

CODE OF FAIR TESTING PRACTICES

Below is presented our code of fair testing practices. It is not intended to replace guidelines published by the British Psychological Society which, as Chartered Psychologists, we adhere to. It is however a statement of our aims and objectives as a Company and an attempt to provide a brief, non-technical resumé to test users and developers of the principles of good practice. The Code presents standards for test developers and users in five areas:

Developing
/Selecting
Tests

Interpreting
Scores

Striving for
Fairness

Informing
Test Takers

Security of
Information
& Materials

1. DEVELOPING AND SELECTING APPROPRIATE TESTS

To aid test users in selecting appropriate tests test developers (D) should freely supply test users with appropriate information about their products. To this end test developers should:

- D1 Define what each test measures and what the test should be used for. Describe the population(s) for which the test is appropriate and accurately represent the characteristics, usefulness and limitations of each test.
- D2 Provide a detailed technical manual for each test. This should describe the process of test development, explain the relevant measurement concepts at the level of detail that is appropriate for the intended audience(s) and provide evidence that the test meets its intended purpose(s).
- D3 Provide either representative samples or complete copies of test questions, directions, answer sheets, manuals, and score reports to qualified users as required.
- D4 Identify and publish any specialised skills needed to administer each test and to interpret scores correctly.

Similarly, test users (U) should be committed to using only those tests that meet the purpose for which they are to be used and that are appropriate for the intended test-taking populations. To this end test users should:

- U1 First, define the purpose of testing and the population to be tested. Then, select a test for that purpose and population based on a thorough review of the available information. Where possible this should be based on independent test reviews.
- U2 Read the materials provided by test developers and avoid using tests which provide unclear or incomplete information.
- U3 Become familiar with how and when the test was developed and fully understand the technical data which supports the test.
- U4 Examine specimen sets and/or sample questionnaires and test instructions, answer sheets, manuals, and scored reports before selecting a test.

2. INTERPRETING SCORES

Test developers should help users interpret scores correctly. To this end they should:

- D5 Provide timely and easily understood reports that describe test performance clearly and accurately.
- D6 Describe the population(s) represented by any norms or comparison group(s).
- D7 Include within the technical manual clear descriptions of the scales which will enable the user to interpret test scores.
- D8 Only supply tests to users who are qualified to interpret such test scores.
- D9 Indicate within the manual the likely shelf-life of test scores i.e. how long test scores are likely to remain valid.

Similarly test users should make every effort to ensure that they interpret test scores correctly. To this end they should:

- U5 Obtain information about the test and fully understand the psychological characteristic(s) it measures.
- U6 Interpret scores taking into account any major differences between the norms or comparison groups and the actual test takers.
- U7 Only use those tests which they are qualified to administer and interpret.
- U8 Respect the limited shelf-life of most tests and treat test information in respect of when the results were obtained.
- U9 Take into account other relevant information about the test taker which could have a bearing on the characteristics being assessed.
- U10 Compile interpretative reports which are intelligible to the intended reader.

3. STRIVING FOR FAIRNESS

Test developers should strive to make tests that are as fair as possible for test takers of different races, gender, ethnic backgrounds, or disabilities. To this end tests developers should:

- D10 Review and revise test questions and related materials to avoid potentially insensitive content or language.
- D11 When feasible, make appropriately modified forms of tests or administration procedures available for test takers with disabilities. Warn test users of potential problems in using standard norms with modified tests or administration procedures that result in non-comparable scores.
- D12 Actively strive to collect and make available data on the fairness of all published tests.

4. INFORMING TEST TAKERS

Test developers should promote an open and informed discussion about test materials and procedures. To this end test developers should:

- D13 Provide clear test administration instructions, including example test items for completion by test takers.
- D14 Include within the technical manual information which will enable the test user to offer the test taker useful feedback on his/her test results.

Similarly, test users should select and use tests in such a way as to promote equal opportunities. To this end they should:

- U11 Evaluate the procedures used by test developers to avoid potentially insensitive content or language.
- U12 Review the performance of test takers of different races, gender, and ethnic backgrounds when samples of sufficient size are available. Evaluate the extent to which performance differences may have been caused by inappropriate characteristics of the test.
- U13 When necessary and feasible, use appropriately modified forms of tests or administration procedures for test takers with disabilities. Interpret standard norms with care in the light of the modifications that were made.

Similarly test users should obtain informed consent from test takers. To this end test users should:

- U14 Provide the test taker with adequate information regarding the purpose, procedure, duration and likely outcome of the assessment process.
- U15 Offer guidance and support to test takers only in so far as it is consistent with the administration instructions and does not invalidate the assessment process.

5. SECURITY OF TEST INFORMATION

Test developers should ensure that the integrity of test information is maintained. To this end test developers should:

- D15 Limit access to test questions to trained test users who have a legitimate use for the tests
- D16 Ensure that any materials used in the development or validation of the test are returned.
- D17 Maintain copyright on test materials and actively pursue infringements
- D18 Ensure that all identifiable test data collected is kept secure and only used for the purpose that was intended and for which consent has been obtained.
- D19 Avoid publishing any material which undermines the reliability and validity of their tests.

Similarly, test users should:

- U16 Store securely all test booklets and software, restricting access to trained test users.
- U17 Respect the copyright on test materials and inform the developers of any infringements which come to light.
- U18 Ensure that all test data collected is kept secure, is only used for the purpose for which it was intended and for which informed consent was obtained. This should be consistent with data-protection and freedom of information legislation.
- U19 When leaving an organisation make adequate arrangements to secure both test materials and confidential test data.

Note

Many of the statements in the Code refer to the selection of existing tests. However, in customised testing programmes, where test developers have been engaged to construct new tests, the test development process should be designed to help ensure that the completed tests will be in compliance with the Code.

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