

Aptitude tests and Assessment centres



While resumes, cover letters and interviews are the most common selection tools used by employers during the recruitment process, some employers also use a range of testing methods to gain further insight into candidates' skills, competencies, personality and suitability for the role to assist with the shortlisting process.

Psychometric assessments

Designed by experts in the field of psychology, psychometric assessments can assess candidates' cognitive abilities, personality, motivations, values and interests under standardised conditions. Psychometric tests help employers understand hidden qualities that aren't obvious in a job application, such as how well someone understands and manages their emotions, their approach to problem-solving or thinking, and their interpersonal styles.

Many types of assessments are used to help the employer build an overall profile of you and, importantly, how you would be a good cultural fit within their workplace. Assessments are often administered as online exercises and may be a precursor to, or part of, an assessment centre. Psychometric assessments typically fall into two categories:

1. Aptitude tests

- Used to measure numerical, logical, verbal, abstract and spatial reasoning, as well as comprehension and job-specific skills.
- These tests are usually timed so you may feel a little pressured. Work quickly and as accurately as possible, and don't be surprised if you can't answer all questions.

2. Personality inventories or motivational fit

- Designed to reveal interests and motivations.
- The typical format is preferential questions (where you select from a series of choices).
- There are no correct or incorrect answers; rather, each response contributes to shaping a profile, which is then assessed against the criteria for an employer's ideal candidate.
- Emotional intelligence (EI) tools may also be used to determine your capacity to recognise and manage emotions in yourself and your relationships, use feelings to guide your thoughts and actions, and motivate yourself and others.

Preparing for psychometric assessments

Prepare for psychometric testing by requesting information such as:

- What types of tests are conducted and what do they measure?
- How much time is allocated for the tests?
- Can a calculator be used in numeric tests?

You should also consider practising by taking sample tests. Practise may speed up your information processing, help you understand the structure of tests and questions and reduce performance anxiety. There are many free psychometric tests and information on assessment centres online. Here are some sites to get you started:

Aptitude tests:

- [Cappfinity Assessment Centre Preparation Hub](#)
- [Numerical, deductive reasoning, verbal reasoning, abstract and inductive, and mechanical aptitude tests](#)
- [Mixed Aptitude Test](#)

Personality inventories:

- [BigFive Personality Traits Test](#)
- [16Personalities Test](#)
- [Core Values Assessment](#)
- [LEADx EQ Self-Assessment](#)

Read Prosple's [Ultimate Guide to Psychometric Tests](#) for more tips.

Assessment centres

Assessment centres are used by organisations throughout Australia, especially for graduate programs. Assessment centres are typically conducted over a day or multiple days, and may be conducted in person or virtually. They can involve a collection of activities (group and individual) designed to simulate real-world work scenarios and assess various skills such as teamwork, problem solving and communication.

Common components of an assessment centre	What it involves	Key skills being assessed
Group discussions and exercises	Solving a problem or completing a task as a team	Teamwork and leadership Communication skills Negotiation skills
Case studies	Responding to scenario-based problems or analysing a data set; may involve preparing a verbal or written report	Analytical skills Decision making skills Communication skills
Role plays	Simulated interactions e.g. dealing with a challenging client or team member	Interpersonal skills Adaptability Conflict resolution
Presentations	Preparing and presenting a presentation on a given topic	Communication skills Persuasive skills Analytical skills
In-tray exercises	Simulating a real work scenario, candidates must prioritise tasks, respond to emails and make decisions under time pressure	Time management Decision-making skills Organisational skills
Psychometric testing	Aptitude tests Personality assessments Situational judgment tests	Cognitive abilities Personality style Behavioural tendencies
Interviews	Competency-based, behavioural, scenario-based or motivational questioning	May involve follow up questions on activities within the assessment centre to assess self-awareness, thought processes and decision making

Depending on the industry, some assessment centres may also incorporate activities designed to assess technical skills relevant to role and organisation, for example demonstrating proficiency in software tools.

Advantages for applicants

Assessment centres are designed to be a fair and inclusive hiring process. Your success isn't determined by a single interview, rather you have the opportunity to share your working style and strengths in a variety of scenarios. Should you secure the position, you may be more confident the position will suit you and that the employer feels you have the potential to advance.

Preparing for your assessment

- Familiarise yourself with the job description and desired competencies.
- Research the employer, industry and assessment centres.
- Read all test materials carefully and thoroughly.
- Dress as though you're attending a job interview.
- Be yourself.
- If online, ensure you are in a quiet space and can't be interrupted.

After the assessment

Even if you are not selected to progress further after psychometric and/or assessment centre testing, don't let the experience undermine your confidence. Remember:

- Your results only reflect your performance on the day you were tested (many factors can affect this).
- You are assessed against the needs of one organisation. You won't be viewed identically by all employers, or by the same organisation in the future.
- You have gained valuable practise for next time. Evaluate your performance and any feedback given.
- You may have avoided a position which would not have been right for you in the long term.