



Psychometric tests – a guide for disabled and neurodivergent candidates

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Introduction

Employers use psychometric tests to measure candidates' abilities and skills as well as personality and behaviours. They are seen by some employers as an effective way of assessing suitability for a particular job role or industry.

It won't be that you'll face psychometric tests every time you apply for a job, but psychometric tests are used as part of the recruitment process for graduate schemes, and for other roles that may be competitive or attract a high number of applicants such as internships.

Psychometric tests tend to be timed. Typically, an employer will ask you to take a psychometric test at the beginning of the recruitment process. However, you might be asked to take tests as part of the final interview stage or at an assessment centre.

Occasionally, you might be faced with completing online industry tests even if the role you are applying for is at mid-senior level.

You may also encounter game-based assessments which, as the name suggests, are assessments which are in a game format. These tend to be more interactive than the traditional psychometric tests.

What are adjustments?

Adjustments – sometimes called reasonable adjustments, accommodations, or workplace adjustments – are changes employers can make at your request.

In this guide, the words 'adjustments' and 'changes' have been used interchangeably.

If you are a disabled applicant or employee, employers must make sure that you are not disadvantaged when completing a job application or carrying out a job role. Employers must therefore provide adjustments for those who require them.

As a disabled applicant, you have the right to ask for changes to be made to an application form, psychometric test / other type of test e.g. an industry test, assessment centre, or interview (be that face-to-face, telephone, or video).

Challenges

Due to how psychometric tests are phrased and presented, you may find it challenging to complete psychometric tests to the best of your ability, without adjustments.

- Psychometric tests generally have a time limit and are text heavy. For some disabled candidates, it can be tough to process the questions and come up with answers in the time given.
- Others find it hard to read the text or see the images well.
- Employers tend to be familiar with the adjustment of giving extra time but will probably be less familiar with other adjustments.
- An employer may tell you that they have not previously given the adjustment you're asking for, or that the tests they use aren't editable, and therefore the adjustment you're asking for isn't possible. You may need to work with the employer to find a solution, and this can take time and perseverance.

- You might be worried about discrimination. Some people choose to wait until they have been offered the job / started the job to mention their disability. However, adjustments won't be available for tests if you don't make the employer aware beforehand.
- Some employers will include information for disabled applicants on their recruitment page and may have proactively thought about adjustments and inclusive recruitment practices.
- Be mindful that although you may have informed the employer that you have a disability on the application form, the person inviting you to take the tests may not be aware of this.

Example adjustments

Adjustments for psychometric tests should meet your individual needs, but here are some that disabled applicants have found useful:

Time

- Extra time. Though the standard suggestion employers make is an extra 25%, you might feel you need more than this (e.g. 50%), or for the timer to be removed altogether.

Technology

- Text-to-speech tools and screen readers (you may be able to do this yourself in the web browser).

Display

- A modification to the display such as: changing the colour, background font size or type (you may be able to do this yourself in the web browser).

Format

- Taking a written, paper version of an online test.

Other adjustments

- Access to a reader, scribe, or a British Sign Language interpreter.
- For taking tests in person (e.g. at an assessment centre), a private room to complete the tests in, a break in between them (rather than sitting the tests one after another), an ergonomic chair, or adjustable desk.
- Extending the deadline to complete the test by or taking the test later in the process. This adjustment might not be possible as it could have a knock-on effect on the employer's timings for the next stage of the recruitment process.
- Completing an alternative test or assessment.

It might be that you have a different adjustment in mind that isn't listed above. These are just examples and not a comprehensive list. Having read this, you may feel you won't need any adjustments for psychometric tests.

Lowering the pass mark for a test isn't a likely adjustment.

How do I know if I need an adjustment?

Take some free online practice psychometric tests. As you would be completing these practice tests without adjustments, you would be able to get a better idea of what changes you may need.

Alternatively, think back to psychometric tests you have taken in the past:

- What would have been useful to have in place at the time?
- Were there any adjustments you could have made yourself?

Advice for situational judgement tests (SJTs)

The hypothetical questions asked in SJTs can be very tricky for some neurodivergent candidates. This is because of how the questions are worded and because the context behind why these questions is being asked might not be clear.

Suggested adjustments for SJTs:

- Take a practice SJT online. If you find it very difficult, an adjustment might be for you to take a different type of psychometric test altogether.
- Requesting to read the questions in advance of taking the test.
- The employer may be happy for you to have a reader for the test. This person would read out the questions (and the possible answers if it is multiple choice format) but wouldn't be able to help you with the test beyond that.
- Another option might be for the employer to verbally ask you the SJT questions. Instead of the employer simply reading out the questions as they appear on the test, it would be helpful if the employer provides some context at the beginning of each question, for example 'I am asking you this next question to understand how you would go about prioritising two competing work deadlines.' (To note, this is a potentially useful adjustment to have in an interview situation too).
- You could ask the employer to give you an example of the type of answer they are looking for.

Tips

- It's better to ask for adjustments before starting a psychometric test. This is because it might take some time for the employer to discuss the right adjustment with you and for the changes to be implemented. It's likely you'll only get one chance to take the psychometric test, so you wouldn't be able to start a test and then decide to stop and retake it again.
- When taking tests during the recruitment process there will be a deadline to complete them by. Let the employer know the adjustments you require as soon as you can. The employer may be slow to respond to you as they might be looking into

what you've requested or may be speaking to the test provider. It's important to follow up with the employer if you've not heard back.

- If the employer hasn't been specific about the tests you'll be doing, then it's a good idea to ask them. It might be you find out you will be doing a numerical reasoning test and you have practiced those and know you don't need any changes making. On the other hand, it might be a test for which you do need an adjustment, for example a game-based assessment.
- You might need more than one adjustment making to a test.
- If you have an idea of what might be the right adjustment for you it is important for the employer to be guided by you. However, employers might have supported other candidates requiring adjustments, so may be able to make some suggestions.
- At the beginning of a psychometric test there will probably be a practice question to try out first. These are sometimes easier and clearer than the rest of the questions. This means some people take the practice question and then decide they won't need any adjustments, only to find the questions are much harder and more time-consuming to work through than they first realised and regret not asking for adjustments.
- Read the instructions and try to complete as many questions as you can without rushing too much. Answer questions honestly and don't try and second guess what answer they're looking for. Make sure you are free from distractions before starting so you can give the tests your full attention.
- Adjustments for psychometric tests are often straightforward and free for the employer to make. Occasionally there is a cost to putting in place an adjustment, but this is not something you would be paying for as the candidate.

Guidance for students

- An employer might ask you to share the adjustments part of your study support plan. If so, share this if you feel comfortable doing so. You may in fact not have a study support plan as perhaps you don't need any study support at university or maybe you don't have a formal diagnosis or perhaps you have a recent diagnosis.
- It's worth remembering that the adjustments in that document are tailored to your study support needs. So, if you have 25% extra time to complete coursework or exams, this might not be enough extra time for a psychometric test or may not be the right adjustment at all for you.
- The purpose of sharing part of a document like a support plan with an employer is to help identify the adjustments you may need and is not to provide evidence of your disability.

Things to remember

- Extra time is a typical adjustment, but that might not be right for you, so you may need a different change to be made.
- Don't leave it too late to speak with the employer about the changes you require. It might take some time to communicate with the employer to identify suitable adjustments.
- If you are unsure which changes may be needed, the employer might have had experience of supporting other disabled candidates so potentially could have some helpful suggestions.
- You might feel that you don't need any adjustments making at all, or only need them for certain types of tests.
- You might be able to make the adjustments you require yourself.
- Although game-based assessments are sometimes described as more inclusive than other psychometric tests, this won't be the case for everyone.
- Adjustments aren't about getting favourable treatment. Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- Psychometric tests are hard, so practicing is key.

For AGCAS members - more information around informing employers about your disability/ disabilities can be found [here](#). (Note, your AGCAS log in is required).