

Numerical practice

Five questions. A calculator, a blank sheet and eight minutes.

Keep the answers aside until you finish. If you are relearning the methods, work untimed. All figures are fictional; these are independent PSP exercises. Eight minutes is a practice target, not an official test limit.

Date: _____ Time taken: _____ Correct: ____ / 5

1. Grant approvals

The table shows grant applications received and the approval rate by county. How many applications were approved in Cavan?

County	Applications received	% approved
Louth	2,000	40%
Meath	900	25%
Cavan	700	80%
Monaghan	1,800	25%

A 140 | B 450 | C 175 | D 560

Answer: _____ Working: _____

2. Applications per 1,000 people

The table shows housing support applications and population by county. How many applications per 1,000 population were made in Clare? Round to one decimal place.

County	Applications	Population
Meath	1,526	62,000
Cavan	1,935	67,000
Louth	1,858	127,000
Clare	1,790	65,000

A 27.5 per 1,000 people | B 275.4 per 1,000 people | C 5.6 per 1,000 people | D 24.6 per 1,000 people

Answer: _____ Working: _____

Use this space for your calculations

Questions 3 to 5

3. A staff transfer

The table shows each unit's weekly caseload and staffing. 2 staff transfer from the Passport Office to the Motor Tax Office, and both units keep the weekly caseloads shown. Working a 52-week year, how many cases will each member of the enlarged Motor Tax Office team handle in a year? Assume an equal share of the work and round to the nearest whole case.

Unit	Cases per week	Staff
Social Protection Branch	182	13
Passport Office	330	30
Motor Tax Office	400	20
Planning Section	238	14

A 945 cases | **B** 1,156 cases | **C** 1,725 cases | **D** 1,040 cases

Answer: _____ Working: _____

4. An invoice with VAT included

The table shows amounts payable to suppliers with VAT included, and the VAT rate applied to each. What is the VAT-exclusive (net) amount on the Ennis Office Supplies invoice?

Supplier	Amount payable (VAT included)	VAT rate
Ennis Office Supplies	€86,100	23%
Boyne IT Services	€35,970	9%
Ardee Facilities Ltd	€61,500	23%
Fingal Catering Ltd	€102,150	13.5%

A €53,900 | **B** €16,100 | **C** €66,297 | **D** €70,000

Answer: _____ Working: _____

5. Compare budgets before a cut

The table shows each council's roads maintenance allocation AFTER a budget cut, and the size of the cut applied. How much larger was Meath County Council's allocation than Kerry County Council's before the cuts were applied?

Council	Roads allocation after cut	Cut applied
Kerry County Council	€2,025,000	25%
Wexford County Council	€1,980,000	10%
Meath County Council	€2,660,000	5%
Sligo County Council	€2,125,000	15%

A €635,000 | **B** €261,750 | **C** €2,700,000 | **D** €100,000

Answer: _____ Working: _____

Worked answers

1. Grant approvals: D

Stay in the Cavan row. The question asks for approvals, so use 80% of the 700 applications received.

$700 \times 80\% = 560$ approved.

140 is the 20% that were not approved.

450 uses Monaghan's figures: 1,800 at 25%.

175 mixes Cavan's total with Monaghan's approval rate.

Check: Put a finger or cursor beside the row you need. Keep the total and its percentage together.

2. Applications per 1,000 people: A

Use Clare's 1,790 applications and population of 65,000. Multiply the fraction by 1,000 to express it for a group of 1,000 people.

$1,790 / 65,000 \times 1,000 = 27.5$ per 1,000 people.

275.4 uses a multiplier of 10,000.

5.6 divides Clare's applications by the population of all four counties.

24.6 uses the Meath row.

Check: Read the unit attached to the answer. A percentage means per 100; this question asks for per 1,000.

3. A staff transfer: A

Motor Tax receives two staff, but no extra cases. Update its headcount to 22 before dividing. Then spread the annual workload across that team.

The Motor Tax Office still handles 400 cases a week, so $400 \times 52 = 20,800$ a year. The team is now $20 + 2 = 22$ staff. $20,800 / 22 = 945$ cases.

1,156 takes two staff away: 20,800 divided by 18.

1,725 transfers the Passport Office's caseload as well as its staff.

1,040 uses the old headcount of 20.

Check: More people share the same workload, so the answer per person must fall.

Working backwards from a total

4. An invoice with VAT included: D

The Ennis invoice includes 23% VAT. Its total represents 123% of the price before VAT. Divide by 1.23 to recover that original price.

The €86,100 is 123% of the net amount, not 100%. Net = $\text{€}86,100 / 1.23 = \text{€}70,000$.

€53,900 removes 23% again from the correct net price.

€16,100 is the VAT amount, not the net price.

€66,297 subtracts 23% of the gross invoice. VAT was added to the net price, so that uses the wrong base.

Check: Rebuild the invoice: multiply your net answer by 1.23. You should get the original total.

5. Compare budgets before a cut: D

The table gives the amounts left after the cuts. Recover Meath's original allocation using 95%, and Kerry's using 75%. Then compare the original amounts.

Meath County Council before = $\text{€}2,660,000 / 0.95 = \text{€}2,800,000$. Kerry County Council before = $\text{€}2,025,000 / 0.75 = \text{€}2,700,000$. Difference = $\text{€}100,000$.

€635,000 compares the figures as printed, after the cuts.

€261,750 adds 5% and 25% back to the reduced amounts. Those percentages now act on smaller bases.

€2,700,000 is Kerry's original allocation, not the difference between the two.

Check: Finish the question. Finding both original budgets is the working; subtracting them gives the requested answer.

Before your next practice session

Which question cost you the most time? Write the calculation you needed, then try it again on a blank sheet. Next time, use a fresh question to check whether the method has stuck.

Official publicjobs test advice: check your competition instructions for timing, calculator use and navigation. Source checked 15 September 2026.

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