

■ Cost-effective online job applicant sifting tools

Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) assess the **skills, behaviours, thoughts and judgement** of a job applicant when faced with particular situations. Candidates are asked to rate the **appropriateness of possible responses**.

These tests are completed **online** and **unsupervised** at the earlier sifting-out stages

The **IRIS range of SJTs** has been thoroughly and extensively researched to contain highly **realistic tasks, scenarios and situations** that are **similar to those likely to be encountered in the role**.

There are no set-up or licence fees for the IRIS SJTs.

What are the benefits?

- **SJT scenarios and scoring keys can be customised** to varying degrees.
- They are completed online and unsupervised, which **reduces assessment costs**.
- They expose applicants to situations and scenarios they are likely to face in the role.
- They help you sift-out those applicants whose responses are judged to be inappropriate in particular situations.
- As applicants are being exposed to situations likely to be faced in the role, those who do not consider they have a fit to the role may also sift themselves out.
- Compared with many other tests, **SJTs have shown reduced differences between candidate groups from different backgrounds**, which can improve diversity in the applicant pool.
- Candidate perceptions of SJTs are more positive than some traditional recruitment methods. which can enhance the employer Brand and reputation.

Comment by Victoria Stone, Recruitment Coordinator, Waitrose.

"The IRIS Situational Judgement Test provided us with very useful information to add to our assessment centre data and gave us greater confidence to select the right Customer Service partners"

Who are the tests for?

Tests are currently available off-the-shelf for graduates, junior managers, customer service, call centre and administrative staff in both the private and public sectors. A tele-sales version is being finalised.

How do the tests work?

Applicants register interest in a position and are sent a link to the test which they complete unsupervised online. Links can be sent out by Pearson, by the customer or by an applicant tracking provider, linked to our platform. Cheating is minimised if candidates are informed they will be assessed further in the process. Tests are untimed but most candidates complete them within 20 - 45 minutes (depending on the test).

Each test contains 3 tasks within which there are a number of situations and scenarios. There are over 50 different tasks, and this ensures that applicants do not become familiar with the tests.

What do the tests measure?

The content of each test is designed to reflect the following competencies and behavioural areas:

Customer Service: initiating and developing relationships, teamworking, problem solving, reliability, coping with pressure, adapting to change and drive, energy and motivation.

Graduate: initiating and developing relationships, managing and developing staff, providing direction and decisions, innovation and creativity, problem solving and analysis, planning and organising, coping with pressure, adapting to change and drive, energy and motivation.

The themes for the tasks are:

Tasks for administrative and customer service roles:

1) Working on a process	The exercise introduces the candidate to situations such as dealing with relationships at work, prioritising workload and making decisions under different conditions e.g. in stressful or overworked environments.
2) Supporting staff	These tasks require the candidate to face situations that involve customer complaints, dealing with managers and fellow colleagues and managing their time in a busy working environment.
3) Client interaction	This exercise requires the candidate to deal with customer complaints through face-to-face and phone call interaction. It assesses customer service skills, decision-making and the appropriateness of taking ownership, working autonomously and when to involve others.

Tasks for Graduates and Junior Managers:

1) Using judgement to deal with mechanistic processes	This exercise requires the candidate (who for example takes the role of a departmental manager) to make decisions based on the management of staff, reducing numbers due to a recruitment freeze and developing strategies to improve services.
2) Dealing with shifting and evolving processes	The exercise places the candidate (managing a small team of customer support staff) in a position where staff morale is low and in situations where they may need to motivate team members, deal with their levels of performance and develop improvement strategies.
3) Innovation and change processes	An example of a task in this category is where the candidate assesses whether new agreements and working practices may benefit or cause harm to the company. It also forces the candidate to make decisions based on change and to consider the effect that changes may have on the team.

Validation and Norms

The **IRIS range of SJTs** have been thoroughly and extensively researched to contain highly **realistic tasks, scenarios and situations** that are **similar to those likely to be encountered in the role**. This has ensured that the tests are rigorously constructed and tested to have **high face and content validity**.

In the design and development stages the Pearson team has worked with experts and analysed numerous competency frameworks across a large number of organisations in both the private and public sectors.

Research in to SJT content has shown that there is high job relevance, which leads to direct evidence of performance through simulation (e.g. Motowildo, Hansen & Crafts, 1997). This is demonstrated through good criterion and incremental validity on personality and ability measures in the selection process (Chan & Schmitt, 2002). Further information can be found in the technical section of the IRIS pages on the website www.TalentLens.co.uk

The extensive trials for each test involve focus groups to determine tasks and situations, testing with large numbers of subject matter experts to build scoring keys followed by further refinement of situations and scoring systems. We have engaged over 200 subject matter experts to date from a variety of disciplines and industry sectors (including line managers, trainers and job incumbents) to design the tasks, situations, scenarios, the content and scoring keys.

To experience a short practice test, visit www.TalentLens.co.uk/iris/iris-practice-task.aspx

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