

# Red Flags in Psychological Reports: A Lawyer's Guide

Psychological reports can significantly influence legal cases, but not all reports are created equal. This checklist highlights key issues that may undermine the credibility or reliability of a report, equipping you to challenge evidence effectively.



## Lack of Author Qualifications

- Author lacks relevant qualifications or registration with a recognised professional body (e.g., AHPRA).
- Expertise is unrelated to the legal issue at hand.



## Unclear Purpose or Scope

- Purpose of the report is vague or not clearly stated.
- Conclusions do not address the specific legal questions posed.



## Unsupported Diagnoses or Conclusions

- Diagnoses lack reference to validated criteria (e.g., DSM-5, ICD-11).
- Conclusions are not supported by evidence from the assessment.



## Outdated or Inappropriate Testing

- Tests used are outdated or not validated for the population in question.
- Heavy reliance on informal or subjective measures over standardised tools.



## Bias or Advocacy

- The report favours one party, compromising objectivity.
- Advocacy language replaces impartial, evidence-based observations.



## Insufficient Data or Analysis

- Key information, such as psychometric summaries or observations, is missing.
- Lack of explanation for how conclusions were derived from data.



## Overuse of Jargon or Poor Clarity

- Excessive technical terms without clear explanations.
- Poorly organised structure obscures findings.



## Inconsistent Findings

- Contradictions in statements or data are present but not explained.
- Discrepancies between self-reports, results, and conclusions are ignored.



## Failure to Consider Alternative Explanations

- Alternative causes for behaviour or conditions are not explored.
- No discussion of malingering or exaggeration in relevant cases.



## Lack of Ethical Compliance

- Opinions go beyond the author's expertise or involve assessed individuals they have treated (except in treatment reports where such involvement is appropriate).
- Limitations of the assessment (e.g., incomplete data) are not acknowledged.