

# Verbal and numerical reasoning tests

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why do I have to complete the tests?

HMRC is using verbal and numerical reasoning tests in the selection process. They tell us who has the strongest verbal and numerical skills, which are key skills needed for jobs in HMRC.

### What do the tests measure?

The tests are measures of:

1. Verbal reasoning: the ability to think about something in a logical way in order to form a conclusion or judgement, based on written information.
2. Numerical reasoning: the ability to critically evaluate numerical information, understand patterns and trends in data, and the ability to make sensible conclusions or judgements.

### What are the tests?

In the verbal reasoning test, you will read a paragraph, which is followed by a statement. What you need to do is decide if the statement is either true, false or not possible to say, based on the information contained in the paragraph above it.

In the numerical reasoning test, you will read either a table, graph or other numerical information, followed by a statement. Again, you need to decide if the statement is either true, false or not possible to say based on what you have read.

### How long do the test take and what should I expect?

The tests are not timed. They are what's known as 'adaptive' tests, which means that the tests adapt to how well you are doing in them. If you get an answer right, the next item will be a little more difficult; and if you get an answer wrong, the next item will be a little easier. The test will 'adapt' to your natural ability.

In practice, this means you will get through the tests fairly quickly. It is sensible, though, to give yourself up to an hour to complete each of them.

You will find also that you are not having to work through a lot of questions that you consider either too hard or too easy. The tests quickly adapt to your natural ability level.

Once you have read the practice section and moved on to the actual test, there are two points to note. If you are inactive in the test for longer than 25 minutes, the test will time out and stop. Alternatively, you might experience a browser or connection issue which

'locks' you out of the test. If this happens to you, you will need to find the test access link again and click it or paste it into your browser window. You will then re-enter the test at the question you were previously working on. You can re-access the test two further times after you first started the test.

You can decide which test you wish to take first.

## **What should I pay attention to when taking the tests?**

Try to take the tests when you are feeling calm and not too stressed. It's natural to feel some 'exam nerves', though. Remember, the tests are not timed.

Find a quiet place to take the test, with no distractions.

Follow the test instructions carefully.

As the test is adaptive, it will not be possible to go back and look at previous answers, and you will need to answer every question that is presented to you.

## **Can I take a practice test first?**

Yes. There are many different websites that allow you to practice taking tests without having to pay or register your details. Whilst we are not making any recommendations about which might be best, here is an example for [verbal reasoning](#), and another for [numerical reasoning](#).

If you are unfamiliar with psychometric tests, we suggest you familiarise yourself with how they work. These practice tests are not exactly like the actual tests, but they will give you a sense of what to expect.

Remember, when you do the actual tests, each of them includes some practice questions at the beginning, to help you familiarise yourself.

## **Do I need any specialist knowledge or experience to complete the tests?**

No specialist knowledge or experience is needed.

## **What device should I take the tests on?**

The tests should work on most operating systems and modern browsers with an internet connection.

If your browser is old and not supported, you'll be given an alert before the tests start, suggesting you try a different browser/device.

It may not be possible to take the tests at work. If you find this is the case, it is possible your employer has placed a block on the tests. You must find an alternative device. You should try to allocate time to completing the tests as early as possible following this

invitation, to ensure that you will have time to seek help to resolve any device/browser access issues before the deadline for completing the tests.

### **Can I use a calculator in the numerical reasoning test?**

Yes.

### **How are my test results calculated?**

The number, and difficulty, of questions you answered correctly is used to produce your score on the test.

Your score is compared to a “norm group” of people who have taken the same test previously, to create what’s known as a percentile score.

If your percentile score is 44, it means you scored better on this test than 44% of the group.

The representative group that you have been compared to is a UK Public Sector Norm. This group is comprised of 3736 applicants for graduate-level positions in the Public Sector.

### **How will decisions be made on my test results?**

After the deadline for completing the tests, HMRC will look at all applicants’ test scores to decide how many applicants will be invited to the next stage of the recruitment process.

They will base their decision by taking expert advice on how high to set the pass mark, considering the number of available invitations to the next stage and the impact on protected groups.

### **If I apply again, do I have to re-take the same test if I have already passed it?**

Yes, you’ll not be able to re-use your score.

### **Can I get feedback?**

Within your application centre in CS Jobs, you will be provided with feedback about how well you have done after the deadline for completing the tests.

It will not be possible to see your answers to specific items.

### **What should I do if I need reasonable adjustments for taking the tests?**

If you need a reasonable adjustment (e.g. you require a reader), you should contact the vacancy holder as early as possible before taking the test.

## **Are the tests fair?**

The tests are fair and free from bias or discrimination because:

1. The tests are good predictors of effectiveness at work. Verbal and numerical abilities are key requirements in the advertised roles;
2. The tests work effectively each time they are used – they are robust as measurement tools;
3. The tests provide a level-playing field experience for all, and there is no advantage in having more educational qualifications or work experience;
4. There are no identified differences in test scores for protected groups when making applications for UK public sector roles where these tests have been used.

## **Is my information secure?**

Yes, your personal information is held securely in CS Jobs. The test supplier does not get to see your personal information and will only know your name if you voluntarily share it with them.

## **What should I do if I encounter any problems during the test (e.g. technical issues)?**

If you lose access to the test midway through, sign-in to your application centre to launch the test from where you left off.

Contact details for technical issues:

Email: [AssessSupport@us.ibm.com](mailto:AssessSupport@us.ibm.com)

Telephone: 0808 145 6506

Questions about the advertised job should be directed to the contact on the job advert.