

Introduction to the Public Health Situational Judgement Test

One of the psychometric tests that you will complete at the assessment centre is a Situational Judgement Test (SJT). This test has been designed specifically to assess personal and professional skills that have been deemed relevant to Public Health Specialty Training. This document provides an introduction to the Public Health SJT.

What is a Situational Judgement Test?

SJTs are psychometric tests, which are designed to measure individuals' judgement in response to situations that are encountered in the workplace. You will be presented with a set of hypothetical work-based scenarios and asked to make judgements about possible responses. Your responses will be compared with a pre-determined scoring key, which has been derived from consensus amongst subject matter experts. SJT scenarios are based on a detailed analysis of the job role, to ensure that the content of the test reflects the most relevant situations in which to test your judgement.

Why is the SJT being used and what does it assess?

SJTs are a very popular selection method across many occupations and are used to select candidates into numerous high profile jobs, for example General Practice training. Research demonstrates that SJTs can be good predictors of future job performance and tend to be well-received by candidates, as they have clear relevance to the job role. SJTs can assess a range of personal and professional skills in an objective and standardised way. The SJT that you will complete has been designed specifically for Public Health Specialty Training to assess the non-academic, personal and professional competencies which have been deemed important for this role, as identified in the National Person Specification for Public Health Specialty Training.

How was the SJT developed?

The content for the SJT was developed by a group of trained subject matter experts – including Training Programme Directors, Public Health consultants and registrars – in conjunction with experienced Psychologists. The test design principles were adapted from previously validated SJTs. The test was piloted with volunteer candidates at the Assessment Centre in 2010. Results indicated that the test provided a robust selection method, would add value to the selection process and was viewed favourably by candidates. Consequently, the SJT was introduced as part of the Assessment Centre in 2011. Following the strong performance of the PH operational SJT since 2011, every year further items are developed in order to refresh the test content. Further pilots are conducted to validate additional test content and the scoring keys.

What does the SJT look like and how do I answer?

In the SJT, you will be presented with scenarios typical of those that Public Health registrars encounter and required to judge the appropriateness of actions taken to address the situation. For each scenario, consider yourself to be a first year Public Health registrar and make a judgement about what you should do. You may sometimes feel that you would like more information before answering, but please give your best answer based on the information provided. The SJT has a total of 45 questions and you will have 90 minutes to complete the test.

There are 2 parts in the SJT, each with different types of question. Read the instructions for each part carefully before attempting the questions.

In **Part 1** you will be presented with scenarios followed by 5 possible response options. You will need to **rank each option in order of appropriateness (1= Most appropriate; 5= Least appropriate)** in response to the circumstances described in the scenario. An example is shown below:

You and a co-worker are working on a complex project that demands a great deal of effort from both of you. Your co-worker is frequently absent as a result of stress due to personal problems. You have not known him for long and know little about the circumstances. Your co-worker contributes very little to the project, and as a result, you are putting in an excessive amount of overtime in order to keep the project moving ahead.

Rank in order the following actions in response to this situation (1= Most appropriate; 5= Least appropriate).

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|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | A | Ask other co-workers to help you manage your workload. |
| 2 | | B | Request additional help from your manager to ensure that the project is completed on schedule. |
| 3 | | C | Meet with your co-worker to request that he does his share of the work. |
| 4 | | D | Continue to put in overtime to keep the project moving ahead. |
| 5 | | E | Offer to help your co-worker deal with his personal problems. |

Please note that you may not give 2 options the same rank

In **Part 2**, you will be presented with scenarios followed by a number of possible options. For each scenario you will need to **select the THREE options which together** are the most appropriate response to the situation, given the circumstances described. An example is shown below:

You and a co-worker are working on a complex project that demands a great deal of effort from both of you. Your co-worker is frequently absent as a result of stress due to personal problems. You have not known him for long and know little about the circumstances. Your co-worker contributes very little to the project, and as a result, you are putting in an excessive amount of overtime in order to keep the project moving ahead.

Choose the **THREE most appropriate actions** to take in this situation.

- A. Ask other co-workers to help you manage your workload.
- B. Request additional help from your manager.
- C. Meet with your co-worker to request that he does his share of the work.
- D. Continue to put in overtime to keep the project moving ahead.
- E. Offer to help your co-worker deal with his personal problems.
- F. Ask your manager whether the project deadline could be extended.
- G. Suggest your co-worker seeks professional help for his personal problems.
- H. Tell your manager that your co-worker is contributing little to the project.
- I. Set your co-worker some clear objectives and deadlines for his share of the work.

How is the SJT scored?

The correct answer for each SJT question is pre-determined based on the consensus judgement of subject matter experts. There are a number of points available for each SJT question. Scoring is based on how close your responses are to the correct answer for the question; the closer your response, the more points you will gain. You can still score well by providing a response that is close, but not identical, to the correct answer.

What can I do to prepare for the SJT?

- The SJT looks at how you deal with typical scenarios that Public Health registrars encounter, but does not require any specific knowledge of Public Health practices.
- The SJT will include a glossary to explain terms or abbreviations, which may be misunderstood by some candidates.
- You may find it useful to look at the National Person Specification for Public Health Specialty Training to familiarise yourself with the skills and competencies that are particularly important for Public Health.
- Familiarise yourself with the different question types above and how to answer each type on the answer sheet; read the instructions and questions in the test carefully on the day.
- The SJT is NOT negatively marked so make sure you answer all of the questions.