



USA Hire

Transforming Government One Hire at a Time

USA Hire Frequently Asked Questions



USA HireSM

Transforming Government One Hire At A Time

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BACKGROUND

This document contains Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding USA Hire online assessments. It can be used by your Agency to address stakeholder questions and to determine if USA Hire assessments are right for your recruitment needs. Additional information is available at the [USA Hire Resource Center](#). Your USA Staffing Account Manager is also available to assist you or direct your questions to the appropriate contact.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY QUESTIONS

1. If my Agency purchased USA Hire, is it required to use the USA Hire Assessments?

Agencies have the discretion to use or not use the assessments on an individual job opportunity announcement (JOA) basis based on your job analysis and specific business needs. The [USA Hire Assessment Decision Tree](#) is a useful tool to help determine when to use or not use a USA Hire assessment.

2. Which occupational series and grade levels are included in the USA Hire Standard Assessments?

For a full list of available grades for each series, please reference the *USA Hire Standard Assessments Available Series and Grades* on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#). If a specific occupational series or series/grade combination is not currently available through the USA Hire Standard Assessment offerings, please contact your USA Staffing Account Manager.

3. Can USA Hire Standard Assessments be used for supervisory positions?

The USA Hire Standard Assessments are to be used for non-supervisory positions only. Based on government-wide job analysis and a content validation approach, the assessment batteries are appropriate for use off-the-shelf for non-supervisory positions. There are two premium assessments available to evaluate candidates for supervisory positions: The off-the-shelf Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA) and the customizable Supervisory Situational Judgment Test (SSJT). Please contact your USA Staffing Account Manager for more information on the FSA or SSJT.

4. Which USA Hire assessment should positions with code 4 supervisor (CSRA) use?

A supervisory position requires accomplishment of work through the combined technical and administrative direction of others, constitutes a major duty occupying at least 25% of the position's time, and meets at least the lowest level of Factor 3 in the [General Schedule Supervisory Guide](#). Positions that do not meet this definition are considered non-supervisory.

Based on this definition, supervisory positions with Code 4 supervisory (CSRA) are considered non-supervisory and may utilize a USA Hire standard assessment.

5. Is there a possibility to include other occupational series and grades in USA Hire?

You may partner with OPM through a separate IAA to expand USA Hire Standard Assessments to

incorporate additional occupational series and/or grades not currently offered. In addition, USA Hire evaluates expansion opportunities periodically to add new series and grades to the list of available Standard Assessments.

6. Can USA Hire host Agency-specific assessments?

Yes. You may partner with OPM through an IAA to host Agency-owned assessments or to have OPM develop and validate an Agency specific assessment.

7. Can Agencies use USA Hire assessments for both Competitive (i.e., Delegated Examining) and Merit Promotion announcements? What are the policy considerations in both scenarios?

Yes. The USA Hire Assessments may be used in delegated examining and merit promotion announcements. Agencies should consider their merit promotion plans and Bargaining Unit Agreements when deciding whether to use USA Hire for Merit Promotion. If you have questions regarding use of USA Hire with a particular hiring authority please contact the USA Hire Program Office at USAHire@opm.gov.

8. What competencies are assessed for each series and grade combination available through the USA Hire Standard Assessments?

For a list of competencies measured for each job series and grade combination, use the Competency Lookup Tool on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#). For a description of the assessment batteries used and competencies assessed for each series and grade combination available using the USA Hire Standard Assessments, please ask your USA Staffing Account Manager for a copy of the *USA Hire Standard Assessments Description and Matrix* document. **NOTE: You are responsible for safeguarding the contents of this document.** An abbreviated version, the USA Hire Matrix Look-Up, is available on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#).

9. Can I use a USA Hire assessment for some grades, but not others, in the same job announcement?

If a USA Hire assessment is not available for all grades being announced in a job announcement, it is recommended to not use USA Hire in that situation. When a USA Hire assessment is used for some grades and not others, this may result in widely different rating results for the different grade levels. For example, if a cut score is involved at a lower grade level, and no USA Hire assessment is required at a higher grade level, an applicant may be referred at the higher grade and rated ineligible for the lower grade due to not meeting the minimum competency proficiency requirement. If an agency wishes to use a USA Hire assessment for the available grade levels, USA Hire recommends splitting the recruitment into two job announcements. One announcement would contain the grade levels using a USA Hire assessment, and the other announcement would contain the grade levels using a different assessment method.

10. Because of the variance in duties from Agency to Agency, how can you use the same assessment for different Agencies?

The USA Hire Assessments target general competencies that are consistent for the position across agencies. The assessments were built based on governmentwide job analyses to determine the competencies that are consistent across the government rather than skills that are only needed in an individual Agency.

11. How can Agencies assess applicants' technical competencies when using USA

Hire Standard Assessments?

Agencies have the option of using USA Hire Standard Assessments as a stand-alone assessment or combining USA Hire with an assessment questionnaire in USA Staffing. When combining a rating Assessment questionnaire in USA Staffing with USA Hire Standard Assessments, the rating Assessment questionnaire must only measure technical competencies and general competencies not already assessed through USA Hire. To determine which competencies to target in the rating Assessment questionnaire, consult your Agency job analysis data or conduct a job analysis.

12. Am I required to use an Assessment Questionnaire with USA Hire?

Yes, an Assessment Questionnaire (AQ) is required when using USA Hire, but the AQ does not have to be used for rating purposes. You can use USA Hire as the only assessment for rating or you may combine the rating with an assessment questionnaire. If the USA Hire assessment is used entirely for rating, then the assessment questionnaire in USA Staffing will only need to contain minimum qualification question(s) and any other necessary screen-outs. This is appropriate in situations where technical competence is not critical to the position upon entry (e.g., lower grades or internships).

13. Can Agencies use additional assessments, such as structured interviews, to measure additional competencies after a certificate is issued?

Yes. Using additional high quality assessments like structured interviews is highly encouraged! Follow internal Agency protocols for additional assessments, such as structured interviews and written demonstrations. Contact the USA Hire Program Office at USAHire@opm.gov if your Agency would like to partner with OPM to create additional assessments.

14. Does use of USA Hire change any veterans' preference rules?

Current veterans' preference policies remain in effect and are not affected by the assessments. When a USA Hire assessment with a cut score is used, all applicants must pass the assessment in order to be eligible to continue on in the hiring process and have veteran or other preference rules applied. See the Cut Score section of this FAQ for more information on cut scores.

15. Do non-competitive applicants need to take the USA Hire Assessments?

All applicants, non-competitive or competitive, who apply to a vacancy that uses USA Hire as part of the assessment strategy will be required to complete the online assessments, just as they would be required to respond to minimum qualifications and/or an occupational questionnaire. Any applicant who does not complete the required USA Hire assessment will not be reviewed further under that vacancy, regardless of their status. Additionally, for those job series with cut scores, any applicant who does not meet the minimum proficiency required for the USA Hire assessment, will no longer be considered under that vacancy. Requiring all applicants to complete the same assessment(s) and meet the same minimum level of proficiency supports a fair and equitable process for applicants.

Please note that agencies generally have policies for considering non-competitive applicants outside of a vacancy announcement based on applicable non-competitive hiring authorities. We recommend that agencies consult with their internal Selective Placement Coordinator for alternative hiring processes. Should an agency decide to exempt non-competitive applicants from being subject to the USA Hire assessment, they may announce the competitive and non-competitive positions under two separate vacancy announcements, and not include a USA Hire assessment with the vacancy announcement for the non-competitive positions. Please consult with your USA Staffing Account Manager for more information.

Finally, although you may also review all applicants within a vacancy announcement (eligible and ineligible) in order to verify their non-competitive status, and then override ratings, this strategy is discouraged.

PROCESS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

16. How long will it take before Agencies receive the assessment results in USA Staffing?

Scores are received as soon as an applicant completes the full battery of USA Hire Assessments. However, if an assessment questionnaire is being used for rating along with the USA Hire Assessment, the final rating is calculated after the assessment window closes (typically two days after the announcement close date) and the applicant has completed the USA Hire Assessments. If the USA Hire assessment alone is being used for rating, then the final rating will be viewable once the applicant has completed the USA Hire Assessment. Applicants will remain in a 'Pending Assessment' (PA) status until they complete the assessments or the USA Hire Assessment window closes. The minimum qualifications review may begin as soon as the applicant has completed the USA Hire assessments. For applicants in PA status, the review cannot begin until the assessment window closes. Certificates should not be issued until all applicants have been rated.

If applicants request Reasonable Accommodations (RA) for testing, score results may be delayed until those applicants' requests have been adjudicated and the applicant has been tested, as needed. Applicants that have requested a reasonable accommodation have 48 hours from receipt of the test link or 48 hours after the JOA closes, whichever is later, to complete the assessments. Minimum qualification reviews may occur while RA applicants are still pending, but certificates should not be issued until all applicants have been rated.

17. Are there resources available to assist the HR User in creating the vacancy when utilizing USA Hire Assessments?

When creating a vacancy using USA Hire, the HR User can reference the *USA Hire User Guide* on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#).

An internal JOA review process should be established to ensure all vacancies are assembled appropriately prior to release to USAJOBS. For your agency's first five (5) USA Hire JOAs, the Agency USA Hire POC will coordinate with OPM to conduct the review. For all JOAs beyond the first five (5), follow your Agency's internal review process before releasing the JOA to USAJOBS.

18. Can Agencies use cut off dates for an announcement using a USA Hire assessment?

It depends on whether the USA Hire assessment score is being combined with an assessment questionnaire rating or not. If the USA Hire assessment score alone is being used for rating, then it is possible to use cut off dates to pull lists of applicants while the announcement is still open. However, if the USA Hire assessment is being combined with an assessment questionnaire rating to formulate a final score, the final score will not be calculated until after the close date of the announcement, since USA

Staffing waits until the close of the announcement period to standardize the assessment questionnaire score and determine the final rating.

19. Who should the HR Users contact if they have questions about their USA Hire vacancies?

The HR Users should first contact their Agency's USA Hire Project Manager. The Agency USA Hire Project Manager may then contact the Agency's USA Staffing Account Manager or submit a help desk ticket in the USA Staffing system, if needed.

APPLICANT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

20. How long do applicants have to complete the USA Hire Assessments?

In most cases, applicants have until 48 hours after the close of the JOA to complete the assessments. If an applicant requests a reasonable accommodation that is adjudicated after the assessments would normally close, he/she will have 48 hours after the assessment link is sent or until 48 hours after the close of the JOA, whichever is later, to complete the USA Hire Assessments. Timelines may vary for custom assessment procedures.

21. How do applicants access the USA Hire Assessments?

Eligible applicants will receive an invitation email from usastaffingoffice@opm.gov containing a unique link that directs an applicant to their USA Hire assessment. This unique link may also appear on their computer screen after submitting their application. Applicants will be required to enter their USAJOBS login information, including the Login.gov credentials. If the applicant has previously completed all required assessment batteries, he/she will receive a courtesy email notifying him/her that no further action is required. Applicants may also access the link in the USAJOBS application history under *Track this application, Application Information* for the specific position application.

22. Can applicants log out of the USA Hire Assessments and then log back in?

Yes. Applicants may log out of the assessments and log back in to complete them later. Even so, all assessments must be completed by the due date provided in their "Assessments are Required" notification.

23. What kind of notification and guidance does the applicant receive throughout the process?

Applicants receive all status updates and notifications typically sent through USA Staffing and USAJOBS during the application process. In addition, the JOA, the onscreen instructions in the online application, and the USA Hire invitation email all provide specific instructions on what eligible applicants can expect and how applicants should complete the next steps in the process. Additionally, agencies are able to configure USA Staffing to automatically send a reminder notification to all applicants who have not yet completed the USA Hire assessment when the job announcement closes, while the assessment window is still open.

24. What happens if an applicant does not complete the USA Hire Assessments?

The applicant will not be eligible for consideration and not be available for certification. USA Hire will automatically send back the ineligible code IOIM for applicants who do not complete the USA Hire online Assessments. IOIM states “You were not considered because you failed to complete one or more assessments required for this position.”

25. What happens if the applicant forwards the USA Hire invite email to someone else to take the assessment?

Following each USA Hire Assessment, applicants must certify the information provided and/or that their assessment item responses are correct and provided in good faith. As stated on the Certification page of the USA Hire online assessment platform, “cheating or other dishonest conduct when completing the online assessments may lead to your disqualification from the application process and from seeking Federal employment in the future (5 C.F.R. part 731). If you are a current Federal employee, you may be removed or debarred from Federal Service.” Applicant responses are subject to investigation and identified cheating or unauthorized use of the platform will lead to serious penalties. Additionally, applicants must use their USAJOBS authentication before beginning their USA Hire assessment.

26. Where can applicants get more information or request help regarding JOAs using USA Hire?

The contact person listed on the JOA is the first point of contact for addressing applicant questions. In addition, a special applicant help desk has been established to resolve any issues that may arise for applicants completing USA Hire Assessments. Applicants can submit their inquiry through a web form at <https://apply.usastaffing.gov/HelpTicket>. Inquiries to this USA Hire help desk should be related to technical difficulties with the assessments, such as inability to access the USA Hire assessment link, technical difficulty completing the USA Hire assessment after accessing the link or applicant user experience questions. Agencies that have their own applicant service centers or help desks should have this web form readily available in the event an applicant reports technical issues with the USA Hire system or has other USA Hire questions. Technical assistance is available Monday through Friday 7am to 7pm EST. The Help Desk is closed on weekends, Federal Holidays, and including the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.

COMMON APPLICANT QUESTIONS

27. What’s my score?

You may share category assignment or final rating information with applicants according to your Agency policies. Do not share individual assessment results with applicants, since it is only the final rating that was used to refer applicants. The USA Hire helpdesk will not provide results to applicants.

28. How long will my USA Hire score be automatically reused?

An applicant’s assessment results will be reused in future JOAs that require the same USA Hire assessment(s) for a period of one year post completion of the assessment. For vacancies which utilize Custom USA Hire assessments, applicant score reuse may be less than a year, as prescribed by the agency during assessment development.

29. When can I retake the USA Hire assessment?

USA Hire Assessment results will be automatically re-used for one year. After one year, the applicant will be able to retake the assessment. Even so, the applicant's results on the assessment do not prevent them from applying for other announcements. Other announcements may not have a USA Hire Assessment associated with the application process, may use a different combination of assessments, have a different weighting procedure to calculate your score, or have a different cut score, depending on the occupation and grade. For agencies which utilize Custom USA Hire assessments, applicant score reuse may be less than a year, as prescribed by the agency during assessment development.

30. What is the cut score for the vacancy, or would you please provide more detailed information about my score?

In accordance with 5 CFR 300.201(a), the U.S. Office of Personnel Management does not provide information on the cut score or detailed information on individual results. This could compromise the objectivity and/or integrity of the testing process.

31. I took the USA Hire assessment for this job series and grade within the past year for a different job announcement. Do I need to take the assessment again?

It may depend. If the applicant's previous assessment results are reused, then the applicant will receive an email notification that assessments are complete, and no further action is required. However, if additional assessments need to be completed, the applicant will receive a notification that assessments are required. This message will include a link for the applicant to complete the required assessments.

32. Which part of the USA Hire assessments did I fail? (cut score series)

The cut score is based on the applicant's performance across all the required individual USA Hire assessments (e.g. Reasoning, Reading, Judgment, etc.) in the battery. The applicant did not fail an individual required assessment, but their total score across all the required assessments did not meet or exceed the required cut score.

33. What should I tell an applicant who asks how his/her performance on an assessment battery will impact his/her eligibility for other positions? I didn't pass the USA Hire assessment. Does that mean I can't apply to any announcements for a year?

The applicant's results on this assessment do not prevent them from applying for any other announcements. Other announcements may or may not have a USA Hire Assessment associated with the application process. A status or internal merit promotion announcement may or may not use the cut score for that announcement. If another announcement requires the same USA Hire Assessment(s), the applicant's score results will be automatically re-used for one year. After one year, the applicant will be able to retake the assessment. For agencies which utilize Custom USA Hire assessments, applicant score reuse may be less than a year, as prescribed by the agency during assessment development.

SCORING

34. How are the USA Hire Assessments scored?

The scoring protocols are based on occupational analysis results for the specific occupational series and grade as well as the psychometric characteristics of the assessments. Therefore, the combination of

assessments and the scoring protocols reflect the requirements of the occupational series and grades covered by USA Hire. In accordance with 5 CFR 300.201(a), the U.S. Office of Personnel Management does not release scoring protocols or criteria, so as not to compromise the objectivity of the testing process.

35. How can a USA Hire Assessment be combined with an Assessment Questionnaire used for rating purposes?

If you choose to combine USA Hire Standard Assessments with a rating Assessment Questionnaire, an additional step in scoring is used to determine the weighting protocol. The first step is to determine the appropriate weighting protocol for the USA Hire/AQ combination based on job analysis and in partnership with the Hiring Manager and /or Subject Matter Experts. Agencies will assign the weight for each assessment in USA Staffing when building the JOA. Scores will be standardized and then combined using the Agency-provided weighting. The HR User should maintain documentation of the decision and rationale per Agency policies and procedures. Please visit the [USA Hire Resource Center](#) to view and download the USA Hire Weighting Worksheet, which can be used to document weighting decisions.

The fillable Weighting Worksheet may be used at the discretion of your Agency. This worksheet is solely provided as an example for Agencies who are seeking to verify and document the weighting protocol used to combine USA Hire results with the results of a rating Assessment Questionnaire. All weighting documentation and justification must be retained as part of the case file; this applies to both the acceptance of the default weighting and use of alternative weighting protocol.

36. Is an applicant's previous score reused for a JOA in a different job series?

USA Hire Assessment scores are determined at the individual series and grade level. While scores are reused within a given series and grade, scores are not carried over to other series and grades. Rather, an applicant's responses to the assessments are reused. The responses are scored, and the scores are weighted and combined per the governmentwide occupational analysis study. The ability to reuse assessment responses across job series and grade levels is possible, since general competencies are being measured, not technical skills that may be specific to a specific job series. This approach enhances test security, streamlines content management, and reduces the applicant burden by applying responses across JOAs, rather than requiring repeated test sessions for each JOA.

For example, an applicant applies to a GS-0201-9 and completes the USA Hire Standard Assessment for that JOA. A month later, the applicant applies to a GS-0343-11 that requires the USA Hire Standard Assessment. Since these job series/grade combinations require the same battery of assessments, the applicant's previous responses to the assessments completed for the GS-0201-9 JOA will be reused. However, the scoring and weighting protocol for the GS-0343-11 will be applied in the second instance to calculate the applicant's score for the second JOA. As such, the applicant's final USA Hire Assessment score may be different for the two different applications.

37. Why are an applicant's responses reused for one year?

Reuse of responses enhances test security, streamlines content management, and reduces the applicant burden by applying responses across JOAs, rather than requiring repeated test sessions for each JOA. Additionally, unlike technical skills which may show changes over a year, general competencies such as those measured by USA Hire are less malleable to changes which could impact results within a year timeframe.

38. Will the applicant know what their USA Hire score is?

You may share category assignment or final rating information with applicants according to your Agency policies. Do not share individual assessment results with applicants, since it is only the final rating that was used to refer applicants. The USA Hire helpdesk will not provide results to applicants.

39. How does USA Hire block an applicant from re-taking the assessments before the one-year retest period is complete?

All eligible applicants receive an assigned unique identifier based on information gathered during the application process. The unique identifier is used to determine if an applicant has already completed an assessment. If the applicant has previously completed all required assessments, he/she will receive a courtesy email notifying him/her that no further action is required. This occurs when an applicant uses the same USAJOBS account.

40. Are applicants prompted to re-take the USA Hire Assessments after one year?

Applicants are not pro-actively prompted by USA Hire to re-take assessments after one year. If an applicant applies to a position in which they previously completed the USA Hire Assessment and their responses may no longer be re-used, the applicant will receive a link to access and complete the USA Hire Assessments.

CUT SCORES

41. What is a cut score?

A cut score is the minimum score an applicant must obtain to be eligible to proceed in the hiring process.

42. Why use a cut score?

Applying cut scores in the hiring process is a proven best practice for ensuring that applicants who are referred to hiring managers have the required level of proficiency in key general competencies to be successful in the position.

43. What is a cut score based on?

USA Hire cut scores are based on the minimum level of proficiency required to perform the job for a specific series and grade. A Standard Assessment cut score represents the overall level of proficiency an applicant must demonstrate on the USA Hire Assessment battery for a specific job series and grade.

44. How is a cut score established?

A cut score is established through a rigorous process involving job experts and personnel psychologists. The process identifies the minimum level of proficiency for required competencies for a specific job series and grade, and the minimum score necessary on the USA Hire Assessment battery to demonstrate the minimum required proficiency.

45. How will I know if a specific occupational series and grade uses a cut score?

The Standard USA Hire Assessments – Available Series and Grades document on the USA Hire Resource Center identifies which occupational series and grades use a cut score. In addition, the “Cut Score” box will be checked in USA Staffing (see below).

ID	Assessment Name	Assessment Type	Screen-out	Rating	Passing Score	Cut Score	Proportional Weight	Percentage Weight	Mean Raw Score	Standard Deviation	Date Created
+ Demo USA Hire 0201-06 (Cut Score)	External					1 / 2	1 / 2	50%			
+ 114795	HR Spec Tech Questionnaire	Questionnaire				1 / 2	1 / 2	50%			10/5/2020 18:03 EDT

46. Why do only some USA Hire assessments use cut scores? Will the use of cut scores be expanded to other series?

Establishing a cut score is a lengthy and rigorous process requiring considerable time and effort from job experts and personnel psychologists. As the use of USA Hire continues to expand, OPM will identify additional series to evaluate for the use of cut scores. Based on priority and need, cut scores may be expanded to other series.

47. What percentage of applicants are typically screened out by the cut score?

The percentage of applicants screened out by the cut score will vary across occupational series and grades, as well as by job announcement. Many factors contribute to this including the required competencies, required proficiency level, differences in cut-scores across grade levels, the applicant pool, etc. On average you can expect 20-30% of the applicants will not attain the cut score required to proceed in the hiring process.

48. How can I identify the cut score in USA Staffing?

The assessment battery cut score is not visible in USA Staffing. Transmuting the passing score is consistent with 5 CFR 337.101 – Rating Applicants, “...each applicant who meets the minimum requirements for entrance to an examination and is rated 70 or more in the examination is eligible for appointment.”

49. How do I determine the cut score that applicants have to attain?

The cut score is set at a government-wide level and not at the agency or individual vacancy level for USA Hire standard assessments. In accordance with 5 CFR 300.201(a), the U.S. Office of Personnel Management does not release testing and examination materials, scoring criteria including the specific cut score requirements, or other information used solely to determine individual qualifications, so as not to compromise the objectivity of the testing process.

50. Is the cut score the same across all assessment batteries or does it vary by battery?

The cut score is based on the minimum required proficiency to perform the job in a given occupational series and grade. To the extent that the minimal required proficiency is similar across occupational series and grades, the cut scores may be similar.

51. Why did an applicant attain the cut score for one grade, but not another grade, within the same occupational series?

When this occurs, it will most often be when an applicant meets the cut score for a lower grade level, but not a higher grade level. Occasionally, an applicant may meet the cut score for a higher grade, but not a lower grade. Both are valid outcomes, because the cut score is based on the minimum required proficiency for a given occupational series and grade. Thus, the cut score may be different for different grades. In addition, the assessment battery may include additional components (assessments) for different grades

within an occupational series and the cut score is based on all the assessments within a battery.

52. If an applicant does not attain the cut score required for a position, will that impact other openings or future job prospects for the applicant?

The applicant's scores on the USA Hire Assessment battery for a given series and grade will remain on file and be applied to vacancies for the same series and grade for one year. If the applicant applies to the same series and grade for another JOA using USA Hire, the applicant will not meet the minimum required proficiency and will not be eligible for the position. The applicant will have the opportunity to retest in a year.

If the applicant applies to a different occupational series, or the same position but a different grade, the applicant's responses for the completed assessments will be used to calculate the assessment battery score. The cut score for the battery will be applied against this score to determine if the applicant meets the minimum required proficiency for the occupational series and grade.

53. Can I change the impact of a cut score by weighting the technical questionnaire more heavily than the USA Hire assessment?

The weighting of the various assessments used for rating will not impact the cut score. An applicant must first meet or exceed the cut score before the score is weighted and combined with any other assessments to produce a final score. Applicants who do not meet or exceed the cut score will not have a final score or final rating, as these applicants are not eligible for consideration.

CUT SCORE PROCESS QUESTIONS

54. Do I need to take any additional steps to set up a job opportunity announcement (JOA) when there is a cut score for that job series?

The only additional step needed is to ensure the recommended verbiage about cut scores is in the JOA. This verbiage can be found in the USA Hire User Guide available on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#).

55. What information is available to assist during conversations with hiring managers regarding JOAs using cut scores?

The USA Hire FAQs is a comprehensive single resource covering cut scores. It is appropriate to share these FAQs with hiring managers to help answer many of the common questions they may have.

56. Can I use the USA Hire standard assessments without the cut score, even if one has been set for the series and grade I am filling?

For *Public (Citizens and Non-Citizens) announcement types*, it is mandatory to utilize the cut score for standard USA Hire Assessment batteries that have implemented cut scores. The cut scores were established based on the minimum required proficiency to perform the job. If you have specific concerns about the use of cut scores at your agency, please contact your USA Staffing Account Manager to discuss the situation.

For *Status (Federal/Veteran/Other Eligible) and/or Internal Merit Promotion announcement types*, use of cut scores is option when a cut score is available. Users with the *USA Hire – Apply Cut Score for Merit Promotion* permission will be able to check/uncheck the *Cut Score* setting in USA Staffing up until the announcement has been released and opened on USAJOBS. Cut scores are defaulted to "Off" for *Status* and *Internal Merit Promotion* announcement types.

57. Do I need to conduct a qualifications review on applicants who were rated ineligible because they did not attain the cut score?

No. Applicants rated ineligible because they did not attain the overall minimum score do not need any further review.

58. What does it mean when the announcement says applicants need to attain an overall minimum score (cut score)?

The overall minimum score refers to the cut score that has been established for a given USA Hire Assessment battery. To be eligible to proceed in the hiring process, an applicant must score at or above the minimum score (cut score) on the required USA Hire Assessment battery, and meet any other minimum qualification requirements.

59. What code will applicants receive in USA Staffing if they do not attain the cut score?

IQTR - You are ineligible to proceed in the hiring process because you did not attain the overall minimum score on the required assessments for the position.

60. What happens if there are multiple assessments, not just the USA Hire Assessments that must be passed for an applicant to proceed in the process?

The applicant must meet the minimum qualifications and attain any minimum passing score or cut score requirements on each assessment to proceed. For more information on using a passing score with an Assessment Questionnaire, please see [Assessment Questionnaire Passing Score FAQs](#).

61. Do all applicants, including CP/CPS veterans need to meet the cut score to be eligible?

Yes. When using USA Hire Assessment batteries with a cut score, that cut score becomes part of the minimum requirements for the position. Applicants who do not meet the cut score have not demonstrated the minimum level of proficiency in the required competencies for a specific job series and grade and are therefore screened out from further consideration.

62. How do cut scores effect the way an agency handles veterans' preference?

Current veterans' preference policies remain in effect and are not affected by the use of cut scores. Veterans who score at or above the cut score are considered eligible for the position and veterans' preference is then applied accordingly.

63. Can a USA Hire assessment using a cut score be combined with other assessments (e.g., application questionnaires, Automated Writing Assessment) or is this prohibited?

Yes. USA Hire assessments using cut scores can be combined with other assessments. Scores are combined using the same or similar procedures as combining assessments without cut scores. The only restriction is for applicants who do not obtain the cut score on the USA Hire assessment. These applicants are ineligible, so score combination does not occur. If you have questions about combining assessments, please contact your USA Staffing Account Manager.

QUESTIONS REGARDING APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

64. How are reasonable accommodations requests handled?

The reasonable accommodation (RA) item in the eligibilities section of the USA Staffing Announcement Questionnaire offers applicants the opportunity to request an accommodation for the online assessments. Applicants who respond "Yes" to this item will signal the system to alter the notifications sent from this point forward and prevent the USA Hire Assessment link from being emailed to the applicant until RA adjudication is complete. When the application is submitted with the RA item marked "Yes" a help ticket is automatically created on the applicant behalf. A copy of the help ticket remains in the ticketing system and an automatic response is sent to the applicant explaining what the applicant needs to do to support the RA request. All communications between the applicant and the Reasonable Accommodation Help Desk will occur through this help ticket.

All RA requests must be received prior to the applicant starting the USA Hire Assessments. If the RA request is granted, the applicant will receive the appropriate accommodation when completing the assessments. If the request is denied, the applicant will have the opportunity to complete the standard version of the assessment battery. Applicants who request an accommodation will have 48 hours from when their link is sent or until 48 hours after the close of the JOA, whichever is later, to complete the USA Hire Assessments.

For additional information, please visit the [USA Hire Resource Center](#) and reference the *USA Hire Assessments Reasonable Accommodations FAQs* and *USA Hire Guide for USA Staffing Customer Agencies*.

65. Are all applicants, regardless of disability status, able to access the assessments and videos on USA Hire?

All assessments delivered on the USA Hire testing platform meet the WCAG 2.0 AA accessibility guidelines and are compliant with 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, meeting all federally mandated access requirements.