Benefits to Universities

This common assessment tool:

- Enables uniform comparisons of prospective students with mixed experiences and from different socio-economic backgrounds
- Identifies applicants’ potential for tertiary level study
- Supplements applicants’ existing academic qualifications
- Facilitates selection judgements and simplifies admissions processes
- Provides a valid and reliable measure of reasoning.

ACER’s ongoing research, quality assurance and technical analysis ensure the test continues to provide a good range of item difficulty to match the range of candidate abilities.

Let us do the hard work

- Test questions are developed by a team of highly experienced item writers.
- Our online registration system can be adapted to suit each client university.
- All test materials, including a Policy & Procedures Manual, are delivered directly to the university.
- ACER manages the entire test supervision process, in accordance with stringent MSAP procedure guidelines.
- All scoring is undertaken at ACER and analysed by experienced psychometricians.
- Results are released to UCAS, your institution, applicants, or any combination of the above.

Current use of MSAP

The University of Salford, Manchester was the first tertiary institution to pilot MSAP in the UK, during 2013. MSAP has been used in Ireland successfully since 2009 by UCC, UCD & NUIG.

Feel free to browse our websites:

msap-uk@acer.edu.au
msap-ireland@acer.edu.au

Further information

If you have more questions about MSAP and how it may be applied within your university admissions process, please contact:

Melanie Pearson
Higher Education Consultant
Australian Council for Educational Research
PO Box 7772 London W1A 2BX
t: +44 207 935 5132
m: +44 790 882 4559
e: melanie.pearson@acer.edu.au

To discuss possible implementation, timelines, costs and administrative matters related to using MSAP at your institution, please contact:

Shelley McLean
Project Director, MSAP
Australian Council for Educational Research
19 Prospect Hill Road
Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
t: +61 3 9227 5586
e: shelley.mclean@acer.edu.au
What is MSAP?
MSAP stands for Mature Students Admissions Pathway. It is an assessment used for mature applicants to selected courses at various universities in Ireland and the UK.

MSAP provides measures of the types of competencies considered important for success in tertiary study. The purpose of MSAP is to assess candidates’ ability to understand and analyse material and to think critically about issues. It is not a test of knowledge of specific academic subject matter.

MSAP is the ideal instrument for assessing the aptitude of applicants entering Higher Education through a non-traditional pathway.

MSAP allows applicants to provide evidence of their capacity to succeed at university.

Three Modules
Tertiary institutions are given the option of three test modules that suit a wide range of admissions needs.

Reasoning in the Humanities & Social Sciences (Module 1) – 1 hour
- Stimulus materials drawn from Humanities and Social Sciences contexts.
- Stimulus may be a cartoon, poem, graph, diagram, fiction/non-fiction narrative, etc.

Reasoning in the Sciences, Mathematics & Social Sciences (Module 2) – 1 hour
- Stimulus materials drawn from Science and Mathematics contexts.
- Stimulus may be in numeric, symbolic, spatial or graphical form.

Written English (Module 3) – 1 hour
There are two writing tasks. One invites an argumentative response; the other invites a personal response.

Written English is assessed on the following criteria:
- Thought and content
- Structure and organisation
- Expression, style and mechanics.

Each piece of writing is assessed by two independent, experienced markers.

You Decide
The MSAP Office would be pleased to assist you to select an option that best suits the purposes of your institution or faculty.

MSAP test modules may be used in a variety of combinations. For example:

Option A
Applicants to any Higher Education course

MODULE 1
Reasoning in the Humanities & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

MODULE 2
Reasoning in the Sciences, Mathematics & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

Option B
Applicants to any Higher Education course

MODULE 1
Reasoning in the Humanities & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

MODULE 2
Reasoning in the Sciences, Mathematics & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

MODULE 3
Written English (Essay format: 1 hour)

Option C
Applicants to courses such as Arts, Education, Humanities or Law

MODULE 1
Reasoning in the Humanities & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

MODULE 2
Reasoning in the Sciences, Mathematics & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

MODULE 3
Written English (Essay format: 1 hour)

Option D
Applicants to courses such as Science or Agricultural Science

MODULE 2
Reasoning in the Sciences, Mathematics & Social Sciences (Multiple choice format: 1 hour)

MODULE 3
Written English (Essay format: 1 hour)

Sample question:
Reasoning in the Humanities & Social Sciences (Module 1)

The cartoon is a comment on
A corporate loyalty.
B the value of teamwork.
C the social implications of a casualised workforce.
D the social implications of a decentralised workforce.

Answer: D

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