



USE OF PSYCHOMETRIC TOOLS AND TESTS AT THE LSE

POLICY STATEMENT

The LSE uses psychometric tests to enhance the information available to assist decisions on selection and development decisions, as an aid to organisational change/development, career counselling and for team building. The School is committed to the highest standards of practice in the use of all psychometric tools, in order to maximise the benefit of testing to the University and the individual, and to promote fairness and equality of opportunity.

This document outlines best practice on the operation of psychometric testing within the School.

BACKGROUND TO THIS POLICY

Psychometric tests are tools that are designed to assess people and measure the differences between individuals. They are designed and developed in such a way they can be shown to measure what they claim to measure with a reasonable degree of accuracy. They are objective, standardised instruments that achieve this precision by using well-controlled, uniform methods of administration and scoring.

Broadly speaking there are two forms of psychometric tests suitable for use in an occupational setting, these being:

- Those designed to measure maximum performance, such as ability, aptitude or attainment; and
- Those designed to assess personal qualities such as personality, temperament, values and interests.

Psychometric tests are used for activities such as recruitment and selection, training and development, career guidance and team building and can supplement (rather than replace) information from other relevant sources.

RESPONSIBILITIES

HR is responsible for ensuring that all tools used in the School are in accordance with this policy.

Departments wishing to use psychometric tools should discuss their needs with their HR Partner before implementation. Organisational and Lifelong Learning (OLL) will provide advice and support if tools are being used for learning, development and team building purposes – this will include the use and administration of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

HR advises departments on the most appropriate test or battery of tests to be used for each job based on the requirements of the job description and/or person specification.

Unless the tool is being used as part of a learning & development programme (eg the LSE Leadership Development Programme) the department wishing to use psychometric testing will normally be responsible for the cost of the tests that are administered.

CHOOSING PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS

A properly constructed psychometric test is accompanied by information on the test's technical properties. This is contained in the test's technical manual, which is provided by the test supplier. It

includes statistical data indicating the test's validity and reliability; information relating to the procedures to be followed for the test's administration, scoring and interpretation; and norm tables containing the scores of individuals from comparable groups to those to which the test will be given.

Psychometric tests are to be used at the School only if:

- They can be shown to be relevant, appropriate and effective to the circumstances to which they are to be applied.
- They are accompanied by a technical manual that gives details on the background of the test, information on its psychometric properties and instructions for its use, and contains norm tables.
- They can be shown to be valid (measure those things that the supplier claims that they measure) and reliable (consistently measure those things).
- Their use does not disadvantage certain groups, does not unfairly discriminate and is not otherwise unlawful.
- The norm tables or comparison groups provided give a fair and relevant comparison with the individual being tested and are up to date.
- The test provider / supplier is accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS).

All psychometric tests used must be clearly relevant to the given purpose. Detailed job descriptions and person specifications based on objective job analysis must be prepared prior to the choice of test(s) for any selection process.

At the School the following tests or questionnaires are used and can be administered both in paper format and/or online:

- Numerical Reasoning Tests, SHL
- Verbal Reasoning Tests, SHL
- Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ), SHL
- Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), OPP

TEST USERS

Knowledge and experience are required to use psychometric tests effectively. Consequently only trained test users who hold the relevant qualifications may use and interpret psychometric tools. This ensures the competent and responsible use of tests, including the choice, application and administration of the tests, and the interpretation and feeding back of the results.

The Deputy HR Director is responsible for the management of psychometric testing at the School and will ensure that:

- Anyone involved in administering, scoring or interpreting a test is adequately trained and holds the relevant qualification in accordance with the test supplier's requirements.
- No unsupervised access to tests is allowed to anyone who is not trained or qualified.

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF TESTS

The suppliers of tests provide detailed instructions for their use in the technical manual that accompanies the test. All tests should be used as per the instructions from the test suppliers. In general, the users of psychometric tests should ensure that:

- The purpose of the testing is clear to all parties involved prior to the use of the test, and there is an undertaking that the test results will not be used for any purpose other than those communicated at the outset.

- The procedure for taking the test is explained in advance to anyone taking it.
- The level of confidentiality regarding the test results is fully explained to anyone taking the test.
- There are adequate arrangements for giving feedback to the test taker.
- Anyone taking the test is informed of its purpose, who has access to the results and how test materials will be stored and disposed of.
- The results of a single test should not be relied upon as the sole basis for a decision if the tests are being used to make recruitment and selection decisions.

ADMINISTERING TESTS

The objectivity and standards of the results of psychometric tests rely on standard circumstances for their completion. The arrangements for anyone taking a test should follow uniform procedures specified by the test supplier to maintain the objectivity of the test. Only competent and qualified staff should administer psychometric tests and they should ensure that:

- Every person completing a test receives the same standard instructions specified by the suppliers of the test.
- The test takers complete the test by themselves without help from others.
- The test is completed in a suitable environment in which the test taker is physically comfortable, with, for example, adequate light and a comfortable temperature.
- Any person completing the test can avoid disturbance, distractions or interruption from others.
- Test takers have sufficient time to complete the test, unless it is a timed test, in which case they understand what the time limit is.

TEST SCORES

Test scores should always be interpreted by properly trained individuals in the context of clearly defined criteria. Both quantitative and qualitative interpretation can be used. The former should be restricted to cases where there is sufficient supporting evidence.

Test scores must be interpreted on the basis of relevant norm groups. Fixed cut-offs may only be imposed where specific evidence of test relevance is available i.e. job analysis, validation study.

The interpretation of test scores is in accordance with the formula, which will be amended from time to time on the basis of on-going validations results.

FEEDBACK

The School will provide feedback to all LSE staff who have undertaken psychometric tests. For those completing tests who are not employed by the School feedback will be provided upon request.

Feedback on the interpretation of test scores by properly trained individuals must be given to the test taker. Such feedback establishes the validity of their results.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The School is committed to selection on merit and only measures which are clearly relevant to job demands and free of extraneous bias should be used. All assessments for selection and promotion will be monitored to ensure they do not unfairly exclude or disadvantage any section of the population.

Whenever a disability prevents a suitably qualified individual from undergoing standard selection procedures, reasonable adjustments will be made and appropriate alternative arrangements for assessing will be found. Test users should always contact the test publisher for advice before making

any changes to the test administration procedures.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Data Protection Act requires that information collected during psychometric testing be accurate, up to date and stored confidentially.

Test results will never be used for any other purpose than intended and will not be shared with any person without the prior consent of the individual – other than those involved in the process.

Test results should be kept by test users in locked files. Results for those not employed by the School will be retained for a period of 6 months – and will be confidentiality destroyed after this period. For LSE staff a written interpretation of results should be kept in personnel files.

Individuals do change and develop and so psychometric data can become less accurate over time. Test scores should not, therefore, be kept on file indefinitely. Consequently, results over 12 months old are invalid for selection or promotion decisions.

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POLICY REVIEW

The Deputy HR Director will formally review the function of this policy after six months initially and then every two years.

Feedback and suggestions for changes and amendments should be addressed directly to the Deputy HR Director.