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# Guidelines on the Use of Psychometric Tests

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# Guidelines on the Use of Psychometric Tests

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Our University will use psychometric tests to enhance the quality and quantity of information available for selection. We may also use psychometric tests for development purposes. Leeds Beckett University is committed to the highest standards of practice in the use of all psychometric tests, in order to maximise the benefit of testing to the organisation and the individual, and to promote fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

## 2. Definition

- 2.1 A psychometric test is “a standardised sample of behaviour which can be described by a numerical scale or category system” (Cronbach 1984). Psychometric tests aim to maximise objectivity by standardising test conditions, instructions, time, content, scoring and interpretation. At our University, we use two main types of psychometric test – those measuring ability (for example, in numerical or verbal reasoning) and those assessing typical or preferred behaviour at work (personality questionnaires).

## 3. Responsibility

- 3.1 Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that all test use in our University is in accordance with this policy and that our University only uses reputable test publishers. Any procedure that may involve the use of psychometric testing for selection purposes must be referred to Human Resources for approval before implementation. British Psychological Society (BPS) Level A and Level B Certificate of Competence trained test users within Human Resources will advise on the appropriateness of testing within given recruitment and development situations, with reference to guidelines provided by Human Resources.

## 4. Test Administration and Interpretation

- 4.1 Only trained test users who hold the relevant qualifications may use, interpret and give feedback on psychometric tests. Trained test users may delegate test administration to a person trained in this area. A central list of trained test users will be held and kept up to date by Human Resources.

## 5. Use of Tests

- 5.1 Tests may be used as tools in the following situations:
  - Recruitment and selection (in conjunction with other relevant selection tools, such as interview)
  - Staff development
- 5.2 Any additional uses should be referred to the Director of Human Resources for approval.

## **6. Test Choice**

- 6.1 All psychometric tests must be clearly relevant to the given purpose. Detailed job descriptions and employee specifications based on objective job analysis will be used to enable tests to be selected appropriately. Employee specifications will clearly state which criteria tests will be used to assess. In order to ensure equality of opportunity, it is essential that tests measure the specific skill requirements of the post and are at the correct level of difficulty needed. Human Resources has developed a general list of approved tests matched to positions within grades 2 -5, to aid the consistent use of testing across our University. Further guidance regarding test choice is available from Human Resources.
- 6.2 In development, the choice of test will be discussed with the People Development team and decisions will be based on the set of circumstances and the particular development need at the time. Tests may also be incorporated, as appropriate, into courses such as the management development programmes; more detailed information will be provided as part of the overview of a particular programme.

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

- 7.1 Our University is committed to selection on merit and only measures which are clearly relevant to the job demands and free from extraneous bias should be used. The use of tests will be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant to jobs and reference will be made to the test publisher's validity studies.
- 7.2 Wherever a disability impacts on or prevents a suitably qualified individual from undergoing standard selection procedures, appropriate alternative arrangements for assessment will be found. The test publisher will be contacted for advice before changes are made to test administration procedures. For example, it may be appropriate for a dyslexic candidate to be allowed more time to complete the test and particular care should be taken to ensure that instructions have been understood. For a blind candidate, it may be that an audio test or computer simulated speech is appropriate. In all instances where a candidate has declared a disability it is essential to speak to the candidate before the test session to determine if any adjustments are required, and what these should be, rather than to make assumptions.

## **8. Use of Test Scores**

- 8.1 Test scores will be interpreted on the basis of relevant comparison groups and by appropriately trained Human Resources staff.
- 8.2 Test scores will be fed back to recruitment panels both verbally and through provision of a written feedback sheet (see Appendix 1).

## **9. Confidentiality and Storage of Results**

- 9.1 Test results and written interpretation of results for all candidates will be kept for twelve months, in line with other recruitment files.
- 9.2 Where appropriate, test results which have been used for development purposes will be given to the individuals and will not be held within Human Resources, unless express permission has been given.
- 9.3 Test results may also be stored anonymously in order to develop our University's own comparison groups, or for equal opportunities monitoring purposes.

## **10. Responsibility of Test Takers**

- 10.1 Leeds Beckett University is committed to dealing fairly with all individuals who are tested. We will be open and honest about the use of tests, provide suitable practice materials and relevant feedback whenever tests are used.

### **10.2 Pre-testing**

- 10.2.1 Candidates will be given advance notification that they will be required to take tests. Wherever possible, candidates will be sent practice and briefing leaflets before their interview and test date. Consideration may also be given to offering practice sessions, such as to underrepresented groups via community centres or other appropriate means, in order to help address imbalances within workforce profiles.
- 10.2.2 In the case of on line testing, candidates will be provided with practice test items to allow them to explore both the test content and style, and also become familiar with the format and technology required to successfully complete the test.
- 10.2.3 Where tests may require reading skills not integral to the job, candidates should be tested in their native language and given an additional test of their command of English, if necessary.

### **10.3 At the test session**

- 10.3.1 Test administrators will ensure that tests are carried out exactly in accordance with the test publisher's instructions and guidelines.
- 10.3.2 In the case of on line testing, candidates will register for the assessment and be provided with a user name and password. Candidates will be informed regarding:
- where they can get help and what to do if there is a technology problem.
  - the seriousness of the test and their responsibilities
  - reminders to avoid interruptions and distractions
  - how to delay starting the test until they are in a comfortable environment
  - information on the use and protection of data and results

- use of calculators and paper for notes and calculations.

#### 10.4 Feedback

10.4.1 Feedback will be available to all test takers and provided by qualified Human Resources staff, in accordance with the test publisher's recommendations. Test takers will be informed in advance how feedback is to be given.

#### 10.4.2 Recruitment

In the case of ability tests, written feedback will be provided using standard templates comparing test performance to the relevant norm group. In the case of the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (and related questionnaires), a written interpretation will be provided to individuals with a named contact in case of queries, plus the opportunity for a face to face meeting to discuss the profile.

#### 10.4.3 Development

For the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (and related questionnaires), a written interpretation will be provided to individuals, incorporating feedback from the questionnaire with information gained during a face to face meeting to discuss the profile. Feedback for other tests such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator will be provided by a qualified practitioner, either internal or external to our University.

#### 10.5 Re-testing

10.5.1 For selection purposes, a candidate's test results are valid for any similar position for twelve months from the date of testing. Candidates may be re-tested after six months at their request. Candidates may be re-tested within a shorter period only at the discretion of Human Resources and should supply details in writing supporting the request.

10.5.2 In the case of online unsupervised ability testing, candidates may be retested at the point of interview to verify the unsupervised online test results. The verification test will be supervised by a trained test administrator.

### **11. Monitoring**

11.1 The use of tests will be monitored to ensure continued appropriateness and effectiveness, including a periodic internal validation process and ensuring that tests are relevant to the job and up-to-date test versions and norms are used. Test scores will be monitored by ethnicity, age, gender and disability to ensure they do not unfairly exclude or disadvantage sections of the population.

## **12. Access to Materials and Copyright**

- 12.1 There will be a central store of test materials. All materials will be stored in lockable filing cabinets. Human Resources will keep an accurate log of all test materials held, and all materials must be logged in and out of the test store.
- 12.2 Under no circumstances will test materials be photocopied or installed on computer without the test publisher's express permission.

## **13. Use of Technology with Testing**

- 13.1 Where it is decided to use computer based administration, scoring or interpretation of tests, such processes will always be carried out by trained test users. Where appropriate computer generated reports are passed to candidates or line managers, as a minimum, a named contact will be provided in case of questions.

## **14. Guidelines**

- 14.1 It is the responsibility of all test users to ensure that this guidance is applied at all times. Human Resources will review this policy every two years.

**Personnel Test Battery Panel Feedback**

<b>Position:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**Brief test descriptions (\*delete descriptions for tests that are not being used)**

Verbal Comprehension

**40 questions            Time: 18 minutes**

This test is designed to measure the ability to understand written information. The test consists a series of passages, each of which is followed by several statements. The candidate’s task is to evaluate each statement and decide whether it is true or untrue, or whether there is insufficient information to make the judgement. The test emphasises understanding, using and evaluating verbal information rather than language usage, spelling or grammar. People who perform well on this test tend to have the capacity to readily understand reports and documents.

Clerical Checking

**40 questions            Time: 7 minutes**

This test is designed to measure speed and accuracy in checking written information. Information is presented as a handwritten list; the candidate must check that the final typed copy presented on the facing page is correct in all aspects.

Numerical Computation

**30 questions            Time: 7 minutes**

This test is designed to measure the four basic arithmetical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Calculators are not allowed. Candidates are required to work through items where one number has been omitted from a simple numerical equation, and the missing term chosen from five alternatives (fractions, decimals and percentages are included).

Numerical Reasoning

**24 questions      Time: 15 minutes**

This test is designed to measure simple reasoning skills with numbers. The content has a commercial bias and involves working out sale or purchase prices, profit margins, mark-ups and change, as well as weights, times and areas. Each item consists of a short written problem with a numerical answer. Some calculation is involved but the emphasis is on understanding and recognising short-cut methods of finding the solution. The problems involve the four basic arithmetical operations, simple percentages, fractions, decimals and graphs. Calculators are allowed.

**Results (\*NOTE\* please indicate to panel if results are from a previous test session)**

**Test results have been compared against a large composite group of applicants for administrative roles**

<b>Name:</b>				
<b>Test</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentile</b>	<b>No. of correct answers</b>	<b>No. of questions attempted</b>

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### Grades

A-B Higher scorers, when compared against the comparison group

C Average scorers, when compared against the comparison group

D-E Lower scorers, when compared against the comparison group

The **percentile score** indicates how well this person scored against the people in the comparison group. For example, a percentile score of 80 means that the individual performed better than 80% of the people in the comparison group.

### **NOTE:**

Ability tests should be used in conjunction with other selection methods (e.g. interview) to evaluate candidates' suitability and potential for the job. The employee specification indicates the method of assessment for all criteria. Tests should only be used in the assessment of the criteria against which they have been marked.

**Recruitment Panel Information (to be provided at short-listing meeting or before)**

**Customer Contact Styles Questionnaire**

<b>Position:</b>	
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Please find below brief details of the Customer Contact Styles Questionnaire that will be used as part of the selection process for this position.

Further details of SHL tests and questionnaires can be found on the SHL website [www.shl.com](http://www.shl.com), including the opportunity to take some of the tests without charge. Alternatively, please contact [insert name] if you would like more information.

In addition, candidates will be asked to give a presentation on [insert date]. (**\*amend/delete as appropriate**)

Customer Contact Styles Questionnaire (CCSQ)

The Customer Contact Styles Questionnaire is a targeted version of the Occupational Personality Questionnaire. It looks at the candidate's preferred style of behaviour at work and focuses on the behavioural characteristics that are most relevant to customer service orientated roles. The questionnaire is completed online prior to the selection interview. The panel is given feedback on the CCSQ profiles of the candidates prior to interview, so allowing the panel to identify areas of strength and of potential concern in relation to the selection criteria which can then be explored and probed more fully during the interview. The feedback is broken down into competencies including Relating to Customers, Communicating Orally, Team Working, Problem solving and Customer Focus. It is recommended that the successful candidate is offered a full verbal CCSQ feedback session as part of their induction.

**Personnel Test Battery**

<b>Position:</b>	
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Please find below brief details of the tests that will be used for this position. If a candidate has previously taken one or more of these tests at our University over the last 12 months, then these previous test results will be used.

Further details of SHL tests can be found on the SHL website [www.shl.com](http://www.shl.com), including the opportunity to take some of the tests without charge. Alternatively, please contact [insert name] if you would like a copy of the test practice leaflet prior to the interviews.

In addition, candidates will be asked to complete a spreadsheet/word-processing test (**\*amend/delete as appropriate**)

## **Brief test descriptions (\*delete descriptions for tests that are not being used)**

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### Interview letter possible paragraphs to insert where tests are to be completed online

#### OPQ/CCSQ

As part of the selection process all short-listed candidates are required to complete an online Customer Contact Styles Questionnaire (CCSQ)/Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ)\* (delete as appropriate). This looks at your preferred style of behaviour at work and is not timed. There are no right or wrong answers, so it is important to be as frank and honest as possible. We will discuss your responses to the questionnaire within the interview. The questionnaire will be emailed to you within the next few days and should be completed by **[insert date]**. Further details about the questionnaire can also be found on the SHL website [www.shl.com](http://www.shl.com).

#### Verify

As part of the selection process all short-listed candidates are required to complete verbal and numerical reasoning online ability tests. The verbal reasoning test is designed to measure your ability to evaluate the logic of various kinds of argument presented in written form, and so your capacity to readily understand reports and documents. The numerical reasoning test is designed to measure your ability to make correct decisions or inferences from numerical or statistical data, such as tables and graphs. Further information and system log in details will be emailed to you within the next few days and the tests should be completed by **[insert date]**. On the day of your interview, you will be asked to complete short verification tests linked to both the verbal and numerical reasoning tests you have completed online.