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# A Test-Taker's Guide to Technology-Based Testing

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## Intended Audience for this Guide

This Guide is for people about to take a test on a computer, over the Internet or by some other means of modern technology.

In 2005, the International Test Commission (ITC) produced a set of good testing practice guidelines directed at those developing, supplying and using tests and questionnaires delivered by means of modern technology. This test-taker's guide is based on those good practice guidelines. It highlights the things you should expect from a test provider and the rights and 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.

# Introduction

The rapid advance of technology has changed the way many psychological and educational tests are administered. Now they may be administered over the Internet or via your cell/mobile phone. Rather than being invited to a testing session and being asked to complete a paper and pencil test (what we call 'local testing'), you are more and more likely to be asked to complete a test on a computer or other technological device (like a cell/mobile phone, a tablet, or even a TV set). While this may involve you going to a supervised testing centre (this is still called 'local testing', as it is quite similar to taking a paper and pencil test in a testing centre), it might also be that you can complete this at home, at work, school or some other nearby location. Such testing, where there is no one present to supervise you is called 'remote testing' because it is managed 'remotely' by the test provider.

**There are three main scenarios for taking technology-based tests**  
In two of these scenarios you may be administered a test remotely (e.g. over the Internet, through a cell/mobile phone, or through some other mobile devices such as a smart-phone, net-book, tablet, etc.). The assessment can be taken in your home or place of work, or anywhere where the technology for electronic access to the test exists (an internet accessible computer, a cell/mobile phone signal etc.). In the third scenario, you will be invited to take the test in a supervised testing centre.

**Testing Remotely and Unsupervised**  
The first of the remote-administration scenarios is referred to as remote unsupervised testing. When testing occurs in a remote location and you are not supervised (monitored) by a supervisor ('proctor') during the test, no reliable authentication of your identity can be made, however you will have been provided with some form of personal identification in order to take the test (e.g. a username and password for Internet-based tests).

**Testing Remotely and Supervised**  
In the other remote-administration scenario, when testing occurs in a remote location and is supervised, your identity will be authenticated (e.g. via biometric procedures such as keystroke pattern recognition or face recognition) and monitored throughout the test by supervisors ('proctors'). This is done by them recoding that you do as you take the test through a webcam or some similar technology. This is called remote supervised testing.

**Testing Locally and Supervised**  
The third alternative is locally supervised testing. When testing occurs locally and is supervised, you are invited to go to a location where someone will be present to check your identity (e.g. by viewing photo identification documents such as an ID card, passport or driver's licence) and oversee the person taking the test. The test may still be delivered over the internet, but in this case you cannot access it on your own outside of the designated testing centre.



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

**1** Prior to accessing the system, you should be informed about the purpose of the testing, the content included on the test, the type(s) of tests to be used and the appropriateness (validity) of the test(s), given the purpose for which you are taking the test.

**2** The system you are using to take the test should be suitable in terms of hardware and software requirements (i.e. the system is able to perform all the functions required by the assessment procedure). If a test is given at a testing centre, the appropriate hardware and software configuration should be the responsibility of the testing agency; if the test is taken in another type of setting, system requirements should be explained clearly to you by the testing agency. Equipment and connections should be automatically checked by the testing agency for suitability, whether the tests are supervised or not. If the automatic checks detect a hardware, software or connection problem, you should be informed clearly about what to do, in order to be able to remedy the problem.

**3** For testing that occurs outside of a testing centre - whether supervised or unsupervised - a technical support contact information (e.g. telephone number, email address) should be provided to use, in the event that any problems occur during the testing session. Problems can include but are not limited to computer crashes, lost Internet connections and slow downloads. It should be made clear to you what procedure to follow, should you face any problems of this variety during the assessment procedure.

**4** Clear instructions should be provided on how to take the test (e.g. whether the tests are timed, how questions or statements will be presented and what response formats you will use to respond); how to access on-screen help while completing the test; and, for testing outside of a testing centre, how to log-on and log-off the system. In most cases you should be provided the opportunity to take practice test questions to familiarise yourself with the requirements of the test session.

**5** If you have a documented disability or medical condition, reasonable adjustments are normally made to the testing process. Adjustments may include modifications to the test (e.g. extended time, more breaks during test sections, auxiliary aids, enlarged print on the screen, etc.) or provision of an alternative (e.g. paper-and-pencil) form of assessment. The availability of such adjustments for qualified persons should be publicized, as should the procedures for documenting need for access to modifications or alternate test forms.

**6** For supervised testing, either in a testing centre or not, you should expect to take the test in a comfortable and quiet environment and should expect the standard administration procedures to be followed. For unsupervised testing, guidance on organizing the test environment (e.g. quiet and comfortable environment away from phones, television, etc.) should also be provided to you by the test system or during former personal contact.

**7** You can expect to be informed of the appropriate level of authentication needed before you undertake the test. This requirement can range from no authentication (e.g. accessing a career guidance tool on the Internet); to obtaining a password and username for access to an unsupervised test. It may also include completing Internet-based biometric authentication for online remotely supervised tests, and/or 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, should be properly maintained. Basic information on the security procedures used to safeguard your data both in terms of its transmission and storage should be provided to you prior to test administration.

**9** The confidentiality of your data when stored on a computer or a server must be properly 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. Information about the people who will have access to your data must be provided previously to the test. Further, test administrators and users must comply with country specific data protection laws.

**10** Your results should be scored accurately and interpreted correctly and you should be provided with timely and clear feedback (if appropriate, given the nature of the examination and its use). A feedback report is in some cases generated from computer-based interpretations, and if it is presented to you it should be in a comprehensible and meaningful format. Possibilities and limits of the computer-based interpretations must be communicated.



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

**1** For remotely administered tests, you will ensure the system (e.g. your computer) meets the hardware and software requirements defined by the test provider before completing the test. Many test providers carry out automatic checks of the system to ensure it is compatible with the test software. In some cases you may be asked to make changes to the browser (or other comparable software) settings (e.g. screen size, resolution, sound support) before this software is used to take a test. You may be asked to allow automatic and immediate upgrades to software (e.g. Adobe Flash, Internet Explorer, etc.).

**2** You will know how to access technical support, should any problems arise. You should 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 implemented. These may include inviting you to initiate the test again from the beginning or starting you anew at the same point where the problem occurred.

**3** You are expected to have read and understood the instructions on how to complete the test and to know how to access on-screen help, should it be required. It is Your responsibility to read the instructions. They should be read carefully because they are important and 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 and navigate through the user interface before beginning a test for real.

**4** You will inform the appropriate individual or organization (usually the individual or organisation setting up the testing process) in advance of the testing session if you have a documented disability or medical condition that may interfere with your performance on the test or for which you are requesting a test accommodation.

**5** You are familiar with the operation of the computer or other device and the software functions required by the test, and you complete any tutorials designed to ensure this familiarity. For example, you should be able to operate an Internet browser and be capable of accessing email to obtain passwords that were sent to you. Should you not be familiar with the required system, you should 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 computer keyboard 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 are unlikely to be disturbed. When you are taking an unsupervised or supervised test in your own environment, it is your responsibility to ensure that the test is taken in a suitable environment and that the instructions provided to you in this respect, concerning the proper conditions to take the test, are followed.

**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), and/or providing government-approved picture identification when being tested in a supervised test centre.

**8** You will complete the test on your own and 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 will not engage in improper conduct with respect to the test, and understand the consequences of fraudulent test taking practices. Where appropriate, it is your responsibility to sign and accept an agreement that the test will be completed in an honest and fair manner.

**10** You know that you are not allowed to copy, print or reproduce any test materials whether provided in paper format or on a computer screen. Test materials are protected by copyright and other laws and publishers are likely to prosecute people who infringe their intellectual property rights.