



Diversity In The Workplace

Test results should always be interpreted within context and should never be used on their own, it is likely that they only measure some of the relevant attributes and other selection methods need to be used to assess the other characteristics.

Test Content

The most important aspect of testing is whether the content reflects the actual skill or attribute being measured. All the tests used should measure skills or attributes identified as necessary to do the job. Skills not required on the job or after training should not be a necessary requirement in order to complete a particular test. For example, the test should not require understanding of complex vocabulary or performance at speed, unless these are relevant to the job. Under the law, the employer maybe required to show that the tests used correspond to a real need, are appropriate with a view to achieving the objective and are necessary to that end.

In addition, the test content and the context in which the skill is measured should, as far as possible, reflect the type of content found in the job. For example, a typing test should require the typing of material similar to that required on the job. However, care must be taken not to include material requiring knowledge specific to the organisation, that would put external applicants at a disadvantage.

Test content that is of a more general nature should be equally accessible to all applicant groups – men and women, people from ethnic minority groups or older and younger people. For instance in the typing test, if job relevant text is too technical for an external applicant to deal with before training, more general text should be used.

Similarly, the level of difficulty at which the skill is measured should be appropriate to the job. A test which is too easy will not differentiate between applications with good and poor potential. One that is too difficult could lead to greater disparate impact. The level of the test should also be appropriate for the likely applicant pool. If the general level of applications is below the standard required for the job, employers should consider what they can do to attract better applicants. Training or job redesign options also need to be considered.

Where there is a tendency for applications from one particular racial group or sex to fail to meet the required standard, Section 38 of the Race Relations Act (1976) and Section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act (1986) sometimes allow positive action targeted at this group, in the form of training programs, to be instituted.

The Loft, Little Braxted, Witham Road, Little Braxted, Essex. CM8 3EU
Tel: +44 (0)845 067 8849 Fax: +44 (0)870 067 8843
Email: info@skillsarena.com
www.skillsarena.com

Use of Practice Materials

Some candidates may be unfamiliar with testing, rendering it difficult for them to perform to their best. Others may find the testing situation very stressful. Ethnic minority candidates, in particular, might perhaps under perform, because of the effects of educational disadvantage or race discrimination. Older candidates and those with less educational experience are also likely to suffer these sorts of problems.

Practice items at the beginning of the test can reduce the bias that may arise from differential 'test sophistication' helping some people but not others. They can also reduce nervousness by allowing a candidate to gain confidence in his/her ability to answer the test questions. Such practice tests increase the effectiveness of the main tests, in giving an accurate assessment of a candidate's abilities.

Implementation

Job success does not generally depend on a single ability and tests do not have perfect predictive power. Therefore, on occasion low scorers on a test will do better on a job than a test score may suggest. For this reason, it is preferable to interpret test scores together with other available information. Test results should always be interpreted in context and a combination of selection methods should always be used to assess all relevant job characteristics as fairly as possible. There may be greater costs involved in ensuring the selection process is fair, but this should be far outweighed by the benefits of a capable and representative workforce, and the avoidance of costly employment tribunal cases.

The Loft, Little Braxted, Witham Road, Little Braxted, Essex. CM8 3EU
Tel: +44 (0)845 067 8849 Fax: +44 (0)870 067 8843
Email: info@skillsarena.com
www.skillsarena.com