

## Applicant Success Assessment (ASA) for Retention and Graduation Service Description

### Overview

Identifying and recruiting students who are likely to persist, graduate, and succeed in life is essential for an institution's legacy and financial growth. While standardized cognitive ability tests (e.g., SAT, ACT) are useful for predicting some measures of student success, they ignore a host of non-cognitive (i.e., personal qualities, character) differences among students related to their eventual success. The Applicant Success Assessment (ASA) is a fully-tested and statistically valid state-of-the-art assessment tool—grounded in psychological science—that assesses key individual differences in non-cognitive factors related to student and career success. The ASA predicts estimated grade point averages significantly more effectively than cognitive ability measures. When used in conjunction with cognitive ability measures, the Applicant Success Assessment provides a clear prognosis for an applicant's likelihood of success in college. The result is better admission decisions, more efficient allocation of recruiting and retention resources, greater student success, and institutional growth.

### Process

The ASA is used to determine (a) how likely the student is to succeed at any higher education institution, and (b) how likely the student is to fit with your particular institution's value attributes. These value attributes are developed in consultation with you so that we can identify students who best fit with your institution. After developing the value attributes with you, we turn to administering the assessment to applicants.

The ASA is a web-based assessment. It can be incorporated into existing admissions processes. Clients provide **Stevens Strategy** with the email addresses of the applicants. We contact each applicant with a unique link to the assessment portal. Once inside the portal, the applicant is asked a series of questions pertaining to his or her personal attributes, motives, and behavior. Depending on the goals of your institution, the assessment itself contains up to 55 questions and only takes about 5 minutes or less to complete. The length of the assessment can be adjusted to fit your needs. Once the applicant has completed the assessment, we compile his or her scores and provide you with a detailed report of the assessment results. Included in the reports is a global assessment of the individual's likelihood of success at your institution (see *Reports* section below).

### Reports

The basic ASA service includes two reports: the Class Summary Report and the Applicant Report.

*Class Summary Report.* This report summarizes the overall fit of all applicants for your institution. As such, this report provides a quick overview of all applicants and can be useful for quickly determining which students are likely to be successful at your institution. The overall fit scores are returned as percentiles based on normative data, meaning that scores can range from 0% (poor fit) to 100% (perfect fit).

*Applicant Report.* This report is provided for each applicant and includes a detailed look at the comprehensive profile for each applicant, as well as his or her overall fit score. This more in-depth look allows you to get a better picture of each applicant's strengths and weaknesses on up to 7 core dimensions of personality relevant to school and career success. Figure 1 provides an example of the Applicant Report. Once again, scores are presented in percentiles based on applicant norms on the ASA and an interpretation for each score is provided.

## Incorporation of ASA into Admission Decisions

Admission decision-making can vary from simple cutoffs (e.g., anyone with SAT above 1200) to more complicated weighting schemes (e.g., tests scores weighted 50%, interviews 25%, etc.). **Stevens Strategy** is committed to working as closely as needed with your admissions staff to develop an admissions model that meets the institution's goals for both enrollment and student success. Some of our clients prefer a complete admission modeling service wherein we use all available data, including the ASA results, to develop a top-of-the-line admissions model using modern predictive analytics. Other clients prefer a less hands-on approach wherein we only provide the ASA results and some guidelines for using them. In the latter case, a simple heuristic that serves most institutions well is to weight the results of the ASA reports as much as one weights cognitive ability test results. For example, if cognitive test scores currently make up 50% of the admission decision value and high school grades the other 50%, we recommend weighting all three (ASA scores, cognitive ability scores, and high school grades) at 33%. Although this rule of thumb is not perfect, it performs quite well compared to more complicated weighting systems based on predictive analytics and is inexpensive to employ.

*Good Risk Students.* Some students study hard, follow the instructions, never miss assignments, and attend class regularly. These students will be successful in college because they are motivated to do the things that lead to college success. The ASA is designed to identify these students. However, the ASA is a unique instrument because it recognizes that some students *may or may not* be successful in college to the degree to which they see it as advantageous to their own success in life. That is, these students will attend class and pay attention only when they see opportunities for such activities to lead to their own career success. The ASA is designed to identify these *Good Risk* students as well. We refer to them as *Good Risk* students because, while there is an increased chance they will not graduate, these students have potential for long-term payoff if they do graduate because they are more likely to have very successful careers (e.g., to start and run successful businesses, etc.) and become loyal alumni. By identifying these students, institutions can determine how much risk they want to take at the admission level on these students.

## Incorporation of ASA in Financial Aid Decisions

The ASA results can inform the strategic allocation of institutional financial aid for recruitment and retention purposes. **Stevens Strategy** will work with your admissions, financial aid, and finance staff on incorporating ASA results in the development of an institutional financial aid awarding matrix.

## Incorporation of ASA into Student Advising and Student Success Services

The ASA identifies at-risk students early. The ASA results can be used to engage with at-risk new students before enrollment and allow an institution to work with the student to design an individualized support and success services plan. ASA results can also be used to inform academic advisors when counseling advisees on choosing a major or program of study.

## Incorporation of ASA into Student Wellness

The ASA measures student resilience and institutional fit. It identifies students who may have trouble adjusting to a university setting. Certain students are more likely to become more stressed during finals week, struggle with starting or maintaining personal relationships, lose self-esteem due to poor academic performance, or have trouble with collaborative work. The ASA incorporates early identification of students who are at risk for poor adjustment. **Stevens Strategy** is then committed to working with your university, if needed, to develop intervention procedures to cultivate physical, social, emotional, and cognitive wellness.

## Support

Stevens offers full support for clients using the ASA. Our specialists are trained in the use and interpretation of the ASA and can answer questions from interpretation of a specific score to questions about how to best incorporate the ASA into your institutions admission process.

## Timeline

This service is designed to work as part your regular application process. Because the ASA is a web-based assessment, results are returned to clients in a rapid fashion. Scores are compiled and stored in Stevens' secure database as soon as the applicant completes the assessment. We generate the Applicant Report immediately after the scores are compiled and provide the Class Summary Report for our clients on a weekly basis.

## New Income

Conservatively, **Stevens Strategy's** Applicant Success Assessment for Retention and Graduation service would generate a low end estimate of \$3,000,000 in additional income per entering class over 4 years at a typical private college or university that wishes to increase its total enrollment ([Click here to easily calculate your institution's likely additional income](#)). This additional income could easily reach \$5,000,000 with less conservative projections. Beyond these figures, there are also a number of soft benefits including a more stable academic environment (e.g., fewer drug and alcohol related incidents).

## Service Fee

The fee for ASA would be under \$60,000 annually for a typical institution. This fee covers the cost of administering the assessment, storing and scoring the results, generating the reports and client support. Conservatively, the usual fee would yield **a return on investment of about 50 to 1** if the institution chose to increase its enrollment with the same number of admits. If the institution choses to maintain total enrollment and lower the number of annual admits, cost savings accounting for reductions in admission expenses would be about \$330,000 or a 5.5 to 1 return on investment annually. There is no better way than **Stevens Strategy's** Applicant Success Assessment for Retention and Graduation service to generate income for your institution and improve its academic environment.

Figure 1:

Applicant Success Assessment  
Example Student

Stevens Strategy

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# INTRODUCTION

## Personal Attributes

People are different from each other. They are motivated by different things, think in distinct ways, and respond differently to the same set of situational circumstances. Such individual differences in motivation, thinking, and behavior are related to, and predictive of, individual differences in human performance in a variety of domains. The study of Personal Attributes concerns the ways in which people differ from each other. Decades of research in Personal Attributes and Psychological Science have shown that characteristics that are important in one area of life (e.g., romantic relationships) may hinder performance in another (e.g., school). As such, there is no such thing as a "bad personality" score, but there are scores that are better suited for success in particular domains.

## Using this Report

This report is based on the Applicant Success Assessment (ASA), a measure of seven well-known dimensions, or characteristics, that are related to academic performance. The primary use of this report is to understand how a student is likely to behave in most educational settings and the impact of this behavior pattern on his or her likelihood of success in college. The report reveals psychological strengths and weaknesses in the academic domain. These strengths and weaknesses should be used to implement strategic interventions that may counteract such behavioral tendencies.

## Reading this Report

This report presents a student's scores on seven Personal Attributes. Scores are presented in percentiles ranging from 0 to 100. Scores above the 65th percentile are considered to be in the "High" range, meaning that the student scores higher than most people. Scores below the 35th percentile are considered to be in the "Low" range, meaning that the student scores lower than most people. The following pages provide an interpretation of the named student's scores (page 3) as well as their significance for the student's likely performance in school (page 4). The last page provides a graphical summary of the student's entire Personal Attributes profile.

## Caution

This report ONLY concerns a student's past behavioral tendencies and how those tendencies are related to, and predictive of, the student's future academic performance. As such, it is intended to supplement student advising and admission decisions in conjunction with other student information (e.g., test scores, GPA) and should almost never be used as the sole criteria for making an admission decision.

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## DEFINITIONS

The seven scales of the Personal Attributes Report are defined as follows:

### **Adjustment**

Reflects the degree to which a person is calm and even tempered or conversely, moody and volatile. High scorers seem confident, resilient, and optimistic. Low scorers seem tense, irritable, and negative.

### **Ambition**

Reflects the degree to which a person seems leaderlike, seeks status, and values achievement. High scorers seem competitive and eager to advance. Low scorers seem unassertive and less interested in advancement.

### **Sociability**

Reflects the degree to which a person appears talkative and socially self-confident. High scorers seem outgoing, colorful, and impulsive, and they dislike working by themselves. Low scorers seem reserved and quiet; they avoid calling attention to themselves and do not mind working alone.

### **Interpersonal Sensitivity**

Reflects social skill, tact, and perceptiveness. High scorers seem friendly, warm, and popular. Low scorers seem independent, frank, and direct.

### **Prudence**

Reflects concerns for self-control and conscientiousness. High scorers seem organized, dependable, and thorough; they follow rules and are easy to supervise. Low scorers seem impulsive and flexible. They tend to resist rules and close supervision; however, they may be creative and spontaneous.

### **Inquisitiveness**

Reflects the degree to which a person seems curious, adventurous, and imaginative. High scorers tend to be quick-witted, and visionary, but they may be easily bored and not pay attention to details. Low scorers tend to be practical, focused, and able to concentrate for long periods of time.

### **Learning Approach**

Reflects the degree to which a person enjoys academic activities and values education as an end in itself. High scorers tend to enjoy reading and studying. Low scorers are less interested in formal education and more interested in hands-on learning.

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## INTERPRETING EXAMPLE'S PERSONAL PROFILE

### PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES CLARIFICATION

#### **Adjustment**

This student is viewed by others as relatively balanced and stable in demeanor. He or she is usually calm under pressure and receptive to feedback from others. However, others may perceive this student as rather non-chalant towards work tasks.

#### **Ambition**

This student is leaderlike, energetic, driven, competitive, and focused on achieving results and success. He or she will take the initiative, persist at finishing tasks, and will be on the lookout for opportunities to advance him or herself. To others the student will appear self-confident and like a natural leader. However, the student will also have a tendency to compete with peers and be less interested in input from others.

#### **Sociability**

This student is approachable, outgoing, talkative, entertaining, and dynamic. He or she will tend to make positive first impressions on people and is comfortable when all eyes are on him or her. The student is socially skilled and good at meeting new people and making new friends. However, he or she may tend to talk over people and have difficulty listening to what others have to say. Some will perceive this student as loud or overbearing. He or she may also have a tendency to blurt things out without thinking them through.

#### **Interpersonal Sensitivity**

This student is direct in dealing with others. He or she will confront issues immediately and will not let personal feelings get in the way. This student is good at enforcing tough rules or procedures. However, others will see this student as blunt, tough, or insensitive. The student may be overly harsh and tend to be unconcerned with other peoples' feelings.

#### **Prudence**

This student is quick to act and to make things happen. He or she will be flexible, open, and comfortable with change. However, the student is also a bit impulsive and careless. This student has little respect for rules, policy, and procedures. As a result, the student may leap into action without planning ahead and often overlook the details.

#### **Inquisitiveness**

This student is somewhat imaginative and has some creative interests. Though he or she does not necessarily develop creative solutions to problems, this student will be good at evaluating ideas that are presented. The student will take abstract ideas and turn them into practical solutions. However, this student may lose sight of the big picture at times and may appear a bit unenthusiastic about long-term planning.

#### **Learning Approach**

This student will seek learning opportunities, but not with great urgency. He or she will encourage people to stay up-to-date with current trends, but realize that this is not always mandatory. As such, this student may delay a bit in learning new things that could benefit him or her. The student may also verbalize an interest in learning, but sometimes fail to follow through.

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## INTERPRETING EXAMPLE'S PERSONAL PROFILE

### ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS

#### **Adjustment**

This student handles stress about as well as most people. He or she will respond appropriately to pressure and challenging deadlines. The student will also take critical feedback (e.g., a poor midterm grade) seriously and tend to seek out academic and/or social support as needed.

#### **Ambition**

This student is very achievement oriented and will strive for success both inside and outside of the classroom. Critically, the student will view his or her performance in the classroom through the lens of its relevance for his or her long-term success. That is, the student may only perform well in classes that he or she sees as important for his or her future career, slacking in others. If this student's score in this domain is especially high (e.g., 90th percentile or above) he or she may be more prone to skate around the rules, especially if Prudence is low and Inquisitiveness is high.

#### **Sociability**

This student will have a strong desire for social engagement. As a result, he or she will likely be one of the most talkative students in the classroom. At the same time, the student will find the social aspects of college difficult to resist and will often feel strong conflict between learning and social goals. The student will enjoy intercollegiate activities and is likely to join such clubs and organizations. He or she will thrive in classrooms that rely heavily on participation (e.g., presentations, group discussions), but will be bored in lecture-based courses.

#### **Interpersonal Sensitivity**

This student is task-oriented and direct. He or she will not be afraid to speak his or her mind to others and will challenge peoples' opinions (especially if Prudence is also low). This may come across to others as argumentative or hostile. As a result, this student may have profound difficulty making friends on campus. The student will thrive in classrooms that encourage students to challenge their peers and professors, but struggle in more collegial settings.

#### **Prudence**

This student will be quick to take action, but careless in regards to rules, policy, and procedures. He or she will have problems in highly structured courses because the student is more likely than most to miss class and deadlines. This student is likely to wait until the last minute to complete tasks, which may result in work that is somewhat sloppy. The student's impulsive nature means that he or she is more prone to risky behaviors than most. This student could use assistance with time management skills and will appear strongest in unstructured courses.

#### **Inquisitiveness**

This student is about as curious as most and will show some signs of creativity in the classroom. However, he or she will tend to keep his or her ideas grounded in reality and not go too deep into philosophical or hypothetical discussions. The student is likely to stay about as focused as most students, but will become bored if material is repetitive. The student will be appropriately reactive to change (i.e., experience both stress and excitement).



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### **Learning Approach**

This student will do about as well as most students in traditional classroom settings. He or she won't necessarily feel restricted by the classroom environment, but will not necessarily prefer it over less-traditional structures. This student will try to determine the minimal amount of reading / learning necessary to do well-enough in the course and stick with that. The student will largely view college as a means to an end, but still take homework and reading assignments seriously.

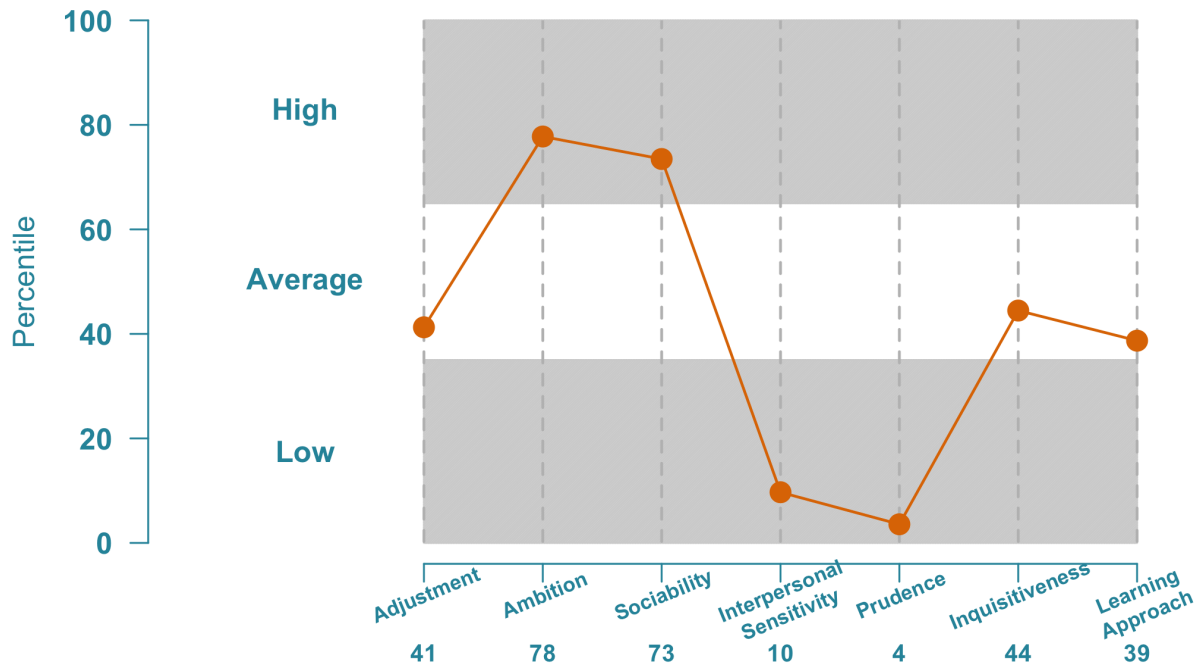
### **Overall Expected Performance**

Overall, this student's personality makeup suggests that he or she will be less likely than most to succeed in college. The student's estimated probability of persistence is 30%.

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## Graphical Summary

### Example Student's Personal Profile



High scorers are above the 65th percentile. Average scorers are between the 35th and 65th percentiles. Low scorers are below the 35th percentile.

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- **Adjustment** - Concerns composure, optimism, and stable moods.
  - **Ambition** - Concerns taking initiative, being competitive, and seeking leadership roles.
  - **Sociability** - Concerns seeming talkative, socially bold, and entertaining.
  - **Interpersonal Sensitivity** - Concerns being agreeable, considerate, and skilled at relationships.
  - **Prudence** - Concerns being conscientious, dependable, and rule-abiding.
  - **Inquisitiveness** - Concerns being curious, imaginative, visionary, and easily bored.
  - **Learning Approach** - Concerns enjoying formal education and staying up-to-date on technical matters.