



SHL Test Results: Complete Guide

The ambiguity of CEB’s SHL scoring methods, norms and cut scores causes confusion amongst candidates about their odds of passing SHL tests, their goal achievements and the amount of practice they need to put in to succeed. In the following article we will reduce the level of ambiguity by answering a few important questions about SHL test results.

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How are SHL tests scored?

SHL aptitude tests are usually comprised of multiple choice questions. The possible marks for each question are: correct, incorrect, and unanswered. When you submit an SHL aptitude test your answers are first measured against the correct answers. Then, your correct answers are counted, and the rate of correct answers is calculated.

What can you learn from this?

- Don't leave questions unanswered. In SHL tests, guessing is beneficial (unless you are told otherwise on a specific test).

How are SHL scores interpreted?

Your own rate of correct answers is compared to the average achievement of a norm group. The most relevant norm group is chosen by the employer out of the options offered by SHL.

The candidate's normed score is then transformed into a percentile, which tells the employer where the candidate is ranked relatively to the norm group (see graph). For example: if you are in the 75th percentile, it means that you scored higher than 75% of the people in the norm group.

What can you learn from this?

- Your absolute score does not matter. Since you are graded relative to people of similar educational background who experience similar difficulties, you should practice as much as you can to gain an advantage.
- Most candidates try to increase their odds of getting the job by buying practice packs and putting efforts into preparation. Don't get left behind! You can practice the whole battery of SHL tests with us at <http://www.jobtestprep.co.uk/shlpracticetests.aspx>.
- Don't panic if practice tests are difficult – it may be difficult for everyone. On the other hand, don't rely on a subjective feeling of confidence. You don't know how good other people are.



What is an SHL norm group?

SHL results are collected from thousands of test takers. This data is divided into norm groups, so employers would be able to compare a candidate's results to relevant candidates in the employment market. These groups are defined according to two factors: Industry and job level.

- The industries that SHL offers to employers are:
 1. Finance & Banking
 2. Engineering, Technology & Science.
 3. Public Sector
 4. General Population
 5. Retail, Hospitality & Leisure

- The job level groupings available to employers are
 1. Managerial & Professional
 2. Graduates
 3. Skilled Technology
 4. Supervisory & Junior Management
 5. Senior Customer Contact
 6. Skilled Technical
 7. Junior Customer Contact
 8. Administrator
 9. Semi-Skilled Technical

What can you learn from this?

- You may guess your norm group according to the character of the position you apply for. That would give you a clue about the effort you need to put into preparation for the tests. For example: taking a numerical test against the Finance and Banking group would require a higher absolute score to get a high normed score than taking it against the Public Sector group.
- If you apply to an operational position, your scores on reading comprehension tests, checking tests, deductive and spatial reasoning tests or calculation tests will be compared to the General Population norm group.



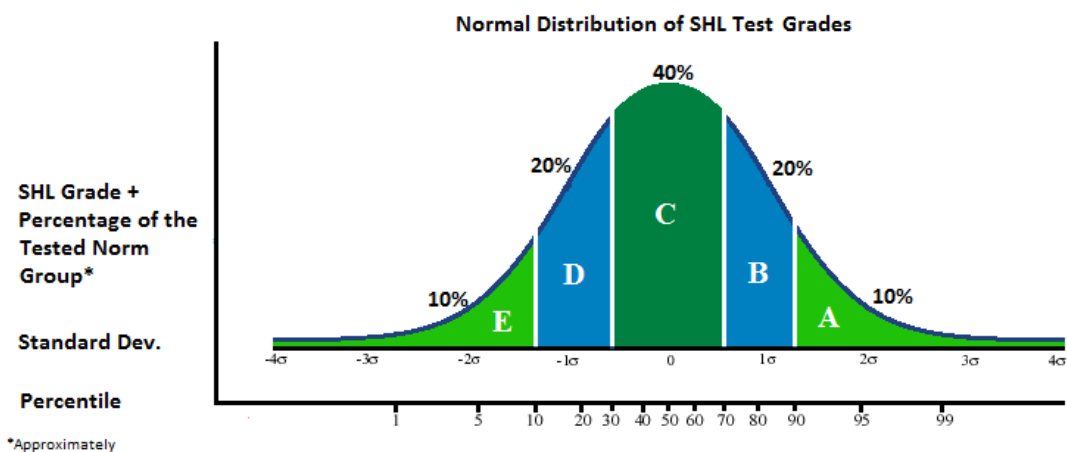
- Taking an industry relevant test will probably require a relatively high score. For example: a candidate applying for a lawyer position and taking an SHL Verbal Reasoning test will have to score higher than a finance candidate of the same job level taking this test, since Verbal Reasoning is more relevant to law than to finance.
- You should make your practice job level and industry specific as much as you can, rather than doing generic practice. Learn about our SHL level and industry specific practice packs at <http://www.jobtestprep.co.uk/shlpracticetests.aspx>.

How are SHL scores reported?

The employer is given an SHL report which includes the normalized score on each test you took. However, the candidate cannot obtain this report. Rather, he may be able to receive an SHL feedback report. On that report, the candidate's abilities are marked A-E according to the following method:

SHL results scale:

Grade	Meaning	Percentile
A	Well above average	99-92
B	Above average	90-73
C	Average	69-31
D	Below average	27-10
E	Well below average	8-1



How to read the normal distribution graph?

On the normal distribution graph, the 50th percentile represents both the mean and the median score. The absolute mean and median score changes between different tests and different norm groups. Therefore, absolute scores cannot be displayed on that graph. The different sections of the Bell Curve represent different groups of scores in relation to the mean score. For example: if you had X correct out of Y questions in a certain test, and your



score falls in the 80th percentile of the scores achieved by the members of your norm group, your grade is 'B' (above average). In total, 20% of your norm group are graded B.

What can you learn from this?

- Obtaining this report is extremely important for future SHL assessments, especially if you failed the current assessment. The report will give you information about your "real time" achievements and a general idea about your normed scores.
- You can now choose to focus your future practice on weaknesses spotted in the SHL report.

How to find your SHL test results?

If the employer decides to provide you with SHL feedback, it will be linked to **feedback Reports** on your Assessment Home Page. The feedback will be provided only after you have completed your last online assessment. If you have not received an automatically generated SHL results feedback through your SHL online account you may ask for it directly from the employer.

What is the SHL pass score?

The SHL pass score, also referred to as SHL cut score or SHL pass mark, is a score pre-determined by the employer which you have to pass in order to continue to other parts of the assessment. SHL enables the use of pass scores but employers do not always choose to use them.

There is no general answer to the above question as pass marks and average scores depend on the norm group and on the requirements of each employer.

Cut scores are used differently on [SHL verify tests](#) (tests administered online, before the assessment centre) and on assessment centre aptitude tests:

1. SHL Verify tests are used to sift candidates before an assessment centre in order to save money. Therefore, most of these tests have cut-scores, usually not very high. We have seen different examples ranging from the 15th to the 60th percentile. It is rather safe to say that candidates below SHL grade C will be disqualified (see chart).
2. Aptitude tests administered at the assessment centre are usually more forgiving and generally do not include cut scores as assessors tend to integrate all the information (personality tests, psychometric tests, group dynamics etc.) they have from the assessment centre. Therefore, your aptitude tests scores are an important factor,



although not the **only** important factor. For information about other types of important SHL assessments:

- SHL Group Exercise - <http://www.jobtestprep.co.uk/shl-group-exercise>
- SHL Personality Test - <http://www.jobtestprep.co.uk/opq32.aspx>
- SHL In-Tray - <http://www.jobtestprep.co.uk/shl-in-tray-exercise>

What can you learn from this?

- You should put real effort into preparing for your SHL verify tests since failing to make the cut scores will end your chances to get the job as you will not be invited to attend an assessment centre.
- If you know that demand is high for the position you have applied to, cut-scores may be higher than usual.



What is the average score for SHL tests?

There is no such thing as a uniform SHL average score. Rather, the average score depends on the type of test (numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning etc.) and the norm group.

Nevertheless, we have some examples of average scores from some SHL tests, just to give you a hint about the range of SHL average scores:

In a series of surveys conducted on graduates in Australia, SHL test scores were collected (published in 2006)

- The averages of correct answers on the Numerical Reasoning test for graduates (NMG2) ranged from 10 to 21 correct answers out of 35.
- Among the same candidates, the average number of correct answers on the Verbal Reasoning test (VMG2) ranged from 19 to 36 correct answers out of 48 questions.

In a series of SHL surveys conducted on supervisors taking the CRTB (Critical Reasoning Test Battery) in Australia (published in 2006)

- The averages of correct answers on the Numerical Reasoning test for supervisors and junior managers (NC 2) ranged from 18 to 30 correct answers out of 40 questions.
- The averages of correct answers on the Verbal Reasoning test for supervisors and junior managers (VC 1) ranged from 37 to 43 correct answers out of 60 questions.

What is considered a good score on SHL tests?

There is no conclusive answer to this question since SHL test scores are normalised and a good SHL score depends much on the norm group and possibly on a pass-score determined by specific employers. However, in general, a good score on SHL tests is a score that will enable you to go on to the next stage of the assessment. On SHL verify tests this would mean scoring above the pass-score. We can safely say that getting a grade A is a great score which will help you "stand out from the crowd". Getting a grade B is a good score. Note that you can only assume the number of questions you need to get right in order to receive these grades as this rate changes between norm groups.



Do SHL results include speed and accuracy?

SHL does not include speed and accuracy in its standardised ability scores which only take into account the number of correct answers. However, CEB's SHL provides the employer with Precision scores as additional information:

- **Work Rate** – refers to the candidate's speed. Calculated as the number of attempted items (i.e. the number of questions answered + the number of questions clicked through without answering) divided by the total number of questions in the test.
- **Hit Rate** – refers to the candidate's accuracy. Calculated as the number of correct answers divided by the number of attempted items

SHL advises employers to regard this data with a degree of caution since there is no evidence to support that higher speed and accuracy correlate with better work performance.

Summary

CEB's SHL test results are normalised. That is, your score is compared to other candidates of your job level and industry. Therefore, practising will help you "stick out" from your norm group and increase your odds of getting the job. There is no way to tell exactly what score is required to pass. Nevertheless, information of the job level, job industry, and the specific employer may give you a clue about the level of the norm group and the amount of practice that you need in order to get a good SHL test score.