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Multiple Choice - Multiple Select Items Quick Reference Guide

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OPM HR SOLUTIONS
by government, for government

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Introduction

This document serves as a reference for using Multiple Choice - Multiple Select (MCMS) items in USA Staffing. The MCMS item type can be used in the Assessment Questionnaire to rate applicant knowledge and experiences and the Announcement Questionnaire to collect information from applicants. MCMS uses a "Select all that apply" item format.

Using MCMS Items in Assessments

MCMS items can be used in assessments using the **Weight-based** Rating Method in conjunction with either **Competency-level, Item-level, or Response-level** scoring. All else being equal, Competency-level scoring weighs *competencies* equally, whereas Item-level scoring weighs *items* equally. Response-level scoring does not apply any item or competency weights, and instead response values alone are used to determine an applicant's score. The decision of which scoring method would be most appropriate should be based on job analysis information and Subject Matter Expert (SME) input. For more information, see the [Assessment Scoring and Weighting Decision Guide](#).

Note: Based on the scoring protocol outlined in the Job Qualification System for Trades and Labor Occupations, Multiple Choice – Multiple Select items would not be appropriate for use in rating applicants for Federal Wage System (FWS) positions.

Using MCMS items in an Assessment Questionnaire allows users to collect multiple, specific pieces of information about applicants' previous experiences in order to assess their breadth of knowledge and experience. The development of MCMS items requires greater SME involvement, but can lead to more valid items and greater buy-in among hiring managers. When constructed properly, critical information can be collected with fewer MCMS items relative to default scale items.

The USA Staffing system scores MCMS items by summing the points for each endorsed response option. Some responses could be weighted higher than others if there is job analysis evidence and/or SME input that supports this approach. However, MCMS items make an underlying assumption that more cumulative experiences are better than fewer experiences. If a specific response is the most important and the additional experiences do not make the applicants more qualified, it may be more appropriate to rate that experience with a Multiple Choice – Single Select scale.

When creating a MCMS item, it is recommended that HR Users:

- Utilize the complete question format because it is easier for applicants to understand. In other words, instead of "I have led construction projects in:" ask, "Which of the following types of construction projects have you led?"
- Remind applicants to select all response options that apply to them. Although it may seem obvious that a list of response options requires multiple selections, it does not hurt to include a reminder.
- Enter a "None of the above" response option at the end. Keep in mind that checked boxes will not automatically clear if an applicant selects "None of the above", so it may be a good idea to instruct applicants that if they selected this option they should ensure this is their only response for the item.

Building MCMS Items in Assessment Questionnaires

MCMS assessment items can be added on the Assessment Questionnaire page of an assessment for an Assessment Package or Assessment Package Template in one of two ways. The first option is using the **Copy from File** option.

1. From the **Add to Questionnaire** dropdown in the top right corner, select **Copy from File**.
2. Enter **MCMS:** followed by the item stem and enter the base values for each response in [] before the letter of the response. For example:

COMPETENCY ID: XXX
MCMS:
1. Which of the following activities have you led during a subject matter expert panel?
(Select all that apply.)
[1] A. Draft interview questions
[1] B. Develop content for work samples (e.g., assessment center exercises, case studies)
[1] C. Develop occupational questionnaires (e.g., assessment questionnaires, training and experience questionnaires)
[1] D. Review and revise test items (e.g., situational judgment tests, job knowledge tests)
[0] E. None of the above (if selected, be sure this is the ONLY response selected for this item)

MCMS assessment items can also be added individually when preparing an Assessment tool for an Assessment Package or Assessment Package Template by following the steps below:

1. From the **Add to Questionnaire** dropdown in the top right corner, select **New Item**.

Add Questionnaire Item

Item Text *

Which of the following activities have you led during a subject matter expert panel (Please select all that apply)

Screen-out Question Link to Competency: Assessment Development

Response Required

Response Type * Scale

Multiple Choice - Multiple Select Item-specific Response Options

Response Option	Response Text
A	<input type="text" value="Draft interview Questions"/>

Add Response **Save & New** **Save & Close** **Cancel**

2. From the **Link To** dropdown, select the competency to which the item will be linked (if applicable).
3. Enter the **Item Stem**.
4. From the **Response Type** dropdown, select **Multiple Choice – Multiple Select**.
5. Click the **Add Response** button to enter responses one at a time.
6. Click **Save & Close** to exit the Add Questionnaire Item pop-up box.
7. To edit the item or to add additional response options, hover over the item on the Assessment Questionnaire and click on the **Edit** icon that appears.
8. Navigate to the **Rating Criteria** page and click on the appropriate competency title. Expand the MCMS item and assign the appropriate base values to the response options. Based on SME input, response options can be weighted equally, or some responses could be scored higher relative to one another. The “None of the above” response should receive a value of 0.

Number	Item Stem	Rated	Proportional Weight
3	Which of the following activities have you led during a subject matter expert panel? (Select all that apply.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1

Response Option	Response Text	Base Value
A	Draft interview questions	1 (1)
B	Develop content for work samples (e.g., assessment center exercises, case studies)	1 (1)
C	Develop occupational questionnaires (e.g., assessment questionnaires, training and experience questionnaires)	1 (1)
D	Review and revise test items (e.g., situational judgment tests, job knowledge tests)	1 (1)
E	None of the above (if selected, be sure this is the ONLY response selected for this item)	0 (0)

Apply to all Rating Combinations

When using Competency-level or Item-level scoring, by default the system will weight MCMS items equally with other questionnaire items. If job analysis information and/or SME input indicates a need for MCMS items to be rated differently relative to other items in the assessment, HR users with the appropriate permission can turn off the Weight Equally setting to adjust the weight of MCMS items.

HR Users with permission profiles that include this option can also add MCMS items to Competency Networks in the Admin area. To do so, navigate to the **Items** tab of the Competency Network and select **Add Item**. The process is very similar to the steps identified above, except users will be able to add the responses and assign the base values for each response directly from the **Create Item** pop up box.

Using MCMS Items as Screen-Outs in Assessments

If needed, **MCMS items can also be used as screen-out items in the Assessment.** For example, if ability to communicate in one of three foreign languages is necessary for a particular position, the HR User can create an MCMS screen-out item with a response option for each of the languages and a fourth option for “None of the above”.

Tying an MCMS screen-out item to a Competency is only necessary if it is also being used to rate applicants. In this example, if knowledge of more than one of the desired foreign languages would also enhance performance in the position, the item can be used to rate applicants by assigning it to a competency (e.g., Foreign Language Ability) and establishing base values for the qualifying responses. In doing so, an applicant who can communicate in two or all three of the desired languages would be rated higher than an applicant who is proficient in only one of them.

Building the item would follow the same steps outlined above with the following additions:

1. To identify the item as a screen-out, enter a “-” in front of the question number when using the Copy from File option, or select the **Screen-out toggle** when entering/editing the individual item.

Add Questionnaire Item

Item Text *

In which of the following languages are you able to communicate orally and in writing with professional working proficiency as defined in the announcement? (Select all that apply.)

Screen-out Question

Response Required

Link to Competency
None

Response Type *
Multiple Choice - Single Select

Scale
Item-specific Response Options

Response Option	Response Text
<input type="checkbox"/> A	French
<input type="checkbox"/> B	Flemish Dutch
<input type="checkbox"/> C	German
<input type="checkbox"/> D	None of the above

Add Response Save & New Save & Close Cancel

2. On the Screen-Out Criteria page, click **Add Screen-Out**.

Add Screen-Out

Name *
Foreign Lanugage Ability

Apply Screen-Out to Rating Combinations *
 0201-12

Ineligibility Code *
IQSP - You were not considered because your applicati...

1 Add all Items that should be considered in this Screen-Out. Then, select all Response Options that should disqualify applicants for the selected Rating Combinations. Remember that the selected Items and Response Options should be specific to the Rating Combinations selected above.

Add Item

Item
2. In which of the following languages are you able communicate orally and in writing with professional working proficiency as defined in the announcement...

Response Options

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	French
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B	Flemish Dutch
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C	German
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D	None of the above
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Failed to respond

Qualifying Response Disqualifying Response

Save **Save & Close** **Cancel**

3. Enter the required fields for the screen-out criteria.
 - a. Provide a Name
 - b. Ensure the applicable rating combinations are correctly selected.
 - c. Select the appropriate Ineligibility Code, and
 - d. Ensure the “None of the above” response option is marked as a disqualifying response.

Note: If an applicant selects both a qualifying and a disqualifying response option for an MCMS screen-out item, the system will determine that the applicant meets that particular screen-out requirement.

Building MCMS Items in Announcement Questionnaires

MCMS items can also be used in the Announcement Questionnaire to collect information from applicants. This information can be used later to help filter applicant lists using Advanced Criteria functions.

Note: MCMS items cannot be used as screen-out questions in the Announcement Questionnaire.

Users can add an MCMS item to the Announcement Questionnaire by following the steps below:

1. (Optional) Create a new section by clicking the **Add Section** button in the top right corner of the Announcement Questionnaire page.
2. Select **Add to *Section Name*** and select **New Item**.
3. Enter an **Item Header** and the **Item Stem**.

Add New Questionnaire Item

Item Header (required)

Item Stem (required)

This announcement includes multiple vacancies in different functional areas. In which of the following areas would you be interested in working? (Please select all that apply)

Response Type (required)

Required

Edit Questionnaire Responses

A.	Facilities Engineering	<input type="button" value="🗑️"/>
B.	Systems Engineering	<input type="button" value="🗑️"/>
C.	Testing and evaluation	<input type="button" value="🗑️"/>
D.	None of the above. (If selected, ensure this is the only response selected for this item)	<input type="button" value="🗑️"/>

4. From the **Response Type** dropdown, select **Multiple Choice – Multiple Select**.
5. If appropriate, identify the item as **Required**.
6. Select **Add Response** to enter the response options one at a time and **Add & Close** when completed.
7. Click the **Save Sections** button to save your changes to the Announcement Questionnaire.

Note: HR Users with permission profiles that include this option can also add MCMS items to Announcement Items in the Admin section. To do so, select **Manage Announcement Items** and select **Create New Item** in the top right corner of the page. Once entered and saved, these items will be available for easy reuse within individual Announcement Questionnaires by selecting the **Item from Library** option. More information on this option can be found in the [Create Announcement Item](#) online help page.