
Statement on Use of Psychometric Testing

Human Resources, Organisational and Staff Development Unit

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Statement on Use of Psychometric Testing

1 Statement

The University of Strathclyde uses psychometric tests to enhance the quality and quantity of information available to support decisions on selection, development and training decisions and as an aid to organisational change. We are committed to the highest standards of practice in the use of all psychometric tests, in order to maximise the benefit of testing to the University and the individual, and to promote fairness and equality of opportunity.

This document outlines best practice on the operation of psychometric testing.

2 Background

Psychometric tests are complex tools that are designed to assess people and measure the differences between individuals. They are designed and developed in such a way they can be shown to measure what they claim to measure with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They are objective, standardised instruments that achieve this precision by using well-controlled, uniform methods of administration and scoring.

Broadly speaking there are two forms of psychometric tests suitable for use in an occupational setting, these being:

- Those designed to measure maximum performance, such as ability, aptitude or attainment; and
- Those designed to assess as personality, temperament, values and interests, preferred styles of working.

Psychometric tests are used for activities such as recruitment and selection, training and development, career guidance and team building.

3 Scope

This statement must be used whenever managers are considering the use of psychometric tests for a recruitment, development or team building activity, and normally for posts of Grade 8 and above.

4 Responsibilities

The Human Resources Department is responsible for ensuring that all tests used in the University are in accordance with this statement. Any procedure that will involve the use of psychometric testing must be discussed and agreed with [Human Resources](#) before implementation.

Organisational and Staff Development will advise managers on the most appropriate test or range of tests to be used for each job based on the requirements of the job description and person specification.

It is the responsibility of all test users to ensure that this statement is applied at all times. Test users are responsible for the way they personally use the tests.

The department wishing to use psychometric testing will be responsible for any associated cost of the tests that are administered.

5 Appropriate use of tests

Tests can be used to support personal development; team building; careers counselling; and, organisational development purposes. We do not currently use psychometric tests to support decisions on selection, placement or promotion decisions. Any proposals for use should be discussed with the Organisational and Staff Development Manager and/or Human Resources Manager.

6 Technical information on psychometric tests

A properly constructed psychometric test is accompanied by information on the test's technical properties. This is contained in the test's technical manual, which is provided by the test supplier.

It includes statistical data indicating the test's validity and reliability; information relating to the procedures to be followed for the test's administration, scoring and interpretation; and norm tables containing the scores of individuals from comparable groups to those to which the test will be given.

Psychometric tests will only be used at the University where:

- They are relevant, appropriate and effective tool for the circumstances to which they are to be applied
- They are accompanied by a technical manual that gives details on the background of the test, information on its psychometric properties and instructions for its use, and contains norm tables
- They can be shown to be valid (measure those things that the supplier claims that they measure) and reliable (consistently measure those things)
- Their use does not disadvantage certain groups, does not unfairly discriminate and is not otherwise unlawful
- The norm tables or comparison groups provided give a fair and relevant comparison with the individual being tested and are up to date
- They provide an opportunity for feedback to all test participants
- They are used in accordance with the requirements of the test publisher

All psychometric tests used must be clearly relevant to the given purpose. Detailed job descriptions and person specifications based on objective job analysis must be prepared prior to the choice of test(s) for any selection or promotion procedures. All decisions to use tests should be clearly documented with a copy being sent to the [Human Resources Department](#).

7 Test users

Knowledge and experience are required to use psychometric tests effectively. Consequently only trained test users who hold the relevant qualifications may use and interpret psychometric instruments. This ensures the competent and responsible use of tests, including the choice, application and administration of the tests, and the interpretation and feeding back of the results.

The [Organisational and Staff Development Manager](#), who is responsible for the management of psychometric testing (as outlined in Section 5), will ensure that:

- Anyone involved in administering, scoring or interpreting a test is adequately trained and holds the relevant qualification in accordance with the test supplier's requirements
- No unsupervised access to tests is allowed to anyone who is not trained or qualified.

8 Guidelines for the use of tests

The suppliers of tests provide detailed instructions for their use in the technical manual that accompanies the test. All tests should be used as per the instructions from the test suppliers.

In general, the users of psychometric tests should ensure that:

- The purpose of the testing is clear to all parties involved prior to the use of the test, and there is an undertaking that the test results will not be used for any purpose other than those communicated at the outset
- The procedure for taking the test is explained in advance
- The level of confidentiality regarding the test results is fully explained
- There are adequate arrangements for giving feedback to the test taker
- How test outcome information will be stored and disposed of

9 Administering tests

The objectivity and standards of the results of psychometric tests rely on standard circumstances for their completion. The arrangements for anyone taking a test should follow uniform procedures specified by the test supplier to maintain the objectivity of the test. Those who administer psychometric tests should ensure that:

- Every person completing a test receives the same standard instructions specified by the suppliers of the test
- The test takers complete the test by themselves without help from others
- The test is completed in a suitable environment in which the test taker is physically comfortable, with, for example, adequate light and a comfortable temperature
- Any person completing the test can avoid disturbance, distractions or interruption from others
- Test takers have sufficient time to complete the test, unless it is a timed test, in which case they understand what the time limit is and it is applied consistently.

10 Test Results

Test results should always be interpreted by a properly trained person in the context of clearly defined criteria and in compliance with the requirements and good practice advice of test publisher. Test results must be interpreted on the basis of relevant norm groups.

11 Feedback

Feedback on the interpretation of test scores must be given to the test taker. Such feedback establishes the validity of their results.

12 Equality

Whenever a disability prevents a suitably qualified individual from undergoing standard procedures, appropriate alternative arrangements for assessing must be found. Test users should always contact the test publisher for advice before making any changes to the test administration procedures.

13 Confidentiality

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires that information collected during psychometric testing be accurate, up to date and stored confidentially.

Test results will never be used for any other purpose than intended and will not be shared with any other person without the explicit prior consent of the individual,.

Test results will be kept by test users in locked files. A written interpretation of results should be kept in personnel files and provided to the relevant individuals.

14 Copyright

Copyright legislation of test publisher will be complied with in all cases

15 Complaints

Any complaints or concerns about the terms of test use laid out in the document or breach of the test use conditions should be directed to the [Organisational and Staff Development Manager](#).

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