

Psychometric and other tests.

OK, at some point you will have to go through a variety of online or in-house testing. Unfortunately some companies place a very high value on the results or just use them as an elimination process. So it is handy to understand what you may be up for.

Psych tests – Psychometric testing is very common today, especially with big companies. You may have done similar tests at school looking at numerical or verbal skills, multiple-choice career questionnaires or personality styles. These tests can range from a basic unit, to a multiple battery session lasting up to three hours.



What are they all about? They're an assessment or screening tool, depending on how they are used. In a recruitment or graduate drive, everyone wants to get the best possible candidate. Big firms have conducted so many of these tests that they are normed to reflect their ideal scope of preferred skill sets or traits, providing them with a benchmark. Other tests are just normed on age or industry sectors. They can be split in three main categories being Aptitude/Ability, Personality/Motivation and Interests.

- **Aptitude/ability tests** – Look at your ability to think and assess problems. This differs from sitting exams where you learn and cram set knowledge for a test. These tests cover things like verbal, numerical, perceptual and abstract problem solving. They determine how quickly you can pick up on information/patterns and how much you can process in a set time. This shows your potential ability to learn and adapt quickly to new information and problems in the future, not how smart you are. So, from the employer's point of view, how quickly they can expect you to be profitable.
- **Personality/motivation test** – Is basically a fairly long series of questions, sometimes seemingly irrelevant, used to try and assess your personality traits and drivers against the style of person they might want to work in a particular area. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, so answer instinctively and honestly.

N.B. Don't lie or try to give the answers you think they want, because it will show up in the results. You also have no idea as to what characteristics they are looking for.

Interest/career direction – These questionnaires are usually done at school, or through career guidance practitioners. Answer them instinctively as they are a practical tool for identifying a number of potential career paths that might be right for you. They may confirm what you are already thinking, or might even show strengths or interests that you hadn't considered.

Tip – If whilst at university you get the opportunity to be a guinea pig for the psych students, take it. You can't learn or predict psych tests, but you can develop a level of comfort and familiarity with them, that will help you in the future.

Good luck in your next interview, James E Lynch