

Supplementary document

3751-FAQ | Issue one | December 2024

Frequently asked questions

Questions related to RIS-3751-TOM issue four: Psychometric Assessment
in Train Driver Selection, published 7 December 2024

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Introduction

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about RIS-3751-TOM issue four *Psychometric Assessment in Train Driver Selection* and the wider selection process used during train driver selection. RSSB and the Rail Assessment Centre Forum (RACF) have produced it to support candidates through the process and assessment centres with implementing RIS-3751-TOM issue four.

RIS-3751-TOM issue four, all the associated forms and this frequently asked questions document can be downloaded from the RSSB Standards Catalogue.

The document is split into the following sets of questions:

1. General questions: These are about the standard, licensing, and the assessment process.
2. Candidate questions: These are for specific candidate-related questions.
3. Contacts and further information.

A glossary of terms is at the end.

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General questions

1. What is a Rail Industry Standard?

A Rail Industry Standard (RIS) defines the functional or technical requirements to be met for a given rail sub-system and sets out rules about how they should be operated or managed. RISs are standards agreed by the industry through Standards Committees. Organisations can use them to address hazards, manage compatibility, or meet contractual and legal requirements.

Although not made compulsory by legislation, RISs are industry-agreed standards that are assessed as part of a robust risk-assessment approach for their ability to address the licence obligations and function as Codes of Practice. A condition of licence requires licence holders to comply with RISs unless they, after having consulted with affected parties, identify and implement an equally effective alternative to achieve the purpose of the standard.

RISs are expected to be considered by licence holders, and indirectly their suppliers and other parties, as key industry standards with a force of law behind them.

For further information on standards, see the Standards Catalogue on the RSSB website.

2. What is RIS-3751-TOM, and what is the train driver psychometric assessment process?

RIS-3751-TOM sets out the requirements, rationale, and guidance on the psychometric assessment used during the selection process by transport operators that employ train drivers to operate trains within the Office of Rail and Road (ORR)-defined limits of the GB mainline railway.

Appendix A of RIS-3751-TOM issue four sets out the standardised psychometric selection criteria and assessments to be used by transport operators during the selection of train drivers who will operate trains within the ORR-defined limits of the GB mainline railway (see table 1 below). This process is designed to cover current and future features of the train driver role, including the use of train protection systems such as European Train Control System (ETCS). Appendix A of RIS-3751-TOM issue four can form one part of the overall selection process of train drivers.

Table 1 Standardised psychometric assessment process (extract of Appendix A from RIS-3751-TOM issue four)

Selection criteria	Psychometric assessments
Attention	Paper Group Bourdon and Test of Everyday Attention-Occupational (TEA-Occ)
Vigilance	WAFV Vigilance test
Memory	TRP1 Trainability for Rules and Procedures Test (part 1b)
Reasoning	TRP2 Trainability for Rules and Procedures test (part 2)
Perception	ATAVT Adaptive Tachistoscopic Traffic Test
Reaction time	WAFV & ATAVT
Hand coordination	2HAND Two hand coordination test
Communication	MMI Multi-Modal interview
Behavioural aptitudes	SJE Situational Judgement Exercise & MMI

3. Why was the standard for psychometric assessment in train driver selection updated?

RSSB reviewed RIS-3751-TOM issue three as part of the 5-year review cycle for existing standards. This highlighted that the content needed to be fundamentally revised to update and align content to current good practice, standards, and legislative frameworks for psychometric assessments. The ORR, Unions, DfT, RACF and other industry representatives participated in the original development of the standardised psychometric assessment process and the current update to the RIS. Appendix A of the standard sets out the standardised psychometric assessment process (criteria and tests) and remains unchanged, as it has been designed, evaluated, and validated across several research projects.

4. When was RIS-3751-TOM issue four published?

RIS-3751-TOM issue four was published on 7 December 2024 and came into force from the date of publication. Once in force, it superseded RIS-3751-TOM issue three.

5. Who owns RIS-3751-TOM?

All RISs, including RIS-3751-TOM issue four, are managed by RSSB via the relevant Industry Standards Committees and published by RSSB on behalf of the industry. They have been developed and agreed with the rail industry and represent an industry-agreed way of working.

6. Does the psychometric assessment process meet requirements of the train driver licensing directive?

Yes. RIS-3571-TOM issue four is in line with the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010 (TDLCR) and the ORR's 'A guide for train operators'. The TDLCR mandates that duty holders must ensure that a valid and reliable assessment is used to assess a key set of abilities required to become a safe train driver. It specifies these abilities. Appendix A of RIS-3751-TOM issue four includes these abilities and has been evaluated to demonstrate that it is valid and reliable.

7. What evidence is there to support the psychometric assessment process?

The standardised selection criteria and psychometric assessments set out in Appendix A have been subject to extensive industry research conducted between 2005 and 2011 (T340: RSSB & Competence Assurance Solutions, 2005; T628: RSSB, 2010; and T948: RSSB, 2012) and a subsequent validation study carried out (RSSB, 2019).

The research evaluated the suitability of the process in terms of:

- validity, which means if the tests measure what they claim to measure
- reliability, which means how stable the test results are over time
- fairness, which means if the tests are fair for all candidates, regardless of gender, ethnicity, and age.

Further studies may be undertaken to check the process remains fit for purpose.

8. When will the effectiveness of the new process be reviewed again?

RISs are kept up to date and fit for purpose through the standards review process, which includes a 12-month review and a 60-month review post-publication as a minimum. A review can be initiated at any other time if required. RACF and RSSB monitor the effectiveness of the process in RIS-3751-TOM issue four and ensure that it is applied using good practice in assessment.

9. What are the roles and responsibilities of different organisations / groups involved in the train driver psychometric assessment process?

Table 2 Roles and responsibilities of organisations / groups involved in the train driver psychometric assessment process

Organisation / group	Roles / responsibilities
Assessment centre	<p>This is where candidates undertake a variety of activities—such as tests, exercises, and interviews—that are observed by a team of trained assessors who evaluate performance against a set of pre-determined, job-related assessment criteria.</p> <p>The standardised psychometric assessment process in Appendix A of RIS-3751-TOM issue four will be carried out within an assessment centre.</p> <p>Transport operators may also use other assessments to support decision-making in train driver selection.</p>
Employers of train drivers	<p>These are the rail companies that employ the train driver and set company policies regarding the recruitment process for train driver candidates who apply to the company. An assessment centre may be part of the employer organisation or an independent qualified supplier.</p>
ORR	<p>The Office of Rail and Road is the independent economic and safety regulator for Britain's railways.</p> <p>The ORR issues train driving licences for driving on Britain's mainline infrastructure and checks to make sure that all the conditions for holding a licence—including professional competency examinations as well as medical and occupational psychological fitness examinations—have been met before issuing the licence.</p> <p>The ORR holds and keeps up to date a register of people who are recognised as competent to carry out the psychometric assessments for train drivers. To join this register of psychological practitioners, certain criteria—including the need to hold the appropriate qualifications in psychometric assessments—need to be met. This includes a requirement for people who administer and interpret the psychometric assessment process to hold the 'BPS Test User: Occupational, Ability' qualification.</p> <p>The ORR also requires or provides guidance on regulations, requirements relating to criteria, record-keeping, and audit requirements, and documentation required when train drivers change employer.</p>

Organisation / group	Roles / responsibilities
RACF	<p>This is a group of assessment centre representatives who have undertaken to follow RIS-3751-TOM issue four.</p> <p>RACF shares good practice when assessing individuals for the role of train driver.</p> <p>Members of RACF adhere to the process defined in RIS-3751-TOM issue four and in the RACF procedures manual.</p> <p>RACF undertakes actions to support the implementation of the assessment process.</p>
RSSB	<p>RSSB supports industry with ensuring that RIS-3751-TOM remains fit for purpose.</p> <p>It works with industry groups to support necessary cross-industry preparations for the implementation of the process.</p> <p>RSSB supports future evaluations of the psychometric assessment process.</p> <p>It is also the test supplier for the SJE and MMI. These two tests are part of the standardised psychometric assessment.</p>
Test suppliers / publishers	<p>These provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the assessment methods to industry • technical support to industry • any required training to industry • any information required to support the activities of the implementation of RIS-3751-TOM issue four.

Candidate questions

10. How do I apply to become a train driver?

Information on how to become a train driver can be found on the Train Driver Academy website or on your local train company's website.

You can usually apply to become a train driver via your preferred company's website or a job advert. You can read job descriptions about what the role involves, the type of environment you will be working in, and the skills you will need to understand more about the role at that company.

The application process varies by company, but most require you to fill in an application form in the first instance. Some companies also request CVs. They may ask you to complete tests or activities that are in addition to those set out in Appendix A of RIS-3751-TOM issue four. You will find out more about this process when you apply.

Please note: Most companies will ask that you live within a certain distance of a depot, so it is recommended that you only apply to those companies that have depots close to you. Distance checks will be undertaken, and often, train companies do not allow for relocation.

11. What qualifications and experience do I need to become a train driver?

The train driver role is one of the few positions in the UK with minimum pre-requisites for you to apply. The recruitment process will identify whether you have the skills and abilities needed for this specialist role. The minimum education requirement is completion of at least 9 years of education (primary and secondary).

12. What is the minimum age to become a train driver?

The minimum age you can obtain a train driver licence to drive a train on the GB mainline railway is currently 20 years old. Guidance on licensing can be found on the ORR website.

13. English is not my first language. Can I still apply?

Yes, you can. Verbal communication will be assessed as part of the recruitment process.

14. Can I have more than one application active at a time?

It is recommended that you complete one application and assessment process at a time. This is because the results from one application will affect all other applications. Once an application is being progressed, it should be followed through to its conclusion with that train company before another one begins.

15. Can I request adjustments when undertaking the psychometric assessment?

Yes. If you have a disability or condition, including neurodiversity, or may need adjustments to be made at the assessment centre, you can ask for suitable adjustments. Assessors are equipped to confidentially and confidently discuss the support that can be offered. Contact the train company's recruitment team as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to discuss your needs and for potential adjustments to be considered. Without prior notice, support is not guaranteed, and your assessment might have to be rescheduled.

Please note: If any adjustments are to be considered, evidence of your disability or condition will be required.

16. I have been invited to an assessment day. What should I wear and bring on the day?

We recommend that you dress smartly but comfortably (smart casual).

The train company you have applied to will advise you of what to bring to the assessment day, but as a minimum, it will be photo ID (passport or driving licence) and a copy of your National Insurance (NI) number (payslip, NI card, or other government documentation). If you cannot find your NI number, you can use the UK government website to find it.

17. I can no longer attend a scheduled assessment. What should I do?

Please contact the company you have applied to as soon as possible.

18. Are there any practice materials?

Yes. If you are invited to an assessment, you will be given the approved practice materials at least a week before your assessment date. If you have not received these, contact the train company to which you have applied.

The purpose of these practice materials is to inform candidates and allow them to familiarise themselves with what to expect on the assessment day.

19. How many failed attempts can I have, and how do they work?

If you have undertaken any part of the standardised psychometric assessment process before 7 December 2024, the 'two attempts rule' applies. This means that after two failed attempts, you cannot have any more attempts at the process.

For new candidates starting the standardised psychometric assessment process from 7 December 2024, the 'three attempt rule' applies. This means that after three failed attempts, you cannot have any more attempts at the process.

This is set out below:

	1 year after	2 years after	3 years after	4 years after	5 years after	Beyond
Failed attempt #1						
	Attempt #2 can take place a minimum of 1 year after the first failed attempt.					
					Attempt #3 can only take place 5 years after failed attempt #1 and a minimum of 1 year after failed attempt #2	

20. If I undertook the psychometrics assessment before 7 December 2024, how does the new attempts rule affect me?

The 'two attempts rule' will apply to any candidate who completed any part of the standardised psychometric assessment process before 7 December 2024. After two failed attempts, you cannot have any more attempts at the process.

The examples below illustrate how the 'two attempts rule' will still apply after 7 December 2024:

- In 2023, Zack sat the complete psychometric assessment process and failed. He has a new application in process and will be assessed again in January 2025. As Zack has already had one failed attempt at the process and this was before 7 December 2024, if he fails again, he cannot have any more attempts at the process.
- In 2021, Joel sat part of the assessment and failed this. As Joel already had one failed attempt at the process and this was before 7 December 2024, if Joel fails again, he cannot have any more attempts at the process.
- In 2018, Sam had their first attempt at the psychometric assessment process and failed. They also failed the second attempt in 2019. Sam cannot have any more attempts at the process.
- In 2023, Debbie sat part of the psychometric assessment and passed this. She has two attempts to pass all the psychometric assessments.

21. I have sat the process and passed some of the tests already. Will I have to sit them again?

The train company you have applied to will advise you of what you need to complete, taking into account their specific process.

Please note: As part of the application, the national database is checked, and your prospective employer will advise you of what you will be required to sit.

22. Have the train driver psychometric assessments changed in the latest RIS-3751-TOM issue four?

No changes have been made to the selection criteria or assessments set out in Appendix A of RIS-3751-TOM issue four.

23. I am interested in becoming a train driver. Why do the previous issues of RIS-3751-TOM not apply to me?

From 7 December 2024, RIS-3751-TOM issue four applies to all new train driver candidates.

Every iteration of RIS-3751-TOM is expected to update the process over time to reflect changes in the types of candidates applying, the evolving nature of the train driver role, and new research and guidance that emerges to improve various aspects of the process.

From its inception, RIS-3751-TOM has been based on the principle that candidates are assessed in accordance with the standard that is in place when they begin the assessment process. This principle is applied to maintain the overall fairness of the process for all train driver candidates. It is only when the selection criteria and assessments change that there may be a need to adjust the psychometric assessment process applied to previous train driver candidates. As both the criteria and assessments remain unchanged with RIS-3751-TOM issue four, no adjustments have been made for previous train driver candidates.

24. How do I get feedback from my assessment?

Please contact the company to which you have applied, and they will advise you on their process for feedback. When contacting the train company, please give them your full name and when you attended the assessment day.

25. What do I do if I fail an assessment?

If you would like to be considered for re-assessment, you should contact your prospective employer.

Please note: As part of your application, the national database is checked, and your prospective employer will advise you of what you will be required to sit.

26. Can I appeal the result?

Yes. You can contact the train company to which you applied.

27. Can companies still apply part testing?

Yes.

28. Can companies use higher cut-offs or an enhanced standard?

Yes. RIS-3751-TOM issue four does not set pass marks. RSSB has recommended the pass marks, but it is the responsibility of the train company to determine which pass marks are used. Any tests undertaken outside of the standardised psychometric assessment process set out in RIS-3751-TOM issue four are outside of the scope of the standard.

29. How does the validity period apply?

Before 7 December 2024, the validity period for the assessment results will remain in place as per train company agreements.

From 7 December 2024, the validity period will be five years.

30. I am a qualified train driver and want to change employer. What do I do?

Contact your prospective employer. They will guide you through the process that will apply to you.

Contacts and further information

31. Can I provide feedback on aspects of the process covered in the standard?

Yes. Anyone can provide feedback and submit enquiries on RIS-3751-TOM issue four via the RSSB portal on the RSSB website.

Please note: RIS-3751-TOM issue four is a process that is carefully managed to maintain the fairness of the process for all involved. Changes to standards are captured as part of the consultation and review process in place for RIS-3751-TOM. Changes are not retrospectively applied. Instead, they are included in future versions of the standard.

32. Who can I contact if I have more questions about the train driver assessment process?

If your query relates to the results of the assessment or the assessment itself, contact the train company to which you applied.

For general enquiries related to RIS-3751-TOM issue four, you can submit enquiries via the RSSB portal on the RSSB website.

33. Where can I find general information about the train driver role?

Further information on the train driver role can be found at thetraindriversacademy.com.

For information about train driver licensing and certification, please visit www.orr.gov.uk.

Information relating to RSSB research, the Standards Catalogue, and other useful learning and guidance is available at www.rssb.co.uk.

Glossary of terms

RIS	Rail Industry Standard
RIS-3751-TOM	Rail Industry Standard on Psychometric Assessment in Train Driver Selection. It is managed by the Rail Industry Traffic and Operations Management Standards Committee (TOM SC)
ORR	Office of Rail and Road
RSSB	Rail Safety and Standards Board
RACF	Rail Assessment Centre Forum
TDLCR	The Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010



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