Admissions Tests Questionnaire April 2010

What are admissions tests?
An admissions test has been defined by SPA as a timed unseen written paper based or on-line test normally taken in the academic year before admission to a higher education institution (HEI), the results of which can be used by that HEI as one element in decision-making on an application.

The type of test used depends predominantly on the course and the attributes deemed appropriate for the professional, vocational or academic discipline. They can be aptitude tests, essay writing exercises, problem solving tests, critical thinking assessments, subject specific tests, cognitive and non-cognitive tests. Many are designed to enable a correlation to be made between test results and degree success; that is they are designed to be predictive as well as testing aptitude; whether evidence can be presented to support this will require long term study and analysis.

Why is SPA interested in admissions tests?
Since 2007 SPA has carried out an annual research exercise to identify the extent to which HEIs in the UK use both the main national tests and their own, institution devised tests. This information is published on the SPA website at **www.spa.ac.uk/resources/admissions-tests** and is a significant step forward in terms of the transparency of this information.

We are now keen to broaden this research, in terms of understanding more about the rationale behind HEIs' use of tests and the added value the use of a test can bring to the admissions decision-making process. If your institution uses one or more admissions tests we would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete the following questionnaire. The time this will take will vary depending on your institution's use of tests, but it is advisable before you start to have to hand information about which test(s) your institution uses.

If you have any general comments about the use of admissions tests at your institution which are not covered by the questionnaire, please use the Comments box at the end to outline these. For example, have there been discussions between central and faculty or departmental units of the institution about the introduction of a test where agreement has not been reached?

Your help with this research is greatly appreciated.

Annie Doyle
SPA Senior Project Officer
15 April 2010
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Which of the following admissions tests does your institution use?
Please tick to indicate any which are in use

1 Main Admissions Tests

- ☐ BMAT (Biomedical admissions test)
- ☐ GAMSAT (Graduate Australian medical school admissions test)
- ☐ HPAT (Health professions test)
- ☐ LNAT (National admissions test for law)
- ☐ STEP (Sixth term examination paper in mathematics)
- ☐ TSA (Thinking skills assessment)
- ☐ UKCAT (UK clinical aptitude test)

2 Your own Admissions/ Aptitude Tests

- ☐ Foreign language test for admissions purposes – please indicate language(s)
- ☐ Foreign language test for diagnostic study support purposes – please indicate language(s)
- ☐ ICT (Information and communication technologies) test for admissions purposes
- ☐ ICT test for diagnostic study support purposes
- ☐ Literacy test for admissions purposes
- ☐ Literacy test for diagnostic study support purposes
- ☐ Numeracy test for admissions purposes
- ☐ Numeracy test for diagnostic study support purposes
- ☐ Science test for admissions purposes
- ☐ Science test for diagnostic study support purposes
- ☐ Psychometric test for admissions purposes
- ☐ Psychometric test for diagnostic study support purposes
- ☐ Subject specific test for admissions or diagnostic study support purposes – please tell us more in the space below

Please use this space to tell us more:

National Tests

3 **If you use one or more of the national tests, what additional information does the test provide?**

☐ Differentiation between equally well-qualified applicants

☐ Subject specific knowledge required for the course

☐ Subject specific knowledge required for the profession

☐ Demonstration of skills not tested by other pre-HE qualifications – please indicate what these skills are in the space below

4 **If you use one or more of the national tests, do you have any evidence of predictive value added through the test usage?**

SPA is very interested to learn more about any research which is in progress and we would be grateful if you could contact us separately to discuss this.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Research in progress

5 **If you use one or more of the national tests and accept applicants via Clearing or Adjustment, how are these applicants assessed?**

☐ Applicants not accepted via Clearing

☐ Applicants not accepted via Adjustment

☐ Clearing applicants only accepted if they have taken the relevant test and scored at the same level as applicants accepted during main admissions round

☐ Adjustment applicants only accepted if they have taken the relevant test and scored at the same level as applicants accepted during main admissions round

☐ Clearing applicants accepted if they have taken the relevant test but scored at a lower level than applicants accepted during main admissions round

☐ Adjustment applicants accepted if they have taken the relevant test but scored at a lower level than applicants accepted during main admissions round

☐ Clearing applicants accepted without the relevant test

☐ Adjustment applicants accepted without the relevant test

6 **If you don't use one or more of the national tests during the main admissions round and you accept applicants via Clearing or Adjustment who have taken a relevant test, is the test score taken into account when these applicants are assessed?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

7   If you use your own test for literacy, numeracy and/or ICT, what is the rationale for using the test i.e. what additional information do you gain that is not available from the application?

☐   Demonstration of English Language competence equivalent to GCSE grade C

☐   Demonstration of English Language competence equivalent to GCSE grade B

☐   Demonstration of English Language competence equivalent to GCSE grade A

☐   Demonstration of Mathematical competence equivalent to GCSE grade C

☐   Demonstration of Mathematical competence equivalent to GCSE grade B

☐   Demonstration of Mathematical competence equivalent to GCSE grade A

☐   Demonstration of ICT competence at level 3

☐   Subject specific knowledge required for the course

☐   Subject specific knowledge required for the profession

☐   Demonstration of skills not tested by other pre-HE qualifications

Please indicate what these skills are in the space below:

Decision making and tests

8   Courses which require applicants to be interviewed

☐   Selection for interview on the basis of a cut-off point (as a single factor)

☐   Selection for interview on the basis of a cut-off point (as one of a number of factors)

☐   De-selection on the basis of a cut-off point prior to interview (as a single factor)

☐   De-selection on the basis of a cut-off point prior to interview (as one of a number of factors)

If one of a number of factors please indicate what the other factors are in the space below:

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9   Courses which do not require applicants to be interviewed

☐   Selection on the basis of a cut-off point prior to decision being made (as a single factor)

☐   Selection on the basis of a cut-off point prior to decision being made (as one of a number of factors)

☐   De-selection on the basis of a cut-off point prior to decision being made (as a single factor)

☐   De-selection on the basis of a cut-off point prior to decision being made (as one of a number of factors)

If one of a number of factors please indicate what the other factors are in the space below:

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10   All courses

☐   Used for decisions in borderline cases during main admissions round

☐   Used for decisions in borderline cases during confirmation

☐   Used for decisions in borderline cases during main admissions round and during confirmation

Other – please state in the space below:

Entry requirements information

11   If a weighting is applied to the test score, what is it?

12   Is the weighting (this is likely to be for the previous year) included in your published entry requirements information?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

13   If yes, where is the information published?

☐   Printed prospectus   ☐   Entry Profile

☐   On-line prospectus   ☐   UCAS Course Search

14   If no, will you consider including it in new publication material?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

If no, please indicate why this might be problematic:

15   Are previous cut-off test scores published?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

16   If yes, where is the information published?

☐   Printed prospectus   ☐   Entry Profile

☐   On-line prospectus   ☐   UCAS Course Search

17   If no, will you consider including it in new publication material?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

If no, please indicate why this might be problematic:

Approval and review process

18   When an admissions test is introduced at your institution, is there an approval mechanism?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

19   If yes, please outline the approval mechanism and any regular review process.

☐   Approval by Admissions Committee or similar

☐   Approval by high-level University Committee e.g. Senate or Council

☐   Review at Annual Admissions Committee meeting

☐   Review following results

☐   Review considering conversion rates

☐   Review before new admissions round begins

☐   Review of available research

☐   Review using data from UCAS

☐   Review using data from test bodies

☐   Review of applicant feedback

☐   Review of school/ college feedback

If no, please indicate whether this mechanism and review process could be introduced and if not, please indicate why this might be problematic:

20   As a result of any regular review process would you:

☐   Confirm the continued use of the test

☐   Stop using the test

☐   Change how the test is used within the admissions decision-making process

Comments and thank-you

21   General comments

Please use the space below if you have any further comments about your institution's use of admissions tests which have not been covered by the survey:

22   Thank-you for completing the questionnaire.

It will be very helpful to us in our work to improve transparency in the use of admissions tests if you would identify your institution and an appropriate contact, should we wish to get in touch with you.

Institution Name	
Contact Name	
Email address	