

Psychometric tests

Psychometric tests are often used by larger organisations as part of their recruitment and selection processes. They are taken just as seriously as the other stages and can be used to look at things like logic, numeracy, technical ability, literacy, verbal reasoning, inductive or deductive reasoning, spatial or diagrammatic reasoning, situational judgement, motivation and personality. You may be asked to complete tests online before or after applying, or as part of an assessment centre or interview. Some areas that psychometric tests are used to assess, like personality or motivation for example, require you to answer instinctively, so don't require you to practise, although you can think about them in advance to some extent. Others, like numeracy or verbal reasoning for example, you can practise and we strongly recommend that you do. Often, these tests will be timed and under pressure it can be difficult to do well.

Top Tips:

- Take these tests seriously. Find somewhere quiet to complete them so you can really focus. They are usually pass/fail only.
- These tests are not usually negatively scored so use the time allowed wisely e.g. if you have 30 minutes for 60 questions, that's 30 seconds per question. If you can't answer in that time, move on.

Some employers provide practice tests, the Civil Service for example, but most don't. There are many organisations who offer practice tests online but some charge a fee.

Be prepared

We subscribe to online tests exclusively for Essex students, which you can access via our website to practise and get feedback on your performance. We also have a list of other free online practice tests that we recommend. www.essex.ac.uk/careers/applications/tests.aspx

Assessment centres

Larger organisations often consider a number of candidates at the same time through assessment centres. They use a range of tasks, such as psychometric tests, group challenges, role play, presentations, in-tray/e-tray exercises and interviews. They consider this an objective and fair way of selecting staff using a variety of activities over a longer period of time to minimise bias. Assessment centres are carefully designed to see which candidates fit the role and the organisation, so as well as testing your skills and abilities further, they may be considering your personality; your approach to solving problems and dealing with situations; leadership potential and overall ability to work in a team; your commercial awareness.

Top Tips:

- At the assessment centre, don't view the other candidates purely as competition. The assessors may be impressed by all of you or none of you on the day. Getting on well with others and demonstrating the ability to work in a team will make the best impression.
- In group activities, be yourself and take a role you are comfortable with so you behave naturally and keep an eye on the time.

Prepare as you would for an interview (see our interview checklist on page 14). Dress and behave professionally, be punctual and bear in mind that everyone you meet on the day may be asked what they thought of you.

Be prepared

We provide an online assessment centre preparation tool exclusively for Essex users on our website. This will help you to be ready for and stand out at assessment centres, with information on what the different tasks could involve, how to prepare and information about the assessment centres run by several well-known companies. www.essex.ac.uk/careers/applications/assessment_centre/default.aspx