


Core Abilities Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions



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Core Abilities Assessment—Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Core Abilities Assessment?

The *Core Abilities Assessment* is a 20-item, 15-minute timed assessment of general cognitive ability. As a measure of cognitive ability, the *Core Abilities Assessment* provides valuable information regarding an individual's capacity to learn concepts and tasks, apply sound reasoning, and draw accurate conclusions from information.

For which type or level of candidates can I use the Core Abilities Assessment?

The *Core Abilities Assessment* can be used to evaluate a candidate's potential for success in such entry- to mid-level positions as production/manufacturing employees, maintenance employees, administrative positions, front-line supervisors, call center/telemarketing employees, etc.

Can I use the Core Abilities Assessment as a screener?

Brief measures of general cognitive ability are often used as screeners to reduce the number of applicants who proceed through the costly hiring process of interviewing, comprehensive assessments, etc. However, Pearson does not recommend or endorse the practice of using a single score to disqualify an individual. Although the *Core Abilities Assessment* provides valuable insight into an applicant's cognitive ability, it provides no information about an applicant's level of motivation or personality fit for the job. By combining the *Core Abilities Assessment* with a measure of personality or work styles (such as the *Workplace Personality Inventory*), an employer can capitalize on the predictive power of cognitive ability and determine whether the applicant has the personality traits necessary for successful performance on the job. Measures of personality also tend to decrease adverse impact of assessment batteries that use cognitive ability.

Does the Core Abilities Assessment correlate with the Wonderlic Personnel Test?

In the standardization study, the *Core Abilities Assessment* correlated .71 with the *Wonderlic Personnel Test* scores ($n = 108$).

What is the reading level of the Core Abilities Assessment?

The *Core Abilities Assessment* items were written at or below the 6th grade reading level.

Should I use the raw score or a percentile score for interpretation?

Raw scores can be used to rank candidates, but little else can be inferred from raw scores alone. You will get the most meaningful results when you compare the applicant's score to a norm group that is similar to the group who will be taking the test in the local situation.

When were the norms collected?

The norms are based on data collected via online administration of the assessment during the period February, 2007 through June, 2007.

Will using the Core Abilities Assessment produce adverse impact? If so, how can I avoid legal challenges while still maximizing accuracy in identifying top performers?

Cognitive ability assessment scores tend to be lower for some groups, resulting in adverse impact for these groups. Research on the *Core Abilities Assessment* as well as other cognitive ability assessments show that these differences are not due to flaws in the assessment. The differences reflect real disparities attributable to factors outside of the assessment.

When use of an assessment results in adverse impact, it's important that employers are ready to demonstrate the assessment's job relevance in case of a legal challenge. Demonstrating job relevance is best done through a criterion validation study or a job analysis that documents competencies essential for successful performance.

What factors should I consider when setting a cutoff or passing score on the Core Abilities Assessment?

The following questions need to be considered if you choose to set a cutoff or passing score on the *Core Abilities Assessment*:

- ✓ What is the minimal level of expected performance I'm willing to accept from new employees? (e.g., the same as the typical current employee; the same as my very best employees)
- ✓ What is the maximum amount of time I can wait to fill the position?
- ✓ How many people am I willing to evaluate before the position is filled? (e.g., until I find the right one)
- ✓ How likely am I to find the talent I'm looking for quickly?
- ✓ What level of legal scrutiny is the selection system likely to face?
- ✓ What type of work has been done to show that the assessment is relevant for the target job?

In general, higher cutoff scores tend to produce more top performers. However, the tradeoff of using higher cutoff scores is that you may need to screen more candidates and may run the risk of increasing adverse impact for some protected groups.

Lower cutoff scores tend to have the opposite effect—you are less likely to select the very top performers, but will be able to fill positions more quickly and may end up hiring a more diverse pool of employees.

To strike a balance between these two positions, many organizations start with a moderately high cut score (e.g., 50th percentile) and monitor the effectiveness of the selection system on an ongoing basis in terms of the performance level and diversity of candidates hired, as well as the time and expenses involved in filling positions.

Where can I find more information on the Core Abilities Assessment?

You can find more information on the *Core Abilities Assessment* by logging on to the online testing platform at TalentLens.com. The *Core Abilities Assessment* documents available on TalentLens.com include:

- ✓ *Core Abilities Assessment Sample Report*
- ✓ *Development of the Core Abilities Assessment*
- ✓ *Core Abilities Assessment—Administration Best Practices*
- ✓ *Core Abilities Assessment—How to Use Results in Employment Selection*
- ✓ *Core Abilities Assessment—Evidence of Reliability and Validity*