

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

- Understand how the logic of prediction guides the selection process
- Review the nature of predictors—how selection measures differ
- Understand the process involved in developing a selection plan, and the selection sequence
- Learn about initial assessment methods and understand how these methods are optimally used in organizations
- Evaluate the relative effectiveness of initial assessment methods to determine which work best, and why
- Review the legal issues involved in the use of initial assessment methods, and understand how legal problems can be avoided

Introduction

External selection—one of the more practically important and heavily researched areas of staffing—refers to the assessment and evaluation of external job applicants. A variety of assessment methods are used. Preliminary issues that guide the use of these assessment methods will be discussed. These issues include the logic of prediction, the nature of predictors, development of the selection plan, and the selection sequence.

Initial assessment methods are used to select candidates from among the initial job applicants. Those methods that will be reviewed are résumés and cover letters, application blanks, biographical information, letters of recommendation, reference and background checks, and initial interviews. The factors that should guide the choice of initial assessment methods will be reviewed. These include frequency of use, cost, reliability, validity, utility, applicant reactions, and adverse impact.

The use of assessment methods requires a firm understanding of legal issues—including the use of disclaimers and the legal complexities surrounding reference and background checks. The most important of these details will be reviewed. Finally, bona fide occupational qualifications (BFOQs) are particularly relevant to initial assessment because such qualifications are usually assessed during the initial stages of selection. The legal issues involved in establishing such qualifications will be reviewed.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

Many times, selection is equated with one event, namely, the interview. Nothing could be further from the truth if the best possible person/job match is to be made. For this to be achieved, a series of well-thought-out activities needs to take place.