



**Pre-employment Testing Process for
Clerical, Secretarial, and Technical Jobs
Applicant Preparation Guide**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to assist you in preparing for the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC) Pre-employment Testing Process. The guide provides background information about the requirements for clerical, secretarial, and technical jobs, examples of the types of items that are included in the test battery, and tips for helping you prepare for the testing process.

The testing process is designed to measure various skills and abilities that are important to performing clerical, secretarial, and technical jobs. At MDACC, there is a wide range of jobs that are currently tested. These jobs include:

- Administrative and secretarial positions
- Patient and public contact positions
- Clerk and information management positions
- Data entry operators
- Business and accounting positions
- Pharmacy and medical technicians
- Artists
- Medical transcriptionists

Presented in this guide is a summary of clerical, secretarial, and technical job requirements, an overview of the testing process, sample items similar to those in the basic skills tests, a brief discussion of the specialized skills tests, and general test taking tips.

Using this guide does not guarantee you will successfully complete the Pre-employment Testing Process.

TEST-TAKING TIPS

The following are some suggestions to help you prepare for the Pre-employment Testing Process.

General Testing Suggestions

Before the Test

- Eat well and get a good night's sleep before the test. If you are tired or hungry, your concentration may be affected and so might your test performance.
- Wear something comfortable since you will be sitting for approximately an hour. Test sites may be slightly hot or slightly cold, so dress for any temperature.
- Make sure you know the exact location and time of the test. Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive, use the restroom, find your seat, and compose yourself.
- Leave behind pagers, cell phones, calculators, portable radios, etc.
- Go into the test with a positive attitude, determined to do your best. Focus on what you know rather than worrying about what you do not know.
- Try not to discuss the test with other people once you arrive. Generally, this only increases everyone's anxiety.

During the Test

- Listen carefully to all of the test administrator's instructions and follow them step-by-step. If you work ahead of the instructions, you may miss important information.
- Ask questions at the appropriate times if you are unsure about any directions or procedures.
- Keep in mind that the tests have time limits. Work as quickly and accurately as you can, but do not become discouraged if you do not complete any test. It is not expected that everyone will be able to respond to all of the test questions in the given time limits.
- Carefully read each test item. Skimming over a test item may cause you to miss important information.
- Pay attention to your own work, not to what is going on around you. If you are wondering how other people are doing, you are wasting valuable time.
- Try to stay relaxed during the test.

Strategies for Multiple-Choice Tests

Multiple-choice test formats present questions with several response alternatives. You are to choose the one alternative that is the correct or best answer to the question. Keep the following tips in mind when you are taking a multiple-choice exam:

- Never choose an alternative based on the frequency or pattern of your previous responses. Do not assume that the correct answers follow any sequence or pattern, or that they are used in equal numbers.
- Be sure to read every alternative. Even if one of the first responses is the alternative you expected to be correct, one of the others may be better or more specifically correct.
- Eliminate alternatives you know are wrong. This will help you to focus on the remaining alternatives. If two or more alternatives seem correct, compare them to determine what makes them different. Evaluate these differences in relation to the question.
- If you are not sure about any of the alternatives, use logical reasoning to rule out as many alternatives as you can. Then, choose between the remaining alternatives.
- If you cannot rule out any alternatives, your first reactions often tend to be correct. Change your answer only if information remembered later or a strong hunch indicates that your first guess is wrong.
- Try to answer as many questions as you can during the time limit. Do not spend too much time on any one question.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

The MDACC clerical, secretarial, and technical jobs were studied to determine the skills and abilities that are required of individuals in order to perform successfully in these jobs. The following list presents examples of requirements that were identified as important for these jobs (note that you will only be tested on a subset of these):

- Ability to read, understand, and write English, including the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Ability to inspect and verify information for accuracy, paying close attention to details.
- Ability to formulate ideas and thoughts and present them meaningfully (for example, in letters, memos, reports, presentations, or instructions).
- Ability to read and comprehend information from charts, graphs, and diagrams.
- Ability to think logically and make appropriate decisions in routine and non-routine situations.
- Ability to follow MDACC rules, regulations, and procedures.
- Ability to organize, assemble, and compile information, including tracking and recording information on forms and in records.
- Ability to plan, schedule, organize, and prioritize work activities for self and others.
- Personal characteristics such as dependability, communication, and interpersonal skills.

The tests you will complete are based on the skill and ability requirements of the specific job for which you are applying.

TESTING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Basic Skills Tests

The Basic Skills Tests in the Pre-employment Testing Process are all timed, multiple-choice tests. Depending on the test, you will have 1½ to 10 minutes to respond to as many of the items as you can. You should work as quickly and accurately as possible. The test items are presented in a multiple-choice item format. You will select the best answer to each question from the response options presented. The number of response options varies, ranging from two to five, depending on the test. The specific Basic Skills Tests you will complete depend on the job for which you are applying.

The Basic Skills Tests will be administered on the computer. The computerized Basic Skills Tests do not require knowledge regarding the use of a computer. There is a brief tutorial presented at the beginning of the computerized battery to familiarize you with the computer, the mouse, and how to respond to the test items. Even if you are computer-literate, carefully complete the tutorial to ensure that you understand how to respond to the test items.

Specialized Skills Tests

In addition to the Basic Skills Tests, applicants for some jobs will complete a Specialized Skills Test. Administrative and secretarial applicants will complete a Microsoft Word test (online as part of the application) and a Microsoft PowerPoint test (onsite in our testing facility). Applicants for data entry operator positions will complete a data entry test. Medical transcriptionist applicants will complete a test transcribing information from an audiotape into the computer. All the Specialized Skills Tests are administered on the computer.

CLERICAL TEST BATTERY - BASIC SKILLS TESTS

ITEM EXAMPLES

There are several tests of basic skills included in the Pre-employment Testing Process. The specific tests you will take are based on the job for which you are applying. This guide includes samples of the different types of items included in the test batteries. The items presented in this guide may not be exactly like the items you will see on the actual tests. Rather, this guide provides you with information regarding the *types* of items you may see.

On the following pages are instructions and samples of the types of items in the pre-employment tests. At the top of the page is the type of test, followed by a brief set of instructions, sample items, and explanations for the answers to the sample items.

Editing and Proofing

Directions

Look at the sample sentence below. Part of the sentence is underlined. The underlined section may contain errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, or usage. Following the sentence are three changes to replace the underlined section. Select the best answer and mark the circle in front of it. If the underlined section contains no error, mark the circle in front of *NO CHANGE*. The sample has been done for you.

Sample Item

S1. Several customer will be in the office today.

- customers
- customer's
- customers'
- NO CHANGE

Explanation: The first response, “customers,” is the correct answer. In the sentence, the word “several” indicates that the following word should be plural. Therefore, the singular “customer” is incorrect, and “NO CHANGE” cannot be the correct answer. The second response, “customer’s” is a possessive of “customer” and not a plural. The third response, “customers’,” is the possessive of “customers,” and a possessive does not fit the meaning of the sentence.

Math Word Problems

Directions

Read the sample problem below. Select the correct answer, and mark the circle in front of it. For some of the problems, there is no correct answer shown. If the correct answer is not given, mark the circle in front of NONE OF THE ABOVE. The samples have been done for you.

Sample Item

S1. Bob Smith was expected to spend \$25.00 for office supplies last month. Pens are \$2.50 per dozen, boxes of paper clips are \$5.00 per dozen, and note pads are \$1.00 each. If Bob purchased two dozen pens, one dozen boxes of paper clips, and five note pads last month, how much did he spend?

- \$10.00
- \$15.00.
- \$35.00
- \$40.00
- NONE OF THE ABOVE

Explanation: The second response, \$15.00, is the correct answer.

Two dozen pens =	\$5.00 (2 x \$2.50 per dozen)
One dozen boxes of paper clips =	\$5.00 (1 x \$5.00 per dozen boxes)
Five note pads =	\$5.00 (5 x \$1.00 per note pad)
Total spent =	\$15.00

Following Written Instructions

Directions

Read the sample set of rules below. Then, answer the problems by following the rules. Mark the circle that corresponds to your answer. The samples have been done for you.

Sample Item

Rules for Selecting a Rental Car

The three types of cars available for rental are compact, mid-size, and full-size. Listed below are the rules for deciding which type of car should be rented.

- Compact or mid-size cars should be rented when only one or two people will be riding.
- Full-size cars must be rented when three to five people will be riding.
- Compact cars should only be used when traveling less than 25 miles.
- Mid-size cars should be used when traveling more than 25 miles.
- Full-size cars may be rented when traveling long or short distances.

	Compact	Mid-Size	Full-Size
S1. Two people traveling 20 miles	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
S2. Four people traveling 15 miles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Explanation: According to the rules listed above, when two people are traveling, a compact or mid-size car can be rented. However, when traveling less than 25 miles, the rules state that a compact car should be rented. Therefore, a compact car is the correct answer for the first sample item (S1). In the second sample item (S2), four people are traveling for less than 25 miles. The rules state that a full-size car must be rented when three to five people are traveling and that a full-size car may be rented for either long or short trips. Thus, a full-size car is the correct answer.

Forms Checking

Directions

Look at the sample below. Read the information in the paragraph. Then check to see if the form has been completed correctly based on the information presented in the paragraph. For each problem, mark the circle under **Correct** if the form is correctly filled in, or under **Incorrect** if the form is not correctly filled in. You only need to check the information that has a circled item number next to it. The sample problems have been done for you.

Sample Items

Last month, a total of 250 surveys were sent out to Customer Service, Operations, and Management employees. Overall, 168 surveys were returned. Of the 166 Customer Service employees receiving surveys, 98 completed them, for a 59% return rate. Of the 74 Operations employees receiving surveys, 60 completed them, for an 81% return rate. Of the 10 Management employees receiving surveys, 10 completed them, for a 100% return rate.

(S1)	Total No. surveys returned	168
	% of Customer Service surveys returned	59
(S2)	% of Operations surveys returned	60
	% of Management surveys returned	10

	Correct	Incorrect
(S1)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(S2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Explanation: The first sample item (S1) asks whether the total of 168 surveys returned listed in the table matches the information presented in the paragraph. The paragraph states, “Overall, 168 surveys were returned.” Therefore S1 is correct in the table, and the circle for correct is filled in. The second item (S2) asks whether the percentage of Operations surveys returned listed in the table match the information in the paragraph. The value listed for the percentage returned by Operations employees is not correct. A total of 60 Operations employees returned the survey, out of the 74 Operations employees who received a survey. This is an 81% return rate, and a value of 81 should have been in that line of the table. You can ignore the percentage values for Customer Service and Management since there is not a circled item number next to those lines in the table.

Categorizing and Classifying

Directions

Look at the sample chart of codes below. Following the chart are two sample problems. For each problem, select the best code, and mark the circle under the code. The sample problems have been done for you.

Sample Item

Type of Safety Hazard	Code No.
Burn hazard	75
Electrocution hazard	27
Fume hazard	31
Slipping hazard	11
Tripping hazard	07

	07	11	27	31	75
S1. Puddle on the floor	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
S2. Heated metal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Explanation: The correct answer for the first sample item (S1) is 11, because a puddle on the floor is a slipping hazard, and the code number for a slipping hazard is 11. For item S2, heated metal is a burn hazard. The code number for a burn hazard is 75, and therefore the circle under 75 has been marked.

Sorting and Coding

Directions

Look at the sample table of codes below. The sample table lists codes for Department, Number of Staff, and Supplies Budget. Below the table are two sample problems. In the problems, mark the circles below the codes that correspond to the information found in the table. The sample problems have been done for you.

Sample Item

Department	Number of Staff	Supplies Budget
77 Facility Management	1 1 - 19 employees	A Less than \$1,000
27 Transportation	2 20 - 39 employees	B \$1,000 - \$1,999
94 Finance	3 40 - 74 employees	C \$2,000 - \$4,999
13 Human Resources	4 75 - 99 employees	D \$5,000 - \$9,999
45 Marketing	5 100 or more employees	E \$10,000 or greater

S1. Marketing Dept., 73 staff members, \$8,250 Supplies Budget

Department	Number of Staff	Supplies Budget
77 27 94 13 45	1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E
○ ○ ○ ○ ●	○ ○ ● ○ ○	○ ○ ○ ● ○

S2. Finance Dept., \$1,950 Supplies Budget, 11 staff members

Department	Number of Staff	Supplies Budget
77 27 94 13 45	1 2 3 4 5	A B C D E
○ ○ ● ○ ○	● ○ ○ ○ ○	○ ● ○ ○ ○

Explanation: For item S1, the code for the Marketing Department is 45, the code for 73 employees is 3 (between 40 and 74 employees), and the code for an \$8,250 supplies budget is D (between \$5,000 and \$9,999). For item S2, the code for the Finance Department is 94, the code for 11 staff members is 1, and the code for a \$1,950 supplies budget is B.

Filing Names

Directions

Look at the sample problems below. Each of the names at the top of a box is to be “filed” in alphabetical order in the group of names below it. You are to mark the place where it belongs. It may belong at the beginning, between two of the names, or at the end. The sample items have been completed for you.

Sample Items

Chapman	Matthews	Garfield	Smythe	Williams
○ [_____]	○ [_____]	● [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]
Abrams	Davis	Hamilton	Schults	Gonzalez
○ [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]
Braxton	Hudson	Jefferson	Smithers	Jackson
● [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]	● [_____]	○ [_____]
Dell	Lawrence	Mason	Snyder	Phillips
○ [_____]	● [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]
Erwin	Rodriguez	Mercer	Stanley	Washington
○ [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]	○ [_____]	● [_____]

Explanation: Alphabetically, “Chapman” falls between “Braxton” and “Dell” in the first column, and the circle between the two is marked. “Matthews” falls between “Lawrence” and “Rodriguez” in the second column. In the third column, “Garfield” falls before any of the names, and therefore the first circle above “Hamilton” is marked. In the fourth column, “Smythe” falls between “Smithers” and “Snyder” alphabetically. In the last column, “Williams” would follow “Washington,” and the circle below “Washington” is marked.

Filing Numbers

Directions

Look at the sample problems below. Each of the numbers at the top of a box is to be “filed” in numerical order in the group of numbers below it. You are to mark the place where it belongs. It may belong at the beginning, between two of the numbers, or at the end. The sample items have been completed for you.

Sample Items

309877	898315	478765	732471	884562
<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input checked="" type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []
134323	290002	518741	713789	818393
<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []
234567	670933	547892	731348	839802
<input checked="" type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input checked="" type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []
440933	793455	689223	733132	874321
<input type="radio"/> []	<input checked="" type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []
569329	899765	698324	742875	834662
<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input type="radio"/> []	<input checked="" type="radio"/> []

Explanation: Numerically, 309877 is larger than 234567 and smaller than 440933, and therefore the circle between those two numbers is marked in the first column. In column two, 898315 falls between 793455 and 899765. In the third column, 478765 is smaller than 518741, and the circle before the top number is marked. In the third column, 732471 is between 731348 and 733132. In the last column, 884562 is larger than any number in that column, and thus the circle below the last number is marked.

Visual Speed and Accuracy

Directions

Look at the pairs of numbers and characters below. Mark the circle in front of the *S* if the two numbers are exactly the same. If they are different in any way, mark the circle in front of the *D*.

Sample Items

S1.	531727	531727	<input checked="" type="radio"/> S	<input type="radio"/> D
S2.	.00050	.00550	<input type="radio"/> S	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D
S3.	\$6,969	\$6,966	<input type="radio"/> S	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D
S4.	1.107	11.07	<input type="radio"/> S	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D

Explanation: The first pair of numbers (S1), 531727 and 531727 are exactly alike.

Therefore the circle in front of *S* (same) has been marked. The second pair of numbers (S2), .00050 and .00550, are not exactly the same. Therefore, the circle in front of *D* (different) has been marked. The next pair (S3), \$6,969 and \$6,966, are marked to show that they are different. The fourth pair (S4), 1.107 and 11.07, are marked as different because the decimal point is in a different place.

Corrective Proofreading / Business Letter Editing

Directions

Candidates are presented with a letter and asked to edit the text correctly according to basic business writing standards. Corrections may include punctuation, spelling, and formatting errors.

Sample Item:

July 13 2002 Ms Jill Smith

We are pleased to enform you that our organization is ofering an additional service to make the customar experience even more positive The parking garage will now offer free parking for all visitors. When you arrive you will need to show your appointment schedule to the parking attendant. For our patients that are have more than one apointment in a week, we will be giving them a parking card. We ask that you complete the enclosed form for a card to be mailed to you.

Sincerely Jane Green

Explanation: The above text has fourteen errors. For example, a comma should be placed following 13 in the date. Furthermore, the text has four misspellings, e.g., “enform.” Following the basic standards for composing a business memo or letter should aid you in identifying the errors in this example item.

TESTING PROCESS - SPECIALIZED SKILLS TESTS

If you are applying for an administrative, secretarial, data entry, or medical transcriptionist position, you will take a Specialized Skills Test in addition to the Basic Skills Tests.

Administrative and Secretarial Applicants

Administrative and secretarial jobs require employees to be skilled at performing functions within Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. Therefore, applicants to these jobs will complete a computerized Word test in addition to the Basic Skills Tests described previously. The test requires knowledge of standard word processing functions, such as editing text, formatting documents, creating tables, inserting objects, and saving files. Applicants to these jobs will also complete a computerized Microsoft PowerPoint test, which requires knowledge of standard presentation functions, such as formatting slides, saving files, and inserting charts.

Data Entry Operator Applicants

Employees in data entry positions are required to quickly and accurately enter data into computer systems from forms, records, and tables. Applicants to data entry positions will complete a computerized data entry test in addition to the Basic Skills Tests described previously. The test requires the ability to enter information from a form quickly and accurately.

Medical Transcriptionist Applicants

Medical transcriptionists at MDACC transcribe information from audio tapes into computerized systems. In addition to the Basic Skills Tests described previously, transcriptionist applicants will complete a computerized transcription test. This test requires applicants to quickly and accurately transcribe medical information presented to them through headphones.