Personality inventories are designed to assess the relatively stable and enduring characteristics of a person that may affect job performance and workplace behaviour. A number of global personality scales exist and these rest upon the idea that personality is made up of a number of different factors, each of which may affect the way a person responds to situations.

Typical characteristics of personality inventories

- They are usually quite long (expect to complete in approx. 30 - 90 minutes)
- They are usually un-timed
- They are usually paper and pencil tests but are increasingly offered in computer based format
- There are no right or wrong answers
- They typically contain questions in a “forced choice” format rather than free response
- They usually contain an inconsistency and/or a good impression scale
- Questions are often quite vague, (i.e. could be answered differently depending on the situation) and subsequently a person's first or gut response is the best indication of how they would generally respond in the situation.
- Answering honestly about yourself, rather than how you would like to be or how you think the employer wants you to respond, will help you get the truest picture of your personality characteristics and help the employer make an appropriate choice.

Personality inventories - sample questions

Please choose the option that is most representative of you:

- I feel most comfortable being around people who are...
  (a) hard-working  (b) focussed  (c) driven

- I prefer to take my time when making important decisions?
  (a) always  (b) often  (c) never

- I prefer things...
  (a) confirmed  (b) pencilled in  (c) flexible

- Procrastination is never a problem for me.
  (a) True  (b) False

- I enjoy experimenting with new ways of doing things
  (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree  (4) Disagree  (5) Strongly Disagree

- I enjoy outperforming others
  (1) Strongly Agree  (2) Agree  (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree  (4) Disagree  (5) Strongly Disagree