

# SELECTING APPRENTICES 2018

## *GETTING IT RIGHT & DOING IT WELL*

A professional, responsible and cost-effective way to  
select applicants for Apprenticeship Opportunities

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### CONTENTS

- Setting the Scene
- Traditional Selection vs Apprentice Selection
- Using Psychometric Assessment for Apprentice Selection
  - CMAP – Career Motivation Analysis Profile
    - Career Interests
    - Work Needs
    - Financial Motivation
  - General Mental Ability
- Putting It All Together
- Practicalities
- Costs
- About the Author
- Acknowledgements
- Useful / Relevant Links



# Assessment & Selection of Apprentices – 2018

## Setting the Scene

You will be aware of the apprenticeship levy and the renewed focus that the UK government is placing on the training and development of young people. For employers, this shift provides an opportunity to 'grow and mould' employees to meet future business requirements, helping to ensure that the workforce provides a long-term fit for company needs. However, there are different pools of applicants for Apprenticeships, and each one represents a challenge when it comes to selection.

For example, when appointing candidates who are fresh from an educational background, it is evident that most young people have no (or limited) workplace experience, and their qualities are fundamentally different to those of older, more experienced personnel.

Those employers who are seeking to upskill *existing* personnel face the problem of 'objective fairness' in the selection process. They need to find the most suitable candidates without de-motivating their unsuccessful colleagues.

And an increasing number of apprenticeships are aimed at Graduate / professional calibre personnel, presenting further difficulty when it comes to separating high-quality applicants.

The selection process for apprentices, therefore, represents a significant challenge for both employers and candidates, and the *process of selection* should be regarded as somewhat different to the recruitment of more experienced staff. Traditional psychometrics may still have a value in selecting apprentices, but a tailored assessment solution can better assess values, attitudes and competence.

<b>Maintenance and operations engineering technician</b> ✔ Approved for delivery    ↗ Level 3    ⌚ 36 months    📄 Max f Maintaining the safety, integrity and effective operation of plant and equipment in the national infrastructure engineering sector, such as electricity generating and pharmaceuticals.
<b>Manufacturing engineer (degree)</b> ✔ Approved for delivery    ↗ Level 6    ⌚ 60 months    📄 Max f Helping take products from design to manufacture, ensuring that they are of the right quality.
<b>Manufacturing Operative</b>

## Traditional Selection vs Apprentice Selection

Traditional selection methods concentrate on KSA's (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities), with candidates being compared against Job Descriptions and Person Specifications. For apprenticeship candidates, however, the first two (in particular) are likely to be much less in evidence.

<b>Associate project manager</b> ✔ Approved for delivery    ↗ Level 4    ⌚ 24 months Managing project work and teams for businesses and other organisations.
<b>Business Administrator</b> ✔ Approved for delivery    ↗ Level 3    ⌚ 18 months Supporting and engaging with different parts of the organisation and its customers.
<b>Chartered manager degree apprenticeship</b> ✔ Approved for delivery    ↗ Level 6    ⌚ 48 months

Young people have limited knowledge of the workplace and their skills have not been fully tested. Furthermore, they are likely to experience difficulty when describing their strengths and suitability.

Even in the areas of abilities and attributes, young people may struggle to demonstrate relevant evidence.

There are also further challenges:

Apprenticeship opportunities will be much sought after, and it is anticipated that the number of applicants for a given position will be high. Indeed, candidates are more likely to apply 'shotgun-style' for available posts, rather than being selective. Anyone who works routinely with young people will know that most have no idea what kind of career they want to pursue; they simply don't know what they might be good at or what they might enjoy. As employers, we have an obligation to ensure that they are placed appropriately. Ultimately, a strong match will be good for business and good for them!

*We have a responsibility to help young people as they search for a suitable opportunity.*

To overcome the difficulties mentioned above, a modified approach to selection is required: One which objectively identifies - and reports on - suitability and fit.

Of course, this means that we need a pre-defined idea of which qualities are required for a given role, which is no small task given the number of apprenticeships on offer\*. Thankfully, Psytech International – one of the world's leading test publishers - have been working on this area for the last two years, and have already mapped most confirmed apprenticeships against robust psychological constructs. Since the Apprenticeship Standards are clearly defined, we have an excellent starting point for assessing candidates.

**Safety mindset:** This occupation sits within an industry with be strict compliance and a disciplined and responsible app

**Strong work ethic:** Positive attitude, motivated by engineeri

**Logical approach:** Able to structure a plan and develop acti able to quickly "think on feet" when working through them.

**Problem solving orientation:** Identifies issues quickly, enjoy appropriate solutions. Has a strong desire to push to ensur a solution identified which prevents further recurrence.

**Quality focus:** Follows rules, procedures and principles in e attention to detail / error checks throughout activities.

**Personal responsibility and resilience:** Motivated to succeed

\*Note: At the time of writing, more than 200 Apprenticeships have been defined and standardised. A further 300 or so are in development.

## Using Psychometric Assessment for Apprentice Selection: Career Interests, Work Needs and General Mental Ability



Using a combination of short, cost-effective psychometric measures, in conjunction with pre-defined Ideal Profiles, it is possible for employers to gain substantial insight into a candidate's likely fit for a given Apprenticeship opportunity.

The Career Motivation Analysis Profile (CMAP) uses the Occupational Interest Profile (OIP+) to provide an overview of a candidate's work interests, work needs and financial motivation. Alongside this, a general reasoning suite of tests can provide a measure of mental abilities: Verbal, Numerical and Conceptual (Abstract) reasoning.

The reports generated from the assessments provide (at least) two significant benefits:

- (i) They provide valuable information for the **EMPLOYER**, not only for use during the selection process, but also as an aid to the early development and support of successful candidates.
- (ii) The feedback report from the exercise provides the **CANDIDATE** (and potentially their parents and Careers Advisors) with vital information relating to their suitability.

#### *Suggestions for Vocational Exploration*

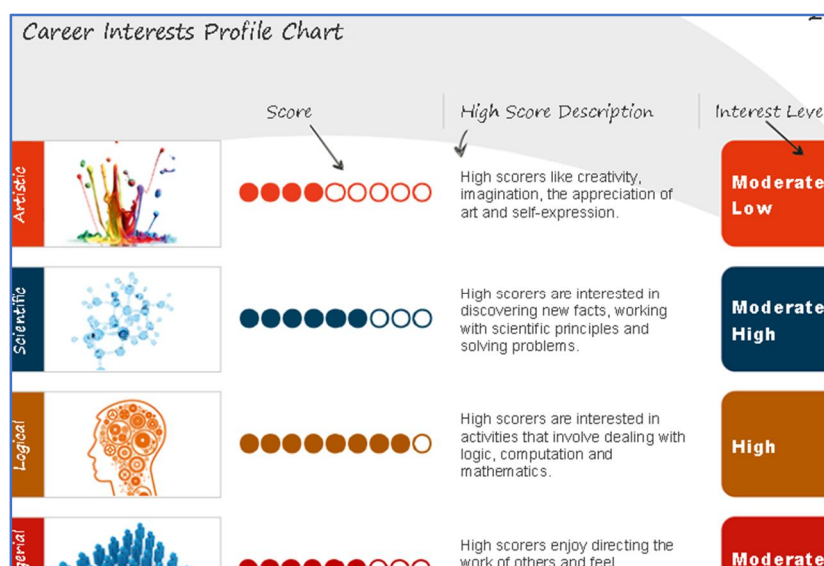
The career suggestions in this report are based on the assessment of your broad interest areas and personal work needs. Career suggestions are useful in gaining clarity and direction for those who need to pursue higher education in order to achieve their career goals. Career suggestions are categorised by the general ability level required for the job. Use the recommendations from your ability test results to help identify the level most appropriate for you.

The following sections look more closely at the areas featured in the CMAP / Ability suite.

## 1. CMAP Career Interests

It stands to reason that for a person to be effective and successful in the workplace, that person must have an interest in the kind of work being undertaken. If we can understand a candidate's vocational interests, we can be more confident of an appropriate fit (ie: between person-role-environment), and more certain of longer-term motivation.

The *Career Interests Profile\** presents the candidate with information like this:



\*The Career Interests Profile section of CMAP includes the following scales: *Artistic, Scientific, Logical, Managerial, Practical, Administrative, Persuasive, Nurturing*.



And, for the employer, it is possible to map the candidate's interests against an Ideal Profile, like this:



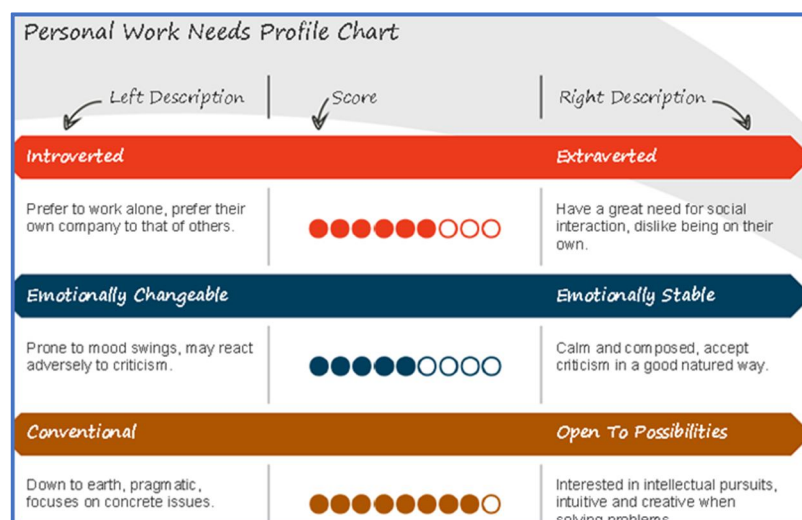
You can see the figure of '45' in the image above. This figure reflects the *degree of similarity* between the candidate's actual interests and the pre-defined, role-specific profile of the ideal candidate. The figure is a **Profile Similarity Coefficient\***.

\*Profile Similarity Coefficients will vary between -100 (minus 100) and +100 (plus 100). The closer the coefficient is to +100, the closer the match between the respondent and the ideal profile.

## 2. CMAP Work Needs

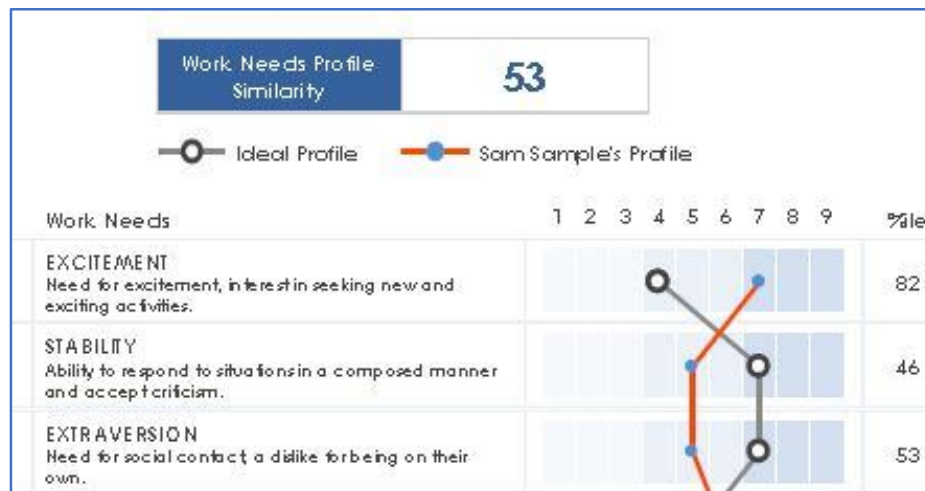
Whilst career interests are clearly a relevant factor in shaping motivation, we must accept that young people in the modern workplace need something for their efforts in return. That is to say, for an individual to maximise their potential over the long-term, their psychological needs must be met.

The *Work Needs Profile* presents the candidate with information like this:



\*The Work Needs Profile includes the following scales: *Extraversion, Stability, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Optimism, Excitement.*

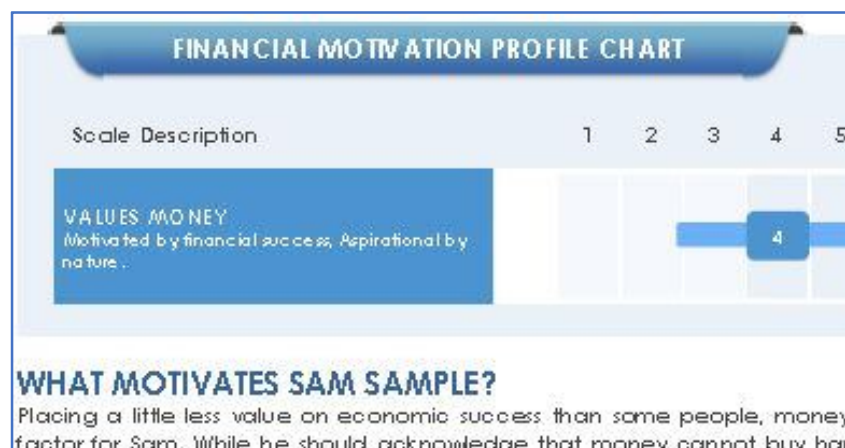
For the employer, as with the Career Interests Profile, it is possible to map the candidate's work needs against an Ideal Profile, like this:



Again, the Profile Similarity Coefficient for Work Needs is provided, this time '53'.

### 3. CMAP Financial Reward

Financial Reward is an additional 'work need', and the extrinsic motivation provided by salary is addressed through the CMAP questionnaire. That is, the importance of money as a motivational driver does not go unrecognised.



Whilst the information on Financial Motivation is not explicitly offered as feedback to the candidate, the employer does get an idea of how important salary might be to the individual.

#### 4. General Mental Ability

The Career Interests and Work Needs described above will provide a good framework for employers when it comes to understanding the motivational drivers of candidates. However, it is also essential that applicants have the required aptitudes and mental capacity for dealing with the *intellectual demands* of their proposed role. Consequently, a fully rounded selection solution for Apprentices will include measures of reasoning (ie: General Mental Ability, often referred to as 'g').

The assessment suite recommended for Apprenticeship selection includes tests of Verbal, Numerical and Conceptual (Abstract) reasoning. Information is presented thus:



Once again, we can see how closely the applicant matches expectations.

#### Putting It All Together – Primary (Selection) and Secondary (Feedback) Reports

To summarise, the **primary report** arising from the combined assessment suite (ie: CMAP and General Mental Ability) is for the **EMPLOYER**. The report provides a measure of how closely the candidate matches the ideal profile for a specific Apprenticeship role. The applicant's match to the ideal is considered in three aspects:

- Work Needs Similarity
- Work Interests Similarity
- Ability Similarity and
- A Total Match (combining the above)

##### RESULTS SUMMARY

Total Similarity	= 56%
Work Needs Similarity	= 53%
Work Interests Similarity	= 45%
Ability Similarity	= 72%

Notes: Match is expressed as a Profile Similarity Coefficient. Such coefficients can vary between +100 and -100. The closer the coefficient is to +100 the closer the match between the respondent and the ideal profile. These coefficients should not be interpreted in an *absolute* way to score applicants (e.g. only above +60 as considered 'good'). Rather, *all data* should be considered to gain an overall picture of the strengths and support needs of any individual candidate. Coefficients can, however, be used as a basis for ranking a group of applicants in terms of closest through least match.

Ability results are indicated against benchmarks, above which an applicant might be considered to have sufficient ability to meet education and training demands within a reasonable timeframe. Again, strengths and areas in which to focus development or support activities can be identified.

The **secondary report** is a comprehensive feedback report for the **APPLICANT**. This provides a powerful and effective bank of information which allows the candidate to consider their relative strengths against particular opportunities.

It can be used by the candidates themselves, or in conjunction with their parents and advisors.

### *Your Career Interests Profile*

The CMAP report measures eight broad patterns of career interests: Artistic, Scientific, Logical, Managerial, Administrative, Persuasive, Practical and Nurturing.

Your interest scores are presented on the next page with a brief description of each of the interest areas. Most people have interests that fall into more than one category. The Career Interest themes with the highest scores represent the type of work you are most likely to enjoy.

### *Suggestions for Vocational Exploration*

The career suggestions in this report are based on the assessment of your broad interest areas and personal work needs. Career suggestions are useful in gaining clarity and direction for those who need to pursue higher education in order to achieve their career goals. Career suggestions are categorised by the general ability level required for the job. Use the recommendations from your ability test results to help identify the level most appropriate for you.

We encourage you to use the services of a trained career guidance counsellor to help you find out more about the suggested careers and how they may suit your preferences and skills.

If you would like to see full examples of the primary and secondary reports, please get in touch via telephone or email.

## **Practicalities**

Assessing candidates via the CMAP / General Ability Suite is very straightforward. There are no up-front costs, so you do not need to be concerned about candidates dropping out. We will need from you the following information in order to set-up the online systems:

- Job Title of the Apprenticeship
- Names of Candidates
- An indication of the candidate's gender (if it's not obvious)
- A valid email address to which send the log-in details for the assessment (Note: This can be the candidate's email address, or your address if you wish to run the online assessments in-house, under supervision).

When we have the information above, we will issue the links promptly and liaise directly with the candidate until we have responses. Once the candidate has completed, the final reports will be generated and emailed to you in pdf format. The entire process can take as little as 24 hours although, for logistical reasons, we usually prefer to have a few days to play with.

Additionally, if you have a large batch of candidates, we can summarise the information into Excel spreadsheet format for easy reference and ranking.



## Costs

The costs associated with the assessments described above are straightforward. All of the costs for set-up, data processing and report generation are included, and there are **no additional fees** (for example, there are no 'lock-in' or 'up-front' costs, no annual service charges, etc). You do NOT need training in psychometric assessment to use the reports; they are a self-contained solution.

Costs are incurred **only** when a candidate completes the assessment. Further, the fee includes **two** reports:

- (i) the full report for the EMPLOYER and
- (ii) the feedback report for the APPLICANT.

**Option 1:** It is possible to run the assessments separately / independently:

- CMAP/OIP+ (Work Interests & Work Needs Profile): **£54.00 per single candidate**
- Mental Ability (Verbal, Numerical, Abstract Reasoning): **£57.00 per single candidate**

**Option 2:** The most cost-effective option is to run the tests as a combined suite:

- Combined CMAP/OIP+ & Mental Ability: **£69.00\*\* per single candidate** (ie: **saving £42.00**)

**\*\* VOLUME DISCOUNTS \*\***

THE COSTS QUOTED ABOVE ARE BASED ON A **SINGLE, INDIVIDUAL** ASSESSMENT

**\*\*VOLUME DISCOUNTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR 2 OR MORE CANDIDATES**

COSTS CAN BE AS LOW AS **£29.00** PER CANDIDATE

Notes: Costs quoted exclude VAT at prevailing rate. Terms are Nett 21 days from date of invoice.

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If you would like to arrange assessments for candidates, or discuss any of the issues raised in this document, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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## ANDREW SIDEBOTTOM – Biography

***Andrew is the Business Psychologist / Director at Andrew M. Sidebottom Ltd.***

Following an early career as Industrial Engineer (UK/US manufacturing), Andrew graduated from the University of Hull in 1992 with a BSc (Hons) Degree & Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Psychology. He worked briefly as UK Business Psychologist for an Australian HR Consultancy before establishing an independent business in 1993. For twenty-five years he has supported organisations across the UK and Europe in areas such as: *Selection & Development of People; Executive / Graduate / Personal Coaching; Vocational Guidance & Career Counselling; Team Building; Organisational Change; Succession Planning; Training Needs Analysis, etc..* He operates at all organisational levels: Shop-Floor to Boardroom.

He is a member of the Association of Business Psychologists (ABP) and the British Psychological Society (BPS), and is registered at both Domestic and European levels in psychometric testing (Register of Competence in Occupational Testing (RCOT) / European Test User (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations)). He is a Certified Coach and a Registered Hypnotherapist (General Hypnotherapy Standards Council).

Areas of special interest and expertise include:

- Application of psychometric techniques in the selection and development process
- Coaching to Make a Difference & Maximise Personal Impact
- Assessment & Development of Interpersonal Qualities & Communication Skills
- Coaching for Work-Life Balance / Stress & Anxiety Management
- Career Guidance, Teambuilding & Organisational Development

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### Acknowledgements:

Carl Francis / John Kilvington, *Psytech International* – [www.psytech.co.uk](http://www.psytech.co.uk)

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### Useful / Relevant Links:

Institute for Apprenticeships:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>

UK Govt Apprenticeships:

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

Apprenticeship Funding Bands:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-bands>

Latest Documents / News:

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships/latest>