

Council of Europe Candidate guide:

Elements ability tests

Why use ability tests?

Ability tests measure your ability to perform or carry out different tasks and have been found to be one of the strongest predictors of future job performance.

We use ability tests in recruitment because:

- they provide an independent measure of important work-related abilities
- they give an indication of someone's potential
- they measure important skills which are difficult to measure in other recruitment procedures (such as an interview)
- they are objective

Types of ability tests

The tests most commonly used are:

- **Verbal reasoning** - these are designed to measure your ability to interpret verbal information and reach correct conclusions. Verbal reasoning is important for any work involving the communication of ideas or the understanding of written information. It can also be important for work requiring analytical thinking.
- **Numerical reasoning** - these are designed to measure your ability to analyse and draw inferences from numerical information and data. Numerical reasoning ability is important for a variety of roles where working with data is key.
- **Logical reasoning** - these are designed to test your ability to analyse abstract information and apply this in determining outcomes and patterns. Logical reasoning ability is important for a variety of roles requiring complex problem solving.

How to prepare

There is no specific topic or subject you need to learn before, so it is possible to complete the tests without any preparation. In order to reach your full potential, however, there are some things you can do to help you prepare. Here is some guidance:

Practice

Putting time into practising the kinds of questions you may face in ability tests is the best way of maximising your performance and boosting your confidence.

Try developing your reasoning skills via online practice tests. We have provided a link below to the Elements practice ability tests, which will be the same format as the real tests. Although other practice assessments are available online, they will not necessarily be the same as the ones you will need to complete.

You could also work through relevant mathematics or language quizzes to improve your speed and accuracy for numerical and verbal reasoning tests, or try completing logic puzzles to improve your logical reasoning ability.

[Try the Elements practice tests online](https://login.talentqgroup.com/Login/SelfService/QHMPAJDXX) (click on the link or paste this URL into your browser
<https://login.talentqgroup.com/Login/SelfService/QHMPAJDXX>)

Special requirements

If you have a special requirement that you would like to be taken into consideration before you complete the test, you should inform us as soon as possible before the day of assessment by sending an email to recruitment@coe.int.

Candidates with any special requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to ensure that any necessary adjustments made to tests are appropriate. Note that depending on the requirements, you may be required to provide a medical certificate.

How to complete - a guide to Elements

Elements is a suite of three ability tests that measure your reasoning skills in: interpreting written information and reports; using figures, data and statistics; understanding and manipulating abstract or logical symbols.

How does it work?

All three tests are completed online, via our assessment system. There is no overall time limit for each test but within the tests, each question will have a time limit (see below). If you don't answer the question within the time limit, the test will move onto the next question automatically and you won't be able to re-visit previous questions during the test. You will receive warnings when you get close to the time limit for each question. On average, each Elements test takes 12 minutes to complete (up to a maximum of 16 minutes).

About Elements Verbal

The Elements Verbal test consists of 15 questions based on passages of text. The passages are presented on the left-hand side of the screen and questions on the right. Below each question you are presented with a range of possible answers from which to choose. Sometimes you have to choose two answers and sometimes only one; it will always be clear whether you have to make one or two choices. There is no overall time limit for the test but there is a time limit for each question: 75 seconds for the first question on each passage of text and 60 seconds for subsequent questions.

Why work?

Why do people work? To many, this is an absurd question. They believe that the sole reason for working is to provide for themselves and their families.

However, many people work even if they do not have an economic need to do so. For them, work can satisfy many other needs. It can have a social dimension, or provide a necessary intellectual stimulation. It may even be the means of defining the person they are.

Many books have been written on this subject and various theories proposed regarding the motivation to work. But none of these theories answers all of our questions on the subject.

Which **one** of these statements is definitely correct in light of the text?

Once you have selected your answer(s), please press 'submit response'.

- Nobody would work if they didn't have to.
- Only one book has ever been written about why we work.
- Most people work just to get intellectual stimulation.
- Earning money is one of the reasons for working.
- Everyone who wins the lottery gives up working.
- There can only be one theory about motivation to work.

Clear answer

Submit response 

About Elements Numerical

The Elements Numerical test consists of 12 questions based on information presented in tables. The tables are presented on the left-hand side of the screen and questions on the right. Below each question you have a choice of answers to pick from, presented in a drop-down list. There is no overall time limit for the test but there is a time limit for each question: 90 seconds for the first question on each table (or set of tables) and 75 seconds for subsequent questions.

Mobile phone tariffs

Monthly charges		Free calls		Call costs	Calls out	Calls in
Contract name	(£s)	(hours per month)		Time of call	(made)	(received)
Basic	15.00	3		Standard	6.00	Free
Premium	35.00	15		Cheap	3.50	Free

Call costs are in £s per hour
Free calls apply only to calls made at standard hours
Cheap hours are week-ends and 18:00 - 06:00

If I have a basic contract, how many hours of free calls could I have in a year?

Once you have selected your answer(s), please press 'submit response'.

Select correct (or nearest) answer.

hrs

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About Elements Logical

The Elements Logical test consists of 12 questions based on an incomplete series of symbols. Your task is to identify the missing symbol from a number of alternatives. The symbols have no meaning, but the series always follows a logical sequence, both from left to right and from top to bottom. There is no overall time limit for the test but there is a time limit for each question: 75 seconds.

Logical sequence

◀	◀	◀
▶	?	▶
◀	◀	◀

Alternatives

◀	▶	▶▶	◀◀	◀▶	▶◀	▶▶▶
▶▶◀	▶◀▶	◀▶▶	▶◀◀	◀◀◀	◀◀▶	◀◀◀

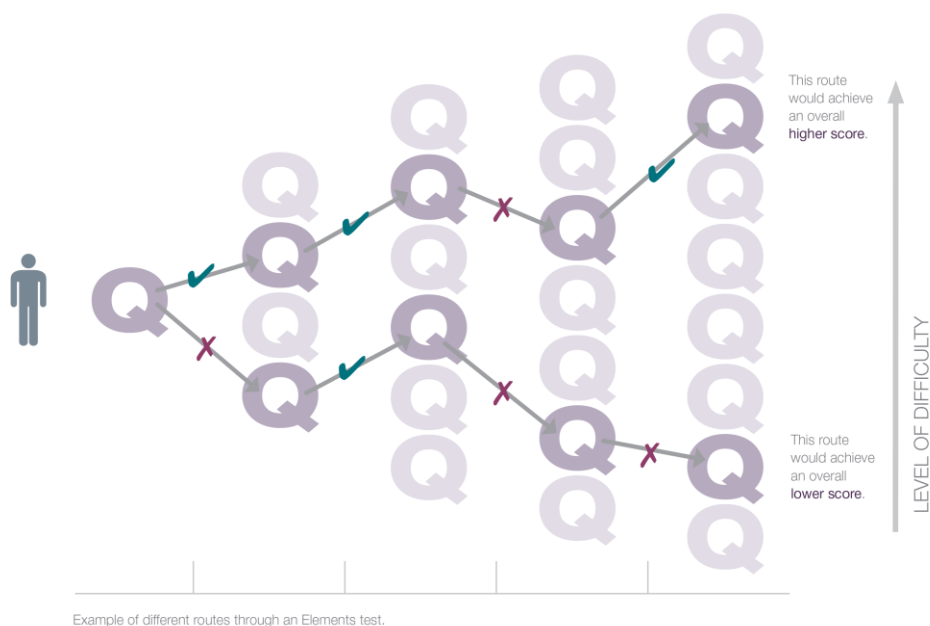
Adaptive testing

All three of the Elements tests are 'adaptive'. This means the system selects what questions to administer based on your previous responses and whether they were correct or incorrect.

You begin with a question of average difficulty. If you answer the question right within the time limit, you progress to a more difficult question. If you answer incorrectly, or fail to answer within the time limit, the system selects an easier question next. This process is repeated until you reach the end of your test.

As a result of the adaptive nature of the test, you will feel continuously challenged and stretched so don't worry if you feel the questions are difficult.

Progressing through an adaptive test



Speed and accuracy

When completing ability tests, it is important that you work both quickly and accurately to achieve your best score. Ensure you read each question and the response options carefully, while maintaining a good pace. Avoid skimming over the material presented and ensure you are fully focused on the information presented to you.

As you have a time limit for each question, the best strategy is to use the full time given and not to rush into an unconsidered answer. Always make sure that you understand what the time limits are, so that you can respond appropriately.

If you have selected your answer for a question but the time runs out before you click through to the next question, you do not need to worry as your answer will be submitted. Therefore by making a selection, this will count as your submitted answer.

Results

Your responses for each Elements test are compared with the scores of a comparison group. In this case, it will be a large group of professionals at a level similar to that required, who have previously completed the Elements ability tests. The result is then given as a percentile (e.g. if your score is in the 75th percentile, you have done better than 75% of the comparison group, or 'above average').

You will receive your results for all three of the Elements ability tests, in relation to the comparison group.

Elements practice tests

[Try the Elements practice tests online](https://login.talentqgroup.com/Login/SelfService/QHMPAJDXX) (click on the link or paste this URL into your browser <https://login.talentqgroup.com/Login/SelfService/QHMPAJDXX>).

After completing each practice test, the system will provide you with a general indication of your performance. Note, however, that as the comparison group used for the practice tests is different to the real tests, there is no guarantee that your performance will exactly match that in the real tests.

Top tips for assessment day

You've read up about how the assessments work and completed our practice assessments to test your reasoning abilities, so what's left to prepare for your assessment day?

Managing test anxiety

It is natural to feel some anxiety before and/or during the assessment process. While a little anxiety can be helpful to ensure you approach the assessment at a good pace, it is important to be as relaxed as possible when you sit down to complete the assessment.

Simply having a good night's rest and making sure you've had a good breakfast can have a positive effect on your ability to perform. Try to avoid rushing around before your assessment and make sure you have left yourself enough time before the assessment begins, so you can approach it in a relaxed and focused frame of mind.

Check your equipment

If you are being asked to complete the Elements Numerical test you will need a calculator. Check to ensure it is working properly beforehand. For all assessments, make sure you have some note paper and a pencil available.

Read the instructions

When you have logged in to the My Talent Q assessment system, take a couple of minutes to carefully read the online instructions provided.

Final practice

When you login to the assessment system, you will have the opportunity to complete a couple of final practice questions before you start the real assessment. Make sure you do this, as it will help familiarise you with the look, feel and functionality of the assessment system.

Questions

Any questions about the ability tests and the recruitment procedure should be addressed to recruitment@coe.int.

Good luck!