

Assessment Work Group Q&A

January 2026

USA Hire/PATCO

1. **Question:** When will the PATCO assessments be available?
 - a. **Answer:** By the end of FY26 Q3.
2. **Question:** Are there any plans to expand the Standard USA Hire package to include options for supervisory assessments? Given the increased demand for the FSA tool, will OPM consider lowering the paywall cost to make it more affordable for agencies, especially if they plan to keep charging for it?
 - a. **Answer:** We are constantly reviewing the availability of our different assessment offerings in different packages given agency needs, ongoing maintenance costs, and our delivery costs. This includes evaluating FSA pricing.
3. **Question:** Is the PATCO Expansion Series-Grade listing that is posted a final listing of what will be available?
 - a. **Answer:** Yes, this is the full list of PATCO assessments included in this expansion. <https://resourcecenter-usahire.opm.gov/hc/en-us/articles/47242132235795-PATCO-Resources-Reference-Materials>
4. **Question:** If you have an interdisciplinary position with three job series that all have the PATCO Professional assessment available for the series and grade, can you use the PATCO Professional assessment for that 3 series interdisciplinary position?
 - a. **Answer:** No, USA Hire does not work with Interdisciplinary vacancies, even if all series are covered by an assessment. We are exploring the ability to expand USA Hire to Interdisciplinary positions once PATCO has been released.
5. **Question:** Will we get notified when a new series or occupational category is released under the PATCO assessment battery?
 - a. **Answer:** Yes, we will be sending out communications to our USA Hire Work Group members when the assessments are released.
6. **Question:** Did I hear correctly that a USA Hire assessment can be customized or adjusted?

- a. **Answer:** USA Hire Standard and Premium assessments are not customizable; however, we can host custom assessments that are developed by your agency or OPM.
- 7. **Question:** We have a unique series and I am curious was there any input taken from our Agency before it was placed into USAHIRE. Currently we don't use USA Hire and no other agency uses this particular series.
 - a. **Answer:** OPM made the initial decision to build USA Hire assessments based on the most recent hiring volume data available with the goal of covering as many job series/grades as possible.

Assessment Decision Tool

- 8. **Question:** Will the prompt for using USA Hire come up if the agency is not paying for the assessment (i.e., Premium)?
 - a. **Answer:** No, the prompt for using USA Hire will not come up if the agency is not paying for it. Users will not see or be able to use a USA Hire assessment their organization does not pay for.
- 9. **Question:** At the assessment package search function, it doesn't appear there's an option to review contents of the assessment before importing into the vacancy?
 - a. **Answer:** You can open a preview version of an assessment package prior to pulling it into your vacancy by clicking the blue 'Preview' button on the far-right column in the search results.
- 10. **Question:** Is there a way for an agency to turn that feature off if they have an established assessment strategy that describes what assessments to add, and the prompts aren't needed to encourage the use of different assessments for the vacancy?
 - a. **Answer:** Not at this time.
- 11. **Question:** How are the newly approved Training and Experience assessments different from the old OQs?
 - a. **Answer:** The 'Training and Experience' assessment method has always been available, and was previously the default option, when creating a questionnaire. That label typically refers to a questionnaire used to rate and rank applicants based on their responses to competency-based questions. 'Occupational questionnaire' is a more generic term that encompasses the Training and Experience format, as well as Minimum Qualifications questionnaires that only screen out applicants. USA Staffing does not use the term 'Occupational Questionnaire' anywhere in the system.
- 12. **Question:** When you're doing assessments, will it automatically filter in the assessments or will that be something we have to do manually?

- a. **Answer:** These new prompts will alert users that a USA Hire assessment exists and make it easy to find, but the HR specialist must select the assessments they wish to add to their vacancy.
13. **Question:** At some point will self-assessments no longer be an option?
- a. **Answer:** There are several valid use cases for self-assessments that fall outside the scope of the Merit Hiring Plan, so we will continue to offer this option.

General Questions

14. **Question:** Are there plans to expand the use of the structured resume review (EO) for multiple graded vacancies?
- a. **Answer:** We would like to at some point in the future, but this is not something we're able to work on at this time.
15. **Question:** Can the HR Specialist complete the min qual code [in a panel review] before sending?
- a. **Answer:** No, when using panel reviews, each SME must provide their own, independent ratings. HR will review them all and have final approval on what is assigned to the applicant, which allows them to enforce any consensus process that exists within the agency.
16. **Question:** I thought panel reviews had to meet and come to consensus? That consensus is part of the process.
- a. **Answer:** A typical panel review does have consensus protocols, but USA Staffing does not facilitate that process. We assume it is handled outside of the system and the final ratings documented here.
17. **Question:** Is there potential that the Rating section on the Panel Review could receive RAW scores instead of Transmuted Scores?
- a. **Answer:** This is a fantastic suggestion and something that would make panel reviews much more useful. We'll consider this alongside any changes we make to panel reviews in the future.