

Guidance for writing test questions

The Office of Continuing Professional Development (OCPD) requires the use of post-tests for online courses as the mechanism to ensure that the learner has completed the course and is eligible to receive the CE credits available for the course. Live courses may also require the use of a post-test if the course is offering Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Part II points. Our staff will notify you if a post-test is required for your course and will provide you with guidance regarding how many questions are required for your particular course.

Post-test questions must be authored by a content expert such as the faculty/presenter, planning committee member, or Course Director and provided to OCPD by the established due date to allow time for building and testing the post-test's functionality. Failure to do so will impact credit availability of a live course and will delay the publication of online courses.

Questions: contact cme@umn.edu



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Questions should be based on the content covered in the course. Consider the course objectives and major concepts covered during the course when writing your questions rather than specific statistics revealed during the course. Post-test questions are not intended to be a test of the ability to recall trivial information nor should it focus on the recall of factual information alone. The intent is to help the learner assess their ability to apply basic concepts from your course.

CE Portal utilizes Multiple Choice format for post-tests. A multiple choice question is constructed from a problem or question, known as the stem, and a list of suggested answer choices, known as alternatives. The alternatives include ONE correct alternative and incorrect alternatives, known as distractors.

When writing your question stem:

- be clear and unambiguous. Avoid vague terms like normally, usually, possibly and may
- state the stem as a direct question rather than an incomplete statement
- avoid unnecessary information or excessive verbiage in the stem

When writing your alternatives:

- use at least four alternatives but no more than six and avoiding alternatives such as, “Both A & B” etc.
- all alternatives should be plausible
- alternatives should be mutually exclusive
- alternatives should be grammatically parallel and fairly equal in length

CE Portal can accommodate case-based or scenario questions. Consider providing case details, data, or other information and develop a question that relates back to the case or data to allow learners to apply concepts, make a prediction or diagnosis.

ALL questions must include learner feedback! The question writer is required to provide an explanation to the learner that describes why the correct answer is correct and the others are incorrect. We encourage question writers to include citations to allow learners to engage in further review of a concept as necessary.

