# Looking for work – Tests at Interview

## About this factsheet

This factsheet is part of a series of factsheets on employment issues. This factsheet is a guide for anyone who is thinking about starting a job search or for anyone who is currently in the process of looking for a job. At the end you will find the full list, and details of where to find them.

## For further information

RNIB Helpline can refer you to an employment specialist for further advice and guidance relating to your employment situation. RNIB Helpline can also help you by providing information and advice on a range of topics, such as eye health, the latest products, leisure opportunities, benefits advice and emotional support.

Call the Helpline team on **0303 123 9999** or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**.

## 1. Tests

Some employers use formal tests when recruiting people for jobs. They are particularly helpful for employers when they wish to narrow down a large number of applicants. Typically they are used in graduate recruitment or to test certain abilities such as typing, working to a deadline or constructing a letter.

### 1.1 Main types of test

**Competency tests**

Competency tests are used by employers to measure people's ability to perform a certain aspect of the Person Specification. For example, testing someone's typing skills for an administration job or testing someone's ability to write a press release for a PR job. The results of these tests are then used along with the interview answers to assess the candidates.

**Psychometric tests**

Psychometric tests are used by employers to measure people's skills, abilities, interests or other aspects of the way they behave in job-related situations. The essence of a psychometric test is that people's performance can be measured on a standard task and in some way compared to other people taking the test, no matter where or when the test is taken. This is achieved by having specific instructions about how the test must be used, scored and the results interpreted.

### 1.2 Preparation for testing

If tests are to be part of the selection process, it is essential to try and obtain as much information as possible about the exercises and what may be involved in advance. This will help you to understand what adjustments may need to be made. You may, for example, want to ask questions such as:

* will I be required to read printed information?
* what size font is the print?
* will I be using a computer?
* can I bring in my own visual aids or laptop to complete the test?

You may also want to think about everyday situations and consider those that give you more of a problem. If you know that hand-written text is more difficult for you to read, for example, you may wish to enquire whether any testing would involve this. In this way, you can begin to consider your needs in relation to what they will be asking you to do and outline these to the employer.

### 1.3 Your rights

You have the right to ask for special arrangements when applying for a job if you need them because of your disability.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits an employer from unlawfully discriminating against you. The Act also says that an employer must make reasonable adjustments. The employer has to make adjustments to the recruitment process as well as any which you might need to do the job. The duty to make adjustments only applies if you have told the employer about your disability. It can be helpful to indicate what adjustments you might need, as this can assist the employer to make them. If you need an adjustment to the recruitment process, you should tell the employer and say that this is because you are disabled. For example, asking for information in large print or for someone to escort you to and from the interview room. An organisation should be able to make special arrangements if you say in advance what you need.

An employer should not consider the issue of reasonable adjustments to the job as part of the recruitment process. It should only do this once the job has been offered.

For more information we refer you to the **Your rights in employment** factsheet. You can also go to the Equality Act section of RNIB’s website:

**rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living-your-rights/equality-act-2010**

### 1.4 Questions and answers about tests

**Q: Will there be a version of the text available in my preferred format?**

A: Competency-based tests are usually designed by the employer themselves, and so they should be relatively easy to adjust to your preferred format. Typically psychometric tests are printed in standard print size, although some are available in alternative formats. The employer will need to contact the test publisher in order to find out if the test is available in alternative formats. Often these tests also have separate answer sheets to fill in, which can be very difficult to provide in alternative formats. There may be alternatives, such as a blank sheet of answer paper or a scribe. It may also be possible to type your answers, so it is important to discuss such options in advance with the employer.

**Q: I have been told that I do not have to take the test although everybody else is still being tested. How will this affect my chances?**

A: In many cases employers may think it is better for you not to sit a psychometric test as part of the selection process. It may not be possible to make the test accessible, and it may be very difficult to fairly compare your results or those of others. If they chose not to test you and you feel disadvantaged by this course of action, you may wish to find out whether you have a case to complain under the Equality Act.

**Q: As I use special equipment for reading, can I use this on the day?**

A: If you use a magnifier or CCTV to help you read, the employer should let you use this. If the employer offers to provide such equipment for you, make sure it is the same model that you are used to or familiar with.

**Q: Can I use my braille equipment to make notes or write my answers?**

A: It is usually possible for you to answer in your preferred way, and for your answers to be copied onto the standard answer sheets later. Other options are:

* use of somebody else to write things down (scribe)
* use of a tape recorder/dictaphone/pocket memo
* use of a keyboard.

**Q: The voice synthesis on my equipment is noisy, can I still use it?**

A: In situations like this, the best thing may be for you to take the test separately in another room, or if you prefer, to bring headphones with you. Arrangements like this are commonplace in exam situations where people need to be able to concentrate in silence. The same would be true if you were dictating your answers or using somebody to read to you.

**Q: If I use a computer, I will need one with voice output. Will this be available?**

A: You need to discuss with the employer in advance whether your preferred technology will be available on the day. If you have your own, you may want to ask if you can bring it along. If it cannot be used, you may need to discuss alternatives, for example use of a reader.

**Q: I prefer to have someone read the test to me, will this be possible?**

A: Depending on the type of test it may be possible to use a reader. We would strongly suggest that you do not choose somebody known or related to you. This is because you may feel awkward about not knowing an answer or they may be tempted to help you and they may not be right. The employer may prefer to provide the reader for you. With tests that ask you about your personal preferences, you may prefer not to share your answer with anyone else, so you may prefer to record your own answers. Likewise, if someone is acting as a scribe for you, you may prefer that they do not have sight of the question booklet, so that they do not know the nature of the question to which you are responding. As before, the test companies have previous knowledge of such arrangements and can advise employers.

**Q: I have never taken tests before and don't know what to expect**

A: Some test companies have practice questions available similar to the questions in the test you will be taking. The employer will need to talk to the test company to see if these are available and if they are available in alternative formats. Where these are available in your preferred format, they may give you a good idea of what to expect. You may also like to know that most tests have sample questions at the beginning, before you start the test proper. This allows every test taker the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and to check that they understand what to do. During this phase the person administering the test may be able to offer you further guidance or clarify issues. If you feel at this stage that you cannot access the test materials effectively or that your preferences have not been met, you should tell the person who is administering the test. You may also feel that you would prefer not to proceed with the test at this point in time, or indeed, the person administering the test may feel it inappropriate to go on until suitable arrangements can be made for you.

**Q: I am not sure what would best work for me in a test situation. How** **can I find out?**

A: You are probably aware of what works best for you around the house, or in everyday situations. For example, do you prefer to have a friend read something out to you, or do you prefer to enlarge it with a magnifier. This is the type of information that is needed.

**Q: I asked for large print and relevant equipment to be made available but when I arrived to be tested, it had not been arranged. What should I do?**

A: The employer has a duty to make suitable arrangements for you. In any circumstance where you believe you have been unlawfully discriminated against or where your specific needs have not been heard or met effectively, you may have the right to pursue a case under the Equality Act.

## Other factsheets in this series

We also produce the following factsheets, which you may find of use:

* Access to Work
* Staying in work
* Job seeking resources
* Self-employment
* Your rights in employment
* Looking for Work - CVs and Application Forms
* Looking for Work – Interview Skills
* Looking for Work – Starting a Job Search
* Looking for Work – Disclosing a Disability

All these factsheets can be found in electronic form at **rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living/work-and-employment**

For print, braille, large print or audio, please contact our Helpline team on **0303 123 9999** or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**

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