



Assessment Types and Their Uses

The table below describes how to use various types of assessments. By “Assessment”, we mean any process in which evidence is judged, including tests and surveys. We use the word “test” for an instrument that assesses an individual’s knowledge and skills. This table does not include clinical assessments that psychologists administer to diagnose and plan treatment for patients.

Assessment Types	Descriptions	Selection and Promotion	Learning	Certification and Licensure	Opinions
180 Assessments	Gather opinions about an individual from their colleagues and direct reports but not their boss				✓
360 Assessments	Gather opinions about an individual from their coworkers, including their boss, peers, and direct reports				✓
Ability Tests	Assess an individual’s cognitive or physical abilities	✓		✓	
Academic Entrance Tests	Evaluate suitability, in specific terms, for a particular educational opportunity		✓		
Attention Tests	Measure ability to focus, avoid distractions, and remain attentive	✓			
Certification Tests	Measure understanding of and ability to perform a variety of specific tasks			✓	
Course Evaluations	Collect opinions and levels of satisfaction with a course to improve the learning materials or the learning environment				✓
Criterion-Referenced Tests	Evaluate performance in relation to a pre-established benchmark	✓		✓	
Diagnostic Assessments	Help determine appropriate and useful learning activities based on the gap between current skills and goals		✓		
Formative Assessments	Provide memory retrieval practice to strengthen recall		✓		
High-Stakes Assessments	Deliver results that will have significant consequences for the test taker	✓		✓	
Job Fit Tests	Ascertain values, preferences, motives, and personality traits to determine suitability for a specific job role	✓			
Job Task Analyses	Identify the tasks required on the job or the behaviors and capabilities required to perform it				✓
Level 1 Surveys as per the Kirkpatrick model	See course evaluations				✓
Licensing Tests	Evaluate a candidate’s understanding of and ability to perform the specific tasks required to obtain a government agency’s license to work			✓	
Low-Stakes Assessments	Deliver results with no consequences for the respondent		✓		✓
Mastery Tests	Demonstrate a high level of proficiency in a specific topic or topics		✓		
Medium-Stakes Assessments	Deliver results that may have consequences for the test taker		✓		

Needs Analysis Surveys	Identify knowledge and skills gaps that exist within a team or organization, to inform course development or course administration				✓
Needs Assessments	Identify the training needs for an individual, team, or organization		✓		
Net Promoter Scores	Measure the level of satisfaction with a product, service, or organization				✓
Objective Tests	Measure factual knowledge	✓	✓	✓	
Performance Tests	Measure ability to perform in real-world environments	✓		✓	
Personality Tests	Ascertain values, preferences, motives, and personality traits	✓			
Placement Tests	Determine suitability for educational opportunities, potentially to provide placement recommendations		✓		
Post-Course Tests	Measure knowledge and skills after a course to determine if participants have sufficiently learned the course material and, in some cases, are eligible to receive a certificate of completion		✓		
Pre-Course Tests	Evaluate knowledge and skills before a course, to create intrigue among students, to inform the instructor of students' abilities, and to set a benchmark to see if any knowledge transfer occurred during the course		✓		
Pre-Employment Tests	Ascertain suitability, in specific terms, for particular job roles	✓			
Quizzes	Provide formative assessments for individuals and offer evidence that they are or are not mastering the subject matter		✓		
Satisfaction surveys	Measure levels of satisfaction with products or services				✓
Screening Tests	Determine suitability, in broad terms, for specific job roles or educational opportunities	✓			
Selection Tests	Determine suitability, in specific terms, for particular job roles or educational opportunities	✓			
Self-Assessments	Gather information from an individual to diagnose learning needs and make recommendations for further learning or development		✓		
Skills Gap Surveys	Identify knowledge and skills gaps that exist within a team or organization, to inform course development or course administration				✓
Smile Sheets	See course evaluations				✓
Speed Tests	Determine someone's ability to perform one or more tasks within a stated time	✓		✓	
Strength Finders	Identify and often rank-order an individual's natural talents		✓		
Summative Assessments	Measure an individual's skills, knowledge, and abilities to determine if they are qualified to pass a course or achieve a qualification, credential, or micro-credential	✓	✓	✓	
Surveys	Collect and quantify opinions, habits, and behaviors				✓
Team Fit Tests	Ascertain values, preferences, motives, and personality traits to determine suitability to work in a specific team	✓			