

EPISODE 6 – Psychometric Assessments

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Mini-Series: Own Your Selection Process. Episode 6: Psychometric Assessments

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In this episode we will be focusing on What Psychometric Are, Types of Psychometric Assessments, and How to best prepare for them.

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- Psychometric tests are conducted so that employers can assess the abilities and character of candidates in a measurable and standardised way.
- They can assess many traits and behaviours: including the way you relate others, deal with emotions (both your own and others), handle stressful situations, how you apply your skills, your leadership style/preference, as well as how you retain and deal with complex information.

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- Psychometric Assessments normally take the form of a timed survey or test and might be done online or in person.
- The employer wishes to verify that you possess the key skills necessary for the position or the personality traits that would be a good fit for the role.
- Assessments are usually part of your application and will be considered together with your CV, cover letter, interview and references. In many cases, personality profiling is used in candidate selection to see how you would 'fit' with the organisation, but is not the sole indicator of success.

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There are 3 main types of psychometric assessments: Aptitude, Situation-Judgement Test and Personality.

- **Aptitude tests** look at both potential and current ability. Employers want to find out if you are capable of learning required skills and what your natural strengths are. These might test your verbal and non-verbal communication, numerical and problem-solving abilities or logic. Typically, these tests are timed multiple-choice tests and can be online or in person.
- **Situation-Judgement Tests** - SJTs assess ability and approach to problem-solving and decision-making. They are normally multiple-choice questions where you are given a description of typical work-related scenarios and several possible responses options. It gives the employer an insight into you behavioural approach to different situations that may arise in the job.
- **Personality tests** analyse how you handle different situations, how you make decisions, and how you work with other people. Always be yourself and don't

overthink the questions. Personality tests are generally supplemental to the other elements in your application

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How to prepare? The first thing to understand is that there is no book to read or exact formula to prepare you for a psychometric assessment, however, these are some practical tips that will help:

Before the assessment:

- Be well rested – get a good night's sleep or take a break from work at least an hour before the test.
- Prepare mentally to be under time-pressure – be aware that you will have a lot to achieve in a short amount of time.
- Ensure that you have all that's required – e.g. stationery, calculator etc.

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How to approach them?

- Confidence & Authenticity – Be confident in your abilities and be yourself, but take the assessment seriously.
- Read each question carefully & only answer once the question is understood
- Try and balance your speed vs accuracy – this is usually a competency they are testing.
- Read the instructions carefully and ignore excess information.
- If you are stuck on a question, don't waste more time on it – move on.
- Try not to overthink the question – they are not trying to trick you, go with your gut.
- Focus on your own assessment and don't try and see how far the other candidates are compared to you – this will waste your own time.
- Remember to BREATHE and take a short break between assessments if you are doing a few in a row.

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Thank you for tuning in to episode 6 of Mini-series: Own Your Selection Process, brought to you by the UCT Careers Service. Be sure to tune in to episode 7 where we will be focusing on Case Studies.