

MATCHING, TRUE-FALSE, ESSAY, ORAL, AND SHORT-ANSWER ITEM-WRITING GUIDELINES

Matching Items

44. Use only homogenous subject matter.
45. Do not have the same number of items and options.
46. Arrange the list of responses in a logical order.
47. Keep the list of items brief.
48. Always place the entire task on the same page.

True-False Items

49. Avoid statements that are too general
50. Do not use negatives or double negatives.
51. Do not use long, complex sentences.
52. Do not include more than one idea.
53. If you are using an opinion, indicate the source.
54. True-false statements should be the same length.
55. Include the same number of true-false statements.
56. Do not use specific qualifiers such as: always, never, all, none, usually, sometimes, occasionally, may, or could.

Essay Questions

57. Frame questions so that the examinee's task is explicitly defined.
58. Specify the value and an approximate time limit for each question.
59. Employ a larger number of questions that require relatively short answers rather than only a few questions that require long answers.
60. Do not employ optional questions.
61. Verify a question's quality by writing a trial response to the question.
62. Prepare a tentative scoring key in advance of considering examinee responses.
63. Score all answers to one question before scoring the next question.
64. Make prior decisions regarding treatment of such factors as spelling and punctuation.
65. Evaluate essay responses anonymously.

Oral Examinations

66. Prepare a list of questions that will be used with all students.
67. Have at least two people evaluate the student.
68. Video/audio tape responses.

Short-Answer Items

69. A direct question is generally preferable to an incomplete sentence.
70. Structure an item so that the required response is concise.
71. For incomplete-statement types, restrict the number of blanks to one, or at most, two.
72. Place the blank near the end of an incomplete sentence or in the margin for a direct question.
73. Blanks for answers should be equal in length.
74. Provide sufficient answer space.