



The Medicare Proficiency Questionnaire (MPQ) User Guide

What is it?

The Medicare Proficiency Questionnaire (MPQ) is a survey that measures an individual's knowledge about Medicare. It was designed to assess both current and prospective beneficiaries' understanding across a range of Medicare topics. The MPQ was developed by selecting items from the 2003 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey and updating the measure to include questions related to Medicare Part D.

What is it for?

The MPQ can be used for a variety of purposes:

- To identify an individual's general knowledge so that Medicare advisors can tailor their advice accordingly.
- To enable Medicare beneficiaries and enrollees to assess their own strengths and weaknesses.
- To provide researchers with a reliable, quick to administer test that can be used as a predictor of Medicare task performance.

How do I administer it?

The MPQ can be administered either on paper or online.

What is the structure of the MPQ?

The MPQ includes 15 items that are answered with "true," "false," or "I don't know." The items cover the following categories: Medicare + Choice, eligibility for Medicare, Part D, beneficiary rights, Medigap, plan choices, and information and assistance. Respondents indicate whether each statement is true, false, or if they are unsure.

How do I score it?

Score each item as correct (1 point) or incorrect (0 points). An "I don't know" response is scored as incorrect. The sum of the points provides the total score.

How do I interpret scores?

Higher scores indicate greater Medicare knowledge. Although no representative norms are available, one study found that current Medicare beneficiaries scored higher on



average (10.4) than individuals enrolling for the first time (8.7). Education level was also associated with higher scores. Those with a college degree or higher scored about 10 on average, compared to an average score of 9 among those with some high school or some college education

Where do I find it?

The MPQ can be downloaded from here:

<https://create-center.org/resources/instruments-and-tools/medicare-proficiency-questionnaire/>

Want to learn more?

For more information about how the MPQ was developed, see:

Langston, E., Charness, N., & Boot, W. (2025). A short medicare proficiency questionnaire (MPQ): Reliability and validity. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648251334413>