

Guidelines from the American Board of Nuclear Medicine

Assessment of Item Stems

1. focus on a single issue, fact or problem in each item
2. keep items independent from one another to avoid cueing
3. avoid over specific knowledge
4. avoid textbook verbatim phrasing for items
5. avoid items based on opinion
6. avoid items for which there is not an accepted best answer
7. test important and significant material, avoid trivial facts
8. state the item positively - avoid negative phrasing
9. include the central idea and most of the verbiage in the stem
10. use one best answer format
11. use good grammar, punctuation, and spelling consistently
12. avoid excess information in the stem - avoid teaching
13. avoid the use of superlatives such as "always" and "never"
14. avoid the use of personal pronouns
15. attempt to write interpretation and problem solving items, minimize recall

Assessment of Item Responses

1. use the standard number of options
2. place options in a logical or numerical order
3. keep options independent and not overlapping
4. keep options in an item homogeneous in content
5. keep the length of the options fairly consistent
6. be sure all distractors are plausible
7. be sure all distractors are logical misconceptions of the best answer
8. avoid "all of the above"
9. avoid "none of the above"
10. phrase options positively, not negatively
11. avoid options that include slang
12. avoid absurd or "fantastic" options
13. avoid giving clues through the use of faulty grammatical construction
14. make sure there is one and only one best response (keyed correct response)
15. evenly distribute the position (1-4) of the keyed correct response

see <http://www.measurementresearch.com/media/evalguidelines.pdf>, Measurement Research Associates, Inc.