

Test Interviews

How to create and implement neuro-inclusive Test Interviews.



About Test Interviews

Test Interviews are a specific approach to assess candidates, offering a direct method to assess a wide range of skills necessary for the role. These interviews are structured around specific tests designed to measure various competencies critical to job performance.

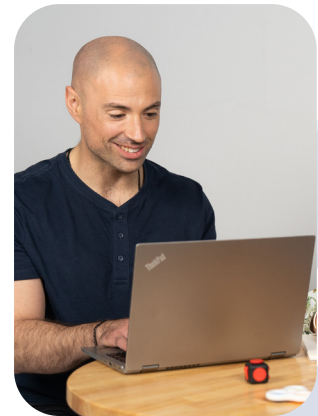
Understanding types of tests commonly used, their advantages, potential challenges, and strategies to ensure neuro-inclusivity in the process.

Types of tests in test interviews

- **Cognitive Ability Tests**
These tests assess a candidate's ability to solve problems, think critically, and process information quickly.
- **Language Tests**
These tests evaluate a candidate's ability to communicate effectively in the job's required languages.
- **Personality and Culture Fit Tests**
These tests help determine whether a candidate's values, behaviour, and work style align with the company.
- **Programming Skill Tests**
These tests evaluate a candidate's programming and coding knowledge and skills.
- **Role-specific Skill Tests**
These tests measure the skills and abilities directly relevant to the role's responsibilities.
- **Situational Judgment Tests**
These scenarios assess how candidates would handle specific job-related situations, offering insights into their decision-making process, judgment, and prioritisation skills.
- **Software Skill Tests**
These tests evaluate how well candidates can navigate and utilise the necessary software.



It is important to choose the right kind of test for the role employers are recruiting for.



Benefits

The benefits may include:

- Providing a clear, objective measure of a candidate's skills and suitability for the role, mitigating unconscious bias.
- Offers a practical means to verify the skills listed on a candidate's resume.
- Beneficial for roles subject to strict regulatory requirements, allowing candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and compliance with industry standards.
- Used to assess cognitive abilities, technical skills, problem-solving, and decision-making.



Ideal for:

Tourism, IT and software development roles.

Example: Auslan interpreter

A candidate applying for a role as an Auslan interpreter for concerts participates in a test interview where they are tasked with interpreting a live music performance. The test involves interpreting song lyrics into Auslan as the music plays, requiring the candidate to convey the rhythm, tone, and emotional essence of the performance in addition to the lyrics. Preparation materials, such as a setlist and song themes, are provided in advance to help the candidate familiarise themselves with the content. Evaluators assess the candidate's fluency in Auslan, ability to synchronise with the music, and skill in capturing the expressive and dynamic nature of the performance. This test offers a realistic and practical evaluation of their suitability for the role.

Considerations and solutions

There are considerations to address to ensure the assessment is neuro-inclusive. These include:

Considerations

Can be stressful for candidates:

Test interviews can be intimidating.

Overemphasis on test results:

Solely relying on test performance can overlook other critical aspects of a candidate's capabilities.

Irrelevant testing:

Testing unrelated to the role can confuse candidates and fail to evaluate job requirements.

Solutions

Clearly outline the format and expectations ahead of time and provide a calm, supportive environment to reduce anxiety.

Incorporate test results into a holistic evaluation, combining them with references and other assessments.

Align tests with practical job responsibilities to ensure relevance and fairness.

Conducting and designing neuro-inclusive Test Interviews

Test Interviews can be powerful tools to assess candidates' skills and competencies, but to ensure they are neuro-inclusive, thoughtful design and implementation is essential. Inclusive practices create equitable opportunities, allowing all candidates to showcase their true potential.

Designing the assessment

An neuro-inclusive Test Interview ensures that assessments are relevant, accessible, and considerate of diverse cognitive styles.

Key strategies for design:

Alignment with role

Design tasks directly tied to job responsibilities, avoiding abstract or irrelevant assessments that may disadvantage candidates.

Clear instructions

Use plain, jargon-free language in multiple formats (written, visual, and verbal). Include step-by-step instructions and examples to clarify expectations.

Flexible formats

Allow candidates to complete tasks through their preferred methods, such as written, verbal, or practical demonstrations.

Standardised criteria

Use structured evaluation frameworks to assess candidates consistently and objectively, focusing on job-relevant performance metrics.

Timing flexibility

Minimise strict time limits to reduce stress and allow candidates to perform at their best.

Conducting and designing neuro-inclusive Test Interviews

Pre-interview preparation

Preparation materials and clear communication are vital for helping candidates feel confident and perform effectively during assessments.

Neuro-inclusive strategies

Neurodivergent awareness training

Ensure all assessors understand common neurodivergent characteristics and how these may present in the assessment context.

Provide details

Offer candidates insight into the assessment objectives and requirements, including logistics like venue details, timings, and any necessary documents. Depending on the format, this may include:

- The schedule, including start and end times
- Access details (location, parking, public transport, signing-in procedures)
- Venue details, including sensory information and breakout spaces
- Names, roles, and photographs of interviewer (as relevant)
- Dress code recommendations
- Necessary documents to bring
- Contact details of a dedicated support person from the organisation to answer questions.

Provide information

Share detailed information about the test format, tasks, and expected duration in advance. Provide preparation materials, such as examples or practice tests.

Support familiarisation

Offer candidates opportunities to practice similar scenarios or review mock examples beforehand to build confidence and reduce stress.

Accommodations

Communicate that candidates may bring a support person or use sensory tools to support them during the exercise.

Flexibility

Negotiate with the candidate when the Test Interview will take place, allowing the candidate to select a time when they perform at their best.

Conducting and designing neuro-inclusive Test Interviews

Setting up the environment

The assessment environment can significantly impact candidate performance, particularly for individuals sensitive to sensory stimuli.

Neuro-inclusive strategies

Workplace visit

Where relevant, offer candidates an opportunity to tour the workplace prior to the assessment. This visit can help candidates familiarise themselves with the setting, reducing anxiety and allowing them to identify accommodations they may need.

Sensory-friendly settings

- Minimise loud, continuous noise
(For example, humming from coffee machines)
- Avoid sudden loud noises, like doors slamming
- Ensure consistent, non-flickering lighting
- Avoid strong smells from perfumes, kitchens, or nearby restrooms
- Provide simple décor and communicate any potential sensory stimuli in advance
- Provide a range of sensory items that the candidate can use during the assessment
- Provide a range of alternative seating options and encourage them to move furniture around.

A sensory friendly setting can support the candidate to feel comfortable and to do their best.

Accessible technology

Ensure digital tools are user-friendly, with features like screen readers, adjustable font sizes, and simple navigation.

Break spaces

Offer a designated quiet area or sensory space for candidates to take breaks if needed on site.



Ensure the quiet area or sensory space is signed and is easy to access.

Conducting and designing neuro-inclusive Test Interviews

Conducting the Test Interview

A structured and supportive approach during the test interview enables candidates to do their best.

Neuro-inclusive strategies

Flexible problem-solving approaches

Recognise and value diverse ways of solving problems, avoiding penalties or negative judgment for unconventional but effective methods.

Time to get comfortable

Train assessors to appreciate and adapt to different ways candidates might express themselves, such as literal or direct responses.

Structured environment

Clearly outline the assessment process, including the start and end times for each task.

Accommodating communication styles

Train assessors to appreciate and adapt to different ways candidates might express themselves, such as literal or direct responses.

Sensory accommodations

Monitor the sensory environment to ensure a comfortable environment.

Timely feedback

Minimise strict time limits to reduce stress and allow candidates to perform at their best.

Contingency planning

Be prepared to adjust the approach if unexpected needs or situations arise.

Post-assessment feedback

Constructive feedback helps candidates understand their performance and enhances their overall experience.

Neuro-inclusive strategies

Transparent outcomes

Clearly communicate timelines for results and any next steps in the hiring process.

Detailed feedback

Offer specific observations about strengths and areas for growth. Avoid vague responses that don't provide actionable insights.

Example of a neuro-inclusive Test Interview

Scenario

A candidate applying for a technical support role is tasked with solving a simulated customer issue using troubleshooting software.

Actions taken

- The task details and software user guide are shared in advance, allowing the candidate time to review.
- The assessment is conducted in a quiet, distraction-free environment.
- The candidate is given written and verbal instructions during the task and allowed to ask clarifying questions.
- Adequate time is provided to complete the exercise.

Outcome

These accommodations enable the candidate to demonstrate their technical skills and problem-solving abilities in a realistic, supportive setting.



Continuous improvement in Test Interview design

Regular reviews and updates ensure test interviews remain effective, inclusive, and aligned with organisational goals.

Strategies for improvement

Collect feedback

Collect input from participants to refine test design and implementation.

Validation by neurodivergent reviewers

Engage neurodivergent staff or external inclusive organisations to evaluate the accessibility and fairness of tests.

Regular updates

Periodically review and adjust assessments to reflect current job requirements and remove unintended biases.

Conducting and designing neuro-inclusive Test Interviews

When designed thoughtfully and inclusively, Test Interviews can assess a wide range of skills and competencies effectively. Aligning tasks with job requirements, creating supportive environments, and fostering inclusive practices ensure a fair recruitment process. These efforts not only improve the candidate experience but also contribute to building a diverse, capable, and innovative workforce.

Learn more and access resources

To learn more about neuro-inclusive recruiting and how to create and maintain neuro-inclusive workplaces, scan the QR code or visit neuroinclusiverecruiting.org.au.

