

# Successfully Applying for Employment at the University of Idaho

TIPS FROM UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

## Read all instructions carefully

Reading and following the application instructions for each vacancy announcement could mean the difference between getting a position or not.

## Address Minimum and Desirable Qualifications

Answer EACH Minimum Qualification **thoroughly** using specific examples. Address as many Desirable Qualifications as possible using specific examples. Many people may meet the Minimum Qualifications, but not everyone will have your depth or combination of experience, knowledge, and skill.

## Screening

- Document screening begins upon receiving a completed application. Then the application will be screened to determine if the minimum qualifications are met. Only those applications meeting each of the minimum qualifications will continue to receive further consideration.
- The minimum and desirable qualifications are listed on the vacancy announcement.
- Please note: Experience refers to work performed for the benefit of someone else. For example, paid employment, internships, or volunteer work. Knowledge refers to information gained through course work or personal

### Remember:

- REVIEWING THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT THOROUGHLY BEFORE APPLYING IS KEY
- PROOFREAD FOR ERRORS
- BE DESCRIPTIVE AND THOROUGH

## Suggestions

### Be descriptive and thorough:

Help the reviewer understand the depth of your knowledge/skill/experience by using qualifying and quantifying language such as:

...”ranging from processing daily correspondence to coordinating bi-monthly mass mailings affecting 4000 subscribers”,

...“accountable for tracking a \$3,000,000 budget”,

...“responsible for increasing productivity 23% in a three-month period”, etc.

... “and I worked there for seven years.”

### Use Positive Language:

Focus on your strengths. Example: “I have provided multiple-line telephone support for the past six months at...” not, “I only have six months experience....”

Apply for University of Idaho positions online at

[www.uidaho.edu/human-resources](http://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources)  
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## Suggestions, Continued

**Use Action Verbs:** Try to use an active voice instead of a passive voice when presenting your materials.

- Example: Instead of writing “I did the Payroll transactions for my department”, try “I performed all functions associated with Payroll such as....”

### **Present Your Materials Effectively:**

- Formatting should be consistent throughout (indentations, alignment, margins, etc.) Remember, if you’re submitting a letter, format as for a letter.
- Make sure to use -ing and -ed appropriately (past and present tense.)
- 90% of the time the word “that” is not necessary. Make your letter smooth and precise.

## Proofread, Proofread, Proofread

Look for awkward or run-on sentences and correct them. Spell-check not only with your computer, but also by proofreading carefully. A word can be spelled correctly but be inappropriate for what you are attempting to communicate.

- Example: there vs. their, here vs. hear, etc. Having someone else read your documents is helpful.

## Reminders

- Express responses in complete sentences; do not use texting abbreviations or computer slang. Observe formal communication guidelines, such as capitalization and correct punctuation.
- A one-sentence response will not score highly.
- Be thorough, descriptive, and detailed ~ you know what you’ve got ~ tell us!
- Sign your letter - even if it is by simply typing your name at the end of your letter when applying online. An “unsigned” letter can demonstrate to the reader that the applicant is not thorough, does not wish to verify the accuracy of what they wrote, etc.

## Contact Information

Questions about information presented in this handout or about positions we have posted on our website can be addressed to:

University of Idaho Human Resources  
[hr@uidaho.edu](mailto:hr@uidaho.edu)  
(208)885-3638

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## Qualification Clarification — Understanding the Minimum and Desirable Qualifications

Confused about what the qualifications listed for a position really mean? The following definitions clarify what the requirements mean:

<b><u>Experience:</u></b>	Refers to skills obtained through work history. This is actual work experience and does not include training received, skills obtained through hobbies, schooling, or project work. Internship experience could be included as experience on a case-by-case basis.
<b><u>Education:</u></b>	Refers to college coursework or other formal training received. Education is usually referred to in terms of college degree. Depending upon the position requirements, partial degrees may be included. Wording such as "...or equivalent combination of education and/or experience totaling (XX) years" would indicate a partial degree may potentially be considered if actual work experience and years of education equal the total years listed.
<b><u>Knowledge:</u></b>	Refers to areas where applicant would have some information or know-how regarding a skill or area of expertise but no actual work experience. An example of this would be if a coworker was trained as a backup for another individual, but has never physically performed the work. That individual would have the know-how to do so, but has not put the knowledge into practice (which would then be experience).
<b><u>Good Knowledge:</u></b>	This terminology is used to qualify the strength of knowledge for the outlined subject matter/skills. For example, someone with good knowledge in an area may have taken multiple courses, workshops, or have had on-the-job training but still has not actually used the knowledge in performing work.
<b><u>Demonstrated Knowledge:</u></b>	This knowledge could be obtained through completing a course project, or through hobbies. For example, an individual who has researched and learned programming languages and programmed as a hobby would have demonstrated knowledge. If this individual also has done this as part of a paid job, it could also be work experience.
<b><u>Familiarity with:</u></b>	The individual would recognize the topic but would not necessarily have in-depth knowledge.
<b><u>Ability to:</u></b>	Ability to and knowledge go hand-in-hand. If an individual has knowledge in a specific area, then they would have the ability to perform that function. 'Ability to' does not require that the individual has performed the function previously, but having knowledge or experience in the area required would indicate the individual would have an ability to perform in the same capacity in a new position.
<b><u>Demonstrated ability to:</u></b>	The individual would not necessarily have had to demonstrate what they know of something, only to demonstrate an ability to perform a task such as rebuilding a computer by following instructions rather than by knowing the steps and why they are done.
<b><u>Physical ability to:</u></b>	This often refers to lifting, standing, walking, etc., requirements of the position. The individual is not required to have experience these areas, only have the physical capability of performing in the areas listed. Some positions require individuals to pass a screening showing they have the ability to perform the necessary functions, even if previously they had actual working experience where these functions were performed.

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## Action Words for Resumes

accomplishment	critiqued	functioned	mediated	reported
achieved	dealt	gathered	modified	researched
acquired	decided	generated	monitored	reviewed
adjusted	defined	governed	motivated	revised
administered	delegated	graduated	negotiated	satisfied
advised	delivered	guided	nominated	scheduled
analyzed	demonstrated	halved	observed	screened
applied	designed	handled	obtained	secured
arranged	detailed	headed	officiated	selected
assembled	determined	helped	operated	served
assessed	developed	identified	ordered	served
assisted	devised	implemented	organized	sold
attained	directed	improved	originated	solved
briefed	discerned	improvised	participated	sought
budgeted	discovered	increased	perceived	sparked
built	displayed	induced	perfected	specified
catalogued	distributed	influenced	performed	spoke
chaired	doubled	initiated	performed	stimulated
clarified	drafted	initiated	prepared	structured
classified	earned	innovated	presented	studied
coached	edited	inspected	persuaded	succeeded
collaborated	educated	inspired	pioneered	suggested
commanded	effected	installed	placed	summarized
communicated	employed	instructed	planned	supervised
compared	enacted	insured	presided	targeted
completed	encouraged	integrated	prioritized	taught
complied	engineered	intensified	processed	tested
composed	established	interpreted	procured	trained
conceived	estimated	interviewed	produced	transferred
concluded	evaluated	introduced	programmed	transformed
conducted	exchanged	invented	projected	translated
constructed	executed	investigated	promoted	unified
consulted	expanded	issued	proposed	updated
contacted	expedited	justified	proved	updated
continued	explained	keynoted	provided	verified
contracted	facilitated	learned	published	volunteered
contributed	finalized	led	qualified	won
controlled	financed	licensed	rated	wrote
converted	finished	located	recommended	
coordinated	forecast	maintained	reduced	
corrected	formalized	managed	referenced	
correlated	formed	manufactured	regulated	
counseled	formulated	marketed	related	
created	founded	mastered	reorganized	
repaired				

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## Action Words for Resumes — Adverbs and Adjectives

accurate	diplomatic	high-level	outgoing	successful
acuity	discrete	honest	outstanding	tactful
adept	diverse	humanizing	penetrating	talented
artful	driving	imaginative	perceptive	trained
astute	dynamic	improved	pioneering	uncommon
aware	easily	innovative	quick	unique
broad	effectively	instrumental	readily	unusual
calm	exceptional	leading	reliable	versatile
challenging	expert	lifelong	repeatedly	vigorous
competent	experienced	mastery	respected	
concerned	extensively	natural	responsible	
contagious	firm	new	sensitive	
creative	foresight	objective	significant	
dedicated	greatly	open-minded	sophisticated	
dependable	highly	original	strongly	

## Career Resource Help

The Department of Labor office in Moscow hosts workshops and can review your resume with you. They have many services to assist you including:

- Job searches – search tips, creating resumes and much more.
- Job market information.
- Job search workshops and networking opportunities.
- Computers and online access for employment-related needs.
- Career guidance and assessments.
- Career training.
- Specialized services for veterans, youth, adults, dislocated and senior workers.

The local Idaho Department of Labor office is located at 1350 Troy Road, Suite 1, Moscow, Idaho.

Contact Information:

208-882-7571

[moscowmail@labor.idaho.gov](mailto:moscowmail@labor.idaho.gov)

LOCAL IDAHO  
DEPARTMENT  
OF LABOR  
OFFERS  
SERVICES TO  
ASSIST JOB  
SEEKERS.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Exam: Supplemental Questionnaire
<p>* Answer EACH item using specific examples.</p> <p>* List all pertinent education and/or experience relating to this position. (including lists of coursework and descriptions, dates and locations)</p> <p>* List experience referenced in your responses on your University of Idaho job application form.</p> <p>* Information provided on a resume will not be accepted as a substitute for answering the following questions.</p>

**1. Please describe how and where you gained good knowledge of the following office support functions: (A) word processing and (B) composing a variety of business documents.**

List specific examples. If you are describing knowledge gained through coursework, please clarify when the course was taken and provide a brief description of the course

Answer

**How do you think you would effectively submit information for this question on the questionnaire?** (Please note that a supplemental questionnaire asks the applicant to respond to a series of questions based on the minimum and desirable qualifications. This example uses only one question as a demonstration.

### How you respond

### How your application is screened

<p>"Please see resume."</p>	<p>If this is a classified position, Human Resources screens for minimum qualifications (yes/no). This applicant would receive a "no" and not move forward to the hiring department with the reason given that they did not submit a complete application or follow instructions. The applicant would receive a letter or email notifying them that they did not pass minimum qualifications for the position.</p> <p>For Faculty, Exempt and Temporary/Student positions, the department screens the applications for minimum qualifications and will fail or score the applicant very low.</p> <p>A resume CANNOT substitute for other specific information requested. It is considered an accessory only to the application and letter of qualification.</p>
<p>You respond with, "At H&amp;H Building Supply, the Fisheries Department and Pet-Co."</p>	<p>Unless you mentioned enough information to demonstrate that you meet the minimum qualifications, then your application will not move forward to the hiring department. If your application does squeak by or it is a non-classified search, the hiring department will most likely give the application a low score for not providing specific examples as requested. They cannot give a high numeric score based on an applicant "telling" rather than "showing" that they are qualified.</p>
<p>You submit a few sentences saying that you have over 10 years of experience in similar positions of a higher level and therefore you meet and exceed all of the minimum qualifications and most, if not all, of the desirable qualifications. You have also submitted the requested resume, confident that it will show that you are a qualified candidate.</p>	<p>Your application may squeak by as long as we or the department can find enough information relating to each of the minimum qualifications, however, your application will most likely not score highly enough to justify an interview. Keep in mind we receive many applications for each position. Someone with less experience that provides enough detailed information showing us that they are qualified may score higher than someone with more experience that doesn't express their experience in a quantified or tangible way?</p>
<p>You respond by describing your relevant education, knowledge and/or experience relating to office support functions, making a point to specifically address each area we are asking about, a) word Processing and b) composing a variety of business documents. In your answer you include specific examples of work or knowledge gained for each lettered item and how you gained it.</p>	<p>This is what we want and need! Your application materials will pass the minimum qualifications in Human Resources and at the department level and will score higher numerically than those that provide a, b, or c as their application materials.</p>

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROVIDING A LETTER OF QUALIFICATION

Exam: Letter of Qualification
<p><b>IMPORTANT:</b></p> <p>To be considered your "Letter of Qualification" must address EACH of the minimum qualifications, including pertinent education and/or experience.</p> <p>Additionally, please provide information in support of your application regarding the desired qualifications as relevant.</p> <p>Information on a resume will not be accepted as a substitute for submitting a Letter of Qualification.</p>

**1. Please compose a letter to the search committee clearly addressing how you meet the qualifications listed on the vacancy announcement. In order to receive consideration, your letter must address each of the Minimum Qualifications. In addition, to improve your ranking during the evaluation process, address as many of the Desirable Qualifications as possible. You may copy and paste or type directly in the space provided, or upload a .doc or .pdf file.**

**How do you think you would effectively submit information for this part of the application?**

**How you respond**

**How your application is screened**

<p>"Please see resume."</p>	<p>If this is a classified position, Human Resources screens for minimum qualifications (yes/no). This applicant would receive a "no" and not move forward to the hiring department with the reason given that they did not submit a complete application or follow instructions. The applicant would receive a letter or email notifying them that they did not pass minimum qualifications for the position.</p> <p>For Faculty, Exempt and Temporary/Student positions, the department screens the applications for minimum qualifications and will fail or score the applicant very low.</p> <p>A resume CANNOT substitute for other specific information requested. It is considered an accessory only to the application and letter of qualification.</p>
<p>You respond with, "At H&amp;H Building Supply, the Fisheries Department and PetCo."</p>	<p>Unless you mentioned enough information to demonstrate that you meet the minimum qualifications, then your application will not move forward to the hiring department. If your application does squeak by or it is a non-classified search, the hiring department will most likely give the application a low score for not providing specific examples as requested. They cannot give a high numeric score based on an applicant "telling" rather than "showing" that they are qualified.</p>
<p>You submit a few sentences saying that you have over 10 years of experience in similar positions of a higher level and therefore you meet and exceed all of the minimum qualifications and most, if not all, of the desirable qualifications. You have also submitted the requested resume, confident that it will show that you are a qualified candidate.</p>	<p>Your application may squeak by as long as we or the department can find enough information relating to each of the minimum qualifications, however, your application will most likely not score highly enough to justify an interview. Keep in mind we receive many applications for each position. Someone with less experience that provides enough detailed information showing us that they are qualified may score higher than someone with more experience that doesn't express their experience in a quantified or tangible way?</p>
<p>You respond by describing your relevant education, knowledge and/or experience relating to office support functions, making a point to specifically address each area we are asking about, a) word Processing and b) composing a variety of business documents. In your answer you include specific examples of work or knowledge gained for each lettered item and how you gained it.</p>	<p>This is what we want and need! Your application materials will pass the minimum qualifications in Human Resources and at the department level and will score higher numerically than those that provide a, b, or c as their application materials.</p>



## **SCREENING**

During the screening process the search committee determines which applicants have the strongest set of experience, knowledge, skills and abilities in the required and/or desired areas listed for the position. The applications are first screened using a preliminary screening form in an effort to determine which applicants meet each of the minimum qualifications. In order for an applicant to receive consideration for a position, he/she must meet each of the minimum qualifications. The applicants that meet each of the minimum qualifications are then considered further using a scale to rate their level of strength in each of the minimum and desirable qualification areas. The applicants with the highest scores are those who will receive interviews.

The following is a sample set of qualifications as would be listed on the Vacancy Announcement for a position:

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

**Good knowledge of:** office support functions including word processing; filing; composing a variety of business documents; reception; and researching, compiling and summarizing data for reports.

**Experience:** interpreting, applying and explaining complex information such as regulations, policies or services; independently solving problems/performing liaison activities in a work setting; coordinating activities requiring complex arrangements.

### **ADDITIONAL DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:**

Office experience

Excellent knowledge of Word and Excel

Strong verbal and written communication skills

### **SAMPLE PRELIMINARY SCREENING FORM BASED ON THESE QUALIFICATIONS:**

The applications will be screened on the minimum qualifications using the following screening form. This will determine which applications meet all of the minimum qualifications and will receive continued consideration.

Good knowledge of: office support functions including word processing;	Y	N
Good knowledge of: filing;	Y	N
Good knowledge of: composing a variety of business documents;	Y	N
Good knowledge of: reception;	Y	N
Good knowledge of: researching, compiling and summarizing data for reports.	Y	N
Experience: interpreting, applying and explaining complex information such as regulations policies or services;	Y	N
Experience: independently solving problems/performing liaison activities in a work setting;	Y	N
Experience: coordinating activities requiring complex arrangements.	Y	N

\*\*\*If the applicant receives an "N" in any one of these areas, he/she does not meet minimum qualifications and will not receive further consideration.\*\*\*



**SAMPLE SECONDARY SCREENING FORM BASED UPON THESE QUALIFICATIONS:** The committee will screen the applications on each of the Minimum and Desirable Qualifications, assigning points according to the applicant's strength/weakness in these specific areas. The following scale is an example:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Weak		Average						Strong		
1. Good knowledge of office support functions including: word processing;	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
2. Good knowledge of filing;	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
3. Good knowledge of composing business documents;	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
4. Good knowledge of reception;	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
5. Good knowledge of researching, compiling, and summarizing data for reports.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
6. Experience interpreting, applying and explaining complex information such as regulations policies or services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
7. Experience independently solving problems/performing liaison activities in a work setting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
8. Experience coordinating activities requiring complex arrangements.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
9. Office experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
10. Excellent knowledge of Word and Excel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											
11. Strong verbal and written communication skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total _____
Comments: _____											

Grand Total Score \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend that the applicant be brought in for an interview?      Y      N

# Successfully Applying for Employment at the University of Idaho

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## Interviewing Tips

1. Arrive early - give yourself extra time to get there to allow for factors like getting lost or getting stuck in traffic. If you are unfamiliar with the area, ask where the nearest or best place to park would be.
2. Dress professionally and appropriately – choose clothing that will allow you to feel confident and also display a professional appearance.
3. Carefully review the job descriptions before the interview. You should go into the interview with a good idea of what the position's responsibilities and requirements are. This will enable you to think about how your strengths will enable you to meet the requirements and fulfill the duties. Think of your skills in terms of the position and try to relate examples of your work to what they are looking for. Review the 'Responsibilities' section for the percentages of time the employer anticipates the employee spending in that area. This will help you understand what is most important to the department when answering the interview questions.
4. Learn about the department or college – Knowing the department or college's needs and goals will allow you to brainstorm and connect your strengths to the goals. If the department or college has a website, the information posted there may provide you with some insight.
5. Listen carefully and answer the question – Listen to more than just the words that are being spoken. Determine what the question is truly asking and make sure that you provide clear examples that provide the committee with the information they are truly seeking.
6. Provide detail – a clear answer with many details showing the level of skill/experience you possess will assist the committee in determining your qualifications. Don't leave them guessing about your abilities. Ex. quantify how often you performed the task in question or how many budgets you managed.
7. Come up with good questions for the committee - Have a few questions ready about the position responsibilities, opportunities for training or skill improvement, and other questions related to the job. You can also ask about what will happen next in the hiring process. Should you call to follow up, or will the department contact you?

## Sample Interview Questions

- How would you describe your attendance and punctuality?
- What do you want out of your career in the short term? Long term?
- Do you have professional goals? What are they? What is your plan to accomplish your career goals?
- Describe a situation when there was a misunderstanding between yourself and a fellow coworker or supervisor. What caused the misunderstanding and how was it resolved?
- How do you think an effective supervisor should communicate with his/her employees? What do you think are the requirements to communicate well with one's employees?
- Give me an example of when you went the "extra mile" to cooperate with a difficult employee or situation.
- Tell me about two good decisions you've made and two poor decisions and your reasons for them. Why were they good or bad? What were your alternatives?

TRY  
ANTICIPATING  
WHAT TYPE OF  
INTERVIEW  
QUESTIONS YOU  
WILL BE ASKED  
AND PRACTICE  
ANSWERING  
THEM.

# Successfully Applying for Employment at the University of Idaho

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## Sample Interview Questions, Continued

- Do you prefer to take your time to think things through or do you usually make up your mind quickly?
- Give me an example of a difficult decision you had to make, and the process you used to make it.
- How do you determine whether or not you're doing a good job?
- Please provide a specific example of when you had to overcome one or more obstacles in order to get the job done. What were the obstacles? How did you overcome them?
- How do you keep up with technological changes in your field?
- What steps do you take to make sure your priority projects are accomplished?
- Describe the most difficult problem you have been faced within the last six months. What did you do to resolve the situation?
- What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
- Do you prefer to work a day that is set or planned, or do you prefer to address tasks as they come along? Why?
- Why should we hire you? What makes you a better choice over all our other applicants?

INTERVIEWS AT  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF IDAHO ARE  
TYPICALLY IN  
COMMITTEE WITH  
FOUR TO FIVE  
PEOPLE  
INTERVIEWING  
YOU.

- Tell me about your work history.
- What did you find disappointing or frustrating in your work?
- What criticism was made of your work?
- What do you consider to be your chief accomplishment in your present (previous) job(s)?
- What kind of references would you receive from your former employers?
- What prompted your decision to apply for this job?
- What irritates or displeases you most in other people?

## Make the Most of It

One last little bit of advice... Remember, the interview is your chance to SHOW the committee that you are not only qualified for the position, but you are the BEST qualified for the position. Use illustrative examples to show how your experiences match what they are looking for. Be confident in your skills and take the time to express your qualifications. You have a scheduled amount of time, usually 15-30 minutes, where the committee wants to hear from you. Use your time wisely. Avoid rambling answers or long stories that do not relate to the questions they are asking. Slow down and take the time to clearly express your interest. Give enough information in your responses so that the committee gets a clear picture of your qualifications. Do not assume that a previous job title or list of duties from your resume will tell enough about you in the screening stage that you do not need to expand on the information in the interview. Think a little before responding to the questions that require a complex response. This is your time; be confident and sell yourself!

Thank you for your interest in University of Idaho positions. Best wishes to you in your job search!