



A test-takers guide to Technology based testing

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Introduction

The use of psychological and educational tests is changing with the rapid advancement of technology (e.g. the growth of testing over the Internet, the use of cell phone technology etc.). Rather than being invited to a testing session and being asked to complete a paper and pencil test, you are more and more likely to be asked to complete computerised tests either within supervised testing centres, over the Internet or through a cell phone.

There are three main scenarios for taking computer tests. In two of the scenarios you may be invited to take a test remotely (e.g. over the Internet). This can be taken in your home or place of work, or anywhere there is access (an internet terminal, a cell phone signal etc). One of these scenarios is referred to as **remote unsupervised testing**. There is no authentication of your identity nor is there a proctor monitoring you during the test, however you will have been provided with some identifier in order to take the test (e.g. a username and password for Internet-based tests). In the other scenario you are authenticated via biometrics and monitored throughout the test by proctors watching through a webcam. This is called **remote supervised testing**. The third alternative is **locally supervised testing**. You are invited to attend a location where someone will be present to check your identity by viewing your ID documents and oversee you taking the test. The test may still be delivered over the internet, but in this case you cannot access it yourself.

In 2005, the International Test Commission (ITC) produced a set of good practice guidelines directed at those developing, supplying and using tests. This test-takers guide is based on the good practice guidelines, but directed at individuals about to take a technology based test. It highlights the things you should expect from the test provider and the responsibilities you have as a test taker.

The guide is structured in 2 sections:

1. What you should expect of the technology-based test session.
2. What is expected of you during the technology-based test session.

When taking a technology-based test you should expect...

1. That the system you are using to take the test is suitable in terms of hardware and software requirements. Equipment and connections should be automatically checked for suitability whether the tests are supervised or not. If a test is given at a testing centre, appropriate hardware and software requirements should be provided. If there is a hardware, software or connection problem, you should be informed clearly about what to do.
2. For testing that occurs outside of a testing centre—whether supervised or unsupervised— a technical support contact number is provided to use should any problems occur during the testing session. Problems can include computer crashes, lost Internet connections and slow downloads. It should be made clear to you what procedure to follow should you face any problems.
3. Prior to accessing the system, to be informed about the purpose of the testing, the type(s) of tests to be used and the appropriateness of the test(s).
4. Clear instructions on how to take the test (e.g. whether the tests are timed, how questions or statements will be presented and how you should respond); how to access on-screen help while completing the test; and, for testing outside of a testing centre, how to log-on and off the system. Opportunity should also be provided for you to take practice test questions to familiarise yourself with the requirements of the test session.
5. That if you have a documented disability or medical condition, reasonable adjustments are made to the testing process. Adjustments may include modifications to the test or an alternative (e.g., paper-and-pencil) form of assessment provided.
6. For supervised testing, either in a testing centre or not, to take the test in a comfortable and quiet environment and for the correct procedures to be followed. For unsupervised testing, guidance on the best methods of taking the test and appropriate procedures should also be provided.
7. To be informed of the appropriate level of authentication needed before you undertake the test. This can range from no authentication (e.g. accessing a career guidance tool on the Internet); through obtaining a password and username for access to an unsupervised test; to completing Internet-based biometric authentication for online remotely supervised tests, to providing government-approved picture identification for access to a supervised test in a testing centre.

8. The security of your data either stored on the computer or transferred over the Internet or phone system to be maintained. Information on the security procedures used to safeguard your data both in terms of its transmission and storage should be provided prior to test administration.
9. Your results to be scored accurately and interpreted appropriately as well as being provided with timely and appropriate feedback. A feedback report is often generated from computer-based interpretations, but it should be presented to you in a comprehensible and meaningful format.
10. The confidentiality of your data when stored on a computer or a server to be maintained. Sensitive material should be protected via the use of encryption or passwords and access to such material should be restricted to those who are qualified and authorised. Further, country specific data protection laws should be adhered.

When taking a technology-based test it is expected that ...

1. For remotely administered tests, you will ensure your system is suitable in terms of the hardware and software requirements of the test before completing the test. Most test providers carry out automatic checks of your system to ensure it is compatible with the test software. In some cases you may be asked to make changes to the browser settings you use before you can take a test. You may be asked to allow automatic and immediate upgrades to software (e.g., Adobe Flash, Internet Explorer, etc.)
2. You know how to access technical support should any problems arise. Make a note of the technical support number provided. If problems occur, it is your responsibility to inform the support contact immediately so that problems can be noted and appropriate procedures operated. These may include inviting you to complete the test again or starting you at the same point where the problem occurred.
3. You have read and understood the instructions on how to complete the test and know how to access on-screen help should you require it. Do not skip the instructions. Read them carefully as you may not be able to return to them later. It is also your responsibility to practice any on-screen tutorials and be familiar with how to respond to test items before you start the test for real.
4. You inform the individual or organisation administering the test in advance of the testing session if you have a documented disability or medical condition that may interfere with your performance on the test.
5. You are familiar with the operation of the computer or other device and the software functions required by the test. For example, you should be able to operate an Internet browser and be capable of accessing email to obtain passwords. Should you not be familiar with the required system, please inform the individual or organisation administering the test before the testing session.
6. You should be comfortable when taking the test. You should maintain proper seating posture; be able to reach and manipulate the mouse and keys if use of these is required; have sufficient leg room; not sit in one position for too long and take the test in a quiet environment where you will not be disturbed. When taking an unsupervised or supervised test in your own environment, it is your responsibility to ensure that you take the test in a suitable environment and that you follow instructions on the best conditions to take the test.

7. You provide the appropriate level of authentication to take the test. This could mean either obtaining a username and password together with a URL to access an unsupervised test, or completing biometric authentication steps (e.g., keystroke pattern recognition), or providing government-approved picture identification when being tested in a supervised test centre.
8. You complete the test yourself and do not seek assistance or collude with others. You should not share passwords, usernames or URLs with other people. Most test providers have procedures in place which are designed to detect attempts by test takers to cheat.
9. You clearly understand the expectations and consequences of fraudulent test taking practices. Where appropriate, it is your responsibility to sign and accept an agreement that you will complete the test in an honest and fair manner.
10. You do not copy, print or reproduce any test materials whether provided in paper format or on a computer screen. Test materials are protected by copyright law and publishers are likely to prosecute people who infringe their intellectual property rights.