



USA Hire

Transforming Government One Hire at a Time

USA Hire Frequently Asked Questions



USA HireSM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	2
GENERAL QUESTIONS	2
ASSESSMENT STRATEGY QUESTIONS	4
PROCESS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.....	6
APPLICANT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.....	7
SCORING	8
QUESTIONS REGARDING APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES	9

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.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is USA Hire?

USA Hire is an OPM Human Resources Solutions (HRS) program that offers Federal Agencies online assessment solutions. Agencies can use USA Hire to automate Agency assessment content, to develop new custom online assessments, or to implement USA Hire Standard and Premium Assessments.

USA Hire Standard Assessments are defined as unproctored USA Hire Assessments that can be immediately included in the USA Staffing assessment plan for a specific vacancy by the HR User, with no additional analysis, development, validation, or customization required. USA Hire Standard Assessments are available to customer Agencies that sign the USA Hire addendum to the USA Staffing interagency agreement (IAA). The Standard Assessments were developed through an OPM/vendor partnership. The

competencies assessed were identified through a government wide occupational analysis. The occupational analysis results are the basis for the competencies included in the USA Hire assessments for a given occupation and grade level. Examples of the competencies measured by the Standard assessments include Accountability, Attention to Detail, Customer Service, Decision Making, Flexibility, Influencing/Negotiating, Integrity/Honesty, Interpersonal Skills, Learning, Mathematical Reasoning, Reading, Reasoning, Self-Management, Stress Tolerance, and Teamwork. Standard assessments are to be used for non-supervisory positions only. Other assessments are available to assess supervisory and leadership positions.

USA Hire Premium Assessments are defined as unproctored USA Hire Assessments which may be implemented immediately or with little additional analysis, development, validation, or customization. USA Hire Premium assessments are available through a separate agreement with HRS. The USA Hire Premium Assessments (Supervisory Situational Judgment Test, Project Management Simulation, and Automated Writing Assessment) were developed to support a multiple hurdle assessment strategy and measure critical duties of the target occupation(s). Examples of the competencies measured by the Premium assessments include Accountability, Administration & Management, Conflict Management, Customer Service, Decision Making, Developing Others, Flexibility, Information Management, Interpersonal Skills, Planning & Evaluating, Problem Solving, Strategic Thinking, Teamwork, and Writing.

Custom assessment projects include:

- Agency-specific assessments already developed;
- Validation that a current Standard Assessment applies to a series not currently covered;
- Development of new assessment content that is unique to a specific Agency;
- Any proctored assessment;
- Any multi-hurdled assessment process managed by USA Hire; and,
- Any Agency testing or assessment material hosted on the USA Hire platform.

What is the cost for using USA Hire?

USA Hire Standard Assessments are available to USA Staffing customer Agencies that solely use USA Staffing as their Talent Acquisition System. Customer Agencies with 19 or fewer full access USA Staffing system User licenses pay a flat fee. Customer Agencies with 20 or greater full access system User licenses, pay an additional percentage of the total cost of the USA Staffing IAA. Contact your USA Staffing Account Manager for specific price information for your Agency.

Premium and Custom Assessment projects are not included in the Standard Assessments access fee. Costs for Custom USA Hire Assessments will be managed through an IAA separate from the Agency's use of USA Hire Standard Assessments and use of the USA Staffing system. A separate agreement with OPM will be required to develop or administer Premium and Custom Assessments. Contact the USA Hire Program Office at USAHire@opm.gov if your Agency would like to purchase USA Hire Premium or Custom solutions.

May Agencies view the USA Hire questions to understand the applicant experience?

For test security purposes, Agency participants will not have access to the USA Hire Standard

Assessments for informational purposes. Sample items can be viewed through the [USA Hire Resource Center](#) or by visiting <https://usahire.opm.gov/assess/default/sample/Sample.action>.

Is there additional information or research that identifies how these types of assessments are predictive of success?

One of the most frequently cited resources for showing the predictive validity of various assessment types is the following article: Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 262-274.

OPM's Personnel Assessment and Selection Resource Center (<http://apps.opm.gov/ADT/Content.aspx?page=TOC&JScript=1>) and the Assessment Decision Tool (<https://apps.opm.gov/ADT/ADTClientMain.aspx?JScript=1>), also has extensive resource lists.

What are the security requirements for Agencies?

Agencies are required to comply with a security agreement which states that only applicants of an Agency job opportunity may access the assessments. To view the rules of behavior for USA Staffing, please visit the [USA Staffing Rules of Behavior](#).

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY QUESTIONS

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 Strategy Chart](#) is a useful tool to help determine when to use or not use a USA Hire assessment.

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

For a full list of available series, please reference the *USA Hire Standard Assessments Overview flyer* on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#). 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.

Can USA Hire Standard Assessments be used for supervisory positions?

The USA Hire Standard Assessments are intended for non-supervisory positions. Based on governmentwide job analysis and a content validation approach, the assessment batteries as constituted are appropriate for use off-the-shelf for non-supervisory positions. There are assessments available to evaluate candidates for supervisory positions such as the Supervisory Situational Judgment Test (SSJT), which is customizable for agency-specific use. Also, the Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA), which is

currently under development, will be available soon as an off-the-shelf solution. These assessments would be more appropriate for supervisory positions.

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 works each year to add new series and grades to the list of available Standard Assessment occupations covered.

Will USA Hire be able to host Agency-specific assessments?

You may partner with OPM through an IAA to host Agency-owned assessments.

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

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 or not 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.

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

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.**

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 government-wide job analyses to determine the competencies that are consistent across the government rather than skills that are only needed in an individual Agency.

When using the USA Hire Standard Assessments, how can Agencies assess applicants' technical competencies?

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.

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

You can use USA Hire as the only assessment or only initial assessment. This is appropriate in situations where technical competence is not critical to the position upon entry (e.g., lower grades or internships).

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

Yes, after the certificate is issued, you may follow internal 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.

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

Current veterans' preference policies remain in effect and are not affected by the assessments.

PROCESS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

How long will it take before Agencies receive the results from the assessments in USA Staffing Legacy?

Normally, results will be transferred from USA Hire three to five business days after the JOA closes. If there are any applicants requesting Reasonable Accommodations for testing, scoring results may be delayed until those applicants requesting Reasonable Accommodations have been adjudicated and tested, as needed. Most often, Reasonable Accommodations are adjudicated within five business days after the assessment period ends. One additional business day is required to transmit the scores to USA Staffing. 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. HR Users are notified when all applicant scoring is completed and the applicant scores have been transferred from USA Hire to USA Staffing. HR Users may then manually verify applicants' minimum qualifications. HR Users may not override any eligibility statuses in the applicant records until OPM notifies them that the USA Hire results are available for Agency use. Note: there are some circumstances where results may be held for a short period to ensure verification that all results have successfully transferred.

How long will it take before Agencies receive the results from the assessments in USA Staffing Upgrade?

Scores are received as soon as an applicant completes the full battery of USA Hire Assessments; however, the final applicant score is not calculated until after the job announcement closes and the applicant has completed the USA Hire Assessments. Applicants will remain in a 'Pending Assessment' (PA) status until they complete the assessments or the USA Hire Assessment close date has passed (i.e., two days after the announcement close date). The minimum qualifications review may begin as soon as the announcement closes, but certificates should not be issued until all applicants have been rated.

If applicants request Reasonable Accommodations 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.

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.

Who should the HR Users contact if they have questions about their USA Hire vacancies in USA Staffing Legacy?

The HR Users should first contact their Agency's USA Hire lead. They may also contact the Agency's USA Staffing Account Manager or the help desk at <https://eshelp.opm.gov>.

Who should the HR Users contact if they have questions about their USA Hire vacancies in USA Staffing Upgrade?

The HR Users should first contact their Agency's USA Hire lead. They may also contact the Agency's USA Staffing Account Manager or submit a help desk ticket in the USA Staffing system.

APPLICANT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

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.

How do applicants access the USA Hire Assessments in USA Staffing Legacy?

Eligible applicants will receive an invitation email from assessments@USAHire.opm.gov containing a unique link that automatically logs the applicant in at USA Hire. 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.

How do applicants access the USA Hire Assessments in USA Staffing Upgrade?

Eligible applicants will have the option to immediately take the assessments while completing their application and will also receive an invitation email from usastaffingoffice@opm.gov containing a unique link that directs an applicant to their USA Hire assessment. 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.

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

Applicants have the opportunity to log out of the assessments and log back in to complete them at a later time, within 48 hours of the JOA closing date.

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 applicants can expect and how applicants should complete the next steps in the process.

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

The applicant will not be available for certification. USA Hire will automatically send back an ineligible code for applicants who do not complete the USA Hire online Assessments. This status code will inform the applicant that he or she is ineligible due to not completing a required assessment.

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 responses to assessment items 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.

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 at helpdesk@usahire.opm.gov to resolve any issues that may arise for applicants completing USA Hire Assessments. Agencies that have their own applicant service centers or help desks should have this email address 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 8pm EST. The Help Desk is closed on weekends, Federal Holidays, and including the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.

SCORING

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, assessments and scoring protocols may vary by occupation and grade. There are a number of different scoring protocols used depending on the specific assessment in the USA Hire Assessment battery.

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 Hiring Manager/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](#) and reference the USA Hire User Guide for a copy of the USA Hire Weighting Worksheet.

The fillable Weighting Worksheet found on the [USA Hire Resource Center](#) 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.

How long is an applicant's USA Hire score applied to future JOAs using USA Hire?

An applicant's results for an assessment will be applied in future JOAs, where the same USA Hire Assessments are applicable, for a period of one year post completion of the assessment.

Why is the score good for one year?

Reuse of results reduces the administrative burden on applicants and Agencies. 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 would impact results within a year timeframe.

Will the applicant know what their USA Hire score is?

You may share category assignment or numerical score information with applicants according to your Agency policies. The USA Hire helpdesk will not provide results to applicants.

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.

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

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

QUESTIONS REGARDING APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

How are reasonable accommodations requests handled in USA Staffing Legacy?

The reasonable accommodation item in the USA Staffing Announcement Questionnaire offers applicants the opportunity to alert OPM if they require an assessment accommodation. Applicants who respond "Yes" to this item will not receive their USA Hire email invitation immediately. The JOA instructs applicants on how to request a reasonable accommodation for the assessments, including contact information for an OPM Accommodation Coordinator and a link to the documents required to submit a request.

OPM must receive requests for reasonable accommodation prior to the announcement closing. If the request is adjudicated positively, OPM will ensure the applicant receives the appropriate accommodation when completing the assessments. If the request is not adjudicated positively, the applicant will have the opportunity to complete the standard version of the assessment batteries. 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 in Legacy USA Staffing Job Aid*.

How are reasonable accommodations requests handled in USA Staffing Upgrade?

The reasonable accommodation item in the eligibilities section of the USA Staffing Announcement Questionnaire offers applicants the opportunity to alert OPM/hiring Agency if they require an assessment accommodation. 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 questionnaire link from being emailed to the applicant until adjudication is complete.

The RA Adjudicator (OPM or Agency RA Coordinator) for the vacancy announcement will receive an email notification stating an applicant has requested a reasonable accommodation and that they are responsible for investigating and adjudicating the claim, using a link provided within the email.

All requests for reasonable accommodation must be received prior to the applicant starting the USA Hire Assessments. If the request is adjudicated positively, the applicant will receive the appropriate accommodation when completing the assessments. If the request is not adjudicated positively, the applicant will have the opportunity to complete the standard version of the assessment batteries. 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 Reasonable Accommodation Adjudication Guide for USA Staffing Customer Agencies*.

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 are section 508 compliant, meeting all federally mandated access requirements.

