MCQ checklist

- Are the learning outcomes being supported or assessed?
- Is the question challenging enough?
- Can the answers be easily guessed?
- Is the question written in clear, straightforward language and sentences?
- Do they contain any words which might be misinterpreted or have several meanings?
- Could there be multiple potentially correct answers depending on the context or point of view?
- Are all the answers plausible/realistic?
- Are all the answers a similar length?
- The question isn’t posed negatively
- Is there suitable feedback provided for every answer?
- The feedback for incorrect answers doesn’t give the correct answer away
- Does the feedback for the correct answer advance the learning further or suggest additional areas for the student to explore?
What makes a good MCQ?

Good MCQs:

- check understanding of a concept
- check understanding and the application of a technique
- check previous understanding
- provide reinforcement
- reassure the learner
- keep the learner engaged.

What makes a bad MCQ?

- Questions can be guessed. Questions can seem pointless and the answers provide no useful data.
- Questions test only a vague understanding. Full knowledge or application isn’t needed.
- Irrelevant testing. The questions have been written because they were easy to write. They do not test key learning points.
- Insufficient challenge. Questions do not address the complexity and academic level of the material.
- Misreading issues. Confusing question phrasing or formats mean that learners can answer incorrectly by mistake; this is demoralising for the learner and creates misleading data.

Do’s and Don’ts when writing MCQs

- Do vary the position of the correct answer in the options available.
- Do keep answer options similar in length, make sure they all are phrased in a similar tone, and are grammatically correct.
- Do, if possible, avoid all of the above or none of the above options, as these are nearly always the answer and do not test the learner’s knowledge.
- Do use clear, straightforward language and sentences, and avoid words which might be misinterpreted or have several meanings.
• Do avoid ambiguous questions where there could be multiple potentially correct answers depending on the context or point of view.

• Don’t use question types that ask the learner to finish a sentence. Rephrase the question so it is a full sentence.

• Don’t use negative questions or options.