



## CASE STUDY: CITY UNIVERSITY LONDON ADMISSIONS – TESTING FOR VALUES

### Project background

Recognising the increasing importance of selecting applicants with the right values and behaviours onto academic courses which lead to vital roles in healthcare, City University London decided to introduce a more robust method of values testing to the admissions process. The purpose of values based recruitment is to ensure that providers of healthcare training attract and select students on the basis that their individual values and behaviours align with the values of the NHS Constitution. Health Education England has subsequently made it a requirement for providers of healthcare training to assess values in their selection of students.

City University London reviewed various options, including a Situational Judgement Test (SJT), but concluded that a Personality Profile assessment would give better reliability. In the search for an appropriate tool, Cambridge Assessment were identified as they had worked with a number of health education providers on the development of a tool for assessing values and behaviours - the Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire (CPSQ). CPSQ assesses a range of behaviours believed to be important for success in healthcare studies and careers (identified in liaison with university medical and healthcare staff), and which can be mapped across to the NHS values. Agreement was reached with Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing Service for the University to take part in the development of a Personality Profile.

### Project aims

City University London wanted to introduce a robust and valid way of testing applicants' values prior to commencing a health pre-registration course at the University. We wanted to enhance our existing recruitment process to ensure we produced high quality graduates with the academic ability, behaviour and values to meet the needs of Health Education England.

### Process

Students from the University joined a four year research project associated with the development of the CPSQ questionnaire. The Admissions Testing Service wanted to assess how a person's values impacted their performance in healthcare training. In order to do this they needed to assess what social psychologist Milton Rokeach termed 'instrumental values': value supporting behaviours or actions through which people demonstrate and live their values. The NHS has a clear statement of its values in the NHS Constitution. However to recruit or train against these values effectively it is useful to define them further in terms of behaviours (instrumental values).

To map out behaviours that support NHS values, CPSQ reports candidate potential against seven generic healthcare competencies. The ability to cope with demands ensures personal effectiveness to deliver on values.

<b>CPSQ competencies</b>	<b>CPSQ competency definition</b>	<b>NHS values</b>
<b>Caring and compassion</b>	People who put others first and respond with kindness to distress. Capable of acting with patience and respect even with the most challenging individuals/patients.	<b>Compassion Respect &amp; dignity Everyone counts</b>
<b>Person-centred communication</b>	Engages with others to develop caring relationships.	
<b>Working well with others</b>	Cooperative and team supportive. Capable of working effectively with others to deliver care.	<b>Working together for patients</b>
<b>Self-management</b>	Strives to be excellent in what they do and backs it up with self-discipline and planning.	<b>Improving lives Commitment to quality of care</b>
<b>Safe practice</b>	Follows guidelines but also possesses a strong sense of social responsibility to alert others if standards are not being met.	
<b>Engagement with learning</b>	Keen to develop understanding and learn. Enthusiastic and creative problem solver.	<b>Commitment to quality of care Improving lives</b>
<b>Coping with demands</b>	People who are resilient and can manage their emotions to consistently deliver care and work well with others.	<b>All values</b>

CPSQ is based on the well-known and well researched Five Factor model of personality. Assessments based on this model tend to predict 'real-world' behaviour.

CPSQ measures 13 individual behavioural style dimensions, which are grouped into five main styles: Thinking, Study/Work, Coping, Social, and Personal. The diagram overleaf illustrates the how the individual behavioural styles are grouped into the main styles.



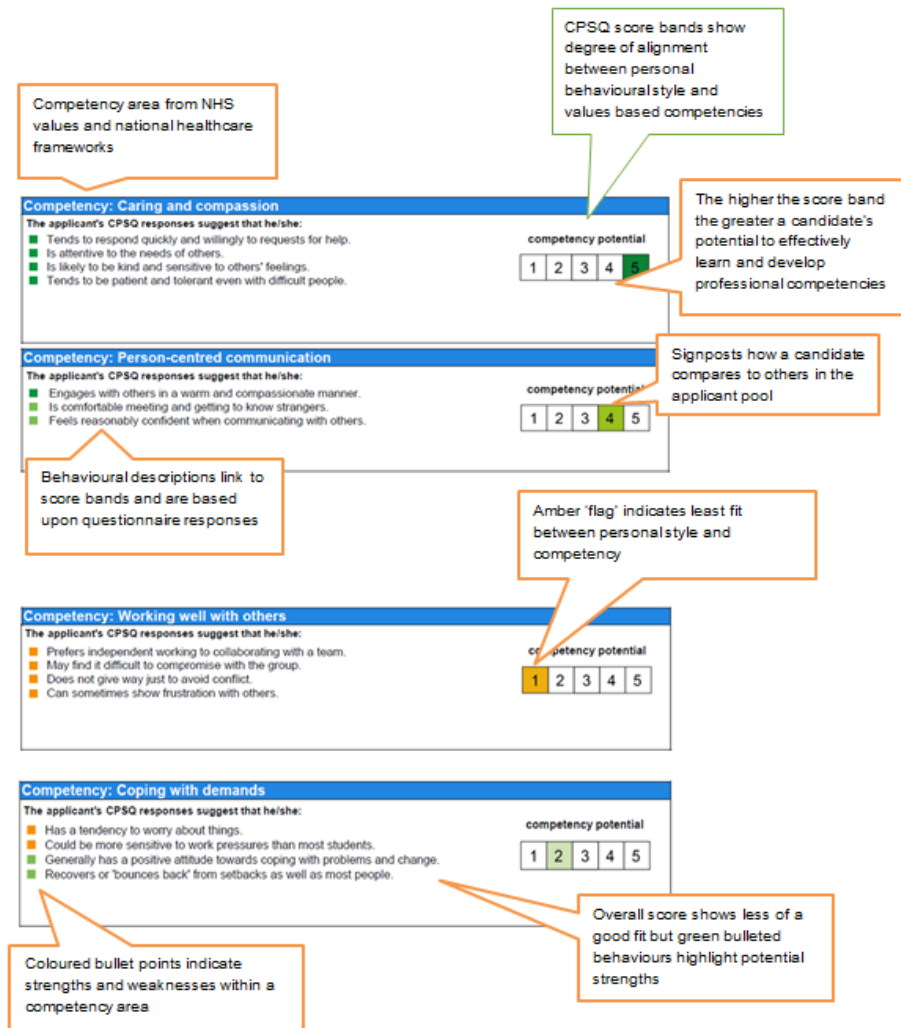
One of the potential barriers to its introduction was a concern that candidates would respond in a way which does not fully reflect their true behavioural style, in other words, 'fake good'. As CPSQ is not a traditional single statement personality measure it has several lines of defence to reduce faking good in that it's behavioural statements are balanced for social desirability and there are not obvious 'right' answers: candidates can describe themselves in equally positive but diverse ways. Furthermore, the rate/rank format means that respondents are prevented from indicating the highest level of agreement with all statements which they believe would please selectors.

Stark, Chernyshenko and Drasgow, (2011) observe the following on this type of assessment:

*"Unless respondents know which dimensions are being used for selection, unless they are able to discern which statements measure those dimensions, and unless they can keep track of their answers on several dimensions simultaneously and provide consistent patterns of responses across blocks, then respondents should not be able to increase scores on selection dimensions as easily as when traditional, single statement measures are used."*

CPSQ's rate/rank format increases measurement accuracy and validity. Salgado and Táuriz (2014) reported that, compared to other methods of assessment, the validity (accuracy) of scores derived from rate/rank formats was almost twice that of traditional personality assessments, and equal to or better than assessment centres, structured interviews and situational judgement tests.

For each candidate we receive a report as below, which is tailored to their individual profile. It gives a series of statements which are likely to describe their behaviours in each competency area, highlighting likely strengths and weaknesses.



## Key challenges

Administration of the test is online which initially presented us with some technical and logistical issues that have now been overcome.

Some academic staff took some time to accept the methodology, with concerns about the appropriateness, validity and reliability. To address this we invited staff from the Admissions Testing Service to discuss the tool with academic staff and we invited staff to take the test themselves. This helped to give confidence as staff agreed with their profile results.

## Impact

CPSQ has high internal consistency and test-retest validity. We provided validation data to the Admissions Testing Service to ensure reliability with University applicants before we formally adopted the test (see below). Our early evidence indicated close alignment with test results and interviewers' assessments of applicants. In some instances, interviewers could not quite "put their finger" on why a candidate seemed a poor fit, but when they viewed the profile they were able to agree with its rankings of the various dimensions.

## Examples of material produced

CPSQ is an online, self-report questionnaire. Respondents are presented with 164 statements about how they behave or relate to others, and they respond to state their level of agreement with the statement.

Statements are presented in sets of four, with each set of statements covering a range of behavioural styles which are balanced for equal social desirability.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	In Between	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I persist with even the most boring tasks	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it easy to get to know people	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can be relied on to keep my temper	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to challenge myself by setting difficult goals to achieve	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Where a respondent states the same level of agreement to two or more of the statements, they are then taken to a screen where they are asked to choose which statement is 'More like me' and which is 'Less like me'.

	More like me 1	Less like me 2
I persist with even the most boring tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it easy to get to know people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Next steps and sustainability

We have not used CPSQ to select as yet. We have tested applicants with CPSQ to review the profile results and will await further validation results at the end of 2014 before we take this step. Even with full adoption we will always be use the CPSQ in conjunction with literacy and numeracy tests, the personal statement and an interview. In this way we will build a broad cognitive/non-cognitive picture of the applicant on which to make our decision.

### Key Tips

Ideally have a long lead-in period to explore options, develop and validate the chosen option. Don't underestimate the importance of getting 'buy in' and confidence from academic admissions staff regarding the validity of the approach.

**This case study has been produced by City University London, for further information please contact:**

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