

Checklist for the Review of Multiple-Choice Questions

Item Content

- Does the concept directly impact professional/occupational competence? (“Need to know” vs. “Nice to know”)
- Is it reasonable to assume that in general, competent individuals should know the answer to the problem posed in the stem?
- For scenario- or case-based questions, is the situation presented a realistic and reasonable one (i.e., not trivial or unusual)?
- Is the item of appropriate difficulty for the level of competence targeted by the certification?
- Does the item deal with a noncontroversial topic – one on which all experts would agree?

Stem

- Can you understand what is being asked without reading the options? (Cover the options during your initial review to determine whether the stem is clear and unambiguous.)
- Does the stem include the least amount of information necessary for understanding the question and selecting the correct answer (i.e., no extraneous information and not overly detailed)?

Options

- Do the options fit logically and grammatically with the stem?
- Are the options parallel and structurally similar to each other?

Distractors

- Are the distractors plausible, but clearly wrong? (What is the rationale for examinees to choose each distractor)?

Key

- Is there only one correct option listed?
- Is the key one on which there is consensus within the field?
- Is the key the same length and level of detail as the distractors?