



**ESQ**

Employee Screening Questionnaire



# ESQ

## Employee Screening Questionnaire

The Employee Screening Questionnaire for

**Great Clips®**

ESQ-GC User Guide

Understanding and interpreting the ESQ-GC



*Advancing the Science of Human Assessment since 1967.*

## PURPOSE OF THE ESQ-GC USER GUIDE

The User Guide was designed to provide important information on the use and interpretation of the ESQ-GC; an exceptionally powerful assessment used to select dependable, hard working, and committed employees.

**Note: It is extremely important that all persons interpreting the ESQ-GC read and understand the contents of the ESQ-GC User Guide. SIGMA assumes no liability for any consequences associated with the failure to read and follow these guidelines.**

## ADAPTATIONS FOR GREAT CLIPS

Certain adaptations have been made to an original form of the ESQ to maximize its usefulness for Great Clips Franchisees and Salon Managers. Customizations to the report include hiring recommendations based on an applicant's score. The recommendations will appear on the scored report as either "Proceed", "Proceed with Caution", or "Do Not Proceed". The Overall Hiring Recommendation provides a snapshot of the most important information captured by the ESQ-GC dimensions.

SIGMA's Fax-In Scoring System was designed to make it easy to administer and score the ESQ-GC. Refer to SIGMA's Fax-In Scoring Guide included in your ESQ-GC package for valuable information on how to minimize the chance of transmission errors so you receive your reports in a timely manner.

We strongly recommend that you read the ESQ Manual for more information on how to administer and interpret the ESQ-GC.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF THE ESQ-GC

### *Question #1: Why should I use the ESQ-GC?*

SIGMA understands that organizations not only seek to hire employees who abstain from undesirable behaviors such as theft and loafing, but also individuals who are productive and committed. As such, the ESQ was developed to provide employers with a legally defensible means for identifying superior job candidates and to screen out less dependable and less productive ones. Also, the ESQ is unique among selection measures in that it is resistant to faking (e.g., responding to questionnaires in the most desirable manner possible).

Research indicates that when used properly, the ESQ outperforms the average job interview, references, grades, interests, and several other criteria for predicting employee behavior. In fact, it is potentially the best, most effective predictor of integrity and dependability. The ESQ-GC will help you make better hiring decisions when dependability, integrity, work ethic, customer service, and a freedom from disruptive behaviors are qualities/skills that are important for the positions you wish to fill.

That is not to say that the ESQ-GC should be used as a stand-alone hiring tool. The report was designed to be used in conjunction with other information gathered during the applicant screening process. Final hiring decisions should be based on a combination of the results reported in the ESQ-GC and other sources, such as the applicant's job knowledge and past experience, specific skills and aptitudes, and performance during a job interview.

***Question #2: As a trial, can I give the ESQ-GC to my current employees?***

No, it is not appropriate to use the ESQ-GC with current employees. Consider the following points and refer to the examples given below:

1. Current employees tend to provide different response patterns than job applicants when completing assessments. Since current employees already have the job, they will usually be less motivated than applicants to make a good impression.
2. ESQ-GC results are determined by comparing an applicant's scores with scores from other job applicants who have taken the ESQ in the past. This is not an appropriate comparison group for current employees.
3. The validity of an assessment is determined using a very large sample of job applicants. A handful of people will not yield meaningful results.

**Altered Response Patterns**

Consider the following example. Imagine asking a colleague some personal questions in order to get to know her better. The conversation is recorded, and there is mention neither of an evaluation, nor of a reward or punishment resulting from the conversation. A colleague who trusts you will probably discuss aspects of her life and character that are positive, as well as some negative information.

Now, imagine asking several job applicants to do the same, and recording the conversations. The job applicants will tend to give you positive information. If an outside observer were to read the transcripts of all of these conversations, they might think that your colleague is "the worst of the bunch". This happens for several reasons. Similar phenomena occur with employment testing.

Because of this, sometimes a high performing employee will get low scores on various dimensions of the ESQ-GC. Such results could lead you to question whether this employee should remain with the organization. SIGMA strongly recommends against firing employees based on the results of the ESQ-GC, or any personality-based selection assessment. This is an inappropriate use of personality testing. Neither SIGMA, nor its partners, nor its Affiliates will be held liable for any resulting legal claims made by former employees fired as a result of their ESQ-GC results.

## Comparison Groups

Scores on the ESQ are determined by comparing an applicant's scores with a large sample of job applicants who have taken the ESQ in the past. This comparison results in applicants receiving "low", "medium", or "high" scores, depending on how they perform relative to the applicant "norm group".

Now consider that if current employees were to take the ESQ-GC, their scores would also be compared to job applicants' scores. This comparison group is not relevant because of the differences in response patterns explained above. Current employees' scores will usually be somewhat lower than job applicants' scores.

## Validity

Determining how well a test predicts job performance is a complex process that often incorporates data from hundreds or thousands of respondents in order to produce meaningful results. Strength is in numbers - it would not be meaningful to draw conclusions based on the test results of only a handful of people.

Consider the following example. Recently a colleague flew Skywest Airlines for the first time, and his flight was delayed. Because of this, he incorrectly thought that Skywest is *usually* late, and vowed to not fly with them again. But Skywest has one of the best on-time records in the industry. He has since faithfully returned to his previous carrier with an inferior record, and will now spend more time waiting as a result of delayed flights. This is the effect random chance has with small sample sizes.

### ***Question #2.5: If I can't trial the test with my current employees, can I take the ESQ-GC myself and/or give it to some of my colleagues, friends, or family?***

This is also not an appropriate use of the ESQ-GC, as it lacks credibility and objectivity. It would be a disservice to allow companies to engage in these types of trials. Our reasons for this are the same as those mentioned above about the use of the ESQ-GC with current employees. There is also an additional issue.

## Objectivity (and Defensiveness)

Most people are not able to keep their objectivity intact when it comes to their own test results, especially with some of the sensitive issues predicted by the ESQ. This is a result of the way we tend to process information about ourselves and is referred to as the "better than average" (BTA) effect. The BTA effect refers to the tendency for most individuals to evaluate themselves as "better than average".

As a result of this and other things, people tend to only accept their own ESQ results if they're higher than average. By definition, most people will not score above average.

Therefore, many people will not like their ESQ scores and will be unhappy with their results.

Imagine your company is thinking about using a new job interview technique. Before being adopted, this new interview technique is evaluated. The interviewer asks the interviewee several questions. The interviewee responds, and the interviewer makes notes. Some of these notes discuss positive observations and impressions, and some are negative.

What would be the best, most fair way to evaluate the quality of the new interview technique? Give the interviewee the interviewer's notes, and ask her how much these notes agree with her self-image? Certainly not. Due to a serious lack of objectivity, this would not be a valid, credible approach.

When decision makers or their colleagues receive low scores on the ESQ, they may feel attacked and become defensive. Some people are more inclined than others to respond in this way. This process unfairly creates critics of the ESQ.

### ***Question #3: What does the ESQ-GC measure?***

The ESQ-GC measures personality traits, and based on these traits, predicts whether applicants are likely to engage in a range of positive and counterproductive work behaviors. Certain personality dimensions are predictive of various behaviors. For example, people who are less responsible and less self-controlled will tend to engage in counterproductive behavior more often, all other things being equal. On the other hand, individuals who are accommodating, even-tempered, extroverted, good-natured, hard working, and dependable tend to provide excellent customer service.

### ***Question #4: What does the ESQ-GC NOT measure?***

The ESQ-GC was only designed to predict whether or not a job applicant is likely to engage in productive or counterproductive behaviors on the job. It is not meant to replace performance evaluations for current employees. Do not use it with current employees. SIGMA has other solutions designed for development and appraisal purposes.

Also, ESQ-GC scores should be interpreted as probabilities and not certainties. Human behavior cannot be predicted with 100 percent accuracy. For example, consider a doctor predicting a patient's risk of heart disease. When determining the patient's risk level, doctors look for various risk factors that include family history, smoking habits, alcohol consumption, activity level, weight, blood pressure, and diet. Research has shown that, in general, people with more of these risk factors are at a higher risk for heart disease than people with none of these risk factors. But there are no guarantees that somebody with all or many of these risk factors *will* develop heart disease. On the other hand, there are no guarantees that someone with none of these risk factors *will not* develop heart disease.

This example illustrates that doctors cannot predict with certainty who *will* develop CV disease; they can only assign risk. The ESQ-GC works much in the same way – it measures personality dimensions that are related to work performance and, based on these personality dimensions, predicts whether individuals are likely to engage in a range of productive or counterproductive work behaviors.

Over the long run, the ESQ-GC will increase the net productivity, accuracy, and quality of customer service in your organization, while minimizing your risk of hiring an applicant who is likely to engage in counterproductive work behavior.

***Question #5: Is the ESQ available in any other languages?***

The ESQ is available in English and Spanish. Please note that applicants taking the ESQ in English must be proficient in the language. The results of this assessment will only be valid under these conditions.

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ESQ-GC**

***Question #1: What do high, medium, and low scores mean? Is it better to have a high score or a low score?***

In the ESQ-GC report, the meaning of high or low scores depends on which portion of the ESQ-GC you are looking at. That is, whether you are interpreting the section of the report that measures (a) the applicant's likelihood of engaging in positive work behaviors including the Overall Hiring Recommendation, or (b) the applicant's Risk of Counterproductive Behavior.

***Positive Work Behaviors***

**For all of the positive work behavior dimensions, higher scores are more desirable.**

***Risk of Counterproductive Behavior***

**For the counterproductive work behavior dimension, a lower score is more desirable.**

On this dimension, a lower score indicates the applicant has a lower risk of engaging in counterproductive behaviors than a large proportion of applicants in the comparison group. A score in the medium range for Risk of Counterproductive Behavior means that the candidate has a moderate or average risk of engaging in counterproductive behavior, compared to applicants in the comparison group. A high score indicates that the applicant has a higher risk of engaging in counterproductive behavior, compared to applicants in the comparison group.



## ***Overall Hiring Recommendation***

The Overall Hiring Recommendation provides a summary of the dimensions predicted by the ESQ-GC. It is based on combined scores for positive work behaviors and Risk of Counterproductive Behavior. When interpreting the Overall Hiring Recommendation, **higher scores** are better. An overall hiring recommendation that suggests “Do Not Proceed” indicates that the applicant might not be as good of a candidate.

### ***Question #2: How do I interpret the Overall Hiring Recommendation (Proceed, Proceed with Caution and Do Not Proceed)?***

Pay attention to the Overall Hiring Recommendation. This information should be used to determine the overall quality of the applicant as measured by the ESQ-GC. The combined scores are grouped into three different hiring recommendations including:

**PROCEED** – Indicates that an applicant has received **high scores** on the positive work behaviors and a **low score** on Risk of Counterproductive Behavior. It is recommended that this candidate proceed to the next phase of the selection process.

**PROCEED WITH CAUTION** – Indicates that an applicant has received **moderate scores** on the positive work behaviors and a moderate score on Risk of Counterproductive Behavior. It is recommended that this candidate proceed with caution to the next phase of the selection process. In other words, moderate scores require that particular attention be given to other information (e.g., experience, training) to determine whether the candidate should advance through the screening process.

**DO NOT PROCEED** – Indicates that an applicant has received **low scores** on the positive work behaviors and a **high score** on Risk of Counterproductive Behavior. It is recommended that such candidates do not proceed to the next phase of the selection process.

**IMPORTANT:** In all cases, use additional information to make hiring decisions, like reference checks, application forms, training, and experience.

### ***Question #3: What does it mean if I receive an error message indicating that a report cannot be scored?***

The fax-in system cannot process and score reports that include **three or more** unscorable answers or errors. This might happen when an applicant skips a question, gives a duplicate response, or fails to completely darken his or her answer on the answer form.

To prevent these types of errors from occurring, emphasize that applicants must completely darken the answer bubble so that their response is clear. Remind them to eliminate duplicate answers by fully erasing any corrections and reviewing the form to ensure they have not left a duplicate response. Learn more about how to get the most out of SIGMA’s Fax-In Scoring System by referring to the Fax-In Scoring Guide included in your ESQ-GC package.

**Make sure you read SIGMA’s Fax-In Scoring Guide. If you do not have a copy, please ask the franchise owner, or SIGMA, to request one.**