

USER GUIDE

INTERPRETING PERCENTILE RANKS

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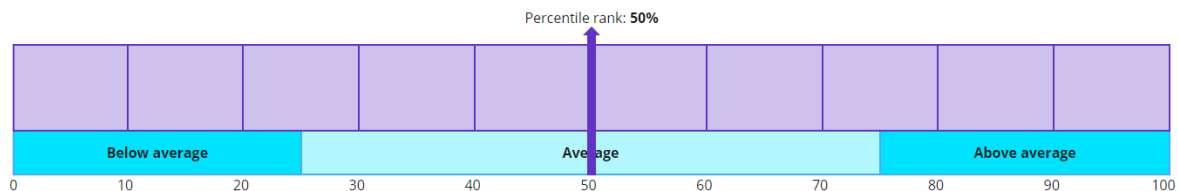
Percentile Rank Scores

A normed score is the result of transformations applied to the raw score. The purpose is to report scores for all individuals on a bias-free scale, via an adjustment to the scores depending on the individual's socio-demographic background e.g. language, etc.

One type of normed score (or transformation to the raw score) is a **percentile** or **percentile rank**. Percentile ranks are normed against a pre-tested comparison group, and indicate the percentage of individuals in the comparison group who obtained a lower score on an assessment than the individual did. At *Central Test*, we use percentile rank scoring for some of our ability and reasoning tests.

Percentile ranks indicate the individual's relative position or rank against a comparison group. At *Central Test*, we report the scores on a scale of 0 - 10, which reflect the individual's percentile rank. For example, if Jarvis obtained a percentile rank score of 7.2 on a reasoning assessment, it means that he has a percentile rank of 72%, and that he scored higher than 72% of the individuals in the group with which he is being compared. It does not mean that he answered 72% of the questions correctly. Thus, it also means that 28% of the comparison group scored higher than Jarvis.

In the reports, individuals' percentile ranks are displayed alongside a graph, which makes interpretation simple for both candidates and institutions:



Note that scaling or transformation of the scores does not affect the psychometric properties of an assessment; it is something that occurs after the assessment process (and equating, if present) is completed.

Debriefing Percentile Ranks

Debriefing or giving feedback to individuals on percentile ranks should be a straightforward process, as percentile ranks are easy for those who are unfamiliar with statistics to understand. It is advisable to state to the individual that this is an indication of their performance relative to a comparison group, and that it is not making judgements about their ability or personality in an absolute sense, but relative to this comparison group.

Examples of feedback for **percentile ranks**:

- “Your score of 8.4 means that you have obtained a percentile rank of 84%, indicating that you have scored higher than 84% of the comparison group”.
- “In this factor, you have scored higher than 67% of the comparison group”.

When debriefing individuals’ scores on ability tests, you may choose to indicate whether the score is below average / average / above average. Below is a guide to translating percentile ranks against the comparison group for the purposes of giving feedback:

0 – 10%

- Score is well below average, falling within the bottom 10% of the comparison group

11 – 25%

- Score is below average, falling below the average area

25 – 75%

- Score falls within the mid-range, typical of the comparison group (please note that a score in this bracket does not necessarily mean the score equates to an average ability level)

75 – 89%

- Score is above average, higher than would be expected for the comparison group

90 – 99%

- Score is well above average

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