



USA Staffing[®]
Great Government Starts Here[®]

USA Staffing ACWA User Guide

OFFICIAL USE NOTICE: This material is intended exclusively for use by USA Staffing Advisory Board Requirements Group Members and is not to be distributed without approval from the USA Staffing Program Office. This communication may contain information that is proprietary, privileged or confidential or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. If you have received this document in error, please notify the USA Staffing Program Office immediately and delete all copies of the presentation.



OPM HR SOLUTIONS
by government, for government

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415

Table of Contents

Background	3
Assessment Content	3
Available Series	3
Alternative Assessments	4
Combining ACWA and non-ACWA Grades	4
Add an ACWA template	4
Appendix A: Create Agency-specific ACWA Templates	8

Background

On November 19, 1981 the United States District Court for the District of Columbia resolved a class-action suit that was filed in 1979. The resolution of the suit was known as the “Luevano consent decree” and it required the use of alternative assessments for occupations at the GS-5 and GS-7 grade levels that were once subject to the Professional and Administrative Career Exam.

The Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) rating schedules are assessment tools that were developed as a result of the lawsuit resolution that comply with the requirement to use validated (i.e., job-related) assessment tools when examining applicants for competitive service positions. The ACWA rating schedules are validated for use with the professional and administrative positions found on Appendix D in the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook (DEOH). https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/competitive-hiring/deo_handbook.pdf.

Assessment Content

Each ACWA assessment system template will contain a minimum qualifications assessment which will need to be modified by the agency prior to releasing the vacancy. Each template will also contain a rating assessment. The amount of assessment rating questions will vary by series. However, applicants may complete anywhere between 80-120 questions. Additionally, because USA Staffing hides all scoring content from HR Users, there is no need for HR users to complete and track test security training every two years. The average time to complete the assessment is about 12 minutes.

Available Series

Rather than requesting approval for a specific set of series, agencies will automatically be granted access to all available USA Staffing ACWA assessment templates.

The following series are available:

0018	0020	0023	0025	0028
0080	0101	0105	0107	0110
0130	0132	0140	0150	0170
0180	0187	0190	0193	0201
0301	0341	0343	0346	0391
0501	0560	0570	0673	0685
0901	0950	0965	0967	0993
0996	1001	1015	1035	1082
1083	1101	1102	1103	1104
1130	1146	1147	1150	1160
1163	1165	1170	1171	1173
1176	1412	1420	1421	1654
1701	1720	1801	1810	1811
1849	1910	2001	2003	2010
2030	2032	2101	2130	2150
2210				

Additional series may be added per request. To request an additional series, submit an enhancement request with the occupational series and target date of need to your USA Staffing Account Manager.

Alternative Assessments

Agencies are free to use any valid alternative assessment. USA Hire is a valid OPM alternative to ACWA, and many of the ACWA series are covered by standard USA Hire assessments. A full list of available series can be found here:

https://help.usastaffing.gov/ResourceCenter/images/3/3b/USA_Hire_ACWA_-_9.4.19.pdf. Agencies are also able to develop their own ACWA alternative assessments. We encourage you to consult your Office of General Counsel before using an agency developed ACWA alternative.

Combining ACWA and non-ACWA Grades

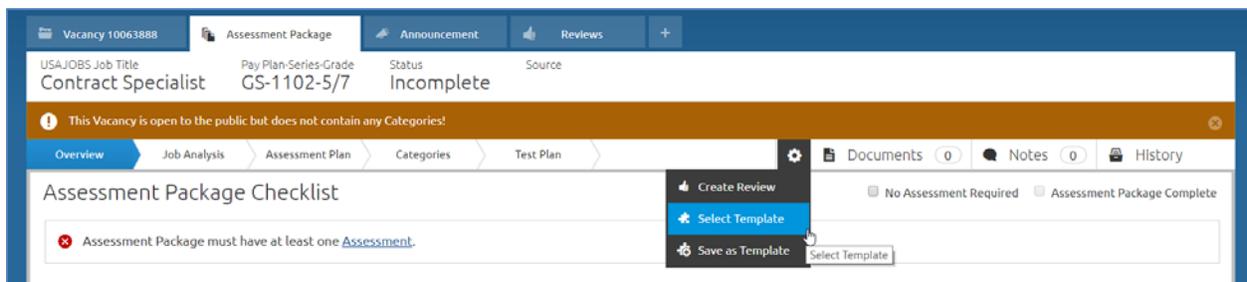
There are many implications with combining ACWA templates with non-ACWA grades that may produce adverse impacts to your desired results as well as the validity of your assessments. ACWA assessments were developed with a unique scoring mechanism that cannot be combined with other rating assessments. In order to avoid unintended issues that could result in the cancellation of a posted announcement, this type of recruitment is best captured when ACWA and Non-ACWA vacancies are announced as two separate recruitments.

Add an ACWA template

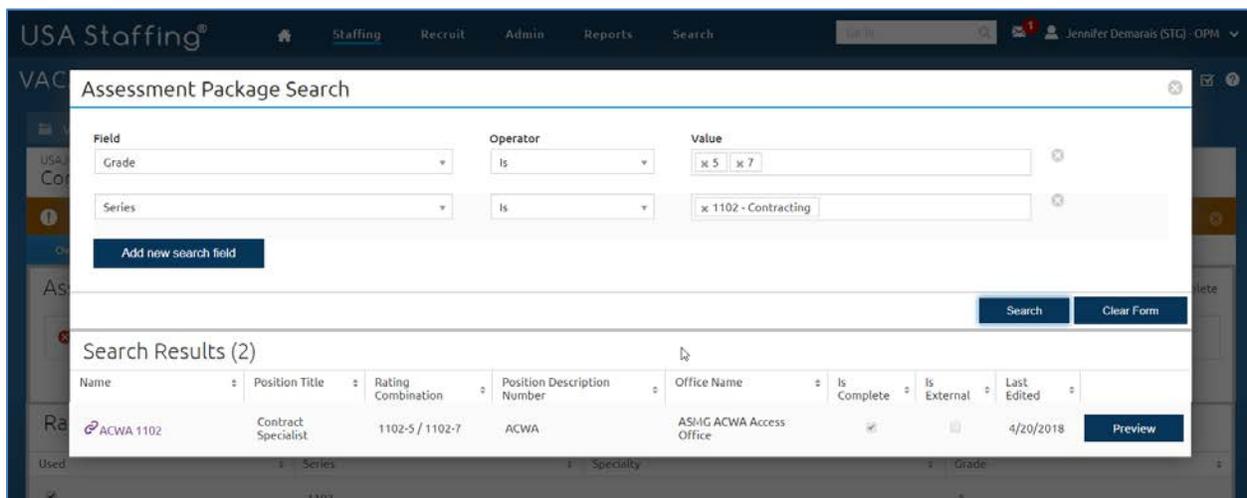
There are currently 76 system-level templates for some of the most commonly used occupational series available to be added for ACWA recruitments.

Adding an ACWA Template from the Assessment Package

- From the Assessment Package Overview Page, click the gear icon and choose **Select Template** from the dropdown.



- The search criteria will default based on the vacancy's series and grade. Select the corresponding ACWA Template to copy it into the vacancy.



Adding an ACWA template to your assessment package will automatically override any pre-existing vacancy settings as follows:

- **Application Processing:** Override individual announcement and assessment question requirement indicators to set all *questionnaire items as required* to **Disabled**
- **Case File Retention:** *Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) position* – Do not archive as **Enabled**
- **Vacancy Tags:** *ACWA appointing authority tag* will be **added**

Updating the Minimum Qualifications Assessment

- System-level ACWA templates must be edited before they can be used, because they do not contain full minimum qualifications questions. For information on creating agency-level versions of templates which contain agency desired minimum qualifications questions, see the **Appendix A: Create Agency-specific ACWA Templates** section of this guide.
- The template will copy into the vacancy in a **Complete** status. Uncheck the **Complete Assessment Package** checkbox and go to the Assessment tab's Assessment Questionnaire page.

The screenshot displays the 'Assessment Questionnaire (2 Items)' page. At the top, there are tabs for 'Assessment Information', 'Competencies', 'Assessment Questionnaire', 'Screen-Out Criteria', and 'Rating Criteria'. The 'Assessment Questionnaire' tab is active. Below the tabs, there are two assessment items. Each item has a 'Select All' checkbox and a description. Item 1 is for GS-5 Contracting work, and Item 2 is for GS-7 Contracting work. Both items have two response options, A and B, which are currently set to 'RESPONSE TO BE ENTERED BY SERVICE CENTER' and 'RESPONSE TO BE EDITED BY SERVICE CENTER' respectively. There are 'Add Response' buttons for each item. At the bottom right, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

- Replace the **RESPONSE TO BE EDITED BY SERVICE CENTER** response options with responses that meet the requirements of your position. Be sure to include a null response, such as “My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.”

- Navigate to the Screen-Out Criteria page and create a screen-out for the grade 5 as you normally would for a two-grade vacancy.

Edit Screen-Out

Name *

Apply Screen-Out to Rating Combinations * 1102-5 1102-7

Ineligibility Code *

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.

Item: 1. From the descriptions below, select the letter that describes the education or experience you have that demonstrates your ability to perform GS-5, Con...

Response Options	Qualifying	Disqualifying
A I have completed a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree or I possess a bachelor's degree that would equip me to perform the work of the position. OR At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B I have education beyond the bachelor's degree, e.g., one full year of graduate study or more, master's degree, Ph.D., LL.B., J.D., etc. My field of study for at least one year of my postgraduate education was in one or a combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management. (Refer to the instructions on how to define 1 academic year of graduate level study)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Failed to respond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Or

Item: 2. From the descriptions below, select the letter that describes the education or experience you have that demonstrates your ability to perform GS-7, Con...

Response Options	Qualifying	Disqualifying
A I have a bachelor's degree in a field that would equip me to perform the work of the position, and I have superior academic achievement. (Refer to the instructions for information on the Superior Academic Achievement provision)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B I have at least one year of experience performing work of the type listed in the following examples: developing, preparing, and presenting terms and conditions in bids or proposals related to the award of contracts; or negotiating and awarding contracts, contract modifications, and subcontracts; or in legal practice involving the analysis of procurement policies and procedures; or administering the terms and conditions of contracts, including such aspects as preparing contract modifications, evaluation of performance under the contract, and contract termination; or analyzing proposed prices or costs, including such aspects as evaluating technical and audit reports, forecasting price trends, evaluating economic factors, estimating production efficiencies, and evaluating methods of allocating costs through various types of overhead and general administrative expense.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C I have less than the full amount of graduate education described in "B" and less than the amount of experience described in "C," but I have a combination of the type of graduate education described in "B" and the type of experience described in "C."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Failed to respond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Qualifying Response
 Disqualifying Response

Save Save & Close Cancel

- Next, create a screen-out for the grade 7 as you normally would for a two-grade vacancy.

Edit Screen-Out

Name *

Apply Screen-Out to Rating Combinations * 1102-5 1102-7

Ineligibility Code *

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

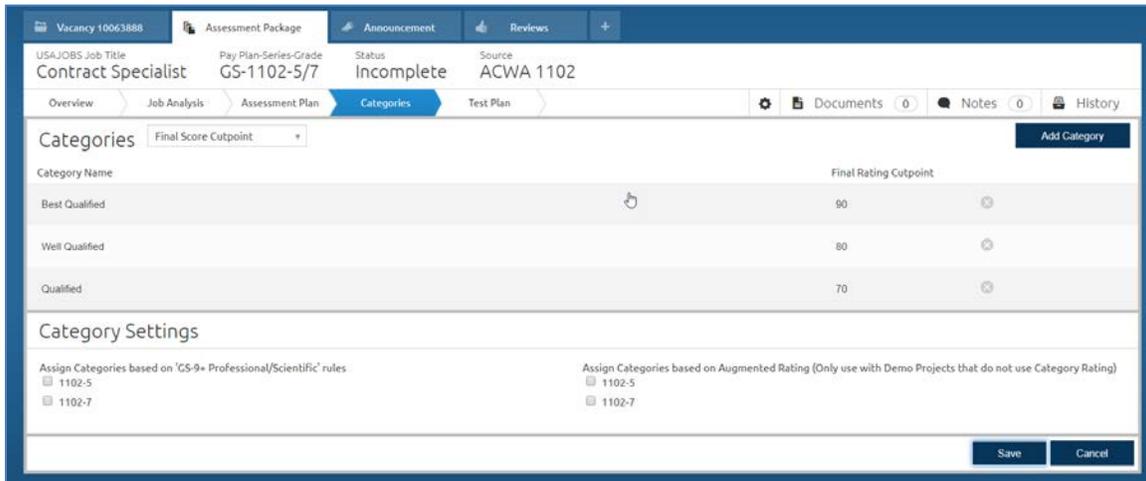
Item: 2. From the descriptions below, select the letter that describes the education or experience you have that demonstrates your ability to perform GS-7, Con...

Response Options	Qualifying	Disqualifying
A I have a bachelor's degree in a field that would equip me to perform the work of the position, and I have superior academic achievement. (Refer to the instructions for information on the Superior Academic Achievement provision)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B I have at least one year of experience performing work of the type listed in the following examples: developing, preparing, and presenting terms and conditions in bids or proposals related to the award of contracts; or negotiating and awarding contracts, contract modifications, and subcontracts; or in legal practice involving the analysis of procurement policies and procedures; or administering the terms and conditions of contracts, including such aspects as preparing contract modifications, evaluation of performance under the contract, and contract termination; or analyzing proposed prices or costs, including such aspects as evaluating technical and audit reports, forecasting price trends, evaluating economic factors, estimating production efficiencies, and evaluating methods of allocating costs through various types of overhead and general administrative expense.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C I have less than the full amount of graduate education described in "B" and less than the amount of experience described in "C," but I have a combination of the type of graduate education described in "B" and the type of experience described in "C."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Failed to respond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

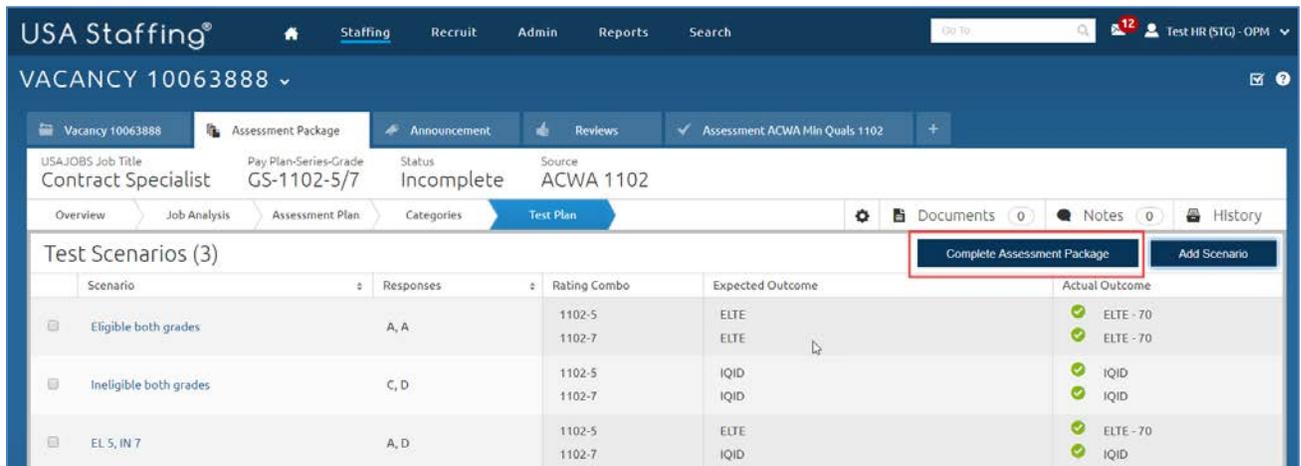
Qualifying Response
 Disqualifying Response

Save Save & Close Cancel

- When you have finished customizing the minimum qualifications questions and built screen-outs for each grade, navigate to the Assessment Package tab's Categories page to ensure your agency's category rating policy is being applied. You will likely need to add categories before testing your assessment package. Do not check any of the **Category Settings** options.



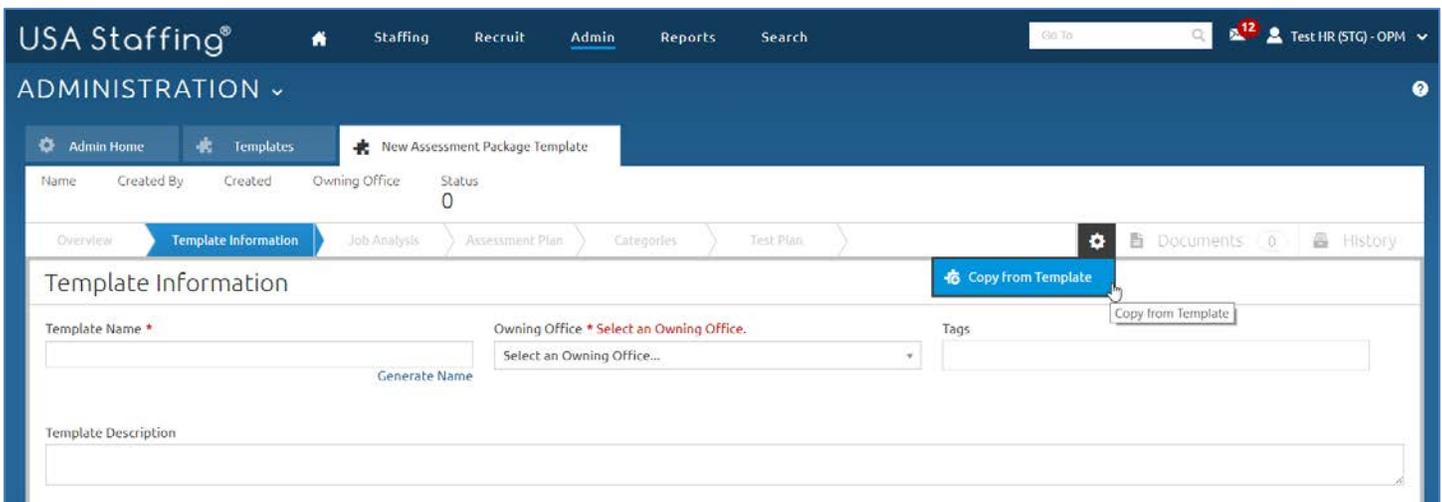
- Navigate to the Test Plan page. Create test scenarios as you would for any two-grade assessment. Follow your agency's business process for testing assessments; we recommend one test scenario per screen-out and at least one eligible scenario.
- When your ACWA minimum qualifications assessment has been successfully tested, click **Complete Assessment Package**.



Appendix A: Create Agency-specific ACWA Templates

USA Staffing allows HR users with the **Create/Edit Assessment Package Templates** permission enabled to copy ACWA templates and build agency-specific minimum qualifications questions. Doing so shortens the process for traditional HR users because they are no longer required to edit the minimum qualification response options for every variation. It also reduces the risk of error and ensures consistent terminology for applicants. We highly recommend creating agency-specific templates for the most commonly filled series within your agency.

- To create an agency specific ACWA Assessment Package Template, open the Manage Templates tab and click **Create Template**.
- Do not enter any information into the blank template. Click the gear icon and select **Copy from Template** from the dropdown.



- Enter **ACWA [series]** into the Template Name search box and click **Search**. Click on the name of the corresponding ACWA template. This will copy the system-level template into your newly created template. The template name will default to “ACWA [series] (Copy)” and may be customized according to your agency’s naming conventions.
- If you have access to multiple offices, select the appropriate **Owning Office** from the dropdown.

The screenshot displays the 'USA Staffing' Administration interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Admin', 'Reports', and 'Search'. The main header shows 'ADMINISTRATION' and the current page title 'Assessment Package Template: ACWA Social Insurance Specialist - 0105 (Copy)'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Overview > Template Information > Job Analysis > Assessment Plan > Categories > Test Plan'. The 'Template Information' section contains the following fields:

- Template Name:** OPM ACWA Social Insurance Specialist - 0105 (with a 'Generate Name' button)
- Owing Office:** San Antonio Services Branch
- Tags:** San Antonio Services Branch
- Template Description:** ACWA Social Insurance Specialist - 0105 Copy Description
- External:**

Below the form is the 'Position Descriptions' section, which includes a table with the following data:

Position Description #	Position Title	Pay Plan	Series	Grade(s)	Specialties
ACWA	ACWA Social Insurance Specialist - 0105	GS	0105 - Social Insurance Administration	x 5 x 7	+

A 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the interface.

- Once the copied template has been saved with an appropriate name and owning office, complete the template according to the instructions in the **Add an ACWA Template** section of this user guide. This should include:
 - Customizing the minimum qualifications response options according to the specialized experience language commonly used in your organization.
 - Building screen-outs for the GS-5 and GS-7 grades.
 - Adding categories according to your agency's category rating policy.
 - Creating test scenarios to thoroughly test your assessment.