



Clerical Skills Test

C.S.T.

HR•Assessments®

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Administrator's Manual



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To ensure that you are obtaining the full benefits available to you from the use of HR•Assessments® products, please read all information contained in this manual carefully. By using this assessment product, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the general guidelines provided in this manual, and that if you have any specific questions, you have referred them to a competent testing and/or legal expert for advice. The test developer and publisher do not assume liability for any unlawful use of this product.

The test developer and publisher do not assume any responsibility for the employer's use of this test or any decision the employer makes which may violate local, state or federal law. By selling this test, the publisher is not giving legal advice.

While HR•Assessments® are designed to help predict various aspects of human behavior, score results are presented in terms of probabilities. False Positives and False Negatives are expected. EDI and the test developer are not liable for test taker, applicant or employee behaviors.



HR•Assessments® Products: An Investment in Your Company's Future

The decision to use assessment products in the employment process is one that can be very beneficial to your company in many ways. A well-designed, properly validated assessment, when used in conjunction with other employment screening tools, can save your company from investing training resources in an applicant who is not suited to perform the job for which he or she was hired, and, as a consequence, can help protect your company from negligent-hiring lawsuits.

Each HR•Assessments product has been researched and developed by our in-house staff of testing professionals, which includes experienced industrial psychologists.

Use of Assessment Products as “Tools”

Validity studies of the assessment products we offer have shown them to be predictive of job performance and therefore quite useful during the selection process. It is important to remember that assessments should be used in conjunction with other, equally important employment screening tools – such as criminal background checks, work histories and employer references – to present a balanced picture of the particular job candidate. Only when used in coordination with one another will you be able to truly determine a “fit” between the candidate and the particular job for which he or she is applying.

Employment assessments, as defined in this manual, can be of several varieties, including trustworthiness or integrity assessments, skills-oriented assessments and personality assessments. Each assessment can center on one of these elements, or may include several different components, assessing a variety of factors. Choosing the proper assessment product for your needs is a key factor in making your selection process more effective.

Legal Aspects of Assessment Use and Administration

Although employment assessments have been in use for more than 40 years, their use became more prevalent after the passage of the Employee Polygraph Protection Act (EPPA) of 1988, which made it illegal for most private employers to use polygraph examinations as a routine pre-employment screening tool. Employment assessments that are not prohibited by the EPPA are designed to give the employer a legal way to gauge an employee's job-related skills and personality traits as an alternative to the polygraph test. Whereas the polygraph test is designed to monitor an applicant's physiological reactions to certain questions, employment assessments seek to gain information on the job candidate through a series of questions designed to measure job-related attributes.

Today, the use of employment assessments continues to increase. Many of the country's largest corporations use such screening devices on a regular basis, and have found great success in using them to hire and promote the best candidates.



Assessment Products and “Adverse Impact”

A common misperception of these assessments is that they all tend to discriminate against certain classes of applicants, in violation of state and federal laws against discrimination in employment decisions. In fact, this is not the case. Although there is evidence of poorer performance by some members of protected classes on some skills tests that include language and mathematical components, the use of such tests is still justified, so long as the skills assessed by the test are essential for the successful performance of one or more of the job’s key functions. In addition, researchers have found no evidence that well-constructed personality assessments discriminate on any unlawful basis.

However, it is incumbent upon employers who use assessment products to continually monitor selection procedures to ensure that no “adverse impact” is occurring in the overall selection process. Adverse impact is defined as a situation in which there is a substantially different rate of selection in hiring, promoting or other employment decisions that works to the disadvantage of members of a race, sex or ethnic group. If adverse impact does occur, the employer needs to be able to demonstrate the job-relatedness of the selection process. For further guidance in this area, read the *Assessment Selection and Follow-Up Procedures* section of this manual.

Federal Laws

There are federal laws and regulations governing the use of “selection” tools, such as employment assessments, insofar as they have any “adverse impact” on the employment opportunities of protected classes of individuals. Some of the more subtle aspects of these laws as they apply to the selection process are discussed in the section of this manual titled, *Using Job Analysis to Justify Use of Assessment and Its Sections (Legal Implications)*.

Title VII

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), covering employers with 15 or more employees, prohibits discrimination in employment decisions on the basis of race, sex, color, religion and national origin. Title VII authorizes the use of “any professionally developed ability test, provided that such test, its administration or action upon the results is not designed, intended or used to discriminate” on any unlawful basis. In 1971, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* (401 U.S. 424), adopted the standard that employer practices that had an adverse impact on minorities and were not justified by a business necessity violated Title VII. Congress amended Title VII in 1972, adopting this legal standard.

As a result of these developments, the government sought to produce a unified governmental standard on the regulation of employee selection procedures because the separate government agencies had enforcement powers over private employers, and each used different standards. This resulted in the adoption of the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (Guidelines), codified at 29 CFR Part 1607, which established a uniform federal position in prohibiting discrimination in employment practices on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, and applies to all public and private employers covered by Title VII, Executive Order 11246, the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, and the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970.



Highlights of the Guidelines include:

Provision of a uniform set of principles governing use of the employee selection procedures that is consistent with applicable legal standards.

Setting out validation standards for employee selection procedures that are generally accepted by the psychological profession.

The Guidelines do not require a validation of the selection device unless evidence of adverse impact exists. It is important to note also that compliance with the Guidelines does not remove the affirmative action obligations for assessment users, including federal contractors and subcontractors.

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides that an employer “shall not conduct a medical examination or make inquiries of a job applicant as to whether such applicant is an individual with a disability or as to the nature or severity of such disability.” (42 USC Sec. 12112(d)(2)(A); see also 29 CFR Sec. 1630.13.) Inquiries into a person’s disabilities are prohibited at the pre-offer employment stage, except in a very narrowly defined situation when the applicant has *voluntarily* disclosed a medical condition requiring accommodation. The ADA protects disabilities, not a characteristic an employer may consider to be a personal flaw or undesirable aspect of an applicant’s personality. The ADA does not prohibit inquiries into such personality attributes as propensity for honesty, ability to get along with others, organizational skills or management skills, to cite a few examples. No question or series of questions designed to elicit information about a person’s mental impairment (as defined by the ADA), or questions that even would tend to elicit such information, should appear on an assessment product. Each HR•Assessments product has been carefully reviewed under this standard to avoid any conflict with ADA guidelines.

Recordkeeping Requirements

Various federal laws require employers to retain tests and test results for at least one year from the date the test is administered or from the date of any personnel action relating to the testing, whichever is later.

State and Local Laws

Due to the wide variety, complexity and ever-changing nature of state laws, it is impossible to summarize each state’s requirements in this brief overview. If you are unfamiliar with the state and local laws governing the use of screening devices applicable in your locale, consult a qualified labor law attorney or testing specialist who may provide competent guidance on this topic.



Assessment Selection and Follow-Up Procedures

Selection

Generally, when selecting an assessment or any other selection tool, you should choose one that has been designed specifically to measure the skills or traits necessary for the position in question. It is recommended that a thorough job analysis be performed to determine the connections between job functions and the attributes the assessment product is designed to measure.

Monitoring

Monitor your selection process to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, checking your selection process for evidence of adverse impact. This should be conducted on a continual basis. HR•Assessments products include testing logs that can be used to record each assessment taker's scores, as well as other important data that can be used to compute your own norms and adverse-impact statistics.

Validation

Should your monitoring results indicate that adverse impact is occurring in the selection procedures, you should determine in which component of the selection process it is happening. If the use of a certain assessment product is found to be the cause, you will need to conduct a validation study of the assessment. Qualified testing professionals may be contacted to help in conducting a validity study. These professionals will be able to help determine whether the assessment is the cause of the adverse impact and whether the assessment is emphasizing a bona-fide occupational qualification for the job. In some instances, assessments that in some context may be considered discriminatory may be lawful to use in others, so long as the assessment is centered on a bona-fide occupational qualification.

Scoring

Cutoffs and suggested "pass" or "fail" scores are not provided with these assessments. Instead, norms and, in some instances, average assessment scores for various levels of job performance are provided. This information is provided for the elements the assessment is designed to measure. This information is a result of the testing universe used in the validation studies performed by HR•Assessments, and is for demonstrative purposes only. Assessment results always should be interpreted, along with other information gathered through your selection process, to ensure that you get a complete picture of the job candidate or employee. It is recommended that you administer the assessment to your current employees so you can develop your own company-specific norms for assessment performance. These norms then can be used as benchmarks during your assessing and selection process.



The Importance of Clerical Skills

The ability of your employees to read instructions, write and analyze reports, file and handle basic computations is critical to the success of your company. Studies by the American Management Association show that more than one-third of job applicants tested lacked sufficient reading and mathematical skills to perform the jobs they sought.

The HR•Assessments® Clerical Skills Test was designed to assist companies in identifying individuals who have strong reading, mathematical and analytical skills. This test can be used in two specific ways:

To select job applicants who have the strong clerical skills necessary for successful performance in the position.

To determine the clerical skill levels of current employees and provide training where needed.

Selecting Top Applicants

The Clerical Skills Test helps you objectively determine an applicant's clerical skills so you can hire the best-qualified candidate. The six sections of the test help evaluate applicants on the following six skills:

1. **Writing** – ability to express thoughts in a clear and concise manner.
2. **Analyzing** – ability to read and interpret data presented in the form of tables and/or spreadsheets.
3. **Proofreading** – ability to detect errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.
4. **Filing** – ability to quickly file names alphabetically and numbers numerically.
5. **Math** – ability to perform basic calculations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
6. **Checking** – ability to accurately determine whether two pieces of information are the same or different.

Once you have determined the essential skills necessary to perform the job, the Clerical Skills Test can help you compare an applicant's qualifications to those of other applicants and to those of current employees. Doing this should significantly increase your chances of finding the right person for the job.

Determining Employees' Clerical Ability Levels

In addition to assisting you in hiring the most qualified applicants, the Clerical Skills Test helps you determine the clerical abilities of current employees. Based on their test scores, you can identify strengths and weaknesses, and offer the low-scoring employees coaching or training to improve their skills.

With little cost or effort, the Clerical Skills Test should significantly increase the accuracy of your hiring decisions as well as help you increase the abilities of your current employees.



Description of the Clerical Skills Test

The Clerical Skills Test provides a reliable measurement of the basic skills required for most clerical positions (i.e., writing, analyzing tables and charts, proofreading, filing, math and checking information). Each section is timed. Administration of the entire test should take less than 30 minutes. To increase the validity of the instrument, each test section attempts to simulate on-the-job tasks as closely as possible.

One of the primary advantages of the Clerical Skills Test is its ease of administration and scoring. Quick and clear scoring procedures make the test accessible to all kinds of businesses, regardless of the size or the industry. What's more, test administration is accomplished in a short time without sacrificing the test's technical qualities (e.g., reliability and validity).

The Clerical Skills Test should provide a significant return-on-investment for its users. A comparison of the cost of this test and the hidden costs associated with the recruitment and promotion of ability-deficient applicants should reveal that personnel testing is cost-effective. Indeed, the time invested in hiring and training employees who turn out to be unqualified represents a very significant hidden cost.



Using Job Analysis to Justify Use of Assessment and Its Sections (Legal Implications)

From a legal standpoint, if a test is to be used for selection or promotion purposes, it is important that users of the test take the necessary steps to establish a clear connection between the job tasks and the occupational environments measured by the test. This relevance should exist to meet the principles outlined in the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978) and other federal government employment-related legislation, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The tasks that are crucial or essential to the job in question should be identified first. Then, the occupational environment that matches the job in question can be determined. This process should be documented carefully to justify the appropriateness of the test administered in the employee selection process.

The following are examples that indicate the relationship between job tasks and the occupational environments described in this manual:

Task	Section
Writes letters to customers summarizing their telephone interactions and answering their inquiries.	Writing Skills
Verifies basic numerical and text information presented in charts and spreadsheets.	Analyzing Skills
Proofreads correspondence for errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.	Proofreading Skills
Files employee information by name and/or identification number.	Filing Skills
Performs basic mathematical functions such as addition and subtraction to verify the accuracy of financial statements.	Math Skills
Checks to see that the purchase order number on the order slip is the same as the number on the incoming inventory package.	Checking Skills



As a general guideline for compliance with federal discrimination and disability laws, test users should not subject test takers to any adverse employment decision based on a test result, unless the test result and other factors considered in the decision-making process reveal that the person does not possess qualifications that are crucial or essential to the job in question. To illustrate, if a test taker performs poorly on a test section designed to measure inspection skills, and inspection skills are not crucial or essential to the position for which the test taker is being considered, the test result should not serve as a basis for excluding the test taker from the position. Similarly, if a test result indicates that a test taker is unable to perform certain physical tasks that are not crucial or essential to the job position at issue, the test taker should not be excluded from that position on the basis of the test result.¹ Test users can avoid such a scenario altogether by carefully identifying the tasks that are essential to the job position at issue, and administering only those tests or test sections that are appropriate and relevant to the position's requirements.

Test sections measuring proficiency in the English language also should be administered in accordance with these principles. Thus, if spelling, grammar, vocabulary or reading comprehension skills are not essential to a job position, a test taker should not be subjected to an adverse employment decision based on poor test results in those areas. Requiring employees or applicants to be fluent in English may constitute national origin discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act if the requirement is not justified by business necessity or directly related to job performance. There are some limited exceptions to this rule for jobs involving dangerous work requiring a heightened understanding of written or verbal safety instructions in English, or service positions that require significant communication in English with the public. Test users should consult an attorney before subjecting any test taker to an adverse employment decision on the basis of English language deficiencies.

¹ If the test taker's ability to perform a particular physical task is essential to the job position at issue, the Americans with Disabilities Act may require the test user to provide certain accommodations to facilitate the test taker's performance of the task at issue. Test users should consult an attorney before making any adverse employment decision based upon a test taker's physical inability to perform a task measured by a test result.



Administration Instructions for Paper Tests

Please read the following instructions before administering the Clerical Skills Test:

If you are using the software version of this assessment, please refer to the software's technical manual for complete administration and scoring instructions.

1. Decide on the number and kinds of assessment instruments to be used in evaluating applicants or employees. The Clerical Skills Test may be one of them. Other valuable evaluation instruments may be the application form, an employment interview, reference checks and other tests.
2. Decide beforehand on the sections that will be administered. Make sure to select only job-related sections as described in the previous section of this manual titled, *Using Job Analysis to Justify Use of Assessment and Its Sections*.
3. Before testing, be familiar with the test and testing instructions. Be prepared to answer any questions that may be asked.
4. The test should be administered in a quiet room, free from distractions and interruptions.
5. Provide to each test taker (applicant or employee) a ballpoint pen to ensure clear markings on the answer sheets. Instruct all test takers to press firmly when marking their answers.
6. Distribute the test and have the test taker complete the information on the front cover (i.e., name, Social Security number and date).
7. Introduce the test to the test taker. Say, "This test is designed to evaluate the basic skills required for the job. There are six sections, each one of them concerned with a different skill. You will have a specific number of minutes to answer each section. In addition, you will be asked to provide a sample of your writing by completing the Writing Sample section of the test." If the test taker is not taking all of the sections of the test, point out to him/her the sections to be taken.

Test users who are subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 may be required to provide accommodations to disabled test takers who need assistance during the testing process. This may include, for example, relaxing the time limitations of timed tests, offering visual or audio assistance, or providing special lighting or seating arrangements. Test users who are uncertain of their obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should consult an attorney if an accommodation is requested in the testing process.

8. Have the test taker (applicant or employee) read the instructions for the first section you are going to administer (e.g., Writing Sample). The test taker should read only the instructions. Do not let the test taker read any of the other sections' questions!
9. Time the test administration. Give the test taker the exact amount of time specified for the section being taken.
10. When the test taker's time for a section is up, say, "Stop!" Do not let the test taker answer any more questions in that section.
11. Repeat steps 8 to 10 for each of the sections you have identified as job-related.
12. When you are done with all sections, ask test takers to turn in their tests and say, "Thank you. We appreciate your taking the time to do this test."



Scoring Instructions for Paper Tests

Scoring the Clerical Skills Test is straightforward and time-efficient. Follow the steps listed below:

1. Open the test and tear off the perforated tab on the right side of the test. Carefully separate the test cover from the answer sheet.
2. The first section of the test (“Writing Sample”) is intended to provide a sampling of the test taker’s writing ability and style. You can evaluate this section according to the requirements of the position being applied for.
3. When scoring the Proofreading Skills section, count the number of mistakes that are correctly identified. If there are any portions of the letter that are circled as incorrect when, in fact, there was no mistake, subtract these from the number of mistakes correctly identified. This number then would be the Proofreading Skills score. Do not subtract anything if the test taker inserts commas before the word “and”, if he/she circles the “ ” before and after the words “fanatical service”, or if he/she does not feel “Valude Employees” should be capitalized.
4. For the remaining sections, the applicant’s answers should appear as checkmarks on the carbonless copy. An answer is correct when the check appears inside the answer box. If an applicant checks off two answers for the same question, this should be counted as incorrect.
5. Add the number of correct responses and write this number in the space provided at the end of each test section. Total the section scores to obtain an overall test score.



Administration Instructions for Web-based Tests

All web-based tests are scored automatically. Please read the following instructions to view the scores of a test.

View Test Results

Once a test has been completed, log in as an administrator and click the “Test Results” tab. You may view test results in one of two ways:

1. Select the applicant’s name from the “Applicant Name:” drop-down list and click the **Show Tests for Applicant** button. This presents all tests taken by the selected applicant. Click on one of the tests to present its results.
- or-
2. Select the test from the “Test Name:” drop-down list and click the **Show Applicants for Test** button. This presents all applicants who have taken the selected test. Click on the applicant’s name to present test results.

At any time in the future you may go back and view past applicants’ test results. They are saved in our system indefinitely.

Interpreting the Test Results

There are five tabs on a test’s results page:

Test Scores: Presents raw score, corresponding percentile with interpretive text and the average score for each test scale.

Test Score Graphs: Presents the same information as Test Scores along with the graphical view of the corresponding percentile score.

Interview Questions: Presents suggested follow-up questions to help you further evaluate the candidate’s responses to particular test items. If the test does not include this feature, clicking on this tab will result in the following message: “There are no follow-up interview questions for this test.”

Candidate Responses: Lists each test question along with the applicant’s response. If a test includes multiple scales, the test questions and applicants’ responses are separated by Scale.

Utilities: Allows you to change your online testing password and print the various test result sections.



Scoring Instructions for Web-based Tests

Please read the following instructions before administering this test.

To access the Online Testing website:

Make sure to be using Internet Explorer to access the site

1. Open your web browser and go to <http://www.mytests.hrdirect.com>
2. Click **Administrator Login**
3. Enter the user name and password we've provided you via e-mail.

Step 1 – Create applicant(s)

It is important that you complete this step first as most of the other screens will not be functional until applicant names have been entered into the system.

In the Applicant Setup tab, fill out the form with the applicants information and click the **Save** button at the bottom left of the page. You should receive the message “You have successfully created a new applicant.” If you wish to create more applicants, click on the **Create New Applicant** button at the bottom of the page for a blank form and don't forget to click the **Save** button after entering each applicant.

Step 2 – Assign a test to an applicant

Click the “Assign Test” tab and select the applicant you would like to assign a test to from the drop-down list. Below you will see a list of tests that are available to the selected applicant. To the right of each test is a link to view his/her respective Administrator's Manuals. Click the checkbox next to the test you wish to assign, then click the **Assign Test** button at the bottom of the page.

Step 3 – Administer a test

Please inform your applicants:

1. Take the test using **only** Internet Explorer.
2. Make sure pop-up blockers are inactivated as the system will open a new screen.
3. Do not use the back button on the task bar during the test, as this will kick the applicant out of the test.

Click the “Administer Test” tab. Select an applicant, with previously assigned tests, from the drop-down list. Select the test that you want to administer. You may administer the test in one of three formats:

The **Begin Test Now** button will start the test immediately.

The **Send Email** button will e-mail an applicant the URL to our testing site along with a unique Session ID for them to enter to take the test.

The **Print Access Info** button will print out the URL to our testing site along with a unique Session ID, for the applicant, to enter to take the test.



Interpretation and Use of Test Scores

Use the test score to evaluate the test taker. An applicant/employee with a low test score indicates that there is a strong probability that he/she possesses limited ability in the skill area the test assesses. A high test score indicates there is a strong probability that the applicant/employee possesses superior ability in the skill area measured. For example, a score of 5 on the Math section indicates the applicant/employee possesses limited ability in performing basic mathematical calculations. Conversely, a score of 20 on the same test indicates the applicant/employee possesses superior ability in math.

Norms also can provide a point of reference regarding the relative test performance of each test taker. Norms represent average scores obtained by different samples of test takers. These norms can be compared to those of your applicants or employees to ascertain their relative standing.

Tables 1 through 6 on the following pages contain norms obtained from studies conducted to validate the Clerical Skills Test. With the exception of the Writing Sample section, tables are provided for each individual test section as well as for the overall test score. These norms offer assistance when evaluating each applicant's or employee's test scores.

Each table consists of two columns of numbers. The first column is the raw test score. The second column is the percentile rank of that particular score or score range. The percentile rank is the percentage of test takers in the sample who obtained scores lower than the corresponding test score. For example, a test taker obtaining a score of 14 on the Analyzing Skills section scored in the 88th percentile. This means that the applicant or employee scored higher than 88% of the test takers in the norm sample.

With regard to evaluating the Writing Sample section, before the applicant/employee takes a test, you should determine the writing skills necessary for successful performance of the position being filled. Once the minimal writing skills have been established, you can evaluate the Writing Sample section to determine whether the applicant/employee has the necessary skills.



Table 1
Analyzing Skills

Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
19+	100
18	99
17	98
16	95
15	92
14	88
13	83
12	77
11	69
10	59
9	49
8	37
7	24
6	13
5	7
4	3
3	2
2 or less	1

Average Score	10
Standard Deviation	3.52
Number of Participants	5072



Table 2
Proofreading Skills

Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
18+	100
17	99
16	98
15	95
14	91
13	87
12	81
11	73
10	65
9	57
8	48
7	40
6	32
5	26
4	20
3	15
2	11
1	8
0	5
-1	3
-2 or less	1

Average Score 9
Standard Deviation 4.53
Number of Participants 4885



Table 3
Filing Skills

Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
20	100
19	99
18	97
17	94
16	91
15	87
14	82
13	78
12	72
11	66
10	59
9	53
8	47
7	42
6	37
5	31
4	26
3	20
2	14
1	9
0	3

Average Score 9
Standard Deviation 5.31
Number of Participants 4969



Table 4
Math Skills

Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
20	100
19	98
18	97
17	95
16	92
15	86
14	81
13	72
12	61
11	48
10	36
9	27
8	18
7	11
6	6
5	4
4	2
3 or less	1

Average Score	12
Standard Deviation	3.48
Number of Participants	4953



Table 5
Checking Skills

Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
20	100
19	89
18	72
17	55
16	42
15	31
14	22
13	15
12	9
11	6
10	3
9	2
8 or less	1

Average Score	17
Standard Deviation	2.87
Number of Participants	4814



Table 6
Clerical Skills

Total Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
89+	100
85-88	99
82-84	98
81	97
80	96
79	96
78	95
77	94
76	93
75	92
74	91
73	89
72	88
71	87
70	85
69	84
68	82
67	80
66	77
65	75
64	73
63	71
62	68
61	65
60	63
59	60
58	57
57	54
56	52
55	49
54	46
53	44
52	41
51	38
50	35

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Table 6
Clerical Skills (continued)

Total Test Score	Corresponding Percentile
49	32
48	30
47	27
46	25
45	23
44	20
43	18
42	16
41	14
40	12
39	11
38	10
37	8
36	7
35	6
34	5
32-33	4
29-31	3
27-28	2
26 or less	1

Average Score 56
Standard Deviation 13.73
Number of Participants 4396



You can use the information in Tables 1 through 6 as a guide in selecting the best job candidate; however, we strongly recommend that you collect and validate your own test data. The applicant/employee pool in your organization may differ from the study sample presented in this manual. Factors such as geographic location, business category and job responsibilities may have a significant effect on test scores.

One way to develop your own norms and benchmarks is to administer the Clerical Skills Test to your current employees. This will allow you to compare the scores of your top performers with those of your less-productive employees. This information then can serve as a guide during your applicant evaluation process. In addition, if you can establish and document that, in general, high scorers on specific sections are also your better performing employees, this can serve as an initial step in establishing the validity of the Clerical Skills Test within your organization.

If you do administer the Clerical Skills Test to your employees for establishing company-specific norms, make sure your employees understand that the results of your study will be used for norm development only and that their employment status will in no way be affected by their scores.

The EEOC and the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures recommend that job analyses be performed in conjunction with validation studies to determine the job-relatedness of each test and other selection tools used throughout the hiring process. It is the employer's responsibility to periodically monitor its employment screening process to ensure that it is fair and valid.



Giving Feedback and Discussing Test Scores

Providing feedback to test takers is a delicate process that should be taken seriously. Test takers are entitled to accurate and honest feedback. Note that communicating test scores to test takers may not be a good idea because they may lack sufficient knowledge about statistics and psychological measurements to interpret the results. Your organization should develop a procedure so test takers can be told what the next step in the hiring process is, regardless of their score on the Clerical Skills Test or any other test. You should emphasize that the test results are only one of the criteria used to make selection or promotion decisions. Remind the applicant that there are many people applying for the same position, and that each applicant will be considered based on the extent to which his/her entire set of qualifications and experience matches the position's requirements. The test score is only one such measurement.

Blaming a test for the rejection of an applicant should not be done. Hiring decisions never should be based solely on any single test score. It is the interviewer's responsibility to review all of the information gathered from the various components of the screening process, such as the employment application, the interview, reference checks and other tests, to formulate a decision about the applicant's match to the position. Feeling that one is the victim of a single test score may provoke unnecessary resentment on the applicant's part.

The employer assumes full responsibility for the proper use of the Clerical Skills Test as recommended in this manual. This includes establishing job-relatedness to the job in question. If you have any questions about the proper use of employment tests, contact an employment testing specialist.



Validity

Effective applicant/employee evaluation procedures need to be valid. Validity can be defined as the extent to which the measure helps in predicting job performance. In other words, validity can be conceptualized as to whether there is a relationship between test scores and job performance. The research studies described next have been conducted to determine the validity of the Clerical Skills Test.

The kind of validation design conducted here is known as concurrent validation. A professionally conducted validation study is acknowledged to be an acceptable means of test validation as described by the federal government's Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. Essentially, this approach requires that the test be administered to current employees and, concurrently, data on the job performance of these employees be gathered. If the test is valid, one would expect a statistically significant correlation between individual test scores and job performance. In other words, those employees who score highly on the test would be those who also perform best on the job; those who do poorly on the test would be likely to receive poor job performance evaluations.

Validity Study #1

The Clerical Skills Test was administered to 113 employees employed in a variety of positions (e.g., secretary, file clerk, accounting clerk, shipping and receiving clerk, marketing coordinators) in 12 organizations. Supervisors were asked to rate the study participants on six aspects of job performance, including overall job performance. These six performance measures are presented on the next page.



Performance Measures

	Very Low Level		Average Level			Very High Level	
1. Perceptual Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Attention to small details. Has the ability to verify and/or match letters and/or numbers (e.g., addresses, account numbers, invoices, purchase orders) quickly and accurately. Makes few mistakes when working with numbers and/or letters.							
2. Analyzing Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Can quickly and accurately read and interpret information presented in the form of tables and spreadsheets.							
3. Proofreading Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to identify errors in spelling, punctuation, phrasing and capitalization. Makes few errors when composing letters or memos.							
4. Math Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to perform basic computations, including adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, using decimals and percentages.							
5. Filing Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ability to quickly and accurately file or store information or merchandise in alphabetical or numerical order.							
6. Overall Job Performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Performs clerical aspects of the job effectively and efficiently.							

Correlation analyses were conducted between test scores and job performance ratings to determine the extent to which the five subtests that make up the Clerical Skills Test (C.S.T.) predicted various aspects of job performance. Table 7 shows the significant correlations between individual section scores and supervisor evaluations. These correlations indicate that those who scored highly on an individual test section also tended to receive high evaluations on various aspects of job performance from his/her supervisor.



Table 7
Correlation Between C.S.T.
and Job Performance Ratings – Validity Study #1

C.S.T.	Job Performance Rating	Validity Coefficient	Significance Level	N
Analyzing Skills	Math Skills	.24	p<.02	101
	Overall Performance	.19	p<.05	112
Proofreading Skills	Perceptual Skills	.18	p<.06*	110
	Proofreading Skills	.27	p<.007	103
	Overall Performance	.18	p<.06*	110
Filing Skills	Analyzing Skills	.25	p<.02	92
	Math Skills	.31	p<.003	100
	Filing Skills	.27	p<.007	105
	Overall Performance	.24	p<.02	111
Math Skills	Math Skills	.22	p<.03	101
Checking Skills	Proofreading Skills	.30	p<.003	103
	Overall Performance	.17	p<.09*	110
Total Score	Analyzing Skills	.25	p<.02	88
	Proofreading Skills	.20	p<.05	100
	Math Skills	.27	p<.009	96
	Overall Performance	.19	p<.05	107

Note: N equals the number of participants in the analysis.

*Correlation approaches .05 level of statistical significance.



Validity Study #2

To demonstrate that the Clerical Skills Test subtests measure skills that are related to intelligence and logical thinking, 47 of the employees who participated in Validity Study #1 were asked to complete the HR•Assessments® Personnel Ability Test. The Personnel Ability Test has proven to be an accurate measure of overall intelligence. Scores on the sections of the Clerical Skills Test were correlated with scores obtained on the Personnel Ability Test. Results indicated a strong relationship between all sections of the Clerical Skills Test and the Personnel Ability Test (see Table 8). In other words, each section of the Clerical Skills Test was found to be strongly associated with cognitive ability, or intelligence. In addition, a statistically significant correlation was found between Personnel Ability Test scores and the total score on the Clerical Skills Test ($r=.72$, $p<.001$). Thus, an individual's total score on the Clerical Skills Test can be said to be highly indicative of his/her intelligence.

Table 8
Correlation Between C.S.T.
and the Personnel Ability Test – Validity Study #2

C.S.T.	Validity Coefficient	Significance Level	N
Analyzing Skills	.51	$p < .001$	47
Proofreading Skills	.67	$p < .001$	46
Filing Skills	.47	$p < .001$	46
Math Skills	.64	$p < .001$	47
Checking Skills	.63	$p < .001$	47
Total Score	.72	$p < .001$	45

Note: N equals the number of participants in the analysis.

The research presented above strongly suggests that the Clerical Skills Test is a valid predictor of an individual's ability to perform basic clerical functions. Employees/applicants who score highly on the test are more likely to perform the following tasks quickly and accurately: verifying information presented in spreadsheet or chart format, proofreading written materials, filing by name and numerical order, performing basic math functions, and checking two pieces of information to ensure they match each other.

Incorporating this test into your selection process for positions requiring the skills mentioned above will add objectivity to your decision-making process and will help you hire the best candidates for your organization.

While HR•Assessments were designed to help predict various aspects of human behavior, score results are presented in terms of probabilities. False Positives and False Negatives are expected. EDI and the test developer are not liable for test taker, applicant or employee behaviors.

To order the Clerical Skills Test or any other HR•Assessments® product, or if you have any questions, call toll-free 800-264-0074.