CPSQ for healthcare

Discover the people who will thrive in healthcare roles
Supporting selection, training and continuing professional development
What is CPSQ?

The Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire® (CPSQ) is an online, psychometric assessment that provides insight into a person’s values and behaviours.

Used in both healthcare education and employment, CPSQ provides evidence for decisions about selection and professional development.

Successful healthcare careers take more than academic qualifications. People who thrive have many capabilities – from the motivation to help others, to the ability to manage the demands of their profession.

• Easy to administer
• Available on demand
• Instant reporting
• Take anywhere
• Complete in 20–40 minutes
• Access on PC, tablet and mobile
• Minimum English level: CEFR* B2

CPSQ research

CPSQ has been developed and trialled by experts in Cambridge in collaboration with healthcare organisations, including schools of nursing and medical faculties. By combining their experiences with prevailing research, we have created a reliable way of assessing the values and behaviours needed for success and wellbeing in healthcare careers.

*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It does this on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country.
Why use CPSQ for healthcare?

For selection

Identify the most suitable applicants for the course or role

CPSQ’s professional competency framework was developed in liaison with healthcare institutions, to help you select people with the values and behaviours for a healthcare career.

Get insights quickly and accurately

CPSQ provides a fast and objective assessment of a large range of personal qualities that would take many hours to uncover at interview.

Focus interview questions or inform Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) content

Get the most out of valuable interview time by identifying an applicant’s strengths and/or areas for improvement that may need further discussion.

For professional development

Recognise training and development needs

Quickly identify individual and group development needs to implement targeted training and continued professional development opportunities.

Identify individuals in need of additional support

Gain insight into behaviours that could negatively affect a person’s wellbeing, particularly following increased pressure on healthcare workers.

Inform effective mentoring programmes

The CPSQ report provides a shared framework and language for conversations that can guide supportive mentoring schemes.

“...We use CPSQ to understand whether the student will be a good fit with our programme. For instance, we use a mixture of self-study, problem-based learning and team-based learning. We are looking for students who can study independently and manage their own work. CPSQ’s Self-management competency gives us insight into which students will proactively maintain order in their approach to their work...”

Assistant Professor Peerapong Kitipawong | Managing Director of CICM Admissions and Test Centre, Thammasat University, Thailand
CPSQ’s professional competency framework

To understand how someone’s personal styles of behaving might influence their participation in healthcare education and work, their questionnaire responses are interpreted against seven professional competencies:

- **Caring and compassion**: Puts others first and is keen to help. Responds with sensitivity to feelings and is kind. Acts with patience and respect even with challenging individuals.

- **Coping with demands**: Resilient to challenge, change and setbacks. Calm and capable when faced with stressful situations and work demands.

- **Person-centred communication**: Confidently engages with others. Regularly uses empathetic and socially supportive forms of communication.

- **Working well with others**: Works collaboratively by sharing goals, ideas and resources. Consults others and is willing to compromise. Considerate and supportive. Tolerant when others are provoking.

- **Professional practice**: Follows rules and guidelines. Takes responsibility and is dependable. Alert to risk and safety issues.


- **Engagement with learning**: Keen to understand theory behind practice. Regularly uses curious, critical, flexible and creative thinking styles that facilitate learning, ideas generation and problem-solving.

**Coping with demands and career retention**

Healthcare and other social careers can be demanding, and people need resilience in order to thrive. Read our case study of work in the teaching sector to see how CPSQ’s Coping with demands competency can help identify those at risk of drop-out.
The CPSQ report

For each competency, a score is provided on a one to five scale. The higher a score, the more likely it is that current behaviours are effective and support progress.

Within each competency, a person may have stronger and weaker areas, which are signposted in three possible feedback categories: Positive, Neutral and Improvement points.

Below is an example of the report for the Self-management competency:

**Self-management**

3 / 5

**Positive Points**

- Likes to pursue high standards of work.
- Typically has a clear sense of direction and sets own challenging personal goals.

**Neutral Points**

- Tends to start work straight away, but may delay if a task is routine or boring.
- Generally focuses on work and finishes things once started.

**Points to improve**

- Does not take naturally to working in a structured and organised way.

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**Healthcare Interview Guide**

We provide a *Healthcare Interview Guide* to help get the most out of your applicants. It provides appropriate follow-up questions for further discussion.
CPSQ’s online platform

The questionnaire can be taken online and at any location (e.g. at home or at your organisation). It is quick and easy to set up and share with individuals participating in CPSQ.

Organise your own assessments

- access the CPSQ platform on computer, tablet or mobile at any time
- invite, manage and monitor the progress of individuals with ease
- customise the individual experience with editable email templates

Use the reports

- make quick decisions with instant access to completed reports
- control who is able to view the reports
- access individual and group reports for analysis
- share and discuss the results with individuals using on-screen reports
Using CPSQ to shortlist for Physician Associate Studies MSc

Applicants to the Physician Associate Studies MSc at the University of Leeds are asked to complete CPSQ as part of the admissions process. Initially it was used in 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, as an alternative to in-person MMIs but has continued to be a key part of the shortlisting process.

Dr Helen Millott, Programme Lead for the MSc course and Michelle Ellwood, Radiographer Lecturer and Director of Student Education explain: 'We quickly needed a reliable online alternative to in-person Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs). These are used to determine whether a candidate’s core values are aligned to those of the National Health Service, such as person-centred care, communication skills, logical thinking and problem solving. As CPSQ assesses a range of relevant competencies, such as Caring and compassion, Person-centred communication and Working well with others, it seemed to be a good solution.'

CPSQ has proved particularly useful in helping filter the growing number of applicants to the MSc course. Helen and Michelle explain: 'CPSQ has proved to be a good step in the shortlisting process. It makes it more robust, and provides insights which are harder to gain from an applicant's personal statement. CPSQ also allows us to generate a more rounded picture of individual applicants.

'It provides a valuable early stage assessment of the soft skills and personal attributes needed by the NHS, and as a result has proved to be a reliable and practical selection tool,' they add.

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Read the full case study: admissionstesting.org/case-study-university-of-leeds
We are part of the University of Cambridge and have been working with UK and worldwide educational institutions, governments and employers for more than 15 years.

Our admissions and personal development assessments are a global mark of excellence that set the quality standard.

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