



**USA Staffing**<sup>®</sup>  
Great Government Starts Here<sup>®</sup>

USA Staffing Upgrade

# 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

## ACWA Background and Access

The Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) rating schedules are assessment tools 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). [www.opm.gov/deu/handbook\\_2007/deo\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/deu/handbook_2007/deo_handbook.pdf)

- The ACWA rating schedules were developed to provide agencies with an alternative to the ACWA written tests. These rating schedules and the ACWA Assessment Delivery System (ADS) streamlined versions of ACWA assessments are available only through USA Staffing. The following series are available at this time:

0105	1102	0301	0201	1910	0343	0560	0025	0901	2210
1170	0501	1801	0018	1101	1103	0346	0110	0341	0996
0950	1150	1165	1176	1035	0028	0193	0080	1083	0150
0020	1147	2001	2003	2010	2130	0101	1146	1104	2101
1171	1811	1173	0391	2032	2030	1082	0170	0132	0130
0107	2150	1001	0685	0993	0965	1420	1412	1015	0023

- Additional series will be added per request. To request an additional series, submit a help desk ticket with the series number and target date of need.

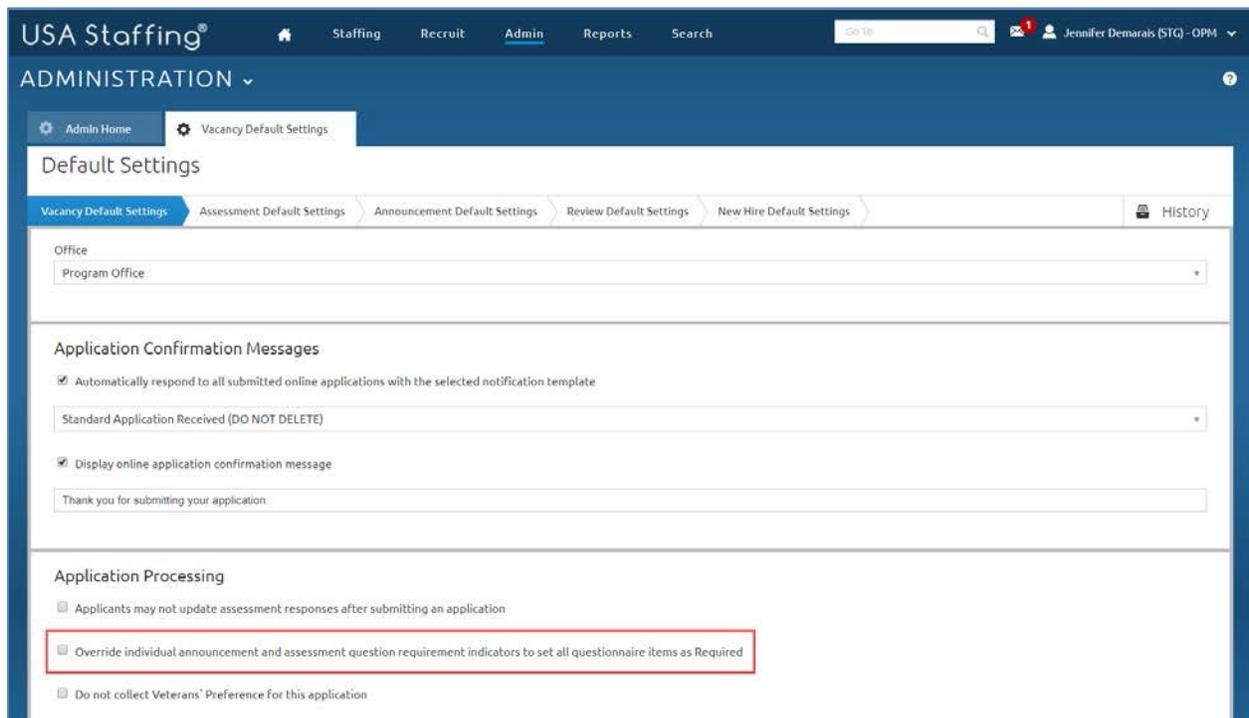
## Notable Changes to ACWA in the Upgrade

- All scoring content is hidden from HR Users, so the need for test security is greatly lessened. Given this, HR users are no longer required to complete and track test security training every two years.
- Agencies will have access to all ACWA assessments rather than getting approval for a specific set of series. All series currently stored in the system are available for all users in all agencies.
- Applicant scores will not be reused across vacancies. Applicants will be required to complete the ACWA assessments each time they apply to a vacancy that uses them. The assessments take approximately 12 minutes to complete, so this is not an undue burden to applicants.
- HR users will be able to create their own minimum qualifications and screen-out items. In legacy USA Staffing, minimum qualifications items were standard across government and agencies were only allowed to insert customize specialized experience statements. In the Upgrade, agencies may build custom ACWA templates using their own minimum qualifications response options and specialized experience language. We encourage agencies with frequently-filled positions to create templates with standard specialized experience and response option language so that individual HR users are not required to recreate them for every vacancy.

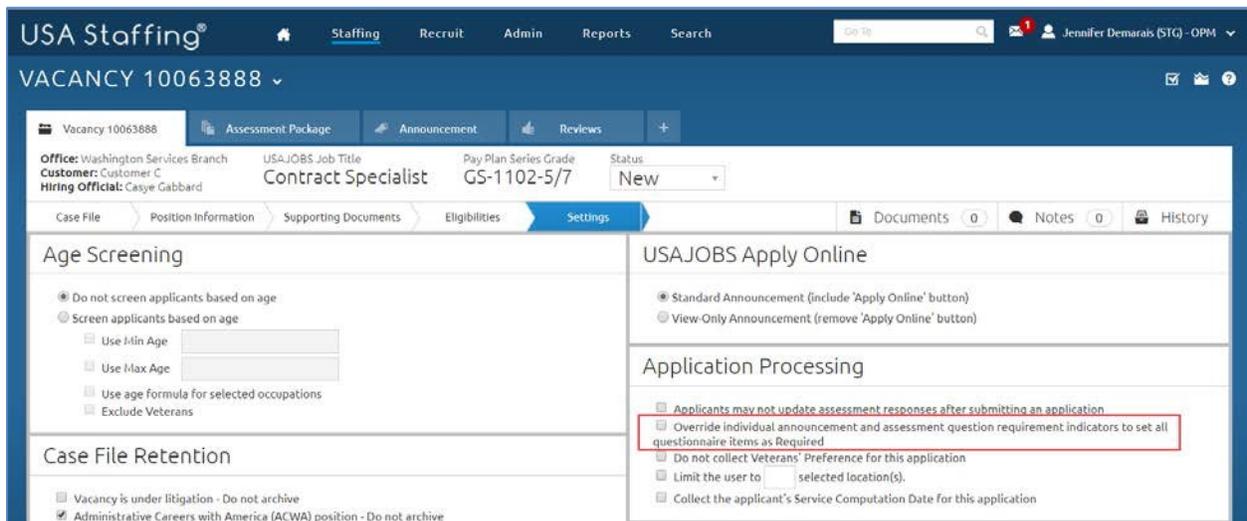
## Vacancy Settings and Default Configurations

Some questions in the ACWA rating assessment instruct applicants to “Skip this question” if the content is not relevant. For example, one question asks the grade they typically received in college; applicants who did not attend college are instructed to skip the question. For this reason, questionnaire items will not require an answer. If your regular business process is to require responses to all items, a different business process should be established for ACWA vacancies.

- The Administration area's Vacancy Default Settings Page allows offices to **Override individual announcement and assessment question requirement indicators to set all questionnaire items as Required**. This setting is disabled for offices where ACWA vacancies are announced.



- The **Override individual announcement and assessment question requirement indicators to set all questionnaire items as Required** control in the Application Processing section in the Vacancy will automatically be disabled.



- The system will also automatically check the **Administrative Careers with America** checkbox in the Case File Retention section and add the **ACWA tag** to the Appointing Authorities field.

The screenshot shows the 'Settings' configuration page for a vacancy. Key sections include:

- Age Screening:** Options to screen applicants based on age (Min, Max, formula) and to exclude veterans.
- Case File Retention:** A checkbox for 'Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) position - Do not archive' is checked and highlighted with a red box.
- Application Confirmation Messages:** Options for automatic responses and online confirmation messages.
- Citizenship Screening:** A checkbox for 'Screen out non-U.S. Citizens' is checked.
- USAJOBS Apply Online:** Options for 'Standard Announcement' and 'View-Only Announcement'.
- Application Processing:** Options for application updates, questionnaire requirements, location limits, and service computation date collection.
- Period of Eligibility:** A dropdown menu set to '3 months'.
- Demographic Data Collection:** A checkbox for 'Collect USAJOBS RNO Data' is checked.
- Vacancy Tags:** The 'Appointing Authority' field contains 'ACWA' and is highlighted with a red box.

## Copying a system ACWA template into a vacancy

There are system-level templates for the sixty most frequently used occupational series. For information on creating agency-level versions of templates, see the **Creating System-level Templates** section of this guide.

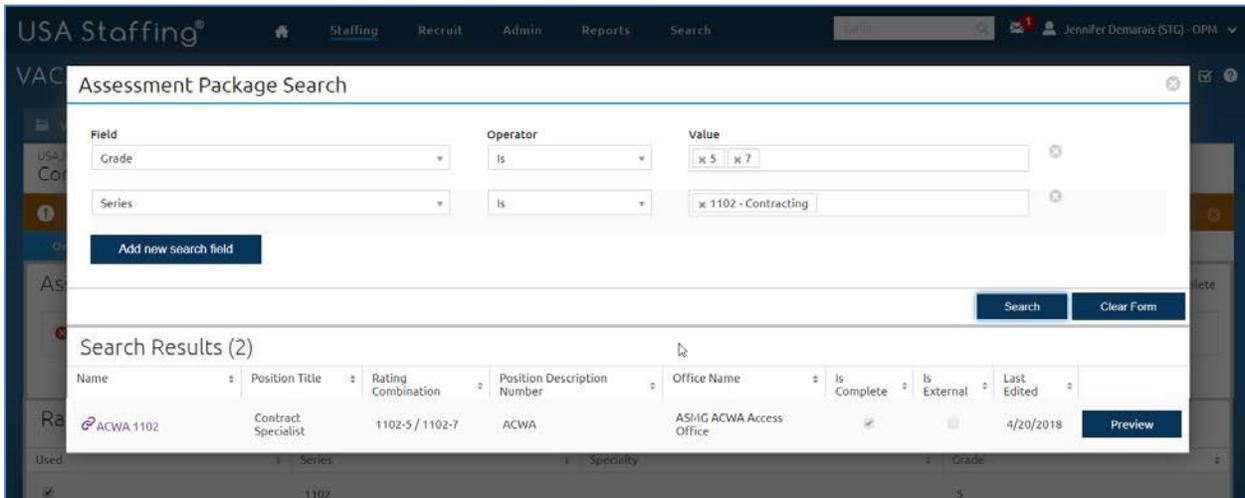
- From the Assessment Package Overview Page, click the gear icon and select **Select Template** from the dropdown.

The screenshot shows the 'Assessment Package Checklist' page. A gear icon in the top right corner of the checklist area is clicked, opening a dropdown menu with the following options:

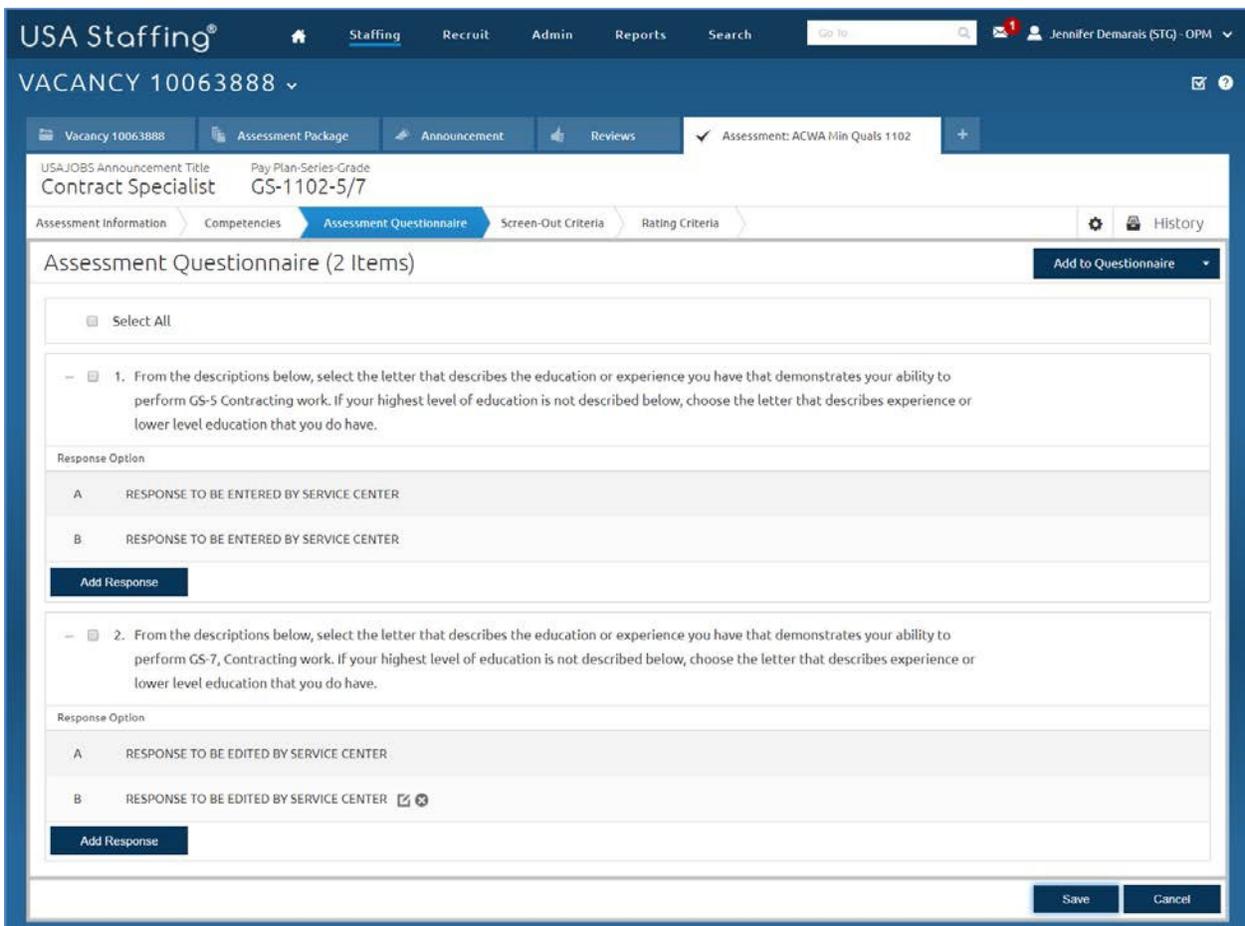
- Create Review
- Select Template (highlighted)
- Save as Template

The 'Select Template' option is highlighted with a blue background and a mouse cursor is pointing at it.

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



- 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. System-level ACWA templates must be edited before they can be used, because they do not contain full minimum qualifications questions.



- 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.

USA Staffing®

Staffing Recruit Admin Reports Search

VA Edit Screen-Out

Name \* Min Quals GS-5

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

Ineligibility Code \* IQID - You are ineligible because you do not meet th...

**i** 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

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C	My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Failed to respond	

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D	My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Failed to respond	

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 \*

**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**

Response Option	Status	Description
<input type="checkbox"/> A	Qualifying	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 type="checkbox"/> B	Qualifying	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 type="checkbox"/> C	Qualifying	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"/> D	Disqualifying	My education and/or experience is not reflected in any of the above statements.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disqualifying	Failed to respond

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.

**USA Staffing®** Staffing Recruit Admin Reports Search Go To Jennifer Demarals (STC) - OPM

VACANCY 10063888

Vacancy 10063888 Assessment Package Announcement Reviews +

USAJOBS Job Title: Contract Specialist Pay Plan Series/Grade: GS-1102-5/7 Status: Incomplete Source: ACWA 1102

Overview Job Analysis Assessment Plan **Categories** Test Plan Documents 0 Notes 0 History

**Categories** Final Score Cutpoint **Add Category**

Category Name	Final Rating Cutpoint
Best Qualified	90
Well Qualified	80
Qualified	70

**Category Settings**

Assign Categories based on 'GS-9+ Professional/Scientific' rules  1102-5  1102-7

Assign Categories based on Augmented Rating (Only use with Demo Projects that do not use Category Rating)  1102-5  1102-7

**Save Cancel**

- 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**.

The screenshot shows the USA Staffing interface for VACANCY 10063888. The 'Test Plan' tab is active, displaying a table of test scenarios. A red box highlights the 'Complete Assessment Package' button in the top right corner of the table area.

Scenario	Responses	Rating Combo	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome
Eligible both grades	A, A	1102-5	ELTE	✓ ELTE - 70
		1102-7	ELTE	✓ ELTE - 70
Ineligible both grades	C, D	1102-5	IQID	✓ IQID
		1102-7	IQID	✓ IQID
EL 5, IN 7	A, D	1102-5	ELTE	✓ ELTE - 70
		1102-7	IQID	✓ IQID

## Creating 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.

The screenshot shows the USA Staffing interface for creating a new assessment package template. The 'Copy from Template' button is highlighted with a red box, and a dropdown menu is open showing the 'Copy from Template' option.

- 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 shows the 'USA Staffing' Administration interface. The main header includes navigation tabs for Admin, Reports, and Search. The current page is 'Assessment Package Template: ACWA Social Insurance Specialist - 0105 (Copy)'. The 'Template Information' section is highlighted, showing fields for Template Name, Owning Office, and Tags. Below this is a 'Position Descriptions' table with one entry for 'ACWA Social Insurance Specialist - 0105'.

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	+

- Once the copied template has been saved with an appropriate name and owning office, complete the template according to the instructions in the **Copying a System ACWA Template into a Vacancy** 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.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Am I required to use ACWA assessments for all positions covered by the Luevano consent decree?
  - a. No, agencies are free to use any valid alternative assessment. USA Hire is a valid alternative to ACWA, and many of the ACWA series are covered by standard USA Hire assessments. USA. The full list of series can be found here: [https://help.usastaffing.gov/USASUpResCtr/images/c/cf/USA\\_Hire\\_ACWA\\_-\\_June\\_2017.pdf](https://help.usastaffing.gov/USASUpResCtr/images/c/cf/USA_Hire_ACWA_-_June_2017.pdf)
  - b. We encourage you to consult your Office of General Counsel before using an agency-developed ACWA alternative.
2. How do I request an ACWA assessment be added for a new series?
  - a. Submit a help desk ticket with the series and target date of need and we will add the assessment in approximately two weeks.