

Starting Point: Psychometrics

What is psychometric testing?

The purpose of psychometric testing is to measure using an objective scientific mechanism, skills, abilities, personality traits, motivation and attitudes. Employers may use the following:

Aptitude tests measure skills and abilities. These can include numerical, verbal, logical and abstract reasoning. Numerical and verbal reasoning are most commonly tested.

Personality assessments measure various innate personal characteristics. Examples include:

- Myers Briggs Traits Inventory (MBTI), based on Carl Jung's psychological types - ways in which people perceive their world. These are sensing and intuition, thinking and feeling.
- The OPQ 32 by SHL is one of the most common personality questionnaires used in recruitment and explores candidates' motives and character, individual preferences, perceived strengths and weaknesses.
- Cattell's 16PF which measures 16 personality factors. Personality assessments of this nature generally include the '**big 5' factors** - extraversion, openness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and agreeableness.

Situational judgement and situational strengths tests. SJT's present real life work scenarios to test how you resolve a particular situation and the behaviour you demonstrate. With **SJT's** the employer identifies particular skills or strengths that are important in the role and devises situational based scenarios to see if you demonstrate those skills and strengths in your answers.

Examples include:

- Capp Situational Strengths Test
- Saville Consulting Work Strengths

Gamification

Gamification, or games-based assessment, involves using games-based tools to assess candidates for different competencies and personality traits. It's being used in a range of sectors and its use is growing as employers see it as a new way of engaging with their potential workforce. Gamification is often used alongside other methods of assessment in the early 'screening' stages of the application process. The assessments record behaviours, choices and decision-making rather than skills or experience. Examples of game based assessments: [Arctic Shores](#) Skyrise City, Firefly Freedom, Cosmic Cadet

Gamification Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Do I have to be a gamer?** No, the tests don't require any 'gaming' skill to complete; they are measuring personality. They tend to be simple enough to make sure everyone has an equal chance of performing well, therefore are considered to be inclusive methods of assessment.
- **Do I really have to take it seriously?** Yes, it's part of the assessment process for a very real job, so make sure you focus and complete the assessment somewhere quiet with no distractions in order to ensure your performance reflects the real you.
- **How can I prepare?** Read the instructions carefully to make sure you understand the rules. You're unlikely to be able to repeat the test.
- **Should I play the game in the way I think they want me to?** Be honest and answer instinctively. If you're focusing on demonstrating what you think they want to see, this will show hesitation and affect your results.

- **I've done one of these before so I know how to play this one...** Caution! The games are usually bespoke to a particular employer or role. Treat it as a new experience as they may be assessing different things.

What tests do employers use and why?

Employers use aptitude and personality assessments in recruitment and staff development. Some wellknown firms operating and supplying psychometric instruments in the UK include SHL, OPP, Kenexa, Saville Consulting and Profiling for Success. Psychometric tests used in graduate recruitment will generally be 'normed' against a representative sample of an undergraduate/graduate population.

Tests from different test publishers vary in their level of difficulty. Practice questions are often easier than the ones you would encounter in the real test. They are there purely to familiarise you with the process.

Adaptive testing: this style of test asks increasingly difficult questions until the candidate starts to get them wrong or runs out of time. This enables employers to establish a minimum benchmark (eg. 50%), and screen out candidates. An example of this type of test is Talent Q.

How can I learn more?

- The UK's official graduate website [Prospects](#) has a useful section on psychometric tests.
- [The British Psychological Society](#) holds a list of test companies, good practice guidelines and advice for people with disabilities.

Sheffield Hallam online psychometric tests

Practice is essential. We have a subscription to the [Graduates First](#) practice test package for SHU students and graduates to use.

- Aptitude tests: numerical, verbal and logical reasoning. Timed tests with individual reports and worked out solutions. You can plot your development on a personalised chart.
- Situational judgement test: The test consists of 18 work place scenarios. Your response to these is assessed against 9 key competencies.
- Workplace Personality questionnaire: A short assessment modelled on the 'big 5' traits.
- Video interviewing software: practice giving answers in a video interviewing situation and get feedback on the content of your answers and your facial expression/presentation.
- Game based assessment: practice a test similar to some used by employers when assessing response to risk/reward, which can be indicative of personality and behaviour.
- Assessment centre exercises: download examples of the types of exercises you might encounter in an assessment/selection event.

To register, download the [Student Guide to Graduates First](#) for full instructions. If you have graduated in the last five years and have registered on UniHub you can contact the Careers and Employability Service to allow you access to this test portal. Email careers@shu.ac.uk.

Free practice psychometric tests

The Target Jobs website has a comprehensive list of test publishers and test preparation sites. Use this shortened url <https://goo.gl/cclZ4q> for the most up to date listings.

Useful information

On UniHub you can book [online](#) to see an adviser or phone Careers for an appointment on 0114 225 3752. We can talk through how these assessments differ from general qualifications and how they are scored differently. Take your test results to an appointment for personalised advice or [attend a workshop](#) on psychometric assessments.