one minute to answer each multiple-choice question. Your 'intelligence' levels are compared to a standard, meaning that you must achieve a certain score to pass.

Psychometric personality tests typically take 10-15 minutes to complete online, with the number of questions varying from around 50-200. You'll usually be presented with statements describing various ways of feeling or acting and asked to record how much you agree on a two-, five- or seven-point scale. There are no right or wrong answers - this, plus the fact that enforced pressure reduces accuracy and discourages honesty, means that they're not typically completed under exam conditions. You should practise personality tests, so that you're familiar with their style and format.

When taking a personality test, make sure that you:

- take the test in a quiet, familiar environment.
- read the instructions carefully, paying close attention to what you're being asked.
- stay calm by breathing slowly and deeply.
- work briskly and accurately, omitting any questions that you don't understand.
- are honest and consistent in your responses.
- trust your initial reactions, and don't simply try to guess the 'best' answer.

Types of psychometric test:

Diagrammatic reasoning: Abstract reasoning tests are believed to be fine indicators of your ability to learn new things quickly. They measure your ability to identify a set of rules and apply them to a new situation, judging how well you follow information or spot patterns. Questions often consist of a series of pictures, each of which is slightly different. You must then choose another picture from a number of options to complete the series. These aptitude tests are particularly common for IT, science and engineering roles.

Error checking: Data checking tests measure how quickly and accurately you can detect errors. They're common for clerical and data input vacancies.

Fault diagnosis tests, meanwhile, test your ability to approach problems logically. This method of psychometric assessment is often used to select technical personnel who must discover and repair faults in electronic and mechanical systems.

Numerical reasoning: These aptitude tests assess your interpretation of charts, graphs, data or statistics, investigating your ability to deal with numbers quickly and accurately. Numerical psychometric tests may also challenge your knowledge of rates, trends, ratios, percentages and currency conversions.

Spatial reasoning: Your ability to perceive, construct and manipulate shapes is measured by these tests. You may, for example, be asked to mentally flip, rotate or fit together objects. Alternatively, you might have to visualise three-dimensional objects that are presented as two-dimensional pictures.

Verbal reasoning: These aptitude tests assess your understanding of written information, evaluation of arguments, and communication of concepts. You must read short passages of text before answering questions that assess your comprehension. Verbal psychometric tests challenge your ability to think constructively and use written information to construct accurate conclusions. Some tests also assess your spelling and grammar.