

Most organisations use testing

As a student applying for an internship or a graduate position, you will almost certainly be asked to complete some form of test (aptitude or personality).

Testing is used either as supporting evidence in a selection process, or as a method of screening out candidates. Whichever way tests are used by an organisation it is vitally important that you do all you can to pass them.

Aptitude tests are used to measure your thinking and reasoning abilities (logical and analytical). The most used tests assess verbal and numerical reasoning skills; some may also assess diagrammatic reasoning skills.

Personality tests assess whether your personal attributes suit a particular working environment. They are used to assess behaviour, attitudes, opinions, motivation, interests and values. Results are often compared to the skills and characteristics required for a particular job.

Tests can be taken in person, but are now often done on-line, be sure you understand what is expected of you in either case. If you take the tests in person, there should be someone administering the tests who you can ask for clarification, don't start the test until you are 100% clear on what you need to do. If you take a test on-line there will be less support, be sure you receive clear instructions from either the organisation you have applied to, or the testing company, again do not start the test until you are 100% clear. Don't make assumptions, you will only get one chance.

Most organisations offer tests in a number of languages, so if English is not your first language, ask if you can take it in another which may be more comfortable for you. *Note: some people find that the translations of the tests from English are not as clear as they might be. If the organisation does not have the language you require and you are not working in your first language ask them how you will be assessed against others working in their first language.*

If you are dyslexic, be brave and say so, if you usually get extra time when doing exams, ask for the same when doing your tests, some organisations may ask for evidence of this from your university.

Most tests are timed and you will have a number of questions to answer in that time, perhaps 50 questions in 20 minutes, you must have a strategy, will you work slowly and accurately or quickly and not double check your answers, what are you comfortable with. To be successful with most tests you need to ensure you answer a certain number of questions correctly. Ask your careers service for advice as they often run tests for organisations.

You must practice, tests are often not what you expect, you don't want to be surprised by the format, questions or timing when you do the test(s) for real. Below are some companies which offer practice tests for you to try.

ASE-Solutions.co.uk
Shldirect.com
Morrisby
Educational Testing Service
Keirseley temperament tests
Team technology
Outofservice

You might also want to look at the The British Psychological Society, Psychological Testing Centre: www.psychtesting.org.uk, for a more in-depth explanation about tests and why organisations use them.

There is no secret to passing tests it just takes lots of good old fashioned **PRACTICE**.