

Position statement on the use of psychological tests and testing

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) recognises the centrality of psychological testing to the discipline and profession of psychology. Much of the conceptualisation and development of psychological tests has been, and continues to be, driven by academic and research psychologists. It is because psychological testing is fundamental to both research and practice that the Society places such a high premium on quality, integrity and excellence in the use and interpretation of psychological tests.

The APS position statement reflects the importance of reducing the risk of harm while facilitating the achievement of maximum benefits from psychological testing. Risk is best managed through ensuring the competence of test users. Benefits are realised when there is an adequate and accessible supply of competent, well-trained providers using reliable and validated instruments and processes.

Position Statement¹

Psychological testing is an integral part of a wider assessment process that brings together information from a range of sources to benefit the client.

The administration and scoring of a psychological test is undertaken by a psychologist who is fully familiar with the test or can be undertaken by a person with training in the administration and scoring of tests working under the direct supervision of a psychologist.

The interpretation of the results of a psychological test and the integration of these results with other assessment information (e.g., interviews, observations) must be undertaken by psychologists who have a sound knowledge of the administration, scoring and interpretation of the particular test instrument being used and of the psychological theory and test theory underlying that test, and the context in which the test is used.

Psychologists ensure that they select and use psychological tests that are based soundly on theory, have adequate psychometric properties, are appropriate to the testing situation, and take account of client characteristics including age, gender, cultural background, language ability and mental state to ensure that the testing will yield meaningful information about the individual or individuals being tested. The use of tests also includes the use of appropriate norms, test adaptations and test accommodations.

Psychologists who conduct psychological testing or who read and interpret psychological reports describing psychological testing take all necessary steps, including ongoing professional development, to ensure that they maintain an up-to-date knowledge and skill base, including in the administration, scoring and interpretation of new tests or new editions that are of relevance to their area of practice. Psychologists are key stakeholders in ensuring the development and professional use of quality testing tools and processes.

¹ The APS recognises that other professions at times administer tests that may be regarded as psychological in the sense that they may tap into psychological concepts, but these tests are not classified as “psychological tests” with appropriately restricted access.

Psychologists who use psychological tests abide by the [*APS Code of Ethics*](#) and the [*Ethical guidelines for psychological assessment and the use of psychological tests*](#) and recognise the importance of practising only within their areas of competence.

Psychological tests and test materials are stored securely in accordance with legislative requirements. Protection from inappropriate public exposure to psychological tests and test materials, including test protocols or record forms, is the responsibility of the psychologist. Access to psychological test data is restricted to psychologists or individuals who are trained in test administration and working under the direct supervision of psychologists.

Promoting an understanding of the role of psychological testing, its importance as a tool to benefit individuals, and the necessity for administration and interpretation by a psychologist trained in the theory and practice of psychological testing, will assist to reduce risk and promote the best possible outcomes for the community.