Policy

Title: OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

Ref: HR/H&S

1. **Introduction**

Occupational psychometric tests are used by the University of Southampton to enhance the quality and quantity of information available to line managers in support of recruitment and selection decisions, identification of development potential, counselling and organisational change.

2. **Purpose of policy**

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the interests of individuals and the University by regulating the use of occupational psychometric testing as it is applied to staff selection and development. It is our intention to maximise benefits to both organisation and individual and we are committed to fairness and equality of opportunity and to best practice in our use of psychometric tests.

It is the responsibility of all test users to ensure that this policy is applied at all times, any breaches should be reported to the Assistant Director (Client Services) who will review the functioning of the policy after 6 months initially and then every 2 years. Suggestions for changes and amendments should be addressed directly to the Assistant Director (Client Services).

3. **Definition**

Psychometric tests are tests that can be systematically administered and scored and which are used to measure individual differences.

Within the context of this policy any instrument that can be systematically administered and scored and used to measure individual differences in ability, aptitude or personality in the occupational setting should be regarded as a test.

- Ability tests – measure a specific competence such as verbal reasoning or clerical checking
- Aptitude tests – measure potential performance in a given area
- Personality questionnaires – look at the typical behaviour, interpersonal style, thoughts and/or feelings of an individual

4. **Scope**

Psychometric tests provide relevant information which extends beyond that available from traditional assessment processes. They have consistently been shown to be better predictors of success than interviews and should be used to complement other methods of assessment. Psychometric testing will not usually be carried out prior to shortlisting and the outcome of a psychometric test should not be the sole rationale for a decision to accept or reject a candidate.

When considering the use of psychometric testing within the selection process, please contact Human Resources as early as possible to discuss the following:

- whether it is appropriate and relevant to use a test
- how a particular test is linked to the role
- time investment
- the requirement for informed consent from candidates
- the availability of qualified staff to administrate the test and provide feedback to candidates
5. **Testing standards**

The administration, scoring and interpretation of tests is undertaken at the University in accordance with British Psychological Society standards.

Testing will be administered by fully trained and qualified staff holding the relevant Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing (British Psychological Society Levels 1 and 2).

Test results will only be evaluated, interpreted and feedback given by qualified staff.

All tests will be administered in strict accordance with the publisher’s guidelines.

Choice of test will be informed by objective job analysis derived from detailed job descriptions and person specifications, ensuring direct relevance to the given purpose. Test selection will be clearly documented with a written record of the reasons behind the choice.

6. **Retesting**

For selection purposes a candidate’s test results are valid for any similar position for 12 months from the date of testing.

Candidates may be retested within a shorter period at the discretion of the relevant manager, only when it is considered a reasonable assumption that they may have under-performed previously, for example because of illness. Requests should be supported by written details of the circumstances.

7. **Security**

Authorised test users will operate within employment law and the terms of this policy at all times.

Authorised test users will respect copyright.

Authorised test users will maintain the security and confidentiality of tests, consumable test materials and test results and are responsible for ensuring that they are stored and securely locked within Human Resources.

Test results over 12 months are invalid for selection or promotion purposes. All results will be confidentially destroyed after 3 years or when the test candidate ceases to be employed, whichever is sooner.

8. **Informed Consent**

The University will seek informed consent from test candidates ensuring that they understand why the test will be used, what will be done with their results, and who will have access. Candidates will therefore always be fully informed about the purpose of the test, its confidentiality and arrangements for security.

Candidates will be given reasonable notice that they will be required to undertake testing, notice of the duration of the test(s), adequate information about the requirements of each test and opportunity to ask questions.

9. **Interpreting results & feedback**

Raw test data, results and/or profiles will be held in a designated secure area and may only be interpreted by authorised test users within their licensed competence. Feedback will be provided to the recruitment panel and candidate by the qualified representative from Human Resources.

A written summary report of test results and norm comparators will be retained, together with copies of relevant documentation on which an objective job analysis has been based. This will include job description and person specification marked to indicate the particular abilities, aptitudes or personality features for which testing took place.

Test results will not be stored or used without the candidate’s permission and under the Data Protection Act (1998) they have the right to see information stored or used, or a meaningful interpretation of it.

An offer of feedback will always be made to candidates however it is for the individual to decide whether they wish to take this up.
10. **Equal opportunities**

The University of Southampton is committed to dealing fairly with all candidates to be tested. We will be open and honest about the use of the tests, provide suitable practice materials and relevant feedback and relevant feedback whenever tests are used.

All candidates will be treated fairly, impartially and courteously and test facilities will be made available regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, marital status, social class, age or sexual preference. Particular needs for candidates with disabilities will be supported and we will refer to the publisher’s guidelines in relation to these arrangements.

11. **Monitoring**

Test monitoring will be carried out to ensure continued appropriateness and effectiveness, and to identify any adverse impact in relation to ethnic groups, age or gender.