



Register of Competence in Occupational Testing

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Incorporated by Royal Charter
Registered Charity No 229642

General Information Pack

Certificate of Competence in
Occupational Testing (Test Administration)



Psychological Testing Centre
www.psychtesting.org.uk

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Psychological Testing Centre

The Society has recently established a Psychological Testing Centre (PTC) to consolidate its activities in the area of psychological testing. As part of the services offered by the Centre the Society has developed the PTC Online website which will provide information, guidance and links to test takers, test users and test publishers alike. The website can be found at: <http://www.psychtesting.org.uk>

Training

To obtain a Test Administration Certificate you must first undertake training and then have your competence affirmed by a Level A Assessor. In many cases Trainers are also Assessors, but not necessarily so.

A list of Training Course Providers is published on the website, and in each issue of the *Selection & Development Review*. A list of Assessors is also obtainable from the PTC's website or from the Society's office. Before starting any training, you should check with the Trainer that the course will lead to eligibility for the issue of a Certificate, and that the Assessor holds a current Level A Assessor's Certificate.

The benefits of the Scheme

The main benefits of the scheme are that it:

- provides the test administrator with a clear specification of what he/she needs to know and be able to do in order to administer ability and/or personality tests properly;
- provides the students on training courses with a set of specific objectives which they can match against the content of their training course;
- provides evidence of qualification which should be 'transferable' between various providers of training in testing and between the various publishers and other suppliers of test materials - as its form and content is not dependent on specific tests, publishers or trainers;
- provides national certification of competence in test administration, which employers will be encouraged to recognise as necessary for the correct administration of psychological tests (under the supervision of a holder of a Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing Level A) within their organisations. If employers can be encouraged to stipulate that test administration may only be carried out in their organisations by or under the direction of suitably qualified people, there should be significant improvements in professional standards in testing.
- If a person holding a Test Administration Certificate subsequently decided to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for Level A or Level B qualifications they would be able to use their Test Administration Certificate as a stepping stone. Those possessing a Test Administration Certificate will not need to be re-assessed on the relevant units of Level A or Level B.

To apply for a Test Administration Certificate

Once you have completed a training course you will need to have the Affirmation of Competence (on the back of the application form) completed by one or more Assessor. Assessors are Chartered Psychologists who hold either a Statement or Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing and have had their assessment methods verified for Level A. The completed Affirmation should then be returned to the Society. Please note applicants who have not completed a recent training course in test administration can approach an Assessor to have their competences affirmed. The applicant must satisfy the Assessor that they have demonstrated competences in **each** of the units and elements of the Test Administration Certificate **within three years of the date of application**.

If you are a Chartered Psychologist with a current Practising Certificate, there will be no charge for the Test Administration Certificate. If you are not a Chartered Psychologist holding a current Practising Certificate, please enclose payment of £50 with your application. If you want your name to be entered on the Register of Competence in Occupational Testing, please enclose £20 for the first year's subscription together with your payment for a Certificate if applicable.

Please note that all holders of Level A or Level B Statements or Certificates of Competence will have been assessed as competent in Test Administration. They do not need to apply for this new certificate. The Test Administration Certificate is designed for those who currently operate as administrators, or who intend to do so, and who want only a qualification in test administration.

Certification Scheme – background and explanation

Preamble

Following the success of the Level A Certification Scheme, which has become the industry standard for test users in the occupational area, it has long been appreciated that a separate certification scheme would be appropriate to cover the competences required solely to administer and score tests, i.e. excluding test choice, interpretation and feedback. While these competences form part of the Level A standards it is recognised that test users often delegate these particular roles to colleagues who work under their supervision.

The Level A Verifiers group were tasked by the Test Standards Committee to describe the competences required by test administrators. Following discussion and consultation with test users these were put forward to, and agreed by, the Test Standards Committee.

The need for Certification arrangements

Competent test administration and scoring is critical to the successful use of psychological tests. The use of the most appropriate psychological test will be invalidated if the test is poorly administered or scored inaccurately. Equally competent administration impacts directly on the candidate's experience of taking tests.

The Certification arrangements ensure clarity in describing the requisite standards of competence to be met by test administrators and establish the minimum standards for the training of test administrators.

The Certificate provides a means of recognising those that are competent, such that others may have a means of distinguishing the competent from the incompetent. This is particularly relevant in situations where the test administrator works at a distance from the Level A qualified test user.

While the current scheme focuses on the administration of tests in occupational psychology, the Society anticipates that it will provide a model for ensuring standards in psychological test administration in all areas of application.

General outline of the Certification Scheme

The scheme provides an agreed set of standards relating to an individual's ability:

- to administer and score psychological tests fairly and effectively within one or more of those areas of application covered by the Society's Division of Occupational Psychology; and
- to adhere to the Codes of Practice and professional conduct defined by the Society and other relevant bodies.

The standards have been designed to fulfil a number of functions, including:

- the provision of criteria which may be used in assessing an individual's competence to administer and score psychological tests;
- guidance for those who may wish to employ users of tests or who may be approached by users or purveyors of tests.

Detailed specification of standards of competence cover the following areas:

- Relevant underpinning knowledge: e.g. the nature of psychological tests and sufficient understanding of psychometrics to understand the rationale behind the way tests are administered and scored.
- Task skills relating to the performance of relevant activities: test administration and scoring.
- Task management skills: e.g. ensuring the smooth running of test sessions, maintaining the security of materials.
- Contingency management skills: to deal with problems and difficulties, e.g. breakdown in routines as well as unpredictable occurrences, dealing with candidate's questions within the test session.
- Instrumental skills: general knowledge of types of tests and their varying modes of delivery as well as specific knowledge of the tests used.

Outline of procedures

A checklist of competences for test administration appears later in this pack. This checklist defines the major set of categories of knowledge and skills relating to the administration and scoring of psychological tests and defines the minimum standards required for competent performance.

Who will be responsible for assessing an individual's competence?

Assessment is the responsibility of a Chartered Psychologist who is also a Verified Level A Assessor.

To whom does this scheme apply?

Any person wishing to administer and score psychological tests in an occupational setting whether they are psychologists or non-psychologists. In this context 'psychologist' refers to any person eligible for Graduate Membership of the Society, not just to Chartered Psychologists.

The new certification arrangement for test administrators will provide such evidence of competence for those people who do not currently wish to or need to become full test users.

How will the standards be maintained?

By providing an explicit set of criteria for judging competence, the system should lead to more uniform standards across training courses. However, it should be noted that the criteria do not stipulate how the training should be carried out, but rather what people should know and be able to do to be a competent test administrator.

Finally, control is exercised by the Society by the fact that the Chartered Psychologist who completes and signs the Checklist is accountable to the Society. This accountability is for their own actions. Actual responsibility for poor test administration and scoring must lie with the test administrator and the test user with whom they work.

Verification of assessment methods

An existing system is in place to verify the assessment materials and activities used by Assessors for the Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing, and as the Test Administration Certificate comprises a modified subset of those Units of Competence (see Section 7), it is intended that those same Assessors should also affirm applicants for the Test Administration Certificate.

The verification process, which was set up to encourage the development of nationwide standards for the use of tests in occupational settings, considers only the assessment materials and activities used by the Assessors. It does not consider the methods of training of the Assessor.

Assessors are all Chartered Psychologists who also hold a Statement or Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing, and who are obliged to abide by the Code of Conduct for Chartered Psychologists.

Once their verification has been completed, Assessors in Occupational Testing (Level A) are issued with an Assessor's Certificate (Level A) which confirms that their assessment materials and activities have been verified by The British Psychological Society. These Certificates must be available for inspection by applicants.

Because of its voluntary nature, the scheme can work only with the goodwill and support of others outside the Society, in particular the test publishers. The Society reserves its position to make changes and introduce additional procedures for monitoring and maintaining standards if necessary.

How does the Administration Certification procedure operate?

Timing

The scheme will commence in 2003 and is additional to the scheme for certifying Competence in Occupational Testing introduced in 1991 (i.e. those holding a Statement or Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing (Level A or B) have already been certified as competent in Test Administration).

Normal conditions for Certification

Any person who can provide 'proof of general competence' is eligible to receive a Certificate and, in addition if they so wish, to have their name placed on a Register of Competence in Occupational Testing on payment of the relevant fees.

Proof of general competence is provided by production to the Society of the Affirmation of Competence form on which a signature from a 'qualified person' has been obtained against each of the units on the list. This checking off procedure is

known as an 'Affirmation of Competence'. Advisory notes to Chartered Psychologists who are intending to sign an 'Affirmation' appear later in this booklet.

A 'qualified person' for this purpose is a Chartered Psychologist who holds a valid Level A Assessor's Certificate.

Test use

The Society is encouraging test publishers and distributors to supply relevant tests for use in occupational settings only to people who hold a Statement or Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing Level A or B. A certificated Test Administrator is expected to be working under the supervision of a certificated Level A or B Occupational Tester who will themselves be responsible for test ordering.

The Register of Competence in Occupational Testing

The Society makes positive efforts to encourage employers only to use competent Occupational Testers and Test Administrators, and the Register is their basic source guide to check the credentials of individuals they intend to consult or employ. It is also a source of public information as to whether individuals using tests as Occupational Testers or Test Administrators are competent to do so.

The *Selection and Development Review (SDR)* is published six times a year under the aegis of the Society's Division of Occupational Psychology. Registrants automatically receive *SDR* free and are encouraged to contribute to the publication. The *SDR* is one way for competent Test Administrators and Test Users to keep in touch with wider developments in the field.

Registrant's details are held on the Society's database. Details are available to enquirers who mention a person by name, but not available as part of a more general listing. If a Test Administrator wishes to offer their services as a test administrator then they can join the Directory of Testers. Details of this are available on the website.

Names and addresses of Chartered Psychologists who are verified Level A Assessors are given on the appropriate list of Assessors.

If you wish to check if a person is or is not on the Register, or you would like a list of Assessors in Occupational Testing, you can visit the website at <http://www.psychtesting.org.uk> or contact the PTC desk on direct line no: 0116 252 9530.

Introduction to the Checklist

This Checklist defines the knowledge and skills that The British Psychological Society considers you should have in order to administer psychological tests fairly, properly and in a professional manner. It covers the minimum requirement for administering most group ability tests, self-report personality inventories and a range of career guidance instruments.

Test administration covers the setting up of test rooms, introducing the test to candidates, giving them the test and marking their answer sheets. It does not cover choosing tests nor interpreting or explaining the results to candidates or others.

Satisfying the requirements set out in the standards does not give you the right to obtain or use whatever materials you wish, nor can it be counted as a formal qualification in psychology. Test administrators are normally expected to be working under the supervision of a fully qualified test user. The test user will be responsible for obtaining test materials and for ensuring they are properly used.

As a test administrator, you remain personally responsible for ensuring that you do not act outside your own areas of competence; you are responsible for those parts of the testing process which are devolved to you by the test user.

The standards cover four Units of Competence. Anyone who meets the requirements of all these Units will be eligible for the award of the Society's Test Administration Certificate.

Those gaining the Test Administration Certificate who wish to proceed to the Level A Certificate need not complete the Level A elements 1.1, 1.2, 1.5 and 1.6, nor Units 5 and 7. Those who then wish to proceed to the Level B Certificate need not complete the Level B elements 3.1, 3.2 or 3.5. The remaining elements for Level A or Level B must be completed.

Checklist of Competences in Occupational Testing (Test Administration)

TA UNIT 1. The nature of psychological testing

Can the assessee:

- TA 1.1 describe the characteristics of a psychological test (* See page 9);
- TA 1.2 distinguish between tests of attainment, ability and aptitude, personality questionnaires and interest inventories;
- TA 1.3 give examples of each type of test as used in occupational psychology.

TA UNIT 2. Planning for Test Administration

Can the assessee:

- TA 2.1 plan test sessions with due regard to the maximum number of candidates who can be assessed in one session and the maximum duration of each session;
- TA 2.2 ensure that any equipment (e.g. computer) is operating correctly and sufficient test materials are available for use by the candidate;
- TA 2.3 ensure, where re-usable materials are being used, that they are carefully checked for stray marks or notes which may have been made by previous candidates;
- TA 2.4 arrange a suitable quiet location for the testing and organise seating and desk space to maximise comfort and minimise possibilities of cheating, taking into account any special needs candidates may have in this respect;
- TA 2.5 inform the candidates of the time and place well in advance and ensure they are adequately prepared – where relevant – for what they will be required to do and why.

TA UNIT 3. The Test Administration

Can the assessee:

- TA 3.1 brief candidates on the purpose of the test session and put them at their ease while maintaining an appropriately businesslike atmosphere;
- TA 3.2 enter the candidate's personal details in the test session log, together with relevant details of what assessment instruments were used, and what provision was made for any special needs;
- TA 3.3 use standard test instructions and present them clearly and intelligibly to the candidates;
- TA 3.4 hand out the tests and check all candidates have the necessary materials;
- TA 3.5 provide the candidates with sufficient time to work through the example test items and review this;
- TA 3.6 make careful checks to ensure proper use of the answer sheet and response procedures;
- TA 3.7 deal appropriately with any questions which arise without compromising the purpose of the test;
- TA 3.8 explain any time limits and ensure that during the test candidates maintain silence to avoid distracting others;
- TA 3.9 in the case of tests of 'typical performance' (e.g. personality questionnaires, interest inventories) demonstrate the ability to administer the instrument, showing due awareness of the need to establish positive rapport with the candidates, encourage the adoption of an honest open response and set an appropriate pace for the administration;

- TA 3.10 make clear that once the test has begun no further questions can be answered;
- TA 3.11 adhere strictly to test-specific instructions concerning pacing and timing;
- TA 3.12 collect all materials when each test is completed;
- TA 3.13 carry out a careful check against the inventory of materials to ensure that everything has been returned;
- TA 3.14 thank the candidates for their participation when the final test has been completed, and explain the next stage (if any) in their assessment to them;
- TA 3.15 lock all materials away in a secure place;

TA UNIT 4. Scoring and recording processes

Can the assessee:

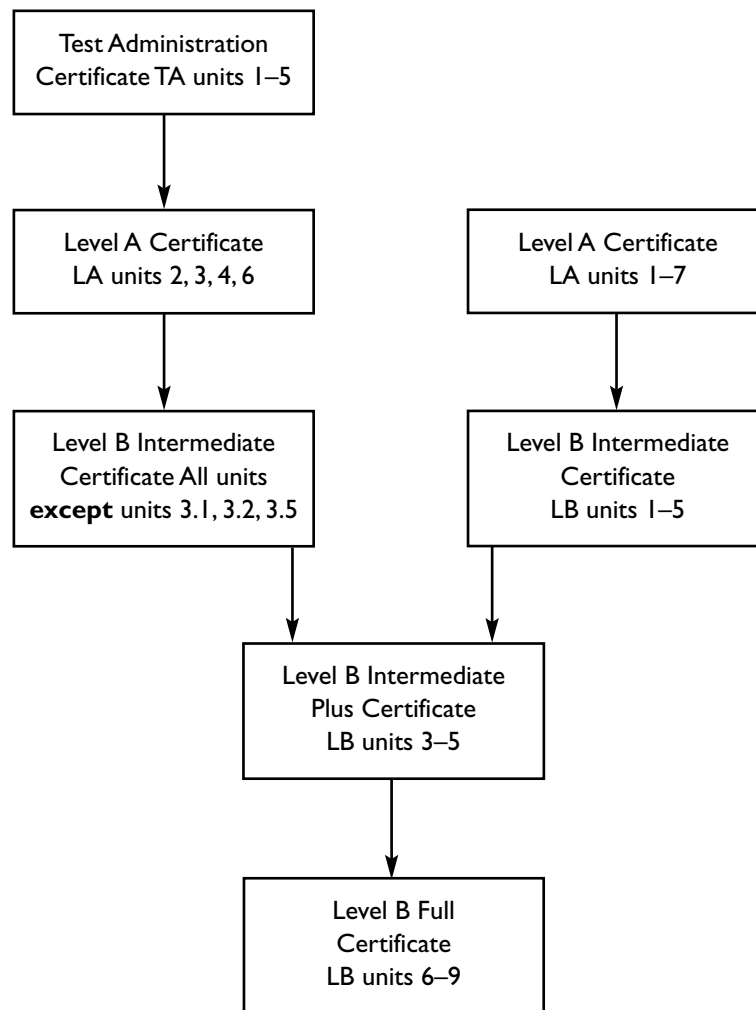
- TA 4.1 make final entries in the test session log - including notes on any particular problems which arose during the session which might have affected a candidate's performance;
- TA 4.2 visually check answer sheets for ambiguous markings which could be obscured by scoring keys or cause problems with machine scoring systems;
- TA 4.3 demonstrate accurate use of a range of different hand-scoring keys and 'self-scoring' forms;
- TA 4.4 accurately transfer raw score marks to record cards;
- TA 4.5 use norm tables to find relevant percentile and/or standard scores and transfer these to the candidates' record cards.

TA UNIT 5. Maintaining security and confidentiality of the test materials and the test data

Can the assessee ensure that:

- TA 5.1 clear descriptions are given to the candidates prior to their assessment concerning how their results are to be used, who will be given access to them, and for how long they will be retained;
- TA 5.2 all test data are kept in a secure place which is not accessible to people other than authorised personnel;
- TA 5.3 all test materials are kept in a secure place which is not accessible to people other than authorised testers;
- TA 5.4 all mandatory requirements relating to candidate's and client's rights and obligations under the Data Protection Act are clearly explained to both parties;
- TA 5.5 where data are stored on computer, the conditions of the Data Protection Act are abided by;
- TA 5.6 potential test candidates are not provided with prior access to test materials other than those specifically designed to help candidates prepare for their assessment.

Certificates of Competence in Occupational Testing



* Please note that Test Administration Unit TAI-1 is a new element.

UNIT TAI. Element 1 (Describe the characteristics of a psychological test)

Evidence requirements:

The assessor should have evidence that the assessee appreciates that a psychological test can be distinguished from other assessment methods.

The assessee should be able to explain that psychological testing:

- is a scientific method for measuring psychological characteristics;
- comprises an organised collection of test items administered in a standardised way;
- is fallible and subject to a margin of error, error potentially arising from the circumstances of administration (including scoring procedures) and the condition of the test candidate.

Examples of appropriate methods of assessment:

Worksheet or test

Notes for Assessors and Trainers

General notes

No formal assessment procedures have been specified, but the Society does publish *Guidance for Assessors*, updates of which are announced in *Selection & Development Review*.

No formal training requirements have been specified.

Assessments of competence must be carried out by a Chartered Psychologist who is a verified Level A Assessor and who should, normally, base his or her judgements of competence on directly observed experience of the person's performance in realistic test administration situations. Applicants can ask verified Level A Assessors to retrospectively sign off their competence in test administration based on relevant experience they have gained within the last three years. In both cases the applicant must satisfy the Assessor that they have demonstrated competences in each of the units and elements of the Test Administration Certificate within three years of the date of application.

An Assessor must initial each item on the checklist. Where all the items on the checklist for a Unit have been initialled, the Affirmation of Competence in that Unit should be signed and dated.

Training courses

Chartered Psychologists who direct training courses in Test Administration need to have obtained Statement or Certificates of Competence in Occupational Testing and have had their assessment methods verified by the Society for Level A.

If all competencies are covered, the course may be advertised as:

'Providing training leading to fulfilment of the requirements for The British Psychological Society Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing (Test Administration).'

If some but not all of the competencies are covered, the course may be advertised as:

'Providing training leading to partial fulfilment of the requirements for The British Psychological Society Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing (Test Administration).'

Courses that are not under the direction of a Chartered Psychologist may not make any claims relating to The British Psychological Society Certificate.

Good practice

This section summarises general advice accumulated by Verifiers in the course of their work, based on the practices of Assessors who appear to be successfully affirming candidates for the Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing (Level A).

- Affirmation of competence is central to the certification process. The Test Administration Certificate will be awarded on the basis of proof of competence in the elements specified. There is no automatic grant of the Certificate solely on the basis of course attendance in previous years.
- The Assessor should acquire a thorough appreciation of the assessee's workplace practices as a basis for assessing their competence especially where these form the sole basis for the affirmation of competence in test administration. Where more formal training programme is provided, the workplace practice may take a secondary role.
- Assessors should encourage the use (in training) of tests and materials from a range of sources and publishers, since it is intended that holders of the Test Administration Certificate will have a wide appreciation of different test types currently available and in general use.
- In developing competence in the administration of tests, assessee's should appreciate that tests normally form part of a number of possible methods that may be deployed in selection, assessment and guidance. In this context, it would be beneficial to test administrators to be fully briefed on the purpose of the testing and the role the test data plays in any subsequent decision-making affecting a client and/or candidate.

Code of good practice for Occupational Testing

People who use psychological tests in occupational settings are expected by The British Psychological Society to adhere to the following code. This includes ensuring that the Administrators, for whom they are responsible, are aware of where the code affects their practice.

Responsibility for competence

- Take steps to ensure that they are able to meet all the standards of competence defined by the Society for the relevant Certificate(s) of Competence in Occupational Testing, and to endeavour, where possible, to develop and enhance their competence as test users.
- Monitor the limits of their competence in psychometric testing and not to offer services which lie outside their competence nor encourage or cause others to do so.

Procedures and techniques

- Use tests only in conjunction with other assessment methods and only when their use can be supported by the available technical information.
- Administer, score and interpret tests in accordance with the instructions provided by the test distributor and to the standards defined by the Society.
- Store test materials securely and to ensure that no unqualified person has access to them.
- Keep test results securely, in a form suitable for developing norms, validation, and monitoring for bias.

Client welfare

- Obtain the informed consent of potential test takers, making sure that they understand why the tests will be used, what will be done with their results and who will be provided with access to them.
- Ensure that all test takers are well informed and well prepared for the test session, and that all have had access to practice or familiarisation materials where appropriate.
- Give due consideration to factors such as gender, ethnicity, age, disability and special needs, educational background and level of ability in using and interpreting the results of tests.
- Provide the test taker and other authorised persons with feedback about the results in a form which makes clear the implications of the results, is clear and in a style appropriate to their level of understanding.
- Ensure test results are stored securely, are not accessible to unauthorised or unqualified persons and are not used for any purposes other than those agreed with the test taker.

Please remove complete application form by removing the centre staples before submitting to the address shown



Certificate of Competence in Occupational Testing Test Administration

The completed application form must bear **original** signatures both of the applicant and the Assessor(s)

Surname..... Title

Forenames (in full) Date of Birth

Address

.....

.....

..... Postcode

Tel No. Work Home.....

Fax No. Work Home.....

E-mail Work Home.....

Are you a Member of the BPS? YES/NO

BPS Membership no. (if applicable).....

FEES (please tick appropriate boxes)	£ Please enter relevant amount
Certificate of Competence (Test Administration)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chartered Psychologist with Practising Certificate	Nil
<input type="checkbox"/> All others	£50
Entry on Register of Competence	
<input type="checkbox"/> All applicants (first year's fee) <i>NB: It is not possible to have an entry on the Register without applying for a Certificate</i>	£20
Total Due £	

I hereby apply for a Test Administration Certificate.

Signature: Date:

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Method of Payment

I wish to pay for:

- £50 for Certificate of Competence (Test Administration);
 £20 for entry on the Register of Competence.

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD PAYMENT SLIP

Please charge my Credit/Debit Card (complete the details below)

Total Amount £

Please write in amount

Name of Cardholder:

Card Number:

Card Issuer: Visa Amex Mastercard Delta Switch
Please indicate

Valid From: Expiry Date:

Issue No:
(mandatory for switch only)

Signed: Dated:

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE/STERLING BANK DRAFT

I enclose a cheque for £
(made payable to The British Psychological Society)

NB. If you do not have a Sterling bank account, and do not wish to pay by credit/debit card, please make payment by Sterling money order drawn on a UK bank. If you use this method, please allow an additional 10% to cover the cost of currency conversion.

REQUEST FOR INVOICE

Please send invoice to

Purchase Order No:

APPLICANT'S FULL NAME.....

Affirmation of Competence in Occupational Testing (Test Administration)

Note to Assessors:

Assessors may be asked to affirm competences in Test Administration for applicants who have not recently completed a training course. In these cases the emphasis is on the applicant to satisfy the Assessor that they have demonstrated competences in each of the units and elements of Test Administration within three years of the date of application.

Assessors should not normally be close relatives of applicants, or members of their immediate household, or their business partners. In other words, they should not have close personal connections with the applicant. Where such connections do exist, they must be disclosed. Assessors must have had either provisional or full verification of their assessment methods for Level A.

TA UNIT 1. The nature of psychological testing

Assessor's name Date

Signature..... Statement/Certificate no

TA UNIT 2. Planning for Test Administration

Assessor's name Date

Signature..... Statement/Certificate no

TA UNIT 3. Test Administration

Assessor's name Date

Signature..... Statement/Certificate no

TA UNIT 4. Scoring and recording processes

Assessor's name Date

Signature..... Statement/Certificate no

TA UNIT 5. Maintaining security and confidentiality of the test materials and test data

Assessor's name Date

Signature..... Statement/Certificate no

THE SOCIETY

The British Psychological Society was founded in 1901 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1965.

Its principal objects are to:

- promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied;
- promote the efficiency and usefulness of Members of the Society by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge;
- maintain a Code of Conduct for the guidance of Members;
- compel the observation of strict rules of professional conduct;
- maintain a Register of Chartered Psychologists.

The Society has more than 34,000 members and:

- has branches in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales;
- accredits nearly 700 undergraduate degrees;
- accredits nearly 100 postgraduate professional training courses;
- accredits higher degrees, in partnership with the Open University Validation Service;
- confers Fellowships for distinguished achievements;
- confers Chartered Status for professionally qualified psychologists;
- awards grants to support research and scholarship;
- publishes 10 scientific journals;
- publishes books, CD-ROMS, videos and other educational resources;
- publishes *The Psychologist* each month;
- publishes newsletters for its constituent groups;
- maintains a website;
- has international links with psychological societies and associations throughout the world;

- provides an information service for the news media and the public;
- has an Ethics Committee;
- provides service to the Disciplinary Board;
- maintains a Register of more than 9,500 Chartered Psychologists;
- prepares policy statements on matters of social policy;
- holds conferences, workshops, continuing professional development and training events;
- recognises distinguished contributions to psychological science and practice through individual awards and honours.

The Vision Statement of the Society plans that by 2006:

- there will be 50,000 members;
- the Society will have offices in the major constituent parts of the United Kingdom;
- the public at large will have a clear understanding of psychology as both a research and applied discipline;
- the Society will seek to influence public policy on matters relating to education, health, the family and the community;
- all its members will contribute so that the strengths and diversity of its membership are fully utilised.

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