

# Assessment Work Group Q&A

December 2025

## General Questions

1. USA Staffing is adding two new 'Assessment Method' options to label questionnaires – 'Minimum Qualifications' and 'Crediting Plan.' When will these be rolled out?
  - a. It will go to Stage on 12/16/25 and Production 1/8/26. This feature also adds an assessment method called 'Crediting Plan' and removes 'Rating' from the default scoring options.
2. Would you also put your screen outs for conditions of employment in this assessment?
  - a. Typically, those are added to the Announcement Questionnaire. There are features that make them easy to use in that area so you don't have to remember to add them each time, such as bundles or office-level defaults. Here are some links to online help that explain these features:
    - Adding an item to the announcement questionnaire - <https://support.usastaffing.gov/hc/en-us/articles/31111921927956-Adding-an-announcement-questionnaire-item>
    - Creating an announcement item bundle - <https://support.usastaffing.gov/hc/en-us/articles/30937879194516-Creating-an-announcement-item-bundle>
    - Adding an announcement default question - <https://support.usastaffing.gov/hc/en-us/articles/30470609939476-Adding-an-announcement-default-question-section>
3. When will structured resume review (EO compliant) be available for multiple grade announcements?
  - a. We don't have an estimated timeframe for this work. We'll be covering structured resume reviews in future sessions and would love to hear more about how this enhancement would benefit your agency.

## Manual Assessments

4. Can a manual assessment placeholder be added after the announcement closed?
  - a. No, once a JOA is released to USAJOBS, no additional assessments can be added to the vacancy.

5. If someone checked or writes in the wrong manual assessment method, can we uncheck the assessment as complete and change that language for reporting purposes?
  - a. Yes, the 'Assessment Method' field can be edited after the JOA is released.
6. In the scenario described (Scenario 1 of the [Manual Assessment User Guide](#)), the interview would occur before the actual certificate is sent to management?
  - a. Yes, the structured interview would occur before the certificate is sent to management. The Merit Hiring Plan requires at least one technical or alternative assessment before issuance of the certificate, and in this scenario, the structured interview is that assessment. The scores for that interview are being stored in the manual assessment so they can be used for rating and ranking applicants on the certificate.
7. Is it possible to create a Structured Interview assessment package template in the library?
  - a. Yes, you can create assessment package templates with all different assessment types, including manual assessments.
8. How do we know when we need to create a new hurdle (e.g., hurdle 1, hurdle 2, etc.)?
  - a. If your agency has an I/O Psychologist or assessment expert, they would be a great resource in helping with this decision. We recommend reviewing our Multiple Hurdles Guide, and we'll cover this topic in a future session.  
<https://resourcecenter.usastaffing.gov/hc/en-us/articles/35526964594580-Multiple-Hurdles-Guide>
  - b. Multiple hurdles allow applicants to complete multiple assessments in a progressive fashion. Applicants progress from one hurdle to the next based on whether they meet established scoring criteria. Only applicants meeting the established scoring criteria proceed in the assessment and hiring process. Applicants who do not meet the scoring criteria do not proceed (i.e., they do not complete additional assessments or receive additional consideration). A multiple or progressive hurdles approach can help narrow down the applicant pool and maximize the efficiency of resources by utilizing the most time and cost intensive resources on the best qualified individuals.
9. Where would you suggest putting questions that applicants would respond to in the system (short answer responses) that would be rated by a panel?
  - a. USA Staffing has a narrative item type within questionnaires that can be used to collect short-answer responses from applicants. These responses can be shared with managers or panelists/SMEs during a panel review to aid in their rating. USA Staffing has functionality that can assist with the panel review process, which we'll cover in a future session, but it does not collect narratives/KSAs/accomplishment records from applicants as a second hurdle.

10. If we were doing a pass/fail interview, would the min raw score be zero and the max raw score be one?
  - a. If it's pass/fail, you would toggle off 'Rating' and toggle on 'Screen-out.' This will remove the min/max raw score options for the assessment.
11. Are competencies required for the structured interview?
  - a. No, you are not required to add competencies to the manual assessment/structured interview, but we do recommend it as a best practice. The competencies listed within your assessment will be available for tagging in the job announcement using the 'Competencies Bullet' or 'Competencies List' data inserts, which help applicants understand how they're being evaluated. If you don't add competencies to the assessment and use that data insert, you can enter them manually in the job announcement.
12. You only added five competencies but said the higher grade had six questions, should the list show six competencies to include all comps measured by all questions across grades?
  - a. Great catch! The example should have included six competencies to align to the six questions being asked at the higher grade.
13. Would this scenario suffice in meeting multi-hurdle assessments (Min Qual & Structured Interview)?
  - a. Yes, this scenario is a multiple hurdle scenario from the applicant's perspective. It's being scored in a single hurdle in USA Staffing because only one assessment is being used for rating. We'll cover multiple hurdle functionality at a later work group meeting.
14. If you are using raw scores, don't you need to set a passing score? How is it determined that an applicant 'passed' the interview in this example?
  - a. No, a pass/fail score is not required in this example. Applicants who fail to show up for the interview will be screened out, but every applicant who completes the interview will be given a score within the specified range. Since the manual assessment (i.e., the structured interview) is the only assessment used for rating in this example, the raw scores will be transmuted to a 70-100 range and used to rate and rank applicants for the certificate.
  - b. Passing scores should only be established through a rigorous process involving subject matter experts and assessment experts (e.g., I/O psychologists). If you're planning to use a pass/fail score for your assessment, we recommend reviewing our Passing Score FAQs first: <https://resourcecenter.usastaffing.gov/hc/en-us/sections/35153717806484-Assessment-Passing-Score-Frequently-Asked-Questions>
15. We set up the interview list after confirming min quals and reviewing resumes, correct?

- a. Yes, it is a best practice to review resumes and adjudicate minimum qualifications and eligibilities prior to inviting applicants to interview or complete additional assessments. This makes good use of both applicant managers' time, because they won't be interviewed if they aren't at least minimally qualified and eligible for the position.
  - b. You can use the Manual Assessment Export to facilitate the interview process by including applicant contact information in the export file and using that Excel for tracking interviews outside the system.
16. If you toggle standardize scoring on with only rating one assessment, is that okay as a general practice?
  - a. Standardizing scores is generally advised when combining **two or more** independent assessments. When using multiple assessments with different rating scales, standardizing scores for each assessment allows assessment scores to be appropriately combined to determine an applicant's final score. Decisions about the most appropriate method for handling scores should be made in consultation with an assessment professional or I/O Psychologist.
  - b. We recommend reviewing the Manual Assessment Guide for more details about the impact of the decision to standardize your assessment:  
[https://resourcecenter.usastaffing.gov/hc/article\\_attachments/35527730864404](https://resourcecenter.usastaffing.gov/hc/article_attachments/35527730864404)
17. Can you show us how you would do a manual assessment in addition to USAHIRE?
  - a. There's a recording of USA Hire training that demos setting up USA Hire and a manual assessment together. The demo starts at time 1:56:16.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UJRDB25FfU>
18. If the min quals rating is done when applicants apply, why are they blank on the spreadsheet?
  - a. There are multiple levels of scores in USA Staffing – for each assessment, we capture a minimum qualifications and rating level (assuming the assessment is used for screen-out and rating), and there is an overall, aggregate level of both minimum qualifications and rating. This summary-level rating takes into account all assessments, including the scoring and weighting protocols established in the assessment package. The manual assessment import spreadsheet deals only with the manual assessment-level ratings, which feed into the summary-level ratings. As the manual assessment ratings change, the applicant will be re-rated and their summary ratings may change from PA to AA or IN.
19. Do you have to add both numbers and NOR codes in the spreadsheet to import?
  - a. No, you do not. You can leave both the raw score and/or the NOR code columns blank in the import spreadsheet if you wish.

20. Could you have fixed [scores] manually through the ratings area?
- a. Yes, you can enter/override scores manually by going into the Rating Details popup within the applicant's record.
21. Is the manual assessment section required?
- a. Manual assessments are not required. Manual assessments are a placeholder that allows HR users to document applicant scores for an assessment that occurs after initial application and prior to certification. The Manual Assessment functionality allows users to import or key-enter scores for assessments that are delivered outside of USA Staffing. These Assessments can take a variety of forms, such as Subject Matter Expert (SME) panel ratings, structured interviews, accomplishment records, job knowledge tests, or composite scores for multiple assessments.
22. If you have multiple scores for a manual assessment, do we have to average the score before putting it on the spreadsheet for import?
- a. We need more information about your overall assessment strategy to give a thorough answer to this question. Generally speaking, if you're delivering multiple assessments outside of USA Staffing, you can capture scores for them through separate manual assessments. This will allow you to leverage USA Staffing for standardization purposes to ensure those assessments are combined and weighted appropriately.
  - b. If your question is about combining competency-level scores prior to import, then yes, those should be combined before putting them into the spreadsheet for import. The manual assessment only captures assessment-level score details, not competency-level scores.
23. When we tested in Stage, the ineligible codes would not import. It could have been user error, but I thought I would note, as we tried on several announcements and couldn't get it to work.
- a. This functionality has worked for us when we've tested it. Please reach out with details about what you tried so we can look into it.