



11th May 2020

Letter to the ATP - Update on the Assessment Standards South Africa (ASSA) review process

This letter is intended to provide feedback and an update to ATP members with regard to the Assessment Standards South Africa (ASSA) process for review of psychological (and other) measures.

ASSA (www.assa.co.za) was founded as an entity that brings together various professional bodies that work with and represent professionals involved in psychological assessment. Professional body involvement includes People Assessment in Industry (PAI), an interest group that forms a part of the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa (SIOPSA) the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) and the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA).

The ASSA test review process and documentation was developed to provide clear guidelines and criteria for reviewing the quality of tests for use in the South African context, based on the international test review guidelines of EFPA (European Federation of Psychological Associations) following an extensive and thorough development and consultation process.

During the 2019 PsySSA and SIOPSA conferences, two round table discussions were held during which representatives of ASSA presented the aim of ASSA and progress on the documents developed (process and criteria guidelines). Members of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) also participated in these sessions upon invitations from ASSA. The review documents were distributed to all members of the various professional bodies and stakeholders involved in psychological assessment for their feedback and input. The process guidelines and criteria documents were updated and finalised using feedback from members, stakeholders and other interested parties. Feedback was generally very positive and appreciative of the thoroughness and clarity of the process and criteria.

The ATP remains excited about the positive developments regarding the process and standards for the review of psychological tests developed by ASSA. As previously communicated, the HPCSA remains responsible for **classification** of tests only (as being a psychological - or not – depending on the construct being measured).

Since February 2019 the HPCSA has indicated that it will no longer be involved in the certification of such assessment instruments. Click on the below link for more information

<https://www.hpcsa.co.za/?contentId=0&menuSubId=52&actionName=Professional%20Boards>

As indicated previously, there is no longer a legal requirement for tests to be evaluated by the HPCSA before they may be used in the workplace. However, test developers and distributors and users **are wholly responsible** for ensuring that any test used must be shown to be valid and reliable, can be fairly applied and is not biased against any employee or group – thus meeting EEA requirements.

We remain convinced that the establishment of ASSA for the quality review of measures and the development of the review guidelines and clear criteria will contribute positively towards high quality

assessments in South Africa. The aim of ASSA will be the establishment of an easy to use new test quality review process that is transparent, objective, and fair, and that can be applied to both psychological and non-psychological tests. The intention is to **certify** assessments that meet the minimum standards as set by the Employment Equity Act.

It is exciting to inform ATP members that the go-ahead has been given for the development of the online system that will be used for the ASSA process, using the clear process and criteria guidelines contained in the documents. Currently, it is anticipated that the online development for running the ASSA review process should be ready for trial use by August 2020.

As previously communicated at the 2019 AGM, existing ATP members will be invited to participate in the trial review process as soon as the online system is available. Each ATP member will be allowed to submit a single measure for such a (free) pilot review. The first number of pilot reviews will be used to check and refine the online process and to finalise clarity of the criteria. After a set number of pilot reviews have been completed, and only if the pilot review measure satisfactorily complies with the requirements as set out in the ASSA criteria document, a certificate will be provided to indicate that instruments meet the stated minimum criteria as set out by ASSA.

To this end, we would like to ask ATP members to indicate by reply email by the 30th June 2020:

- a) whether they would like to submit a measure for the ASSA pilot review process and
- b) by what date – starting in August 2020 – they anticipate doing so.

Yours faithfully

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