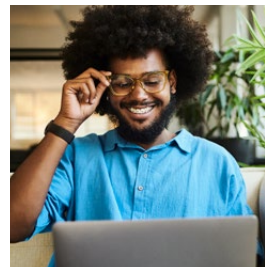




Tell me more about...

# Going Global with your Certification Testing Program

[psiexams.com](https://psiexams.com)



PSI is an ETS Company

# Contents

01

## **Consider your market**

Page 8

05

## **Market your program**

Page 38

02

## **Test development considerations**

Page 16

06

## **Conclusion**

Page 42

03

## **Test delivery considerations**

Page 28

07

## **Going global with ABPANC**

Page 44

04

## **Continuous improvement**

Page 36

# Introduction

There are numerous reasons you might choose to extend the reach of your certification testing program by going global:



## 1 **Growth opportunities**

Cross into new markets and untapped pools of test takers.

Going global is a great way to capitalize on the increasing demand for professional qualifications across different industries.

## 2 **Enhanced reputation**

Elevate the reputation and credibility of your programs and organization.

Global expansion positions you as an industry leader, increasing visibility and solidifying your standing in the market.

## 3 **Contribute to professional development**

Advance the career of your test takers.

Address global talent needs in diverse markets and support the future of your industry on a worldwide scale.

# Benefits of going global

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**Diversifying your audience also reduces reliance on specific markets or regions, mitigating risks that might come with economic fluctuations, regulatory changes, or geopolitical instability.**

This enhances your resilience and adaptability to changing conditions, so you're not only making the most of current opportunities but better prepared for potential risks.



# Balancing

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# risk and reward

Resource implications, market conditions, regulatory complexities, and quality concerns all come into play with program growth. Careful planning is essential.



This guide goes through some of the considerations for organizations considering global expansion, including **insights**, **best practice**, and **strategies** for making the move as efficient and effective as possible.



A global survey by ETS found that

**88%** of respondents feel continuous learning is essential to succeed in today's society. <sup>i</sup>

A survey conducted by HR.com found that

**92%** of HR professionals believe certifications are valuable during the hiring process. <sup>iii</sup>

According to a survey by LinkedIn,

**76%** of professionals believe certifications are important for career growth. <sup>ii</sup>

The ETS survey revealed that

**78%** of global respondents believe proof of specific skills will be more important than a university degree in the future. <sup>iv</sup>

# Consider your market



Making the decision to expand your certification program into a global market is a big change for your team and a potentially significant investment for your organization. While going global presents a huge opportunity, it's not a decision to be taken lightly. There are several areas you need to fully explore and understand before deciding.

Initiating discussions about global expansion and filling in any knowledge gaps will not only help you develop a business rationale and consensus to proceed. A rigorous approach at this stage will also help you further down the line, during the process of expanding your program globally.





# Supply



## What resources do you have to extend your program globally?

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### **Budget –**

What are the financial constraints and projections for global expansion?

### **Personnel –**

What existing resources and capabilities do you have to support global growth, and what additional support do you need to bring in?

### **Timing –**

Do you have an achievable timeframe for rolling out your global program, given the budget and personnel available? Are there any cultural or seasonal factors that might influence adoption in your target geographies?



# Demand



## What is the perceived value of your existing program by:

- **Certified professionals?**
- **Employers?**
- **Others in the industry?**

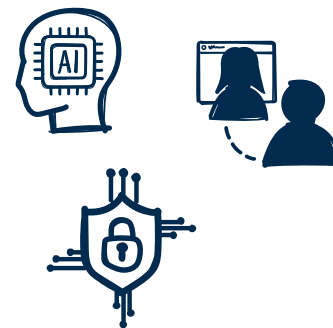
Do you have this important intelligence about your current market, from feedback or testimonials? If not, where can you get it? Quantitative research such as surveys, or qualitative research such as focus groups and online reviews, may prove helpful. Research can also uncover any issues or areas for improvement within your existing program that need to be addressed before going global.



### **Have you explored other factors that could affect demand?**

This might include industry growth, industry trends, emerging technologies, changing regulations, or economic conditions either in specific geographies or globally.

Make sure you consider factors that might present opportunities, as well as those that might present a risk such as political instability or currency fluctuations.





# Regulations



**What is the regulatory landscape in each target region you are planning to expand into?**

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For example, are there any local laws or regulations relating to certification testing or professional standards? These might involve data privacy, intellectual property, or consumer protection. You may also need to seek accreditation from relevant regulatory bodies or professional associations in target regions.



# Framework



## What is the planned framework for your global certification?

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- Are you going to use the same version, internationally delivered?
- Are you going to create a new global certification?
- Will specific elements vary for different versions?
- Will eligibility requirements need to be different for a global certification?
- What will your pricing structure look like?



# Competition



## What is your competition for this global certification? Is there:

- a local version in your target regions?
- already a global version?

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To fully understand the competition, conduct a competitor analysis that assesses the current offering, its reputation, market share, and pricing strategy. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis can be helpful here.

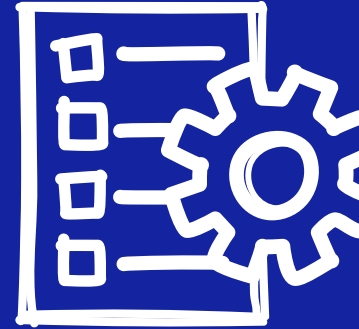
Now is a good time to consider how you will differentiate yourself. This might be related to your test content, flexible test delivery, or quality assurance methodologies, for example.

# Checklist for global expansion

Do you fully understand?


- ☒ **Supply.**
- ☐ **Demand.**
- ☐ **Regulations.**
- ☐ **Framework.**
- ☐ **Competition.**

# Test development considerations



High quality content that is relevant and current to your industry is a key differentiator for any testing program. That's why it's important to carefully consider whether you are going to administer your existing certification in a new market or create a new global certification and test specification.





## Do I need a new global test specification?



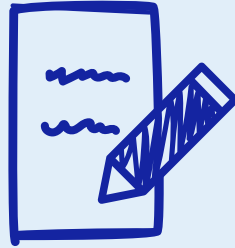
Look into whether your existing test content is relevant and applicable worldwide. Are the knowledge and skills in your test specification aligned with global industry standards, practices, and regulations?

**Cultural sensitivity is another important factor. Is your item and test design familiar to potential test takers?**

Looking at your test content from a global perspective, are there any biases or language barriers that might disadvantage test takers from different cultural backgrounds? If differences do exist, why? Are these cultural preferences or changes in practice or expertise?



# Develop global test content



**Rigorous test development processes are always essential, and even more so when the success of your new global testing program is at stake.**

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After you have conducted a market analysis and feasibility study, content development starts with a job analysis and in-depth consultation with global Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to define what needs to be assessed and how – your test specification. This should uncover any regional differences that need to be considered.

The process continues through item writing, item review, test assembly, and test review. Then on to standard setting, implementation and ongoing maintenance.



## Some tips for the test content development process:

- 1 Measurements should be provided in both imperial and metric units.
- 2 Avoid using words with multiple meanings or complicated language for test takers that are not native speakers.
- 3 Check whether technical terms are the same in all regions.
- 4 Ensure SME representation for item writing and review.

Design your test content with flexibility and scalability in mind, so it can be easily updated to accommodate further geographical expansion, as well as evolving industry trends and regulatory changes.



## Read our guide

### Developing the right test content for your certification program

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## Regional variations

You'll need to identify any regional changes that might be needed, due to regulatory differences or varying industry practices across regions. One option is to use the same broad test content specification or create modules that cover regional variations.

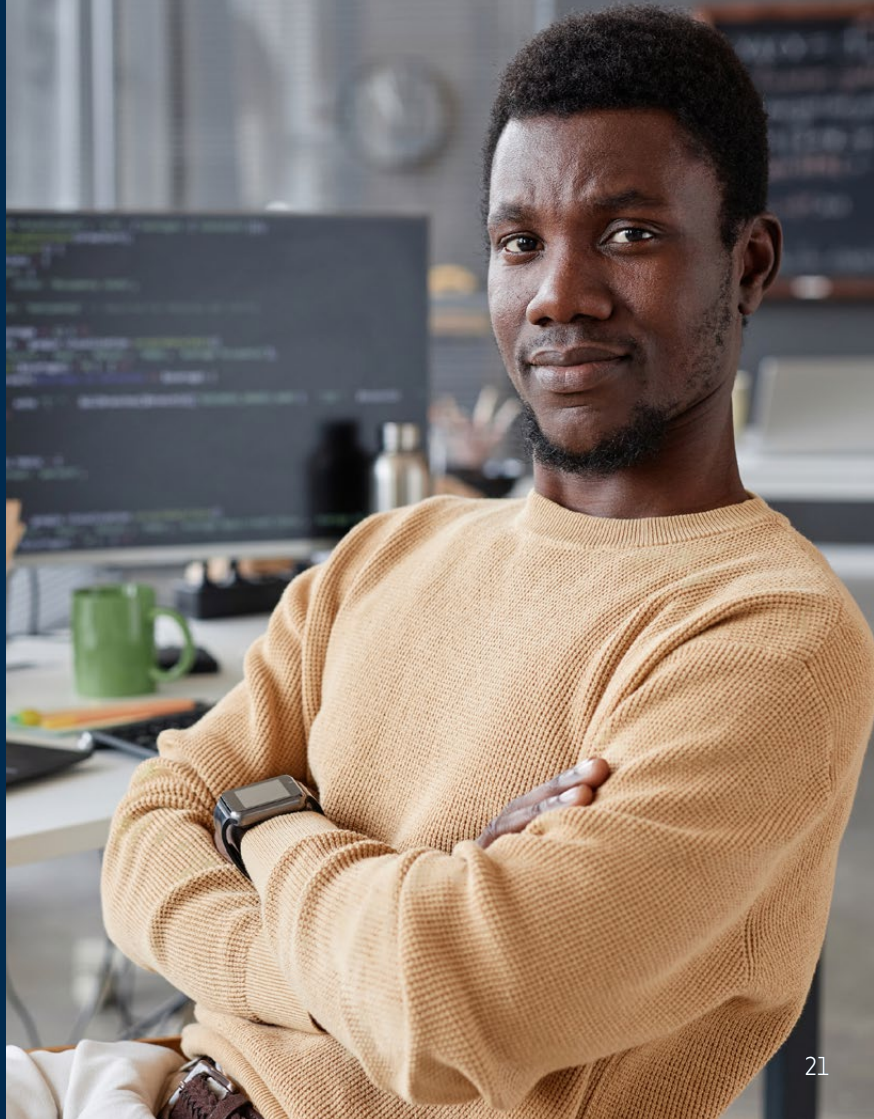
Take financial services as an example. Tests in the United States might include specific content on regulations such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), where European tests might focus more on regulations like the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID).





Similarly, IT tests often include content specific to networking protocols and regulations relevant to different regions. Certifications for construction and engineering professionals may also vary based on regional building codes, safety regulations, and industry standards.

You'll need to work with SMEs from different regions to identify the required variations, make the changes, and assess whether these are aligned with the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed to perform the job or task.



How do  
I decide?

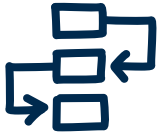
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## Evaluate

the cost and resource implications of creating an entirely new global program. Is it feasible – both today and in the future with increased volumes? Take factors such as content development, language translations, and ongoing reviews and updates into account. Also consider the impact that additional programs or increased market share might have on costs and include this in your long-term plan.

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## Assess

the market demand in your target regions. Will you get return on your investment? Market research or pilot testing can help build the evidence.

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## Engage

global stakeholders such as SMEs, industry practitioners, and regulatory bodies in your decision-making process. Do you already have global partners that can assist with gathering and sharing various resources?



# Standardization **vs** Localization

Standardization ensures consistency and comparability of test outcomes globally, while localization allows for test customization and adaptation to meet specific regional needs.



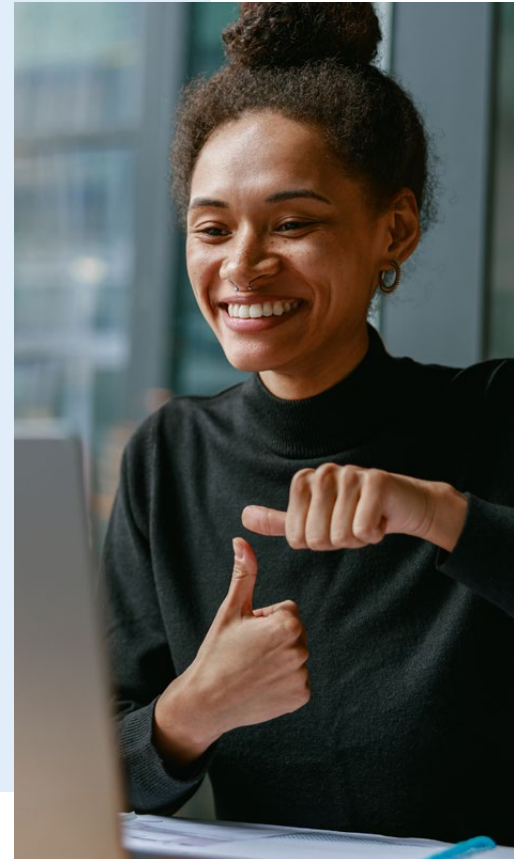
# Test translations



Determine whether the language, or languages, used for your existing tests are appropriate and adequately accessible to test takers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. You may decide to translate the content into more languages or offer language support services, such as practice tests, which are a great way to increase exposure in new markets.

Translations should also be taken into consideration when developing your cost model, as volume is likely to vary significantly by language.

Test translations are a good way to extend your reach even further. However, if you do decide to go down the translation route, a rigorous process is essential to ensure legal defensibility, fairness and reliability.



A bit more about...

# ISO17024:12

## and test translations

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**ISO17024:2012 does not require test translation except where it is dictated by local regulation.**

This international standard states that certification bodies must carefully consider whether or not to translate a test, recognizing that translations can be costly, resource intensive, and prone to legal challenges.



The standard also highlights that test translations raise issues beyond linguistic matters. It requires that items are modified as necessary to align with local cultural sensitivities, norms, and professional practices. These adaptations are expected to be made while maintaining difficulty level.

However, while there may be legal requirements for certification programs to provide translated tests, voluntary efforts in translation will not be appreciated by ISO unless their level of fidelity and accuracy are high. Some countries expect and even prefer that international certification tests offered by US and UK organizations operating in their countries be offered only in English.

Therefore, the issue of test translation is not necessarily a barrier to globalization efforts but should be considered when planning to operate globally.





# Test delivery considerations

Secure test delivery is essential regardless of where in the world your test takers are located. However, there are some specific considerations for testing organizations that decide to expand their programs globally.



## Create a roadmap

### **Where you are now:**

What test delivery infrastructure do you currently have in place to support your certification programs? How does it need to be adapted or enhanced for global expansion?

### **Where you are heading:**

Understand the availability and reliability of testing infrastructure in your target regions, such as test centers, internet connectivity, and security protocols.

This roadmap will help you decide the most appropriate testing modality to maximize accessibility for test takers worldwide, while safeguarding test security and integrity.

## Consideration

# Flexible testing

Many testing organizations choose to adopt multi-modal testing for their global programs. This gives test takers the option of:

- Convenient remote testing with **secure online proctoring** when they have access to the technology and internet connection required.
- Access to the facilities of a **secure test center** in geographies where it is commercially viable.





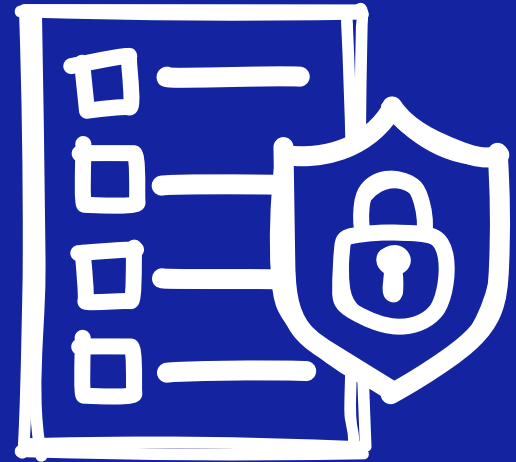
**Flexibility in test scheduling and delivery can be enhanced even further to accommodate different test taker needs worldwide with:**

- Multiple testing windows.
- Continuous testing on-demand.
- Accommodations for test takers with disabilities or special requirements.

## Consideration

# Test security

Maintaining the integrity of your tests on a global scale is essential. Robust security measures, from advanced encryption to a lockdown browser and online proctoring, will ensure your tests are protected against breaches, safeguarding the validity and reliability of results.







### **Additional steps that support testing programs to maintain security when going global include:**

- 1** Clear and strong policies with clear consequences for bad actors.
- 2** The ability to review test sessions when required.
- 3** Processes that make it easy for whistleblowers to bring information forward.



## Consideration

# Test content exposure

Expanding globally brings new challenges when safeguarding your test content. Secure test delivery methods and sophisticated monitoring tools will preserve the integrity of your tests.

Strategies that mitigate the risk of unauthorized access or distribution of your proprietary content should include policies around item and form replacement. For example, after they have been exposed to a certain number of test takers.





**Consideration**

# Data analysis



Going global requires not just administering tests but also extracting meaningful insights from your test data. Advanced analytics, including Data Forensics and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analysis, offer comprehensive evaluation of test performance across different regions.

By identifying anomalies and ensuring fairness, this analysis will support you to uphold the credibility of your testing program on a global scale. What's more, with actionable insights derived from robust analytics you can confidently adapt and optimize your tests for diverse audiences worldwide.



# Continuous improvement

Establishing mechanisms for collecting feedback throughout the rollout process as you go global will help you make iterative improvements and enhancements as needed. After you have launched, gather feedback from test takers on an ongoing basis from surveys and analytics to make continuous improvements to your global program.

It's important to stay agile and responsive to market changes and emerging trends. You will need to monitor changes in the competitor landscape and be prepared to adapt over time.



To remain competitive on a global scale, you will also need to stay ahead of technological advancements and innovations in testing. For example, adaptive testing for different levels of knowledge or digital badges that support global mobility.



Read our guide

## Quality assurance in testing

Download





# Market your program

You will need a marketing and branding strategy to promote your certification to new markets.

## **Start with the basics, your value proposition**

Clearly articulate the benefits to potential test takers and employers such as career advancement, skill enhancement, industry recognition, increased job opportunities.

## **Promote your strengths**

Highlight the quality of your test content and rigorous test development processes, demonstrate the convenience and flexibility of your testing programs through multi-modal delivery or continuous on-demand testing, for example.



## Successful tactics we've seen for testing organizations when going global:



1

Partner with in-country organizations to obtain buy-in from locals.

2

Create relationships with big employers to outline the benefits of certification.

3

Create an accreditation program where businesses meet specific criteria, including the number of employees with your certification.

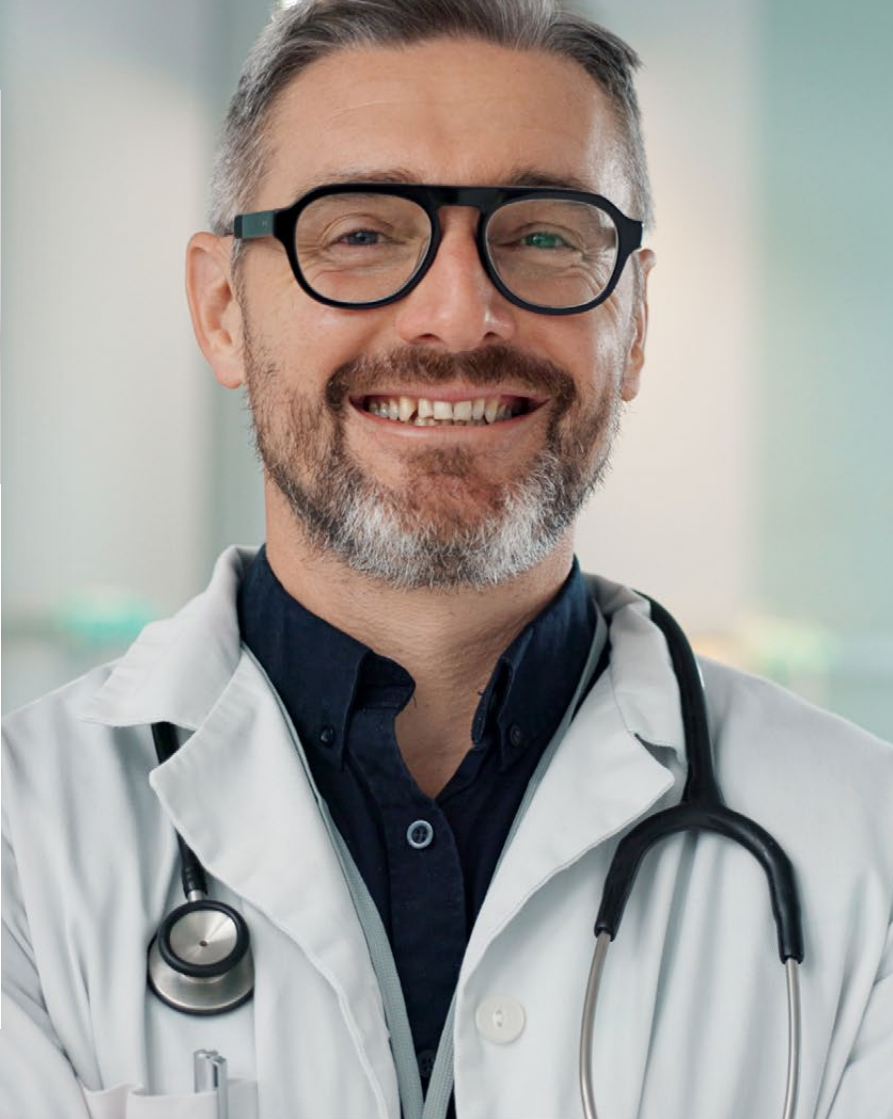




Read our guide

## How to market to test takers

Download







## Partnerships and collaboration

Consider whether you have any existing partnerships or collaborations that can be leveraged for global expansion. And explore whether you can create or build new partnerships. Could you involve local educational institutions, industry associations, or government agencies, to facilitate rollout and enhance credibility in new markets?



# Conclusion

Testing organizations need to be adaptable and innovative to stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly evolving global market. One way to achieve this is to expand your testing programs globally. But to meet the diverse needs of test takers worldwide, you must respond to technological advancements, evolving industry trends, and changing market demands.



Successful global expansion requires collaboration and partnership. By working together we can share best practice, resources and expertise – to collectively advance the quality, accessibility, and impact of certification programs on a global scale.

## A case study

# Going global with ABPANC

The American Board of Perianesthesia Nursing Certification (ABPANC) certifies perianesthesia nurses across the United States. But their ongoing partnership with the International Collaboration of PeriAnaesthesia Nurses (ICPAN) highlighted a growing demand for a global certification with one common standard. This expansion would also support ABPANC's strategic goals and mission to promote perianesthesia nursing excellence across the world.





Director of Certification Services  
at ABPANC, **Lori Furtado**, CAE, explains...



“As ABPANC’s existing testing partner, PSI worked with our team throughout the process. From educating the Board about the benefits and challenges of going global, through exploring and testing modality options, to reviewing test content for validity and reliability.”

The new certification for international nurses went live in March 2024, with the option to take the test remotely with live online proctoring or in-person at a secure PSI Test Centre.

Ms. Furtado adds, “This new certification offers perianesthesia nurses around the world a unique opportunity for global recognition, to elevate their practice and advance their career.”



# Your trusted testing partner

Every day our clients support millions of people to realize their dreams, reach their potential, and improve their life chances. They care about their test takers – and we share that responsibility.

Our unwavering focus is on delivering frictionless and fair test taker experiences, without compromising test integrity, through...

## Secure test delivery

- Authorised global **test center** network.
- Secure and scalable **remote testing** and live and Record & Review **online proctoring**.
- Flexible **multi-modal** test delivery.
- Testing **windows or continuous testing** on-demand.

## Rigorous test development

- Legally defensible and **valid test content**.
- **Job analysis** and test content specifications.
- **Subject Matter Expert** (SME) recruitment, training and management
- Secure **item authoring, banking and test generation** software.

## Expertise in testing science

- Experienced **psychometricians**.
- Specialist **test developers**.
- **Data forensics** and web crawling.

Our willingness to listen and adapt means clients can either benefit from a full testing service, or access solutions at any stage of their testing journey.

We understand every test is about more than the result. It's about a dream. A dream the test taker believes is worth striving for. And we believe that too. Their dreams deserve trusted science, technology and operational expertise. They deserve PSI.

# Dreams... Deserve PSI

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# Connect with an expert today.

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- i ETS, Human Progress Report, 2024.
- ii LinkedIn, 2021 Workplace Learning Report.
- iii HR.com, The State of HR Skills and Education 2020.
- iv ETS, Human Progress Report, 2024.