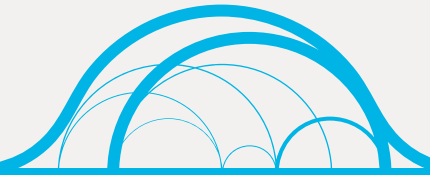




Using CPSQ to support undergraduate self-reflection



The Department of Mechanical Engineering, Imperial College London

Mechanical Engineering undergraduates at Imperial College London are now completing a Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire® (CPSQ – designed and developed by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing) alongside their Professional Engineering Skills 1 Module. 'While our students have excellent A Level results their first year performance can be very variable,' says Dr Julie Varley, Director of Student Experience and Principal Teaching Fellow in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. 'CPSQ helps students to think about their study approach and reflect on how their behaviour might be affecting their performance.'

**Imperial College
London**

CPSQ is a non-cognitive assessment that provides insights into an individual's personal styles (their attitudes and behaviours) across five key competencies – thinking, study, coping, communication and collaboration. CPSQ has been used by the department since 2019, introduced by Dr Linda Stringer, Undergraduate Admissions Tutor and Senior Teaching Fellow. Up to 200 first year students take CPSQ in January. The students also watch a presentation (provided by Admissions Testing) on the research behind CPSQ, its design, and how to use the information given in the test report. 'We want students to use CPSQ for independent self-reflection,' explains Dr Varley: 'Our December progress tests might be the first time a student hasn't done as well as expected. We invite students to use CPSQ to help

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About Imperial College London's Department of Mechanical Engineering

The department is one of the world's leading centres for the study of Mechanical Engineering. It has a distinguished tradition of excellence in teaching, research and practice, bringing together internationally leading staff, over 500 exceptional students and state-of-the-art facilities.

About CPSQ for higher education

The Cambridge Personal Styles Questionnaire (CPSQ) is an online, non-cognitive assessment that provides insight into a student's attitudes and behaviours – their personal styles. The results from the questionnaire can be used by admissions staff and course leaders to support with selection decisions and to understand personal development needs.

About Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing

We are part of the University of Cambridge and have been working with UK and worldwide educational institutions, governments and employers for more than 15 years. Our admissions and personal development assessments are a global mark of excellence that set the quality standard.

them set their own “smart” goals for improvement. We therefore see CPSQ as a tool to help students respond to their progress test results, and which gives them ownership of what happens next.'

The CPSQ report is easy to understand and act upon, adds Dr Varley: 'Words such as “studying”, “thinking” and “coping” resonate with our students. They demonstrate how study approach might outweigh academic ability in terms of performance, which is quite a powerful message.'

This message is borne out in Dr Stringer's analysis of previous CPSQ cohorts which suggests a significant and consistent correlation between study skills and on-course performance: 'Overall, CPSQ results show that conscientious students with high scores for the study competency tend to do better on the course. This indicates that these traits can be just as important as previous academic achievement – if not more so – when predicting on-course performance. The fact that these results are so clear is one reason why we continue to use CPSQ,' she adds.

Students are also encouraged to view CPSQ as a starting point for thinking about life beyond university, says Dr Varley: 'CPSQ underlines the importance of constant reflection and goal-setting. These are vital career skills, especially if you want to become a chartered engineer when it's not just what you do that's important but also how you learn from it.' Dr Stringer adds: 'Students are quite surprised that CPSQ is part of a Mechanical Engineering degree course. We explain that as well as encouraging reflection on current performance it is good practice for future job and internship applications.'

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