

New Orleans Pipe Trades

Client-at-a-Glance

The New Orleans Pipe Trades apprenticeship program for Plumbers and Steamfitters Local Union 60 is a five-year training program in which apprentices receive education and work experience in their field of choice. At the end of the program, each graduate receives journeyman status in plumbing, pipe fitting, or HVAC and can work on their own in the field. Courses begin twice a year, and applicants must have a diploma or GED to be considered for the program.

Wonderlic Raises the Bar for Pipe Trade Apprenticeship

After the state of Louisiana eliminated the test that New Orleans Pipe Trade relied on to identify candidates for their apprentice program, D.J. Berger, Training Coordinator, turned to Wonderlic. The company now uses the Wonderlic Personnel Test (WPT) to measure cognitive ability, and the Wonderlic Basic Skills Test's (WBST) Quantitative Test to measure basic math skills based on established requirements for the position.

Basic math skill is critical in Berger's selection process. "The Wonderlic test scores give us a baseline to go by," he says. "Knowing what score they got gives us a picture of the candidates before they walk into an interview."

The five-year apprentice program prepares participants to be journeymen in plumbing, pipefitting, and HVAC. Their candidates must have the cognitive ability and math skills to make it through the math-heavy program. **"The Wonderlic tests tell us whether a candidate has the ability to learn," adds Berger.**

Scores play a big role in the overall interview grading process. A six-member selection board meets with each candidate and rates them on five criteria: education, attitude, interest, physical factors, and personal traits. With a set number of slots available every term, candidates must have a minimum score to even be considered for the program, then they are selected based on the highest scores.

"A low Wonderlic score will have a big impact on their education rating," Burger says, and that impacts the whole score. "This is a math-heavy program. If they score low on the Wonderlic tests, we know we'll have a hard time teaching them."

Since using the Wonderlic Basic Skills Test as part of the selection process, Berger has noticed a remarkable difference. "For the first time we don't have anyone in class who is having problems with the math," he says. "Using Wonderlic has helped the whole class move forward. It's helping us raise our standards and turn out better journeymen."



Berger is so pleased with the new tests, he plans to move them online and use the scores as a preliminary elimination tool. "It will save time on interviewing and help us make sure the right people get into the program."

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