



E36/ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

Performance Testing and Assessment

Performance tests of potential personnel are becoming more commonly used as predictors of on-the-job performance. A new ASTM International standard is focused on 42 issues that are specific to personnel performance test development and implementation. E2849, Practice for Performance Testing and Assessment, was developed by Subcommittee E36.80 on Personnel Performance Testing and Assessment, part of ASTM International Committee E36 on Accreditation and Certification.

Wallace Judd, vice president, research and development, CertNT LLC, and chairman of E36.80, notes that, while standards for multiple choice tests exist, performance tests need to be covered by a different standard.

"There are many issues performance tests have that multiple choice tests do not," says Judd. "For

example, doing quality assurance on a multiple choice test is simply a matter of seeing whether the choices for each item are scored correctly. Doing QA on scoring a single software security item may require hours of effort."

Judd also says another area specific to performance testing is configuring a test setup so that it is equivalent for all candidates. "For example, how do you set up a crane operators' test so that a person with a huge lattice-borne crane has a test equivalent to one for a small crawler crane," asks Judd.

"The general public won't use this standard, but they rely on performance tests to assure the competence of professionals in many industries, from robotic surgery to plumbers, from airline pilots to nurses," says Judd. "This standard will assure a uniform quality to the performance testing of professionals in many industries."

Judd believes that companies in a variety of industries that are developing performance tests for professions will be early adopters of E2849, with

regulatory bodies and laboratories also being among potential users.

E36.80 welcomes participation in its standards developing activities. Those who are interested in refining future versions of E2849 to include issues specific to their situation are particularly invited to join the subcommittee.

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