

INTERPRETATION GUIDE

RIASEC

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Introduction

RIASEC is a vocational model designed to identify the suitability of careers to personal interests. The **RIASEC** Model, also known as the Holland Typology, was developed by Holland (1959) and is based on his theory that a person's vocational interest or career choice is determined by underlying "personality types". The model is developed based on 6 basic personality types. Each type is characterised by a constellation of interests, preferred activities, beliefs, abilities, values, and characteristics (Nauta, 2010).

At *Central Test*, we have based our interest assessments, **VOCATION** and **IMMERSION**, on this model. In this guide, we will talk about the dimensions of the **RIASEC** model, how it can be applied in various contexts, and what considerations are needed when interpreting and using **RIASEC**.

Depending on the information needed, chapter recommendations are given below:

For individuals:

- The **RIASEC** model
- For Individuals: Practical Approaches to Using Your **RIASEC** Profile

For practitioners:

- The **RIASEC** Model
- Application to the Workplace and Vocational Orientation
- For Professionals: Considerations when Interpreting and Using **RIASEC**

1. The RIASEC Model

The **RIASEC** model comprises 6 main interests and 12 sub-interests. Each interest represents a specific interest, and each sub-interest further breaks down what each interest measures. The interests are presented as a hexagon below:



*Figure 1. Holland's (1977) **RIASEC** Model of Occupational Themes.*

REALISTIC

People with high scores in Realistic interests like to work on things manually. They are driven by concrete tasks that deliver solid or tangible results or require dexterity and physical movement. Such that, they are likely to prefer activities that involve being outdoors, manual activities and applying practical and technical knowledge. They are likely to be independent and logical individuals who prefer things to be done in a practical sense. Due to their tendencies and preferences, they are likely to be most comfortable in working environments that allow them to work with or use technical equipment, work on-site, travel, or move around. They tend to dislike being confined to indoor areas such as an office.

R1	Physical & Outdoor Activities	Preference to engage in physical activities and work outdoors.
R2	Manual & Technical Interests	Preference to make concrete objects and to engage in activities that involve manual work and/or the use of machinery.
	Values	Confidence, concrete methods, tangibility and stability.
	Learning style	Sensory, experience and doing.

INVESTIGATIVE

People with high scores in Investigative interests are intellectually curious. They are driven by logic and information/facts and are drawn to tasks that require problem-solving and theoretical knowledge. As such, they are likely to prefer activities involving analytical thinking or exploring reasons behind various things to better understand the world around them. Due to their preferences, they are likely to fit better in environments which allow them to continuously learn and develop themselves, as they like to broaden their knowledge and grasp new skills.

I1	Intellectual Curiosity & Learning	Preference to engage in activities that require critical thinking and gaining knowledge.
I2	Science & Technology	Preference towards scientific advancements and new technologies, as well as to investigate such topics.
	Values	Curiosity, logic, research and learning.
	Learning style	Reading, analysing, problem-solving and exploration.

ARTISTIC

People with high scores in Artistic interests have artistic sensibilities. They value art and like to express themselves through creative means. They are driven by imagination and are drawn to tasks that need authentic designs and individualistic expressions. As such, they are likely to prefer activities that may involve originality and designing things in an appealing way. Due to their tendencies and preferences, they are likely to be most comfortable in working environments which are flexible and encourage freedom to explore different options, allowing them to express their ideas and create new things.

A1	Aesthetic sense and expression	Preference towards engaging in activities that require artistic sensitivity and expressing one's emotions in different forms.
A2	Creativity and design	Preference towards conceiving, imagining and innovating things.
Values		Originality, expression, aesthetics, imagination and individuality.
Learning style		Design, communication through art, conceptualisation of ideas, and multisensorial environments.

SOCIAL

People with high scores in Social interests enjoy communicating and connecting with other people and in some cases, they might enjoy providing support and comfort to other people. They are people-driven and are drawn to tasks involving verbal and interpersonal skills and working with people. As such, they are likely to prefer activities that allow them to form personal relationships, and work in teams or public-oriented roles. Due to their preferences, they are likely to be most comfortable in working environments which encourage personal contact, collaboration, teamwork and communication.

S1	Dedication to others	Preference towards helping others, listening, informing, training, giving advice and providing support to the community.
S2	Creating personal relationships	Preference to be in contact with other people, explain, counsel and communicate with clients or co-workers.
Values		Outgoing, collaboration, socialising, and bonding/connecting.
Learning style		Interaction, sharing and collaborating with others and communicating and listening to others.

ENTERPRISING

People with high scores in Enterprising interests like to move things forward, start new projects, and they are not shy of assuming risks. They are driven by achieving objectives and drawn to tasks that involve selling their ideas, persuading or leading others. They like to take the initiative and work towards goals that require risk-taking. Due to their interests, they are likely to be most comfortable in working environments which allow them opportunities for being proactive, seizing the opportunities, and/or leading others.

E1	Enterprising	Preference towards developing new activities, materialising ideas or projects, taking risks and managing difficult situations.
E2	Leadership	Preference to encourage, motivate and manage or lead a team/other people.
	Values	Proactivity, assertiveness, action, risks and competition.
	Learning style	Participation, sharing ideas, and experience.

CONVENTIONAL

People with high scores in Conventional interests like tasks that can be carried out in a systematic and methodical way, following an organised process. They are drawn to tasks that involve following instructions, in a defined way and might also like to work with numbers. As such, they are likely to prefer activities that may involve analytical thinking and systematic processes. They like to be organised and detail-oriented in their work, following a set structure throughout. Due to their tendencies and preferences, they are likely to be most comfortable in working environments that are structured with well-defined roles and clear expectations, defined processes and regulations.

C1	Methodical	Preference towards organising, planning tasks, rigorously applying methods or rules and controlling quality or structure.
C2	Data and numbers	Preference to reason with numbers, analyse statistical data and informatics, as well as understand the laws of mathematics.
	Values	Organisation, attention to detail, order, efficiency and preference for numbers.
	Learning style	Systematic process, working with numbers/data, standardised rules, guidance and feedback.

2. Application to the Workplace and Vocational Orientation

2.1 Career selection

RIASEC can be used to aid in the selection of an individual's suitable career path based on their recreational interests. Choosing an appropriate career path is a difficult task, and with the number of working fields that exist, it can be confusing to know which one to choose. **RIASEC** can help to identify the top interests and then match these interests to over 150+ job matches, to help narrow down and give an idea of suitable roles. By choosing a career that links to their interests, the individual can find greater job satisfaction and performance.

2.2. Career development

As we grow and change, our skills, interests and motivations also change and develop. **RIASEC** can be used to identify certain strengths and potential competencies that link to your profile. Those who have Realistic interests tend to have a more practical approach, whilst those who have Conventional interests tend to be more conscientious and detail-oriented. As such, this information can identify an individual's competencies and help to discover areas where they need more training. Therefore, it could provide useful information when drawing up a career development plan.

2.3. Recruitment

Recruitment and selection is an important organisational function which can be very time-consuming and expensive. To successfully hire and retain a candidate who will feel satisfied with their job, the job satisfaction of the employee becomes significant to the recruiter. Bad recruitment decisions also have additional effects on organisational productivity, capability and sustainability. If the endorsed interests do not align with the job role, the job role may not be a good match. Therefore, **RIASEC** will help to infer how suitable a job may be for a candidate based on the results obtained from interest assessments such as **IMMERSION** and **VOCATION**.

2.4. Educational guidance

It can be difficult for students to identify a suitable career path, especially without first-hand work experience within the industry. In this case, **RIASEC** can be used to predict what jobs or fields the individual may be interested in based on their preferences. Therefore, this could help students decide which courses or majors to take if they choose to go into higher education. This is especially useful for careers that require a degree or specialist knowledge, where **RIASEC** can help guide the individual with a career goal, to take the most ideal path.

3. For Professionals: Considerations when Interpreting and Using RIASEC

The **RIASEC** model suggests the need to match an individual's interest profile with the job role and work environment to perform well and be successful at work. As such, job satisfaction is related to success at work as it predicts high engagement and performance which reduces employee turnover. For example, those with a high social interest are significantly more satisfied in social environments. Therefore, looking at the **RIASEC** interests profile is a good starting point for practitioners when it comes to career orientation coaching or decision-making. It is suggested that to improve the quality of the advice given, other factors will need to be considered when assessing an individual's profile to get a global picture of their needs (Yates, 2014).

Factors to consider alongside the **RIASEC** profile:

- **Job market context:** The job market is evolving, and many people are involved in career changes, leading to high uncertainty. When using **RIASEC** profiles, it may be useful to leave options open and seek job fit not based on specific jobs, but for fields to give the individual a wider range of options.
- **Social network input:** The people around us will have an important role and influence in their decision-making and can provide extra information to fully understand their interests. Including their third-party input may be a good way to increase the quality of the advice given or to help the individual make their decision.
- **Meaning of work and importance in the individual's life at that moment in time:** The meaning and relevance of work can change throughout our lives. For example, when you first start work, it might be perceived as a challenge and the focus might be on career advancement and status. However, when there are responsibilities and priorities, work might lose its importance, or for mature workers, there might be a need to work in something that gives them purpose. Considering these factors may increase the usefulness of the advice given and help to guide the individual better.
- **Active vs passive role:** There is no clear line between work, hobbies or activities in which individuals engage. A useful way to gain insight when deciding about a career path is to encourage the individual to engage with their community or participate in activities/events to seek out opportunities to gain first-hand experiences.

- **Identity and work:** Job identity is the way we describe our work persona and how we think others may perceive us when we talk about what work we do. Exploring how the individual perceives others' job identities in various jobs that might be a good fit for them, may provide valuable insights.

3.1. Examples of how to move forward using the information obtained from the profile:

- Identify certifications or courses that can be taken up to take on a new role or job based on the **RIASEC** profile.
- When evaluating the ideal career path, also consider other factors such as the opportunities available, goals, values and competencies.
- Look into using tools that may facilitate the process: SWOT analysis, SMART goals, GROW model, decision matrix, feedback forms, performance appraisals, etc.
- Follow up the profile to ensure that career plans align with the current job opportunities and adjust it accordingly to any changes in their aspirations.

4. For Individuals: Practical Approaches to Using Your RIASEC Profile

1) Research the possible career choices based on your profile and consider these points:

- What are the activities that I have done in school/college that align with my interests profile?
- What activities do you not enjoy doing in general?
- What subjects do you enjoy or not enjoy?
- What are you most passionate about?

2) Questions to ask when selecting the careers which interest you:

- Do these jobs involve further education and is this something you want to pursue?
- What are the available options if the career path was to involve further education?
- What are the long-term career path possibilities/opportunities?
- What skills do the jobs involve?

3) Narrow down your options by considering:

- What are the pros and cons of each career path?
- Do my soft skills align with the jobs?
- Speak to some mentors or industry professionals in those jobs to find out what the job entails.
- Get advice from your career advisor through your school's career and employability services.
- Look at opportunities for shadowing or volunteering.

4) Things to do after picking your top career choice:

- Consider the next steps such as, what training/education you need to enrol in, or what apprenticeships or internships should you look for to gain practical experience.
- Develop a career plan to outline your goals and ways to achieve them.
- Speak to industry professionals to look for relevant work experience.

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