Workplace Assessment

How Questionmark can help organizations implement the new ISO 10667 standard for effective workplace assessments

This white paper explains why workplace assessment is important and describes a new international standard, ISO 10667 in the area. This standard defines good practice in procedures and methods to assess people in work and organizational settings.
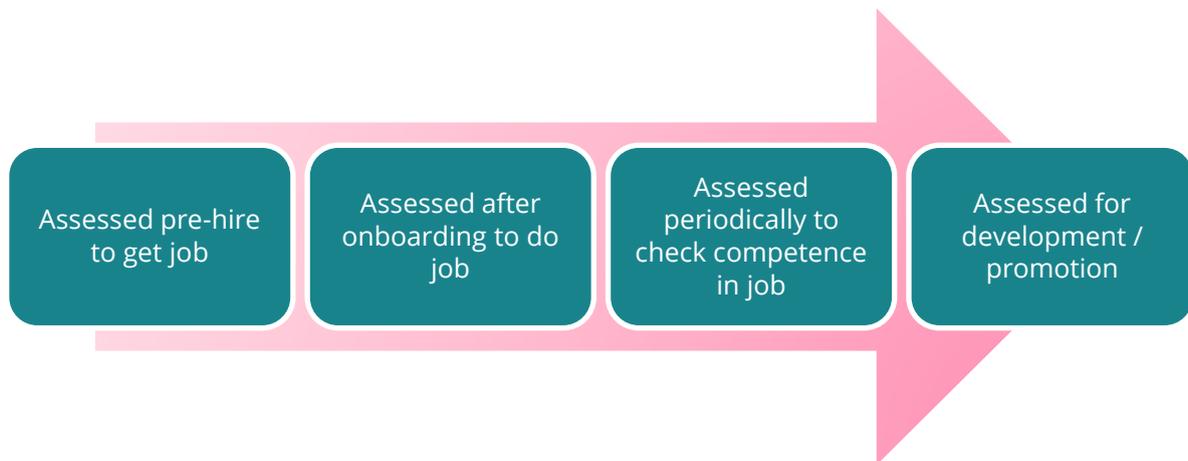
The white paper explains how ISO 10667 can help with more effective workplace assessments and how Questionmark can help you get there. It has been written by Questionmark founder John Kleeman, who has 30 years of assessment experience and was one of the working group involved in producing ISO 10667.

Authors: John Kleeman

Why Workplace Assessment Matters

There are around 3.3 billion people in the global workforce[1] (according to ILO). That is 3,300,000,000 people. Every one of these people have an assessment journey, sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit:

Assessed pre-hire to get job	Assessed after onboarding to do job	Assessed periodically to check competence in job	Assessed for development / promotion

Before getting a job, everyone needs to satisfy the employer they are the right person for the job. In most jobs, people need to onboard, and the organization needs to check they are competent before doing the job for real. In all organizations, there are continued implicit or explicit, objective or subjective assessments periodically to check competence and to assess individuals for development and for promotion.

Many such assessments are implicit or unthought, but they still exist – whether it's a manager interviewing someone for a role, or an organization conducting an annual appraisal or even just a gut decision to put someone in a new role. Only some assessments are explicit processes. But all of them lead to critical decisions that matter. For almost all organizations, people are critical to accomplishment, and so whether it is an objective or subjective process, assessing who is to join, who is to stay and who is to do what are vital to the organization's success.

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[1] According to the International Labour Office (ILO), see https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2020/WCMS_734455/lang--en/index.htm
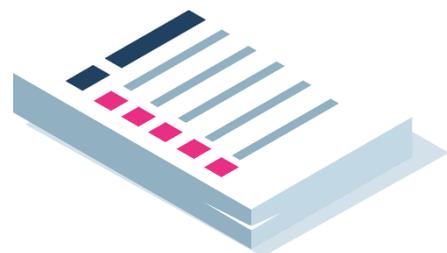
Consequences of Good or Bad Assessments

Decisions made based on good assessments help individuals, organizations and society.

- For individuals, assessments let people demonstrate achievement, find a job role and help people be fairly treated in a job role.

- For organizations, assessments help get the right people in the right job roles and check its workforce is competent.

- For society, assessments reduce skill mismatches, make economies more productive and encourage diversity and inclusivity.

Here are some consequences for an organization making decisions without assessments or based on poor quality assessments.

- Hire less capable people than we might

- May be less diverse as people tend to hire others "like" them or favour their friends

- May make more mistakes as the organization won't be checking competence fairly

- People decisions will be based on guesswork or gut feel rather than data

- The organization will be less productive.

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Why International Standards Drive Productivity

Standards from organizations like ISO help the community in several ways:

1. Standards document the consensus from experts on what good practice is. Organizations often follow standards because they want to follow good practice without having to learn or "reinvent the wheel".

2. Organizations distinguish themselves against competitors by demonstrating compliance or compliance or certification against a standard, and this drives up market quality.

3. Sometimes a standard can help an organization do something in a legally defensible way – because they follow good practice in the standard, they are less likely to suffer a legal pitfall.

The world benefits hugely from standards in areas including physical goods, quality procedures and IT security. Research by ISO on the economic benefits of standards[2] suggests the main benefit of standards economically is by streamlining the internal processes of a company or organization, and that standards contribute to gross profit in a range between 0.15% and 5% of annual sales revenue. For an organization with revenue of $50m, such a benefit might range from $75,000 to $2,500,000 per annum.

Other research by economists for DIN in Germany[3] suggests that since German reunification, standards in general have added around 0.7% to 0.8% to German GDP growth. Given the importance of people to organizations, it's easy to believe that improved workplace assessments could have significant, similar productivity benefits to organizations.

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[2] See https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/archive/pdf/en/ebs_case_studies_factsheets.pdf
[3] See https://www.din.de/blob/89552/68849fab0eeeaafb56c5a3ffee9959c5/economic-benefits-of-standardization-en-data.pdf

The ISO 10667 Standards

ISO 10667 sets out good practice in workplace assessment. It covers all stages of the employment journey and all kinds of assessments – from interviews and appraisals to formal, objective exams and from assessments of individuals to assessments of teams or the whole organization. There are three key roles defined in the standard as follows:
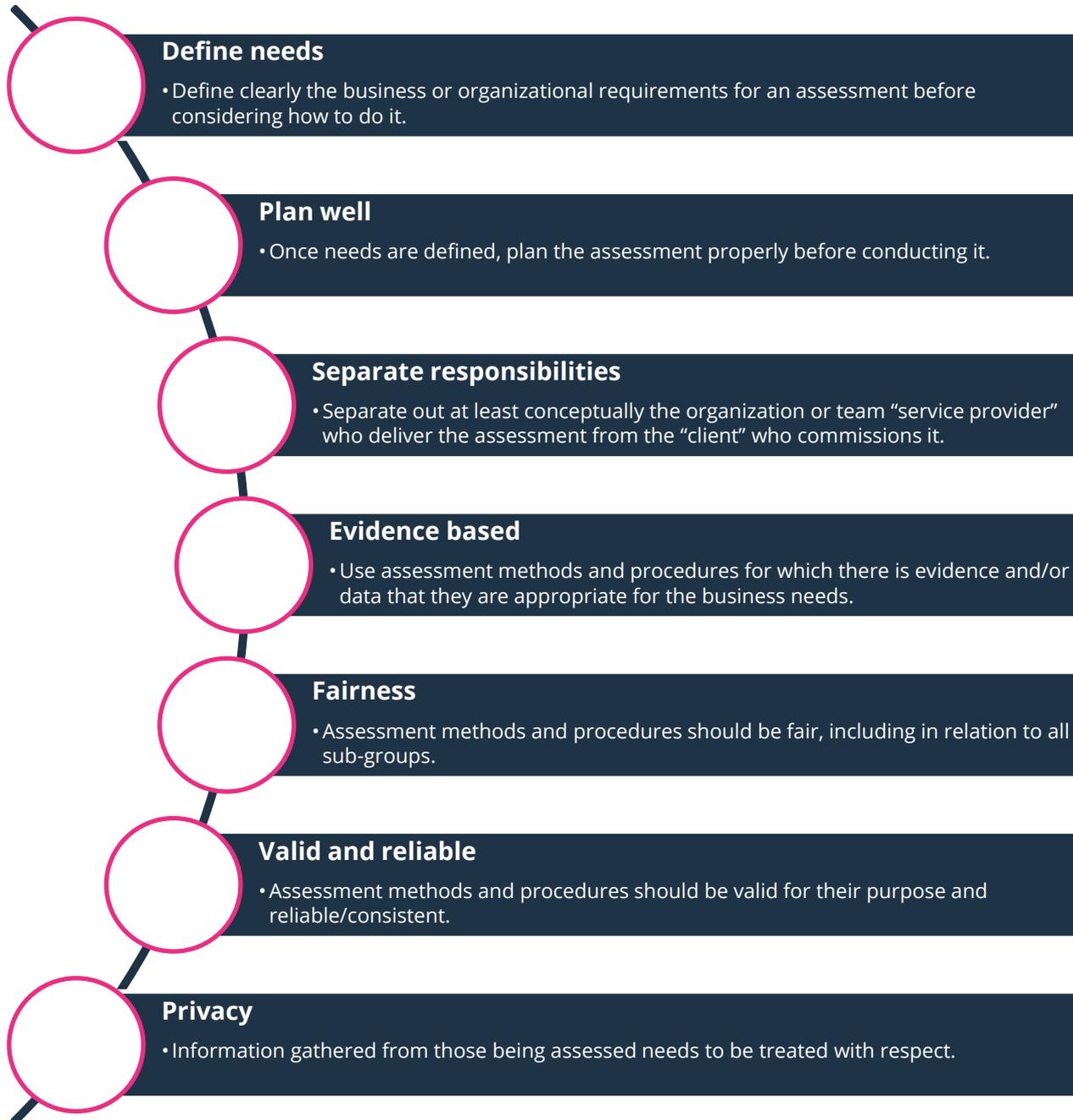
SERVICE PROVIDER

Provider of assessment (e.g. vendor or internal department)

CLIENT

Organization or other who arranges the assessment

ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANT

Individual being assessed

A new and substantially revised version of ISO 10667 has come out in 2020[4]. The standard has two parts:

- Part 1, Requirements for the client

- Part 2, Requirements for service providers

You can be compliant with one or both parts.

Some of the key themes within the standard are shown in the table below. Each of these key themes contributes to making the assessment process more effective for the business.

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[4] ISO 10667 is available on the ISO website at https://www.iso.org/standard/74716.html and https://www.iso.org/standard/74717.html. It is also available on various national standards websites as well (e.g. BSI). Part 1 is called ISO 10667-1:2020 and part 2 is called ISO 10667-2:2020. Make sure to look at or purchase these versions and not the 2011 versions which may still be available but are superseded.

Define needs

- Define clearly the business or organizational requirements for an assessment before considering how to do it.

Plan well

- Once needs are defined, plan the assessment properly before conducting it.

Separate responsibilities

- Separate out at least conceptually the organization or team "service provider" who deliver the assessment from the "client" who commissions it.

Evidence based

- Use assessment methods and procedures for which there is evidence and/or data that they are appropriate for the business needs.

Fairness

- Assessment methods and procedures should be fair, including in relation to all sub-groups.

Valid and reliable

- Assessment methods and procedures should be valid for their purpose and reliable/consistent.

Privacy

- Information gathered from those being assessed needs to be treated with respect.

Why ISO 10667 Matters

As we have seen, every employee has an assessment journey. And every organization makes people decisions based on assessments – explicit or implicit. By improving the quality of assessments, people decisions will be more effective. Here is how ISO 10667 can help when considering some typical organizational use cases for assessments.

Commissioning the development of a test from a third-party organization

Often an organization will commission a third-party services company to develop a test for its use, for example to help make decisions in recruiting or to help evaluate training needs or for a variety of other purposes. By following ISO 10667, both parties will benefit. By defining the business needs for the assessment precisely, the commissioning organization will be more likely to get an assessment that meets the needs, and the service provider will have clear direction. And by ensuring that the assessment is developed using evidence-based methods, it will be much more likely that the assessment meets the business needs; often this will mean that it will measure competence or job skills in an effective way.

Using an assessment from a test publisher

Most professional test publishers use methods and procedures that are aligned with the evidenced-based good practices in ISO 10667. Often, they will follow the principles of the U.S. AERA/NCME/APA Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing[5], which is a more detailed standard on assessment practices, which ISO 10667 itself references. Some less professional providers may make claims for how their systems can measure people or help make recruitment or development decisions that are not evidence based, and reference to the principles of ISO 10667 can help guide which assessments to purchase.

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[5] See https://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards. ISO 10667 references the AERA/NCME/APA standards and the two are not competitive. ISO 10667 directly focuses on assessments in the workplace, it is published by ISO who command cross-sector support, and it is international.

Developing an assessment in-house

Many organizations develop assessments within their organization for recruitment, learning, diagnosis or compliance purposes. It is probably here that ISO 10667 can make the biggest impact, as it helps define good practice for assessment development, and will allow the organization to develop assessments that provide business benefit.

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How Questionmark Helps when Implementing ISO 10667

Questionmark's assessment platform is widely used to author, deliver and analyze assessments for pre-employment testing, certification and credentialing, learning and training, regulatory compliance and HR & talent management. It is often used by organizations developing their own in-house assessments.

Questionmark helps organizations developing in-house assessments comply with ISO 10667 with:

- Capabilities that support an effective and legally defensible authoring process that can result in valid, reliable and fair tests

- Secure, robust, efficient and scalable delivery of assessments online

- Effective security preventing inappropriate access to assessment data and results

- Enabling supporting privacy for test takers, including easy ways of presenting consent information to participants and recording their acceptance

- Useful and meaningful reports on assessment data

- A comprehensive assessment management system that can deliver all your organization's assessments and so provide a central place of reference for compliance with the standard

More information on Questionmark is available at www.questionmark.com. More information on using Questionmark to develop valid, reliable, fair and evidence-based tests can be seen in several white papers on the Questionmark website including:

- Assessments Through the Learning Process

- Defensibility and Legal Certainty for Tests and Exams

- Assessment Results You Can Trust

About Questionmark

Questionmark provides a secure enterprise-grade assessment platform and professional services to leading organizations around the world, delivered with care and unequalled expertise. Its full-service online assessment tool and professional services help customers to improve their performance and meet their compliance requirements. Questionmark enables organizations to unlock their potential by delivering assessments which are valid, reliable, fair and defensible. Questionmark offers secure powerful integration with other LMS, LRS and proctoring services making it easy to bring everything together in one place. Questionmark's cloud-based assessment management platform offers rapid deployment, scalability for high-volume test delivery, 24/7 support, and the peace-of-mind of secure, audited U.S., Australian and European-based data centers.

Complete details are available at https://www.questionmark.com

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Questionmark has the experience to ensure that its customers get results they can rely on. It has helped its customers deliver more than 95m unique assessments and, since starting, has been trusted by more than 2,500 customers worldwide.

The business has a wide range of expertise across industry sectors, government and academia. These include, but are not confined to, financial services, technology, pharmaceuticals, utilities, retail, public sector and government, awarding bodies and higher education.

Questionmark has achieved authorization from the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP). The FedRAMP Authorization means Questionmark is approved to deliver cloud-based assessments for the US government and military organizations.

The business supports the full range of roles within customers' organizations to deliver valid, reliable, fair, and defensible assessments. This includes senior managers and departmental heads, technical assessment teams, and consultants and intermediaries. Questionmark also supports in-house functions such as IT, data, legal and procurement teams.