



USA Hire: The Case for Better Assessments

Human Resources Solutions



CONNECTING with TOP TALENT

A Typical Self-Rating Assessment Question

Competency: Decision-Making

Please indicate your level of competence in making decisions:

- A. Little or None – You do NOT want me making decisions for this agency
- B. Some – I have been known to make some bad decisions in my life
- C. Adequate – Good and bad decisions are a roll of the dice for me
- D. Advanced – I can make decisions independently and competently
- E. Expert – I am more than happy to take full responsibility for all your executive-level decisions

*OK, maybe not typical but you get the idea.

Assessment Mythbuster

MYTH:

The only way to rank large numbers of eligible applicants quickly and efficiently is with a self-report occupational questionnaire (OQ).

FACT:

Although OQs are widely used due to the relative ease with which they can be developed, administered and scored, there are other assessment options that can be used to rank large numbers of eligible applicants efficiently and effectively - and that do not rely on self-report ratings!

The Bottom Line: A Case for Better Applicant Assessment

1. **Barriers exist:** The Federal hiring process is complex and there are some challenges to hiring the best applicants.
2. **The self-rating problem:** Applicant inflation of skills reinforced by current HR processes making it difficult to identify best qualified candidates
3. **Better assessment possible:** Better applicant assessment/testing is possible now—No Act of Congress required!
4. **Impact of decentralized hiring:** Federal agencies are not equipped with resources and expertise to take full advantage of high-quality applicant assessment tools.
5. **Importance of assessment strategy:** Better assessment is not just about better tools but also good assessment strategy.

What is USA Hire?

- OPM-owned online assessment platform
- Delivers high-quality, professionally developed assessments via enabling technologies (e.g., CAT, branching role play, automated scoring engines) to aid agency decision-making processes.
- USA Hire solutions can be delivered in unproctored or proctored environments depending upon the specific needs of an agency.
- Designed to be user-friendly and attractive for both applicants and HR Users.
- Fully integrated with OPM's USA Staffing Talent Acquisition System.

Types of USA Hire Assessments

Standard Assessments

- Measure general competencies for a specific job series and grade
 - Cover 120 job series
 - Typically assess applicants from entry-level to grade 13
 - Based on government-wide occupational analysis
 - May be paired with a technical assessment questionnaire
 - Available for immediate use
- Types of assessments include:
 - **Reading Assessment**
 - **Reasoning/Math Assessments**
 - **Interaction Assessments**
 - **Situational Judgment Assessment**

Types of USA Hire Assessments

Premium Assessments

- Require time to tailor for agency-specific use
- May be paired with a technical assessment questionnaire

Available Premium Assessments

- Supervisory Situation Judgment Test (SSJT)
- Project Management Simulation
- Automated Writing Assessment

Types of USA Hire Assessments

Custom Assessments (*require time to develop*)

Examples include:

- Validation that a current standard assessment applies to a different series at that agency
- Development of new assessment content unique to a specific agency
- Any proctored assessment
- Any hurdled assessment process managed at USA Hire
- Any agency testing or assessment material the agency would like hosted on the USA Hire platform

ACWA Mythbuster

MYTH:

Agencies are required to use the OPM-developed rating schedules or written exam for ACWA positions.

FACT:

- OPM released a memo on March 6, 2009 specifying that “agencies are not required to use ACWA and may use an alternative assessment tool” provided it is validated (i.e., job-related), complies with the DEOH and uniform guidelines.
- Agencies are permitted to develop or procure a custom assessment for ACWA positions.

An Approved Alternative to ACWA

- USA Hire Standard Assessments are OPM approved ACWA alternatives
- USA Hire can also develop and implement a Custom ACWA alternative
 - Partner with the Staff Acquisition Branch to announce your ACWA position using USA Hire
 - Automate an ACWA alternative your agency has already developed
 - Construct USA Hire Standard Assessments for additional ACWA series
 - Develop customized alternative ACWA assessments and scoring for your agency
- Learn more about [ACWA alternatives](#) and the use of validated assessment tools when filling positions in the competitive service.

Benefits of USA Hire

Scientific evidence exists supporting the use of assessments like those administered via USA Hire. Validity coefficients quantify the relationship between scores on a selection assessment and job performance. The higher the coefficient, the better we can predict job performance.

Cognitive Ability	.65	} Validity Coefficients
Structured Interviews	.58	
Biodata Instruments	.35	
Work Sample	.33	
Situational Judgment	.26	
Conscientiousness	.22	
Training & Experience Point Method	.11	

Schmidt, F., Oh, I-S & Shaffer, J. (2013). The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 95 Years of Research Findings. Presentation for the Personnel Testing Council Metropolitan Washington.

The USA Hire Assessment Process



Benefits of USA Hire

How does USA Hire help agencies identify top talent?

- **Quality Assessments** – Designed to measure success on the job as demonstrated by many years of scientific research on personnel assessment methods.
- **“Whole Person” Assessment** – Designed to measure general competencies critical for success across Federal occupations based on comprehensive government-wide job analysis.
- **Ease of Implementation** – Easy to implement and applicant-friendly. Off-the-shelf assessments ready to go for 76 occupational series.
- **Advanced Technology** – Leverages the latest advances in technology with innovative online assessments (online simulations, computer-adaptive testing, avatars, branching role plays, and automatically-scored writing assessments).
- **Federal HR and Assessment Expertise** – Maintained by OPM personnel psychologists with many years of experience implementing high-quality, valid assessments for use in Federal hiring.
- **Better Hires!** – The bottom line is higher quality assessments result in better hires.

USA Hire: By the numbers

“ *The types of assessments included in USA Hire have been shown to be better predictors of job performance than point-method ratings of training and experience. Therefore, USA Hire has the potential to improve the quality of hires across the Government while providing economies of scale for all agencies. — MSPB FY2013 Annual Report* ”

300,000+
3,000+

Number of applicants who have started assessments in USA Hire, with 93% completing the assessment; Number of JOAs using USA Hire

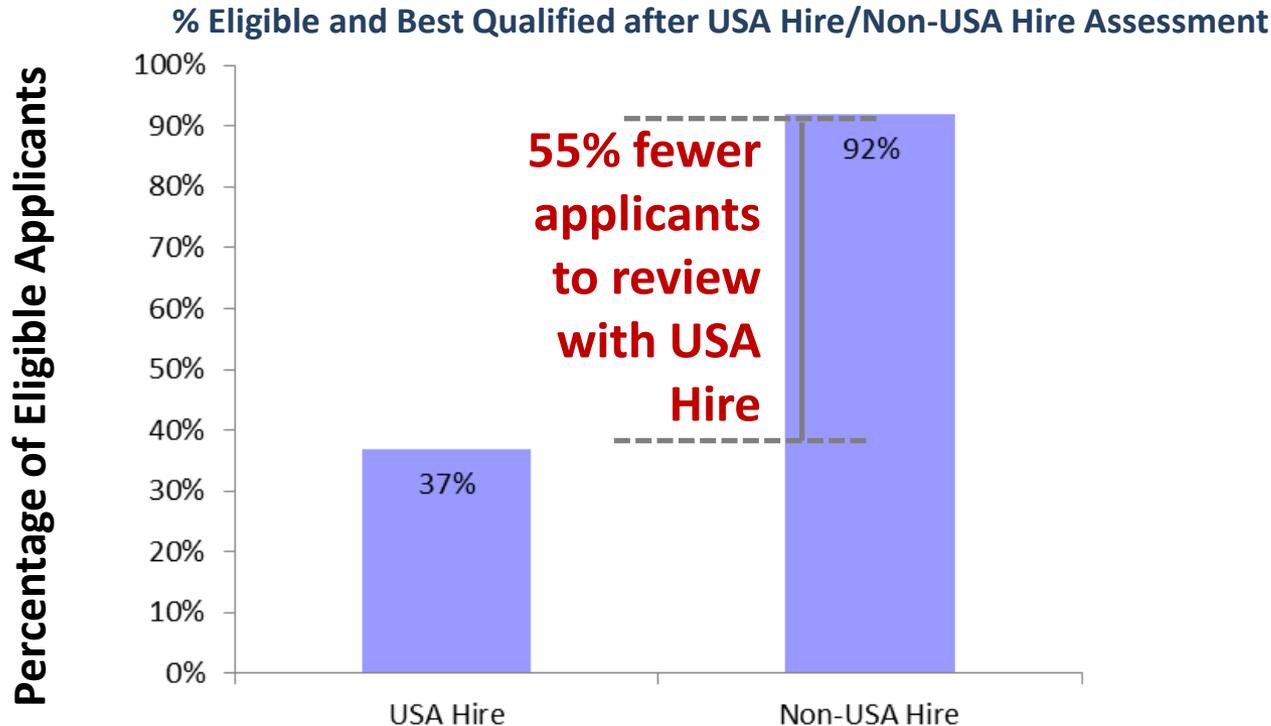
94%; 85%

94% agree the USA Hire online assessment process is user-friendly; 85% satisfied with the online assessment process

40%

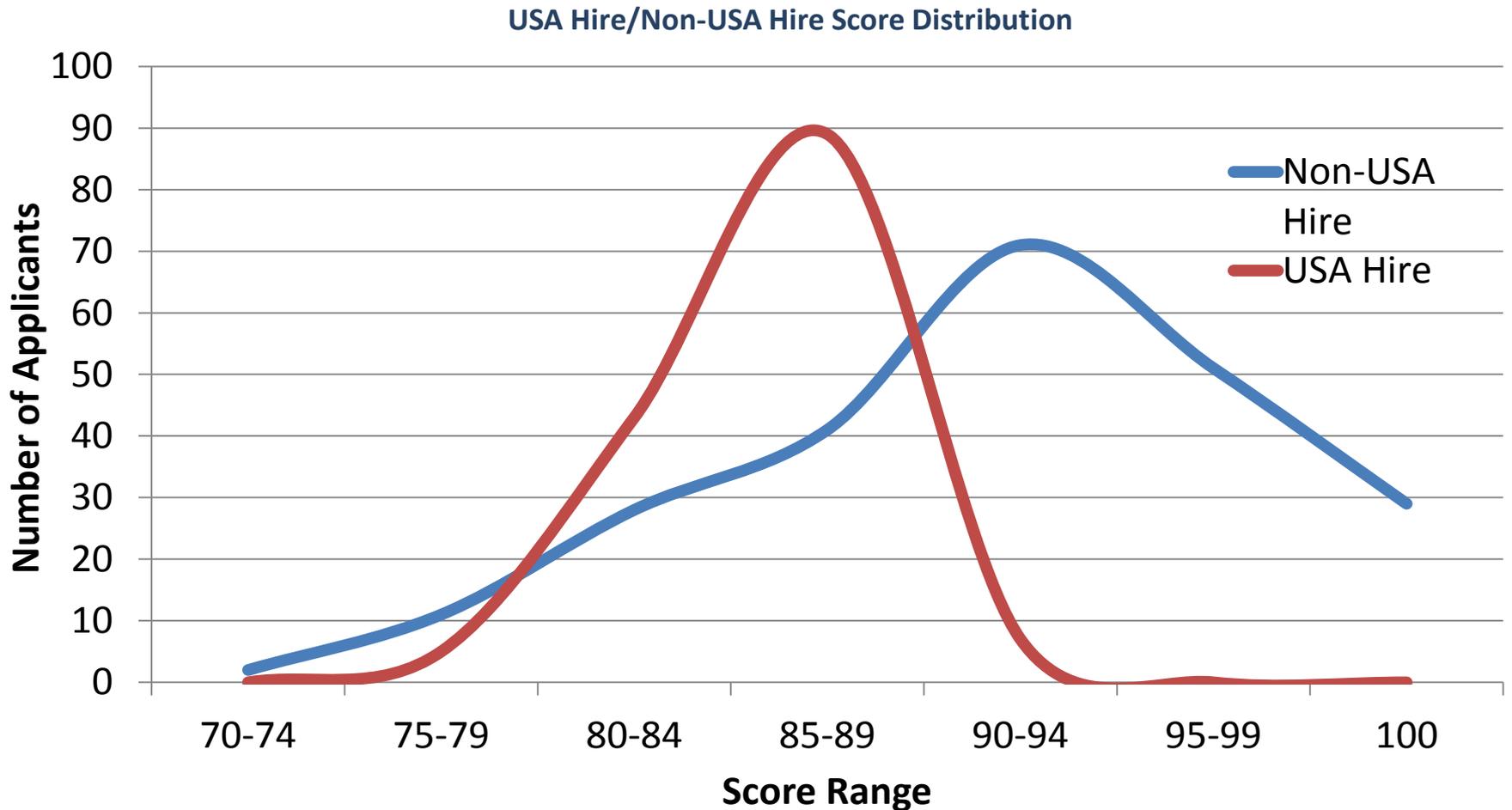
Percentage of applicants who have opted out of the assessment process, decreasing burden on HR specialists

Case Study: USA Hire vs Non-USA Hire



Findings: USA Hire results in significantly fewer applicants for HR review, **reducing the time required to review applicants by 10 hours.**

Case Study: USA Hire vs Non-USA Hire



USA Hire provides a **more 'normal' score distribution**, as opposed to the self-assessment which tends to skew at the high end of the range.



A Call to Action

There are a range of *assessments* that can be used to identify *best qualified* candidates...



Hiring Manager actions...

- Strategize!** Think about your upcoming hiring needs and plan accordingly.
- Review current documentation and assessments for relevance to current job functions.
- Partner with your HR specialist to identify which assessment(s) are most useful for your hiring scenario.
- Utilize assessments for objective feedback on the skills and competencies of your applicants.

HR Specialist actions...

- Provide hiring managers with **best practices** for ensuring JOAs are easy to understand and compelling.
- Educate hiring managers on available assessments and how best to use them.
- Support the development of new assessments to better screen and rank applicants.
- Implement a **multiple hurdles** assessment approach, as appropriate, to ensure efficiencies and identify top talent.



Want more info?

Email us at: USAHire@opm.gov
[Subject: *Hiring Excellence*]

Find us on the web:

<https://www.opm.gov/services-for-agencies/assessment-evaluation/online-assessment/>



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