Selby & Mills

THE EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Employment Product Guide

Selecting loyal, effective, front-line staff with integrity

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Introduction

The Employment Questionnaire helps with the selection of staff for front-line roles that carry little job discretion.

It identifies staff who will be loyal, work productively and effectively in teams, and display integrity in their approach to their work — both on their own and with colleagues. Spin-off benefits include a reduced level of shrinkage.

It offers a range of interview questions that analyse issues such as education, commitment, financial status, likely tenure, ambition, personal responsibility, social adjustment, and attitudes to authority and theft. You decide what you want to know and the questionnaire provides the answers quickly and efficiently.

The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes to complete, and the applicant is compared with a database of over 3,000 candidates for employment with subsequently-known work records, across a range of hourly-paid and low-discretion activities. A further section flags where responses may be inaccurate — where a candidate may be trying to fake their answers — and suggests questions to raise at interview.

> Use of the questionnaire requires qualification at B.P.S. Level A, or attendance on a one-day training course.

Product description

The questionnaire scores candidates on 10 scales plus a queries scale. The scales are part bio-data and part personality measures. Results are provided on a 10-point scale, based on an initial UK sample of 3,000 people in appropriate employment plus subsequent supplements.

The ten scales (plus queries)

SCALE	WHAT IT INDICATES
Educational Attainments	Broad intellectual standing, based on scholastic and college / university attainment.
Job Tenure	An initial prediction of the likelihood the candidate will stay in post if appointed.
Economic Status	A broad indicator of current income and home-ownership — whether income expectations are realistic and whether they may over-extend.
Security Risk	The likely degree of initial security risk associated with employing the candidate.
Drive and Ambition	The extent to which the candidate is "lean and hungry".
Personal Responsibility	Whether the candidate takes responsibility seriously and will finish what they begin.
Social Adjustment	Whether the candidate can work effectively as a member of a team.
Attitude to Authority	Whether the candidate will do what they are told.
Attitude to Theft	Whether the candidate condones — or may commit — theft at work.

Faking Good	Whether the candidate has responded honestly and consistently (in effect, a lie detector).
Queries	Specific queries about a candidate's responses, for additional questioning at interview.

Development

Development began in 1988 with a major corporate client employing 20,000 full- and part-time staff. The presenting issues were an alarmingly high cost of recruitment, a need to attract the most employable candidates despite a process that averaged six weeks from introduction to offer, and a need to attract candidates for whom tenure was likely so that recruitment cost could be reduced over time.

At that time 45,000 candidates a year were interviewed to hire 10% of that number, and around 90% of those hired would leave each year. Sampling across the organisation identified 10 assessment dimensions — four bio-data based and six personality-measure based — which distinguished high performers from marginal performers, and which form the current Employment Questionnaire.

The product was developed for administration through a computer, because this elicits the most reliable and candid answers, is quicker to complete, and suits people who are not comfortable writing long responses. Consistent, screen-paced administration also removes sources of human error and bias at the front end of selection. In five years of trials, only one person declined for reasons attributable to the presence of a computer.

When to use this product

The dominant use is employment selection, but the questionnaire is also appropriate for some career-development, counselling and performance-review contexts.

Employment selection

The major area of use. It is designed for potential employees with relatively low discretion in their job activity — typically closely-monitored, often hourly-paid roles with short-cycle work (bars, hotels, delivery, counter and retail staff, manufacturing, and roles with many brief encounters). It is also appropriate where there is no attainment data, or where it is difficult to establish a track record (for example, candidates who have recently changed domicile or moved to the country).

Career development, counselling & performance review

Not specifically designed for these, but selected dimensions (personal responsibility, attitude to authority, drive and ambition, social adjustment) can provide a fruitful basis for discussion. As the report is not written for direct candidate feedback, the assessor should guide the conversation and treat indications with appropriate caution, with the candidate's agreement.

> Important: this questionnaire is not designed to decide whether people should be interviewed or considered for employment. It assists the process by assessing a candidate's likely attitude to employment against an appropriate reference group. It is not a substitute for reference checks or the interview, and should not be treated as such. Used sensitively, it adds valuable information to the reliability of selection decisions.

The assessment dimensions

The questionnaire assesses candidates against 10 dimensions. On most, a high score indicates a lower risk.

Educational Attainments

Broad intellectual standing based on school and college / university attainment. Many candidates in the relevant employment group will not have academic qualifications; the scale shows how attainment compares with the reference group. Unusually high or low records are flagged in the queries to explore at interview.

Job Tenure

An initial prediction of employment stability, based on research showing that frequent changes of domicile and job form a pattern likely to continue. A key dimension — a high score indicates low risk; a low score indicates instability.

Economic Status

A broad indicator of income and home-ownership. It evaluates whether income aspirations may exceed what the organisation can satisfy and whether credit commitments may be beyond capacity to repay — a reliable indicator when coupled with an effective interview.

Security Risk

An initial indication of the security risk of employing the individual. Confessed criminal or motoring offences raise the score toward significant risk; a consistent absence of serious legal problems produces a low score. Of interest where security, shrinkage and wastage are a concern.

Drive and Ambition

The extent to which the candidate is "lean and hungry". Low scorers tend to prefer a quiet life; high scorers show drive — useful when seeking supervisors and others who set a positive example.

Personal Responsibility

Whether the candidate takes responsibility seriously and finishes what they begin. High scorers are unlikely to take a "devil-may-care" attitude and may set an impressive example; low scores are more questionable.

Social Adjustment

Whether the candidate works effectively in a team. High scorers are team-oriented and may feel isolated working alone; low scorers prefer largely solitary work, often one task from concept to completion.

Attitude to Authority

Whether the candidate will do what they are told — extremely important in low-discretion roles. Research shows candidates with very positive attitudes to authority are more reliable employees.

Attitude to Theft

Whether the candidate condones theft by colleagues, or may commit opportunist theft. A high score indicates lower risk — of interest where security, productivity and shrinkage are genuine concerns.

Faking Good

Whether the candidate has responded honestly and consistently — in effect a lie detector. A high "faking good" score suggests an artificially positive self-presentation, making this a key measure in this context.

Assessing a candidate

The questionnaire is administered via the internet, with candidates responding on the keyboard to on-screen questions. Prepare a relaxed, uninterrupted environment; explain clearly what the assessment involves and why it is appropriate; and answer any questions reassuringly. Once the candidate begins, leave them to it and discourage further contact — poor conditions and poor administrator discipline can dramatically devalue the assessment. Retain the discretion to pause a session if a candidate appears uncomfortable. At the end, close the system down and explain what happens next.

Validity and reliability

The assessment system was trialled in 1988 on a group of 362 job applicants. The results were used in two ways: to analyse questionnaire performance and set scores for selection decisions (examining candidates for whom English may not be a first language as a distinct group); and to correlate the current selection method's decisions with the results of the revised procedure (point-biserial correlations).

The development has been recorded so that an audit trail exists, and the validation meets the highest current standards in professional psychology. Full analysis tables — questionnaire results, correlation matrices and comparisons of appointed versus rejected candidates — are available on request.

Interpretation and norms

Scores are reported on a 10-point scale and interpreted against an appropriate reference group. Choosing the right norm matters: the wrong reference group can disadvantage a candidate, so care should be taken to select norms suited to the role and population being assessed. We hold a large database of completions and can provide additional norms where enough data exists.

Sample report

The following pages show a sample Employment report for a demonstration candidate.

CONFIDENTIAL

Employment report

for

Sam Sample

Produced by Selby & Mills in partnership with

Example domain

Report Date **Tuesday 31st July 2007**

Norm Group = **General Population**

This report has been prepared with every care and in good faith. However the interpretation arises from the sum of the candidate's choices and preferences in answering a series of self-report inventories, and should therefore be seen purely as indicative of certain trends in their attitudes at that time.

No liability can be accepted by the interpreter or by Selby & Mills Limited.

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Introduction

You recently asked a candidate to complete this questionnaire and the report from that completion is provided below. It is partly the result of the candidate's responses to biographic questions and partly based on their responses to psychometric questions. In both cases you should use it to explore issues further in the interview.

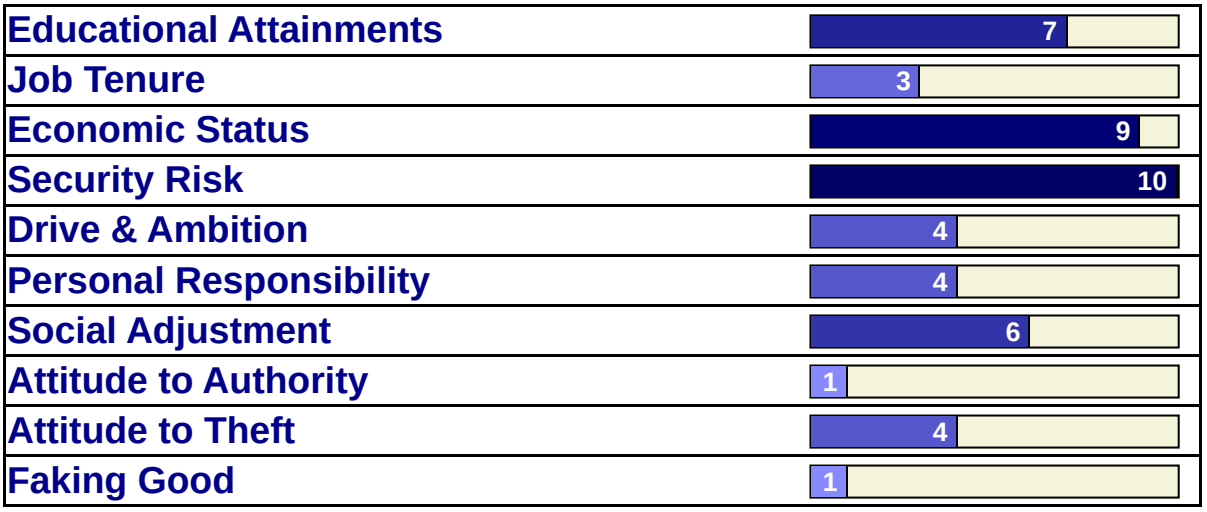
For an explanation of the meaning of the 10 scales which are summarised here, see the User Guide which is available on our web site. You need to be clear about the meaning of the scales if you are to be able to use this report validly and reliably.

The report presents two kinds of information: first, the 10 scale scores are provided on a 1 to 10 (or STEN) scale. If the candidate scores highly (towards 10), this indicates that, on all the scales except 'Security Risk' and 'Faking Good, they responded to the questions consistently with those people in our database who subsequently were judged to be 'effective' and 'productive' employees. Those who score at the lower end on these 8 scales raised questions about their suitability or 'fit' with the job requirements. The reverse applies to 'Security Risk' and 'Faking Good', that is a low score is preferable to a high one. In either case you should explore the areas of doubt concerning their suitability in the interview.

Secondly, we provide below those questions and responses which are indicative of queries concerning their suitability.

Finally, please remember that the assessment is not intended to be used on its own as the basis for an offer or rejection and that it is only suitable for staff with little job discretion and who are working in low margin sectors, such as retail, construction and security, probably on an hourly paid plus overtime basis

Profile



Questionable Responses

The following responses to some of the questions should be examined.

Question:- During this period of 10 years, how many separate periods of employment have been for less than 2 years?
Answer:- Eight or more.

Question:- Were any of your previous jobs similar to the type of work you are now applying for?
Answer:- No.

Question:- Have you had any jobs which have involved daily contact with customers or the general public?
Answer:- No.

Question:- How did you hear about employment opportunities with this organisation?
Answer:- Via the Job Centre or an Employment Agency.

Question:- Have you ever been refused Hire Purchase, a Credit Card, or any other form of personal credit?
Answer:- Yes.

Question:- Do you have any regular personal commitments, or other activities, that might affect your availability for work at particular times or on certain days or dates?
Answer:- Yes.

Question:- Have you ever been declared bankrupt, or made a deed of arrangement or composition with your creditors, or had goods repossessed?
Answer:- Yes.

This is the end of the report.

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