

# INCLUSIVE TECH TESTS

DEI Foundations - The WHY, WHAT & HOW of inclusivity in software engineering tech tests

A PLAYBOOK FOR TALENT ACQUISITION



PROJECT F



# PROJECT F

Project F is a profit-for-purpose social impact business that addresses the low representation of women in technology and STEM with an accreditation program that removes systemic barriers for women, recognising clients for their progress.

[projectf.com.au](https://projectf.com.au)

[Book a call](#)

Use this Playbook to “think-tank” and plan your quest to create inclusive tech tests for candidates applying to work at your company.

TRUSTED BY





# THE WHY

Failing to create a positive candidate experience can do real and lasting damage to your company and its reputation.

Today, equitable candidate evaluations are more important than ever. You're no doubt already aware of the talent shortage in critical tech skill areas...

TA simply can't afford to disadvantage even partial demographics by using inequitable tech tests.

It's time to adjust how we do things.



## ACTIVITY

Take a few minutes to consider as a team why inclusive tech tests are important for your organisation. You will need to be able to articulate this internally.





# THE WHAT

Tech tests for software engineering and related roles have long been known to be “broken”. Many are riddled with bias, use jingoistic terminology, irrelevant questions and even bizarre tricks designed to trip the interviewee up.

At Project F, we regularly review tests for program participants so we know this to be true.

And when the technology sector remains as male dominated as it is, there is a greater drive than ever to hire outside of the stereotype and help create diverse teams - because we all know diverse teams perform better right?

So the challenge is on to tackle the tech test head on and find a way to be more inclusive so that more women will apply, pass the tests and contribute to your diversity strategy. The long term prognosis if you're successful at doing this:

- Better culture
- Higher engagement
- Increased profitability
- Better products



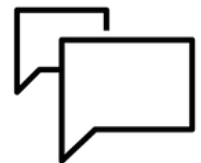


# ACTIVITY



Here are six PERSONAS of realistic job seekers who could be interviewing for different levels of Software Engineering roles in Australia today.

On the next page, list barriers you could foresee for each of the personas based on your existing processes.



Be sure to discuss and consider the differences in barriers that may exist for each persona.

*Ask “What might people assume about this person that differs from the next?”*

## SAM

36 years old  
14 years experience  
2 kids under 5



## ANDREA

36 years old  
14 years experience  
2 kids under 5



## PRITHI

24 years old  
CompSci degree  
2 years experience  
Lives with parents



## DANNY

24 years old  
CompSci degree  
2 years experience  
Lives with parents



## PRASHANT

43 years old  
20 years experience  
3 children



## MANAL

43 years old  
20 years experience  
3 children





# ACTIVITY



List the barriers each persona may face in your CURRENT interview process and in taking your CURRENT tech tests



SAM



DANNY



ANDREA



PRINKA



PRASHANT



MANAL



THE HOW



# HOW TO CREATE INCLUSIVE TESTS

## FOLLOW OUR RULES OF THUMB:

- Recognise your bias and challenge your assumptions (that's what our previous activity is all about)
- Design tests that every applicant can understand easily
- Avoid slang, trendy language, sayings or references that may not make sense to folks whose first language is not English
- Respect people's time and potential constraints - not everyone has free time outside of work
- Respect people's different circumstances - not everyone has access to hi-spec tech at home
- One size doesn't fit all so create options
- Never ever ever give a tech test before interviewing a candidate
- Consider that candidates that have not moved jobs in some years may experience more nervousness than others

- Eradicate ego - check the people creating the test are not flexing to showcase they're own skills
- Train ALL interviewers and seek peer feedback regularly - poor interviewers will cost you dearly
- Create tests with the thought in mind that good candidates will have other options, not just yours
- Make it realistic - you will learn more about a candidates' relevant competency assessing a real-world problem
- No trick questions. Ever.
- Tasks should be clear with clear expectations
- Ensure tasks are iterative and candidates can access help if they get stuck
- When designing tests, focus on problem solving above all
- Be clear on what constitutes passing the tasks, ensuring it is not subjective - ie dependant on who is reviewing it
- Provide candidates with a thorough briefing pack to help them prepare - this will also help reduce stress



# WHAT NOW?

## WORKSHOP IT

Use this playbook to run a short, morning\* workshop with members of TA and engineering. Ask the hard questions and keep candidate care and experience front and centre.

## GET SOME HELP

Cast out to the professionals. Ask Project F who we trust to design and develop inclusive tech tests.

## 3 OPTION IDEAS

1. Github project review
2. Pair programming
3. Take-home project

What others can you come up with?

\*research shows that mornings are proven to be optimum time to run effective workshops as decision fatigue sets in from lunchtime onwards.



# WHAT NOW?

## FOCUS ON TRAINING

Collaborate with L&D to develop effective training for coders who are expected to interview. Ensure every person involved in the process completes the training.

## MAKE IT EASY

Make it easy for interviewers to fairly assess answers to structured questions by writing a library of exemplar answers.

## TEST & MEASURE

Set up clear measures for candidate experience and quality of hires, then review regularly to measure effectiveness and iterate.



# THE LAST WORD

Recruiting is only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to creating inclusive and equitable workplaces.

Project F works with accredited organisations to review the whole environment, pinpoint impact areas and guide towards successful outcomes

If you're not accredited yet, see how you're doing or get in touch:

[Book a call](#)

[Get a pulse check](#)

**PROJECT F**  
CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN TECH



# FURTHER READING

A guide to an inclusive tech interview

<https://sherisoli.medium.com/a-guide-to-an-inclusive-tech-interview-5303960e56a0>

How to make tech interviews suck less

<https://thenewstack.io/how-to-make-tech-interviews-suck-less/>

Vervoe software engineer skill assessment template

<https://vervoe.com/assessment-library/software-engineer-skills-assessment/>

Hackerrank for diversity & inclusion

<https://www.hackerrank.com/solutions/diversity-hiring/>

Alooba objective assessments (data & analytics)

<https://www.alooba.com/alooba-assess>

**PROJECT F**

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN TECH



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GOT QUESTIONS?

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