

Appendix 1 Psychological Testing

- 1) The Program for Priestly Formation states that the psychological assessment should be considered an integral part of the admission procedures
- 2) Psychological testing should be done by a licensed psychologist competent to conduct psychological testing and assessment. The psychological assessment should be completed no more than one year prior to making application.
- 3) Ethical Procedures
 - a) “The place of psychological testing in the overall screening process should be clearly explained to the candidate. Test results are to be treated in a confidential manner. The persons to whom the results will be released are to be clearly indicated and the candidate must sign a release form specifically authorizing those persons to have access to the test results. (See *Psychology, Counseling and the Seminarian*, Washington, DC.: NCEA, 1994 and “On Screening Seminarians Through Behavioral Assessment and Psychological Testing” in *Seminary Journal*, Spring 1997).
- 4) The vocation office determines which psychologists are used and what tests are administered as part of the assessment. This battery of tests should be periodically reviewed with the assistance of professionals in the field. As outlined in “Methodology,” the diagnostic clinical interview should include: family of origin history; relational history; psychological and psychosexual development history and present level of health/integration; history of traumatic events and mental illnesses such as (experiences of loss, violence, abuse, addictions, mental illness, depression, anxiety and panic, etc.)
- 5) A Sample of Tests Used in Psychological Evaluation of Candidates
 - a) Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
 - i) Self-administered objective test, format equals true/false test of 566 items, takes one to two hours, identifies clinical symptoms and/or psychopathology.
 - ii) Limitations: for example, will tell how depressed an individual is but not why.
 - b) Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
Self-administered projective test, stories told to pictures, takes one hour. Will give life themes, attitudes; will help identify what an individual is depressed about.
 - c) Rorschach Test
Administered by examiner; takes one hour, projective and very unstructured. Particularly useful with intelligent, sophisticated people because there are no obvious right/wrong answers; it helps to identify how an individual handles overly obsessive, etc.
 - d) Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS)
Multiple-choice objective self-administered test, takes a half hour. Tells personal preferences (motivations); for example, is an individual motivated by needs for helping others, etc.
 - e) Incomplete Sentences Blank – Adult Form
 - i) Self-administered 40 incomplete sentences, projective test, takes a half hour.

ii) Limitation: very easy for an individual to manipulate by giving socially desirable answers.

f) Human Figure Drawing

Projective test takes 15 minutes. Gives information regarding self-perception as well as perception of males versus females.

g) Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale – Revised (WAIS-R)

Administered by examiner, takes one to one and a half-hours. Gives both verbal and non-verbal IQ scores. Usually not necessary unless there is some question about an individual's academic ability. However, it is good to have some sort of cognitive functioning test, perhaps an abbreviated WAIS or a Shipley.

6) Written Reports

a) Psychological reports are the property of the sponsoring diocese and are normally not surrendered to the candidate, nor is the institution or psychologist required to provide more than a general summary of whatever contents of the test which might have led to the decision to accept or to reject the candidate.

b) The Vocation Office should receive in a timely fashion a thorough and professionally written report analyzing and interpreting the data from all interviews and tests. The report should be written with specific consideration of the individual's capacity for priestly formation and life along with specific recommendations regarding the possible issues to be addressed in formation. Furthermore, the report may include a recommendation regarding admittance to seminary formation. Reports should specifically indicate any area of concern in which the candidate needs further growth and/or discernment and what approaches might be taken to address these issues. A copy of this report will be given to the seminary rector or faculty member in charge of admissions. This report should be treated in a confidential manner by the seminary faculty and vocation personnel, and the manner in which this confidentiality will be safeguarded should be communicated to the applicant.

c) From this thorough report the psychologist should provide a condensed version in written form to be given to the candidate, the Admission Committee and, if accepted, his seminary formation team for their use in priestly formation. Its focus should include relational capacities, the strengths and assets for ministry and the recommendations for further personal growth and development while in the seminary.

d) Once the testing and interview are completed and the reports written, the psychologist should meet with the individual to discuss the findings and recommendations for further personal growth and any questions the candidate may have about the reports. It is very important that the individual understand the findings before entering the seminary.

e) Seminary admission requirements often include notification of the type of psychological testing that has been given, the date(s) administered, the report from the psychological consultant and a copy of a signed release of information form. "Sample Seminary Admissions Packet," *Guidelines for Diocesan Vocation Offices*, Third Edition Revised and Updates, NCCB, 1998.