



All You Need to Know about Taking Part in an Online Assessment

Our experts have responded to the most frequently asked questions concerning online assessment.

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Key Facts about Online Assessment



If you have not taken part in an online assessment, you probably have a list of questions. How is an online assessment devised? What does it measure? The following questions and answers will provide you with some background.

What is online assessment?

Online assessment enables the evaluation of people's specific abilities, behaviors or characteristics by using the web technologies. Typically, these assessments combine a number of tests and questionnaires and are used during the recruitment process.

Why is online assessment being used more frequently?

Online assessment has some very clear benefits over more traditionally administered assessments where candidates were asked to complete assessments face to face. Online assessment is highly objective. Due to the fact that no supervisors or invigilators are needed, there is no possibility of bias – for or against specific candidates – either during the test or during the evaluation of answers. Online assessment can predict, with a relatively high degree of accuracy, how suitable a candidate is for a specific position. The results' automated evaluation saves both time and money. From a company's point of view, the relatively limited amount of time required is one of the main attractions. This enables the inclusion of a large number of candidates in the pre-selection process.

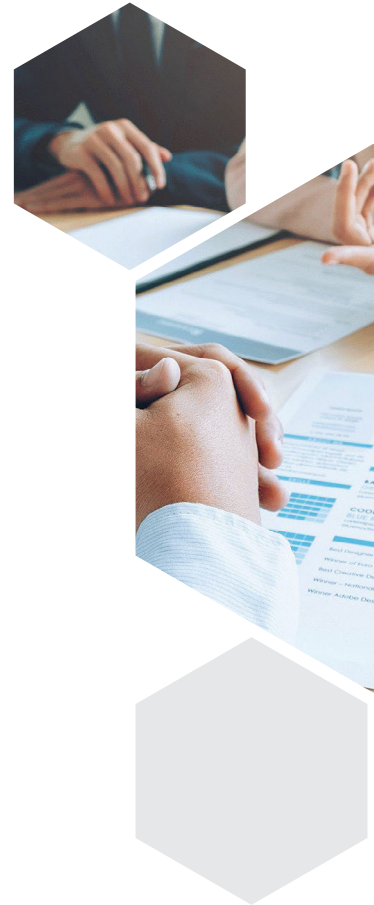
Benefits for applicants: an applicant can complete the online assessment at any time from anywhere – saving on travelling costs and time. Also the test can be taken in the applicant's own familiar, stress-free environment.

What is not tested?

In an online assessment, it is difficult to determine some interpersonal skills, such as how willing you are to help or how you get on with people. These areas are mostly determined in interviews, role plays or group discussions.

How is an online assessment constructed?

Online assessments consist of several tests or questionnaires which are completed by the candidate. The combination of these tests and questionnaires are determined by the abilities and characteristics needed for the specific role applied for. For example, an online assessment could consist of tests for memory and concentration, as well as for language skills. It could also include a personality questionnaire. Typically, you can choose the order in which you complete the tests. It is usually not necessary to complete all the tests in one sitting, allowing you to take breaks between them.





How are individual tests structured?

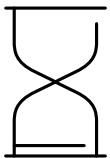
The tests developed by Aon are designed using the same structure. However, the format of the questions themselves will change depending on the type of test. At the start, a short introduction describes exercises or questions. This is followed by an interactive section in which the test is explained in greater detail and the actions you need to take (e.g. click or drag and drop) are demonstrated. You will need to follow the specific action outlined in order to move on to the next part of the instructions. Therefore, you will be clear about what is required and how to do it. To ensure that you have understood what needs to be done, and to prepare you for the test itself, you will be asked to complete a few example questions or exercises.

After completing the examples, the most important points regarding the test are summarized.

What types of tests are there?

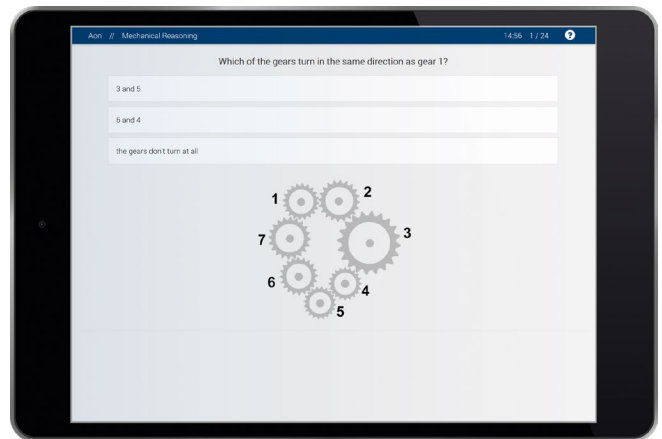
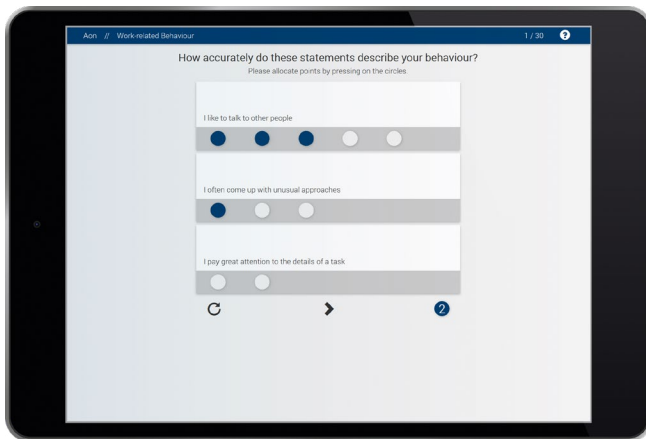
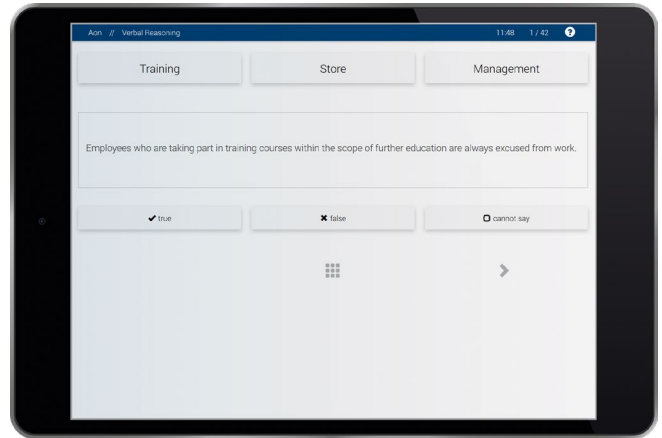
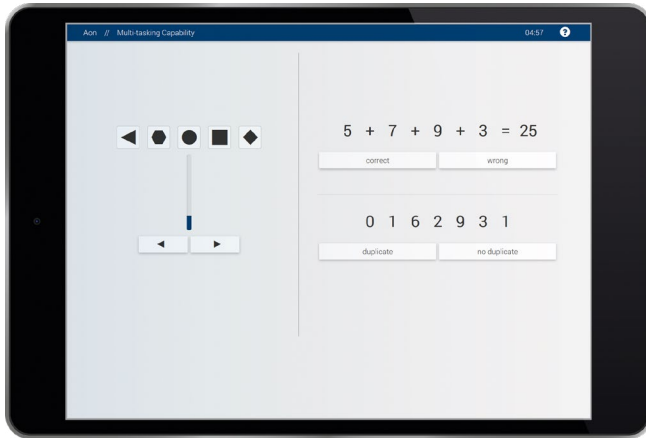
There are several different tests and these can be categorized as follows:

- If the aim of a test is to determine abilities, such as concentration, logical conclusions or text comprehension, we refer to them as **ability tests**.
- Qualities, such as willingness to cooperate, ambition or sensitivity, are determined with the aid of **personality questionnaires**.
- Specific professional knowledge is determined with the help of **knowledge tests**.



Structured Tests

There is no time limit during the initial explanatory stages of the tests. You should take the time you need to work through the examples and look over your work when you have finished.



Sample screenshots: ability, personality questionnaire and knowledge tests

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How Can I Best Prepare?



What sort of hardware do I need? How do I tackle nerves? How do I best prepare for an online assessment? Great questions and we have answered them in this section.

What type of computer do I need?

Any computer can be used – PC or MAC. You simply need Internet access and a browser (e.g. Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox). It is best to use one of the newer browser versions because a number of the older versions are no longer supported. You need FlashPlayer for viewing the actual test – this software is often required for gaming sites. Smartphones or tablets, however, cannot be used.

For optimal viewing of the online assessment, we recommend that you set your screen to a resolution of at least 1024 x 768 pixels.

Do I need any other equipment?

You do not need anything other than a computer with a browser and Internet access. Other equipment is generally not required. However, for some of the tests it is useful to have a calculator or perhaps a pen and paper to hand. Some of the exercises, for example, are made up of various steps, the results of which you might want to jot down so as to make it easier to find the solution. The introductory notes will let you know if any further equipment is needed.

Is specific prior knowledge required?

You do not need any special prior knowledge or experience. However, you may like to familiarize yourself with online tests before tackling the online assessment. There are online practice tests available.

What can I do to counter nervousness?

Getting nervous does not automatically make you a nervous person. Being nervous is related to a situation – in this case, taking an online assessment. You know that you are expected to perform, but the performance might not be as good as you would want. Actors describe the nervousness that suddenly plagues them before a performance as ‘stage fright’. The reality is that most actors do not want to get rid of it because nervousness can have a very positive effect on their performance. So, in this online assessment situation, remind yourself that nervousness is absolutely normal. A certain amount of pre-test nerves has a very positive effect: it channels your attention and mobilizes your energy. You will probably feel a little better when you know what to expect.





I have a disability. What should I do?

Participation in online assessment can be challenging for people with disabilities. For people who have visual or motor impairment, or any other disability, special arrangements must be made with the organization that has invited you to complete the assessment. This is to ensure an accurate and fair assessment of all candidates. In some cases, disadvantages can be overcome with technical aids or equipment, or by changing computer settings.

If you are uncertain whether you can take part in the online assessment because of your disability, you should contact the company that has invited you to complete the assessment. Under EU law, people with disabilities have a right to protection and facilitation by the employer. This also applies to the application process. Different countries and regions have similar rulings.

What else can I do?

Find out as much as you can about the company you are applying to. Check out their website and any social media sites, such as Facebook. Often companies provide interviews with recent hires or trainees or even show a video about their application process or what it is like to work there.

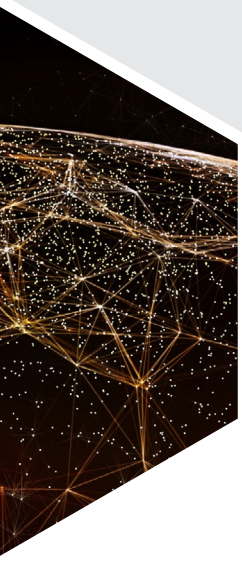


“You need to remember that a company wants you as much as you want them. By organizing yourself correctly with the assessments, you are giving yourself a good chance of being brought to the next stage of the application process.”

David Barrett
CCO, Aon's Assessment Solutions

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What Should I Consider When Taking an Online Assessment?



Is there a best time to complete an online assessment? How long will it take? Can I take a break? What else should I keep in mind?

When should I take the tests?

A great advantage of tests presented online is that you can complete them whenever you want. If you know that you best perform in the evening or at night, there is no reason why you should not complete the test at that time. The most important thing to remember is to complete the test when you feel well and alert and are not likely to be disturbed. Do not complete the test when you come home from work or school, feel tired or after doing strenuous exercise.

What else should I keep in mind?

Ensure that there are no interruptions or distractions while you are working on the tests. Once you have started the actual test, you cannot stop it and continue later. Therefore, it is important that you have both a quiet atmosphere and sufficient time to work through the test.

How long does an online assessment take?

There is no standard answer to this question because it is influenced by the requirements of the company and the position applied for. In most cases, there will be no more than five tests to complete – and most tests do not last longer than 15 minutes. Your test invitation should include information regarding the time you need to set aside for the test process.

Can I take breaks?

Once you have started a test, you cannot interrupt it. In most cases, the individual tests last no more than 15 minutes. Please ensure that you are not disturbed during this period. For many positions, multiple tests are required. However, you do not have to complete all of them at once. You usually have several days to complete all the necessary tests – but please check the deadline given to you for the final submission of the tests. The amount of time you need to complete all the tests is not monitored and has no effect on the results.



Keep in Mind

Turn off your mobile phone, close down other applications running on your computer and inform your family or housemates that you do not wish to be disturbed until you have finished the test.



What do I do if a test suddenly does not respond?

In rare cases, technical problems can lead to the test suddenly freezing up. For example, if the browser crashes while you are working on the test. However, this is not a catastrophe. Simply contact the company who invited you to do the online assessment so that they can reset the test for you.

How does the organization know that I completed the online assessment myself?

First of all, you should be aware that it is never permitted to allow somebody else to complete the tests for you. If this should come to light, you would be automatically excluded from the selection process.

Also, re-tests are often carried out at a later stage. This means that, if you are invited to an interview after the online assessment, you may be asked to repeat a module from the online assessment. Clearly, if you have not completed the test before, as you wanted to inflate your scores with someone else completing it for you, you will struggle to do this at the re-test stage.

The tests have been selected to be part of the online assessment and to provide an indication of how successful you are likely to be in the job later on. If you are giving a false impression to get the job, consider if it is the right job for you.

To summarize: it really is not worth cheating!

How much time do I need to complete the online assessment?

Usually, you will have several days to complete all the tests, and you can complete the various tests on different days. However, it is important that you check the deadline given in your invitation email or letter.

The individual tests are generally subject to a time limit although personality questionnaires, as a rule, do not have a time limit. This time limit is not allocated to give an indication of how you deal with stressful situations, but rather for more methodical reasons. If there was no time limit, all applicants could get all answers right and, therefore, all results would be the same, making the test a waste of time. It is quite normal that candidates are unable to answer all the questions in the time allowed – and indeed tests are often designed in this way.

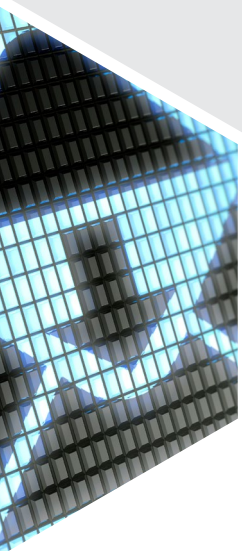
How fast do I have to work in order to pass the online assessment?

Try to answer the questions quickly but carefully. Avoid making obvious mistakes by not working faster than you did at school or during your studies. Incorrect answers tend to affect the overall results negatively so any avoidable errors can affect the final result to your detriment.



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What Happens after the Assessment?



Well done, you have completed all the tasks. So, what happens next? How are the results evaluated? What happens to your data?

What happens after the online assessment?

Once you have completed all the tests, all you can do is wait. The company you have applied to will be in touch shortly to give you feedback regarding the tests and to inform you about the next steps. If everything went well, you will possibly be invited to an interview.

How is the online assessment evaluated?

In the case of ability tests, points are usually allocated to each correct answer and points deducted for every incorrect answer. At the end of the test, the points are calculated to give the final score.

In the case of personality questionnaires, you are reporting your own descriptions of yourself, with regard to specific dimensions of your personality. Therefore, there are no right or wrong answers. It is more a matter of determining whether your personality is suited to the position and the company as a whole.

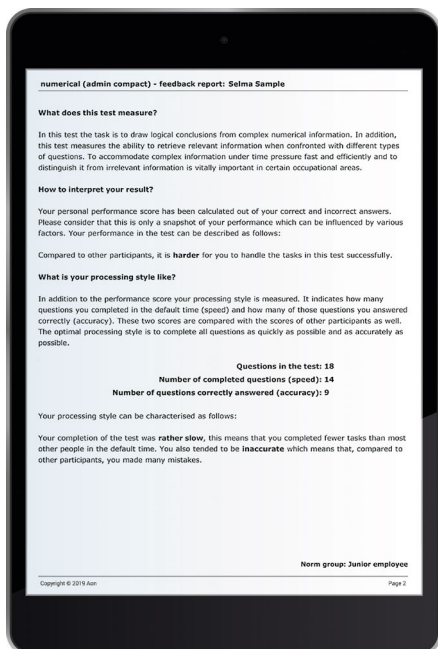
Do I get feedback?

Each of the tests generates a feedback report that provides a thorough and meaningful explanation of the results. Ideally, the company you have applied to will make this report available to you.

What happens to my data?

The key point to remember is that your data remains your data. Any company you apply to is not allowed – without your explicit agreement – to use your data for any other reason than for the application procedure.

Typically, the test results (as well as some personal data, such as name and email address) will be saved in a database for the duration of the application process at least. This database is usually stored on a secured server and access is limited to a very few people within the company. In addition, Aon works with an external professional data protection expert who is continuously checking and monitoring our databases and servers for data protection issues. Of course, you can ask the company in question to delete your data at any time.



Example: feedback report

Contact

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