

# USA Hire Myths



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# Myths and Truths

The below describes common myths associated with USA Hire and their associated truths.

## 1) “It takes 3 hours to complete a USA Hire assessment.”

On average, most applicants complete their USA Hire standard assessment battery in 1 ½ hours. For Situational Judgment Tests (e.g. – Supervisory Situational Judgment Test (SSJT), Management Situational Judgment Test (MSJT)), most applicants complete the assessment in about one hour.

## 2) “A significant number of applicants abandon a USA Hire assessment in the middle of testing.”

There are some applicants who choose to discontinue at different points during the application and consideration process. With USA Hire, what is commonly experienced is that about 35% of applicants do not complete their assessment. USA Hire has been working to engage applicants through making user-friendly enhancements, such as mobile enabling the USA Hire standard assessments and Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA). These enhancements are having a positive effect and are resulting in an increase of applicants who complete their assessment. Modern Hire conducted research on assessment length and applicant attrition behavior if you’re interested in learning more (<https://modernhire.com/assessment-dropout-whats-really-behind-candidate-behaviors-will-surprise-you/>).

## 3) “Applicants cannot get their score information.”

You may share category assignment or final rating information with applicants who meet all minimum requirements according to your Agency policies. The USA Hire helpdesk does not provide results to applicants.

## 4) “Applicants who do not complete their USA Hire assessment have a “failed” score for 12 months.”

If an applicant does not complete the USA Hire assessment, the applicant will be rated ineligible for not completing the required assessment for only that applicable announcement. If an applicant subsequently applies to a different announcement and self-asserts they meet the minimum qualifications, the applicant will receive an invitation to complete the USA Hire assessment. If the applicant has already completed portions of the assessment, he/she will only need to complete the portions not yet taken.

**5) “If an applicant is not referred for one position, he/she will not be referred for subsequent job applications for the same position requiring USA Hire because scores are used for 12 months (standard assessments).”**

While an applicant’s responses to the USA Hire assessments are reused for 12 months, there are several factors that ultimately determine whether an applicant is referred for consideration – different category rating cut-offs, different hiring authorities, different numbers of vacancies to fill, different technical assessment questionnaires, etc. All these factors make it possible for an applicant who was not referred for one announcement, to be referred for another announcement.

**6) “For USA Hire assessments that include a cut score, if an applicant scores below the cut score, he/she will not be eligible for subsequent job vacancy announcements that use USA Hire, because scores are used for 12 months.”**

While an applicant’s responses to the USA Hire assessments are reused for 12 months, scores are calculated independently for each series and grade combination. Further, the assessments used, and the weighting of those assessments are different across the various series and grade combinations. Finally, cut scores are established to reflect the minimum level of proficiency for a given series and grade combination. Given these factors, applicants may score below the cut score for some series and grade combinations, while scoring above the cut score for other series and grade combinations. For example, if an applicant scores below the cut score for a 2210-13, the applicant will not be eligible for other 2210-13 announcements that use USA Hire with a cut score for a period of one year (at which point, the applicant may retest). Cut scores are always turned on for delegated examining (DE) announcements but are optional for status (merit promotion) announcements. As a result, an applicant may not meet the cut score when applying to a DE announcement but be considered eligible when applying to a merit promotion announcement. Additionally, the same applicant may score above the cut score for other grades within 2210 or for other series and grade combinations outside of the 2210 job series.

**7) “USA Hire assessments have to be completed in one sitting.”**

Applicants have the opportunity to log out of a USA Hire assessment battery and log back in to complete the battery at a later time. Applicants are required to complete all assessments in the battery before the assessment window closes, which is typically within 48 hours of the announcement closing.

**8) “The USA Hire invitation URL may go to junk mail or spam and applicants may never see it.”**

Most applicants invited to complete a USA Hire assessment receive their USA Hire URL on screen when the applicants submit their initial application. Applicants also receive the USA Hire URL by email, sent by the USA Staffing system, reducing the number that had go directly to junk mail or spam folders. Finally, this URL is also available to applicants in their USAJOBS account, so even if the applicant cannot find the sent email, they can access the URL through USAJOBS.

## 9) “HR staff cannot review applicants for minimum qualifications until all Reasonable Accommodation (RA) claims have been adjudicated and all applicants have a USA Hire score.”

The minimum qualifications review may begin as soon as the announcement closes. However, certificates should not be issued until all applicants have been rated. Once all RA claims have been adjudicated for that vacancy, the RA warning banner will disappear, and the Announcement Internal Contact will be notified by an alert.



## 10) “USA Hire standard assessments alone help identify quality applicants at any grade level.”

USA Hire standard assessments are high quality assessments that measure general competencies. While using USA Hire standard assessments alone for entry-level types of positions is often an effective assessment strategy, USA Hire standard assessments do not measure technical skills. For positions where current technical skills play an important part in determining who is a high-quality applicant, USA Hire standard assessments will not provide this information. We recommend combining USA Hire with a technical assessment questionnaire to assess the “whole person” for such positions. For expert consultation on your assessment strategy, please contact your USA Staffing Account Manager.

## 11) “USA Hire standard assessments can be used for any position for which a standard assessment is available.”

USA Hire standard assessments are valid 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. USA Hire offers some premium assessments to evaluate candidates for supervisory positions: the off-the-shelf Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA) and the customizable Supervisory Situational Judgment Test (SSJT). Other premium assessments are available to measure technical skills across a multitude of job series, such as the Automated Writing Assessment (AWA) or Program and Project Management Assessment (PAPMA). Premium assessments are available through a separate interagency agreement (IAA).

## 12) “USA Hire cannot be used for ACWA covered positions. The ACWA assessment must be used instead.”

USA Hire may be used as an alternative assessment to Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) for any ACWA covered position. While many have interpreted the ACWA assessments to be mandatory, a 2009 Chief Human Capital Officers Council (CHCO) memo from OPM clarified that agencies are not required to use the ACWA. Agencies may use alternative assessment tools, provided the alternative(s) is a validated assessment tool. USA Hire is a valid option that currently offers an ACWA alternative to 39 of 103 ACWA series.

### **13) “USA Hire cannot be used with Direct Hire Authority announcements.”**

While Direct Hire Authority (DHA) removes many of the required regulations for Federal hiring, most DHAs do not directly prohibit use of assessment tools, such as USA Hire. Instead, most DHAs allow for the option to use assessments in making selections. We recommend reading the DHA thoroughly to understand the requirements and restrictions, then create an assessment strategy that is appropriate for your direct hiring need. Using a high-quality assessment, such as those offered by USA Hire, is a competitive advantage to an agency desiring to make high quality selections. Agencies should evaluate each situation to determine the most effective assessment strategy for that hiring engagement. For expert consultation on your assessment strategy, please contact your USA Staffing Account Manager.