CPSQ for schools
Supporting academic success and wellbeing
What is CPSQ?

The Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire® (CPSQ) is an online, non-cognitive assessment that provides insight into a student's attitudes and behaviours – their personal styles.

By understanding your students' behavioural competencies, you can implement targeted support to nurture personal development and wellbeing, which can contribute to academic success.

Developed by assessment experts in Cambridge, CPSQ was part of a four-year research and development process and was trialled with over 4,000 students.

Why use CPSQ for schools?

Learners’ attitudes and behaviours can be as important for academic success as their subject knowledge. CPSQ gives you critical insight into these areas, allowing you to:

Understand hidden barriers to achievement

Gain an insight into factors that may affect academic performance, and implement timely support to overcome them.

Focus and tailor student support and mentoring programmes

By understanding your students' specific development requirements, you can make the most efficient use of limited resources for student support.

Motivate student interest in personal development

Support your learners to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses and help them engage in their own action planning.

Approach conversations with a shared language

Share reports with students and parents as a way to open up development conversations and start setting personal goals.

Apply a holistic approach to education

Demonstrate your commitment to learner wellbeing and development to students and their parents.

*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability 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.
CPSQ's student competency framework

To understand how learners' personal styles of behaving might influence their participation in education, their questionnaire responses are interpreted against five student competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Intellectual curiosity and open thinking. These are the building blocks for critical thinking and problem solving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Motivation to achieve and self-management; skills that support academic success and independent learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>Resilience and adaptability to demands; skills that students will need in life and in particular during and after lockdown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Social confidence and communication style.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Working with others.</td>
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Responses to Thinking, Study and Coping produce a score 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, learners 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 Study competency:

**Study**
Motivation to achieve and self-management

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**Positive Points**
- Describe yourself as ambitious and as someone who wants to achieve high standards.
- Have a clear idea of what you want to do and usually set yourself challenging goals to reach.

**Neutral Points**
- Usually get on with your work but occasionally you might put off starting some routine or boring tasks.
- Similar to most students in your capacity to focus on your work and persevere until it is finished.

**Points to improve**
- Rarely plan and prioritise your activities.
- Typically like to work in an unstructured way and at times can be disorganised.
Communication and Collaboration are two competencies that establish and maintain relationships. These competency areas are not scored because all interpersonal styles have strengths and downsides, and therefore a higher score would not necessarily indicate better behaviour.

The benefits of developing one interpersonal style over another will depend on educational context and future career interests (e.g. team working or independent freelance careers).

The report provides personal feedback using pairs of bullet points balanced for the advantages and disadvantages of each behaviour.

Below is an example of the report for the Communication competency:

**Communication**

Your responses suggest your potential strengths and areas for improvement...

- You often start conversations with new people and tend to be talkative.
- You tend to be uncomfortable with silence and might talk before others have had time to think.

- You typically take the lead in discussions and like to persuade others round to your point of view. You usually enjoy delivering presentations.
- You might sometimes dominate group discussions and interrupt others.

- You show a balance between functional task-focused and warm relationship communication styles.
- In times of stress, you may find it challenging to maintain a balance and communicate in an empathetic and supportive way.

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**Using the CPSQ results**

All learners can develop their behaviours to be more effective. We provide schools with a CPSQ user guide that gives further support and advice on how to use the results. This includes activities and possible interventions for students.
CPSQ’s online platform

The questionnaire can be taken online and at any location (e.g. at home or at school). 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
How Passmores Academy is using CPSQ-targeted mentoring to boost student performance

Passmores Academy in Harlow, UK is a thriving secondary school of more than 1,000 students. The school introduced CPSQ to help inform a targeted mentoring programme to support academic success.

Research by the school staff identified three key areas of development that were a barrier to student success at GCSE*: developing a growth mindset, increasing their resilience and improving their study skills.

To develop these skills, Passmores used CPSQ as an initial assessment of students' strengths and areas for improvement. The student competencies that CPSQ reports on are aligned with the key areas of development identified by the school.

Passmores introduced a targeted mentoring programme for a selected group of Year 10 students (age 14–15). It was designed to address the weaknesses identified by CPSQ.

The outcome was very positive. The effectiveness was measured by comparing students' performance on Year 11 mock GCSE exams with their performance in Year 10. The students who took CPSQ and received targeted mentoring showed a better increase in performance than those who didn't.

Lee Pickering, Associate Senior Leadership Team and Head of History, said:

'CPSQ for schools is very useful as a starting point to open up conversations. It is accurate at identifying students' areas for improvement. It targets mentoring and helps make programmes efficient by saving time. It enables resources to be tweaked and personalised to student needs.'

*UK school qualification taken at age 16.
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.