

TESTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Care Advantage Best Practice Guidelines

This best practice guide is designed to help clients to develop their own Psychometric Testing Policy that governs the way that assessments are deployed and used across an organisation. It is the organisation's responsibility to ensure all selection processes comply with State and Federal legislation in relation to Discrimination and Disability employment.

From time to time, clients may encounter occasions where an applicant with a disability applies for a job role and is asked to complete the assessments as part of this process. This guide helps to outline the concerns, issues and considerations you will need to take to ensure that applicants with disabilities are treated fairly as part of the assessment process.

Whilst psychometric assessments are recognised as one of the most objective and fair additions to the screening of an applicant's suitability for a job, many worry that they are inappropriate for people with disabilities. These guidelines help to overcome concerns so that disabled people can be treated in the same fair and objective way as their non-disabled peers. They do not serve as a step-by-step guide for dealing with all types of disability as there are so many forms that disability can take and the same condition can affect different people in different ways.

Care Advantage & Online Testing

Our psychometric tests have been designed for online delivery; the dynamic scoring approaches used within the tests require computer-based administration/ scoring. The tests can be delivered in an unsupervised environment, meaning that test takers can complete assessments at a time and location convenient to them.

Online assessments can provide a convenient medium for many disabled people such as taking the tests in the comfort of one's own home with access to appropriate technology. Some employers may prefer to use assessments and tests in a supervised environment and may expect disabled applicants to attend; however, it would be a reasonable adjustment to allow a disabled applicant to take the tests remotely if required.

Considerations & Adjustments

We recognise our responsibilities as a test developer and have designed our online tests in such a way that where possible appropriate modifications can be made to the tests. The term 'appropriate' is of particular importance as modifications to a psychometric test can change the nature of the test itself and the results/ norms may be compromised.

The following is a list of general considerations and adjustments that organisations may need to make to accommodate applicants with disabilities:

- Within any recruitment process it is important to give all applicants the opportunity to inform you about any special needs they may have with any part of the recruitment /selection process so that necessary adjustments/arrangements can be made. This is best included early on in the process so that you can start planning any adjustments that need making. This could mean adding a statement on an application form or test instructions page on your Care Advantage "Event" such as:

"As part of the selection process for this job, you have been asked to complete a short online questionnaire. This will require the use of a computer and to be able to read

passages of text and interpret numerical tables. If you have any special requirements you would like us to accommodate please contact us."

As many people with disabilities are often unsure about disclosure it is important to be clear why you are asking for this information.

- People with disabilities are not simply one group of people with the same requirements. People with the same disability may be impacted in different ways. It is important for employers to be aware of this and to consider every applicant on an individual basis and to respond to each one "uniquely". Having a standard or inflexible policy will not be effective in providing appropriate adjustments based on individual requirements. When inviting applicants to complete an assessment, full details of what is expected should be provided. By being clear about the specifics of each assessment, applicants can decide about whether they are likely to need any support or adjustments.
- When an applicant identifies a special need or disability it is important to confirm the kinds of adjustments that are usually made for them and talk through the entire selection process with them (not just the tests), as there may be other areas where reasonable accommodations need to be made. Applicants are best placed to advise on what adjustments they need. Give the applicant access to any practice questions early on in the overall selection process so that they can judge for themselves whether they feel any extra modifications need to be made. Organisations should also consider the assessments being used within the context of a disability. For example, whilst a job may require analytical and reasoning skills, it may not actually require strong motor skills. Therefore, if someone has poor motor skills they will be disadvantaged if required to use a mouse or keyboard in an assessment. In this situation, it would be a reasonable adjustment to allow the applicant to use someone else to enter the chosen responses.
- Give applicants the opportunity to complete any practice tests using their own access technology or computer settings.
- If the applicant's disability makes it difficult for them to use a mouse, clear instructions can be given on how the keyboard can be used instead (Tab to move between fields, Space bar to select a field and Return to enter a response).
- If the applicant has problems reading text on screen it is possible to invite them to a test administration session where the questions are read out to them by a reader and the responses are input on their behalf. This method is workable for personality questionnaires but less so for ability tests such as the Cognitive Test, which is timed and where there is a lot of information on screen that would have to be described to the applicant (for example, complex reasoning questions).
- Applicants can easily increase the size of the onscreen font using Ctrl and + keys or they can use the 'View' menu on their browser to increase the size of the on-screen font without it impacting any of the characteristics.
- We cannot easily extend test times for the Cognitive Ability Tests online for an applicant when the need arises. However, we can provide paper copies of the test that can be administered in a supervised environment which would mean that you could extend the test time and enter the form responses on the applicant's behalf directly in to the system afterwards. If you need additional guidance on this then please contact us.
- When considering an appropriate amount of extra time to give the applicant it is useful
 - Consider any professional advice/ recommendation provided to the individual as part of previous employment screening (eg Psychologist report).
 - If no such advice is available, it is often useful to consider the likely adjustments that would be made to the job itself. If one would expect the successful applicant to be given 50% extra time to complete their work, then it makes sense to offer this amount of extra time to the applicant for completing the tests.

It may sometimes be appropriate to accept a lower 'pass rate' for a person whose disability inhibits their performance in a test but it is determined to be unlikely to harm performance in the actual job.