

Top nineteen frequently asked questions about psychometric tests



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Psychometric assessments take many forms, from empirically derived personality assessments to cognitive ability tests. However, regardless of what they are being used for, everyone desires the same thing - precise, powerful, data-driven tests that streamline the candidate selection process, ascertain candidates' suitability for various roles and minimize HR and hiring costs.

But if you are amid implementing assessments, what specific points do you have in mind to ask the psychometric test provider?

While your requirements may govern whether you want to leverage these tests for recruitment or learning and development purposes or focus on candidate experience, or perhaps you prefer simple assessments over gamified assessments. There could be varied user preferences but what matters most is achieving absolute clarity in psychometric testing.

We understand that you may have several queries concerning psychometric testing. After extensive research, we have answered the nineteen most frequently asked questions around psychometric tests by organizations, hiring managers, and HRs, first-time users, which will help acquaint themselves with a not-so-well-known process. These FAQs are designed to succinctly explain psychometric assessments, which are assuming greater significance among recruiters and organizations worldwide that are in the process of implementing assessments and getting accustomed to their diverse usages.



Q1. What is a psychometric test?

A psychometric test is an assessment tool to objectively assess the traits, aptitude, behavioral style, mental ability, cognitive skills, and other aspects of applicants' personalities. The test not only helps HRs assess a range of competencies in an individual to ascertain their job suitability in an organization, but it also applies in several employee-related strategies, such as high-potential identification, leadership development, appraisals, and employee engagement. This test helps employers assess applicants' personality traits and general intelligence to make well-informed hiring decisions. Moreover, such a test can be used at every stage of the employee career cycle to make crucial talent management decisions and personal development goals.

Q2. What are the different types of psychometric tests?

Psychometric assessments can be broadly classified into personality tests and aptitude (cognitive ability) tests. Personality tests are assessment tools to uncover aspects of a candidate's personality, such as traits, behavior, interpersonal skills, time management, etc. They can bring an individual's personality, interests, and values to the fore, enabling employers to determine if somebody is suitable for a particular role. Aptitude tests are used to measure an individual's mental, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. There are several available aptitude tests, such as numerical tests, verbal tests, inductive and deductive reasoning tests, situational tests, etc.

Q3. Does psychometric testing work in recruitment?

The psychometric test provides an excellent way for recruiters to glean insights on candidate's skills and personality that one cannot retrieve from CVs alone. Many recruiters worldwide use psychometric tests to predict a candidate's culture fitment. These tests can help recruiters filter and shortlist applicants who are ideal for the role and organization's needs regarding their aptitude, traits, competencies, intelligence, drive, etc. By including psychometric testing in the hiring process, recruiters can make the recruitment process objective and more effective.

Q4. What jobs require psychometric testing?

Psychometric testing is applicable across roles related to different disciplines, levels, and industries. The reason is that the test can help provide assessable data of applicants' competency and cultural fit. Hence, any entity that wants to conduct recruitment, selection and development processes based on this data may use psychometric assessments. These tests are used in recruiting candidates for entry-level and mid-level roles. These tests also find their extensive use in senior and executive-level positions wherein they are used for recruitment, training, promotion, leadership development, etc.

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Q5. Is psychometric test used mainly for lateral hiring rather than campus hiring?

Whether it's about recruiting freshly minted graduates in large numbers or hiring professionals with some experience, psychometric tests suit both purposes! Whether you are looking at lateral hiring or campus recruitment, these tests help identify and select talent with required personality traits such as problem-solving, openness to learning, stress handling skills, diligence, leadership qualities, team spirit, etc.

Q6. Can psychometric tests help in recruiting the blue-collar workforce?

Psychometric tests have proven beneficial to various medium and large-scale organizations in hiring a competent blue-collar workforce. The reason is that they provide a holistic view of the prospect's character and competence. These tests furnish extensive details about candidates' personalities, intelligence, abilities, skills, and behavior, making it easy for employers to find prospective hires who are most suited to their work culture. Psychometric testing can also evaluate if there are traces of negative personality constructs in newly hired ones and existing employees, which could come in handy if employers want to prepare remedial measures beforehand should any unfavorable situation arise.

Q7. Does psychometric test help in integrity testing?

There are specialized psychometric tests that help organizations profile employees based on their level of integrity. Such tests focus on identifying prospective hires and individuals who tend to exhibit counterproductive behavior. Psychometric tools also help increase self-awareness by focusing on a person's underlying strengths and weaknesses, helping them understand the value of integrity at the workplace.

Q8. Does psychometric test help in understanding the dark personality traits of candidates?

The answer is yes! Psychometric personality test helps measure negative personality constructs in potential hires (during the hiring process) and existing employees. Through this personality diagnostic, it becomes easy to ensure safety at workplaces. The tool considers six dark personality traits: Opportunism, Self-Obsession, Insensitivity, Temperamental, Impulsiveness and Thrill-Seeking. Thus, the tool helps safeguard work culture and ensure customer safety in industries where employees working in customer-facing roles may exhibit dark traits, endangering customer, asset and data safety.



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Q9. Which psychometric test is best?

There is no definite answer to that question because “best” seems like generalizing something and imposing one’s personal preference on others. However, research has shown that psychometric tests based on the trait approach (such as the five-factor model) describe and measure personality characteristics more objectively than the tests based on the type approach (such as the MBTI). Unlike the type theory, the trait theory considers situational factors that affect personality and finds the most proper behavior in specific circumstances, essential for high-stakes job roles. The trait theory has shown a high correlation with on-the-job performance and, thus, is highly recommended in the workplace context.

Q10. How are psychometric tests administered?

Psychometric tests are usually presented in a multiple-choice format and are administered online or offline at the candidate selection stage. By using psychometric assessments alongside the usual hiring practices, HRs and hiring managers can access insights backed by reliable data that traditional interview methods often fall short of providing on their own.



Q11. When would it be most suitable to administer a particular psychometric assessment?

The question of when to administer a specific assessment entirely depends upon organization-wide goals. For example, most companies conduct these tests for various purposes, such as enhancing the efficacy of their recruitment, training and development and promotion decisions. Why? Because psychometric assessments are good predictors of future job performance and person-organization fit.

Q12. What type of questions are asked in a psychometric test?

The types of questions that psychometric tests include vary depending on the test type and the measurement model adopted within the assessment. For example, for a verbal reasoning test, the test question might comprise a written passage followed by questions that are succeeded by response options, such as true, false, or cannot say, from which the test taker would choose the correct answer. Another commonly used test, the work personality questionnaire, is designed to assess individual differences based on preferences and work styles. These questionnaires may include questions posed as statements, such as “I always struggle to meet deadlines”, and the test-taker is required to choose their response from the various options (strongly agree, strongly disagree, agree, disagree, unsure).

Q13. Can psychometric tests be cheated?

The answer is no if you are using proper tools! The reason is that today a vast majority of organizations conduct online psychometric tests using advanced assessment platforms to evaluate the personality, behavioral and cognitive skills of the candidates. These platforms support a systematic online proctoring arrangement wherein the test-takers are monitored and regulated through technology tools such as a mic, webcam, and screen of the device, which is currently in use. In addition, psychometric personality tests would be difficult for a candidate to cheat on as there are no right or wrong answers in these tests. Similarly, aptitude tests are time-limited, meaning you can objectively measure aspects of a candidate’s mental ability within the set time frame.

Q14. How reliable are psychometric tests?

Psychometric tests are very reliable in predicting the test-taker’s performance. Therefore, these tests are an effective filtration tool because they can objectively evaluate applicants and help narrow down the talent pool. However, a test would not be very reliable if it produces inconsistent and different results under similar circumstances. That’s why it’s essential to choose the right psychometric assessment provider that provides highly reliable tests which predict the test-taker’s performance with utmost accuracy.

Q15. Is there any right or wrong answer in psychometric tests?

Psychometric tests allow respondents to answer questions from their perspective, and there's nothing called a 'right perspective' or 'wrong perspective'. Therefore, candidates' responses to psychometric tests determine their suitability for a job or role.

Q16. Are psychometric tests too expensive?

Most people think that administering psychometric assessments may prove to be a costly affair. Although undeniably, integrating these assessments in an organization's hiring process would require an additional investment, this can be offset against excellent returns from this cost. Furthermore, psychometric assessments help hire the right fit, so it won't hurt your finances if you invest some amount in attracting top talent. Simply put, the cost of a bad hire is a lot more than conducting psychometric assessments.



Q17. Are psychometric tests time-consuming?

Psychometric testing can stretch from a few minutes to a few hours, depending on the nature of the assessment and the test-taker's capacity. Nowadays, online psychometric tests help narrow down the talent pool and generate results instantly, thereby saving a significant time in the recruiting process. Furthermore, many tests are not lengthy but contain stimulus-based multiple-choice questions that help applicants respond quickly.

Q18. Can anyone administer a psychometric test?

The answer is no! A certified psychometrician undergoes extensive training and certification to attain expertise and ability. Hence, they know how to design and select assessments for the role being considered and use the right approach to assess results. However, there is no shortage of free aptitude tests available online. Unfortunately, these may not be conceptualized with the same rigor as an assessment created by SMEs, and the results and analysis they offer may not be reliable. Therefore, it's advisable to seek expertise from a certified expert or a well-renowned assessment technology provider that offers automated, data-driven psychometric assessments.

Q19. What happens after an assessment?

Once results have been analyzed, all participants should receive some useful feedback. The reason is that result reports can help candidates understand their underlying strengths and weaknesses. If a candidate gets hired solely based on the test and interview performance, evaluators should emphasize areas where they need improvement, which can help them in the long run. Psychometric assessments are not only useful for hiring purposes but also for conducting learning and development, initiating succession planning, resolving workplace conflicts, solidifying teams and workplace culture, etc.

Well, that's the long and short of it. We hope these questions answer all your queries around psychometric testing and help you get acquainted with this novel approach to hiring. We are sure that this list of FAQs has assuaged your concerns and dispelled common myths to drive greater acceptance of the psychometric testing process.

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✉ mettlcontact@mercer.com

🌐 www.mettl.com

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