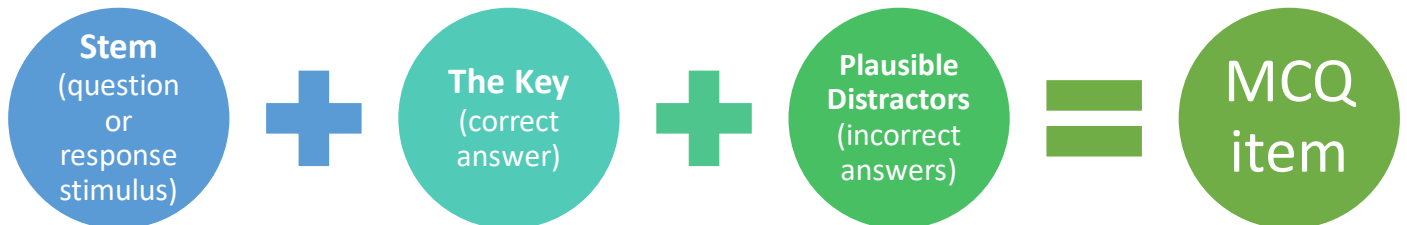


MCQ Components



Good Practice Guidelines – Top 10 Tips

Alignment to learning outcomes

1. Questions need to be aligned to subject learning outcomes and appropriate level/s of cognitive skill.

The Stem

2. **Avoid** open-ended or unfocused stems (e.g. “Oxygen can be used for...”). Put the central idea of the question in the stem so the student can reasonably determine the correct answer before reading the possible choices. Sometimes this is referred to as ‘**passing the cover test**’.
3. **Negatively** worded items should be used with **caution** (e.g. not; never). If you **do** use negative terms, make sure they are highlighted in some way (e.g. **bold**, underline, CAPITALS).
Note: if using underline in an online assessment format, the underline may be confused with a hyperlink so please use your discretion with this form of highlighting.

The Key and Distractors

4. Use **3-4** response options (i.e. 1 key and 2-3 plausible distractors).
5. **Avoid** absolute options (e.g. ‘none of the above’; ‘all of the above’) or vague options (e.g. ‘frequently’; ‘usually’; ‘probably’; ‘rarely’, ‘except’).
6. **Avoid** grammatical clueing or repeating part of the stem in the key or distractors.

Overall

7. When designing a series of MCQs, each question should be **independent** from one another to avoid one question providing a cue for another question.
8. The **location** of the key should be evenly distributed throughout the assessment to **avoid** placement bias.
9. Both the **key** and the **distractors** should be **similar** in terms of grammatical form, style and length.

Review

10. **Prepare** model answers and explanations for each question (i.e. why selections are right or wrong) for **student feedback** and peer review quality processes.

Further information and resources

- [MCQ References](#) (Readings portal)