



### **Specific Questions to Consider When Developing & Reviewing Assessment Questionnaire Items for Automated Delivery**

1. Can you demonstrate the job-relatedness of each item? That is, do you have documentation that substantiates the relationship between the tasks performed on the job, the competencies (also called factors) being assessed, and the items being used to measure each competency?
2. Does each item measure the competency or factor it is intended to measure?
3. Does each item contain a precise (unambiguous) action verb, a direct object, and a qualifying statement? Example: Proofread (action verb) + outgoing correspondence (direct object) + to address formatting, grammatical, consistency, or typographical errors (qualifying statement)?
4. Does each item make sense with regard to the rating scale that is being used?
5. Is the item conveying one specific task? If the item is 'double-barreled', are both tasks always performed in conjunction with one another (i.e., You couldn't have experience performing one task and not the other)?
6. Is the item written in behavioral, observable, and verifiable terms (i.e., Would the applicant's previous supervisor, teacher, or colleague be able to verify the applicant's response?)
7. Is the wording of the item too broad or ambiguous in any way? (i.e., Will every applicant understand it in the same way? Is there a chance that the applicant could misinterpret the item? Or interpret it to his/her advantage?)
8. Is the item free of subjective terms or adjectives (e.g., effective, adequate, complex, all, some) or adverbs (e.g., accurately, highly, timely)? If a subjective term (e.g., complex) must be used, are qualifying examples included?
9. Is the item written as clearly and succinctly as possible, such that the applicant can read it once and respond accurately?
10. Particularly for positions being advertised externally (outside the agency), does the item avoid using any agency-specific jargon or terminology that applicants outside of the organization may not understand?
11. Particularly for entry-level positions, is each item written in a way that is specific enough to measure the competencies needed at the time of hire but general enough so that qualified applicants are not excluded based on details specific to the position?
12. Will each item help to differentiate among applicants (or, for example, will all applicants be able to rate the item high)?
13. Are all spelling, typographical or grammatical errors corrected and acronyms spelled out?
14. When reviewed collectively, do the items capture the most important aspects of each respective competency (factor)?
15. When reviewed collectively, is the number of items reasonable given the competencies being assessed? Can any items be removed without compromising the validity of the assessment questionnaire?

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*Note.* These questions are addressed in more detail in the Leadership and Talent Management Solutions training class, *Best Practices in Assessment Questionnaire Development*. Please contact your OPM representative or Roseanna Ciarlante ([Roseanna.Ciarlante@opm.gov](mailto:Roseanna.Ciarlante@opm.gov)) for more information.