



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission

28 June 2021

9(2)(a)
privacy

Dear 9(2)(a) privacy

Official Information Request
Our Ref: OIA 2021-0052

I refer to your official information request received on 10 May 2021 for:

“I am writing to request information pertaining to the usage of psychometric testing under the OIA. Specifically, I would like to request the following information as held by the state services commission, either pertaining to its own organisation or other state organisations that the state services commission holds information on:

1) The details of any psychometric testing undertaken as part of staff recruitment, training, resourcing or outsourcing – including as undertaken by outside recruitment firms.

1a) Details including: the types of psychometric test undertaken; copies of the test(s) themselves; statistical distributions of results; information about the staff tested broken down by role, and including designation decisions made upon receipt of the tests; & organisational guidelines and communication pertaining to the analysis of results.

1b) Names of all and any companies used to provide psychometric testing, including subcontractors used by outsourced recruitment agencies.

2) All documents and communicating pertaining to: decisions made to introduce or modify psychometric testing regimes; initiate use of results in a particular way or change the use of results.

2a) All documents and communicating pertaining to financial costs of psychometric testing broken down by year, and including names of entities that psychometric testing related transactions occurred within this breakdown.

3) Any documentation or communication pertaining to any cost/ benefit analysis taken to: introduce; modify; or make decisions taking into account the results of psychometric testing.”

On 12 May 2021, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (the Commission) contacted you to clarify the specific timeframe of your request and to seek further context of the information you were requesting in question 2a).

You confirmed that the timeframe for your request was for the past two years, with a summary pertaining to the last ten years. You also advised that the information you were seeking at question 2a) were invoices related to psychometric assessments.

Information being released

For the purpose of this OIA, we have defined “psychometric testing” as a structured and standardised measurement of cognitive, behavioural or emotional functioning.

These features differentiate psychometric testing from other kinds of assessments that organisations or coaches may use, such as 360 feedback, structured interviews, behavioural observations, checklists or questionnaires.

The Commission does not use psychometric testing as part of our appointment process for Commission employees. There are two circumstances in which the Commission may use psychometric tests as contributory information to support other assessment processes: selective use alongside other assessments and processes that control for conscious and unconscious bias in the recruitment of Public Service chief executives; and in the Leadership Insight Programme – a developmental programme that supports senior public sector leaders – owned by the Commission and delivered in partnership with Cerno and the Leadership Development Centre.

Recruitment of Public Service chief executives

The Commission is the employer of Public Service chief executives.

Every Public Service chief executive appointment includes a multi-method approach to consider candidates capabilities and suitability for the role, which can include, but is not limited to:

- self-assessments
- interviews with recruiters (if used)
- panel interviews
- psychometric tests
- media scenario assessments
- interviews with external assessors
- reference checks
- other probity, background and security checks

Employing a multi-stage approach ensures decision-making is informed by a range of inputs. This helps to form a 360-degree view of applicants’ capabilities and suitability for selection and appointment to Public Service chief executive roles. Importantly, psychometric tests are never determinative of a decision to appoint, progress or exclude an applicant.

The amount spent on external consultants who assess Public Service chief executive candidates, including through the use of psychometric tests, are available in the Annual Review reports, which are publicly available via the Parliament website at the following links:

2018/19: [2018/19 Annual Review of the State Services Commission](#)

2019/20: [2019/20 Annual Review of the Public Service Commission](#)

These tasks are not itemised for invoicing and some aspects may only apply in certain situations as they are applied specifically and selectively to each process. The Commission has a contracted open panel of assessment consultants who assess Public Service chief executive candidates. The panel is made up of Cerno Limited, Winsborough Limited, and PsychforLeaders.

Leadership Insight Programme

Leadership Insight is a common developmental assessment programme available for public sector agencies to support their senior leaders' development. This programme is owned by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission and delivered in partnership with Cerno Ltd.

The Leadership Insight programme is informed by a number of elements including conversations, a behavioural interview, a simulation exercise, and several questionnaires that gather information about aspects of a participants' self-insight and leadership capability and approach. All these elements are administered, interpreted and debriefed during the Leadership Insight process.

The psychometric tests that are used as part of the Leadership Insight Programme are the Wave Professional Styles test and an optional critical reasoning test (an online test of a person's ability to reason with information presented in verbal and numerical formats).

The tables below outline the number of participants for the Leadership Insight Programme who had a psychometric assessment as part of their participation, the role tier they belong to, the amount that was paid for the assessments, and the agency the participant belonged to.

FY 2019/20							
Organisation	WAVE			Critical Reasoning			Spend (\$)
Leadership Tier	2	3	4+	2	3	4+	All
Department of Corrections		1			1		\$296.00
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet		1	1				\$192.00
Inland Revenue Department		1			1		\$296.00
Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment		1	17				\$1,728.00
Ministry of Justice / Te Tāhū o te Ture		5			5		\$1,480.00
New Zealand Customs		1					\$96.00
Statistics New Zealand		1					\$96.00
Te Puni Kōkiri		2					\$192.00

FY 2020/21							
Organisation	WAVE			Critical Reasoning			Spend (\$)
Leadership Tier	2	3	4+	2	3	4+	All
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet			1				\$96.00
Land Information New Zealand			1				\$96.00
Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment			1				\$96.00
Ministry of Education	1	1					\$192.00
Social Wellbeing Agency	1						\$96.00

Information found in the table above outlines psychometric assessments undertaken by agency, tier of role and amount paid for the assessment.

The Commission does not hold copies of the psychometric tests undertaken and does not receive results of any psychometric tests. We also do not hold any documents or communication pertaining to decisions made to introduce or modify psychometric testing regimes, or any documents relating to any cost/benefit analysis. Therefore, we are refusing these parts of your request under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982 on the grounds that the information requested does not exist.

In response to part 2a) of your request, as psychometric assessments are done as part of a package and are not itemised within invoices, we do not hold the information in the form you have requested. We are therefore refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act on the grounds that the information requested does not exist.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact Ministerial.Services@publicservice.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that we intend to publish this letter (with your personal details removed) on the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely



Nicky Dirks
Manager – Ministerial and Executive Services
Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission