

psychometric testing

Psychometric testing literally means measuring the brain, which sounds scarier than it need be. In this context it applies to tests that have been scientifically devised and trialed to measure certain characteristics or abilities. Severn Trent Water use psychometric tests because we believe such tests support our selection decisions.

- **we use two very different types of test – personality questionnaires...**

Personality tests have no right or wrong answers. They aren't concerned with what you can do but with how and why you do things in a particular way. They provide a general overview of someone's personality and the way that they prefer to work, and so help us assess how well they would work within our company, within a team or within a particular role. Remember that we may be looking for subtly different personalities for different roles, so be honest. Personality questionnaires consider consistency, accuracy and suggest how much an individual has attempted to shape answers to fit how they want to be perceived. Pretending to be something you're not to secure a role isn't a great idea - if you end up in a role or a company for which you're not suited you'll regret it quickly. On balance there's little you can do to prepare.

- **... and aptitude tests:**

Those tests that measure aptitude - - perhaps manual dexterity and speed, mechanical ability, spatial awareness, abstract reasoning, clerical work, and perhaps most commonly, numerical and verbal analysis - however are worth preparing for. If you really have no natural aptitude in the area that's being tested you can't do much to change that. But if being nervous is likely to slow you down and cause you to make mistakes or if your skills are a bit rusty, practice will make you more confident, faster and able to work accurately. We'll provide the opportunity to review or sit practice tests beforehand to help you become familiar with the format and style of the tests. Timed tests undoubtedly add pressure – so try to strike a balance between speed and accuracy. Practice helps find the sort of speed that works best for you. There are some useful practice tests for you to try at www.shldirect.com – provided by the leading test publisher Saville & Holdsworth.

- **we're increasingly using online testing.**

Candidates can be invited to complete tests using the Internet and we'll have access to results as soon as tests are completed for ease of comparison, storage and so that they are available to discuss with you during the recruitment process.

- **our decision isn't entirely based on the basis of your test results - so don't panic!**

We know that psychometric tests can cause suspicion and bemusement. Some still see them as time wasting psychological mumbo jumbo and think the results are dependant upon your mood on the day. Nevertheless, a recent study concluded that 87% of employers use psychometric testing in conjunction with interviews to select their employees - their value is now widely recognised. While we do use a wide range of tests, any that we ask you to complete will be relevant to the job for which you've applied. Remember you're well within your rights to enquire what we're assessing, why, and whether there will be a chance to discuss test results.