UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

SHOWCASING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

eCareer is the selection system that will ultimately be used for all hiring and promotional activities in the US Postal Service. Searching and applying for EAS positions is now easier with an online system you can access 24 hours a day, seven days a week and anywhere you have internet access.

NOTE: This particular tool discusses how best to present your experience and qualifications; and will reference other tools for more detailed guidance on certain aspects of the process.

Here is some information to assist you when completing your Candidate Profile and/or responding to a job posting.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

Your application is your opportunity to demonstrate to review committee members and/or selecting officials that you are the most viable candidate for the job. To do this you must effectively communicate that you have the qualifications necessary to perform the job and, that you are the best qualified.

Your application may go directly to the selecting official, or it may go to a review committee. The persons who review your application will assess how your qualifications will enable you to do the work required in the announced position. Reviewers will look for specific examples of your accomplishments which demonstrate that you possess the qualifications necessary to perform the duties of the job.

Review committees and selecting officials are trained on how to review applications and evaluate the qualifications of each applicant. The training emphasizes evaluating applications using a behavioral approach. This means that the individuals assessing your application are looking for your qualifications that are:

   a) directly related to the position requirements, and

   b) organized to show what you have done (behavior) that demonstrates each qualification.

Understanding what kind of information the reviewers and selecting officials are looking for should help you in preparing your application.

TIP: Carefully read the vacancy announcement for the position for which you are applying to ensure that you understand the job requirements. Tailor your accomplishments to emphasize the skills required for that position, addressing each job requirement.

<p style="text-align:center">Your Application May Be Your ONLY Spokesperson!</p>

In most cases, interviews are conducted *only* with the applicants deemed the <u>best</u> qualified either by the review committee or the selecting official. This places a significant value on your application! As a result, you need to plan accordingly and allow sufficient time for preparing your application. It may be your only avenue of communication with the reviewers.

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The foundation of the application, known as your <u>CANDIDATE PROFILE</u>, includes personal information, work and educational history. You will progress through the application by entering required information on different 'tabs' in the application. Most required entries of the application are intuitive and user-friendly; however, be sure to read the instructions that are included on the screens at each stage of the process.

For more detailed information, refer to the eCareer website.

WORK EXPERIENCE SECTION

In *eCareer*, <u>WORK EXPERIENCE</u> is the section of the application where you will have an opportunity to describe your work accomplishments. Each entry of work history allows for up to 1500 characters of text to demonstrate your major accomplishments and experience relating to that position. Your description should be:

- Concise and include important details of accomplishments.
- Use action verbs to describe your accomplishments.

  Example: "I managed a team of 10 sales representatives." This presents greater qualification than, "I was responsible for managing…"

- DO NOT ASSUME that the reader(s) will know the level of responsibility or achievements for a certain position – you want to focus on your personal job-related accomplishments.
- Relevant job-related work experience could be gained through volunteer activities.

TIP: Create the Work Experience entries in a word processing program. Most word processing programs have a 'count' feature that will help you to optimize your allotted text fields. To give you an idea – this paragraph (beginning with "TIP" and ending with "!") totals 360 characters!

<u>NOTE:</u> When you copy and paste from a word processing program into *eCareer*, a web based system, some characters may change. You should proofread and make any necessary changes to entries that has been copied and pasted into the system.

PRESENTING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

Keep this statement in mind as you develop your application:

MAKE IT EASY TO SEE THAT YOU ARE THE BEST QUALIFIED FOR THE POSITION.

This is a balancing act. You should give sufficient detail about your accomplishments so that reviewers have confidence that you possess strong qualifications as they apply to this position. At the same time, you do not want to overwhelm them with information that is more quantity than quality. You want to gain optimal value from every entry, with a clear focus on what you have accomplished, demonstrating that you can successfully perform the duties of the new position.

You need to ensure that in articulating your accomplishments, you are being factual and the information in your application supports your responses to the requirements in the vacancy announcement. For example, if you respond you have taken an EEO course, but have not listed this course or any training in your application, a question may be raised as to the accuracy of your responses and/or information.

TIP: Try to obtain as much information as possible on the vacant position. Gather information through research (e.g., site visit, available data or reports, interviews with employees, etc.) so that

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you can determine how your unique talents, education, or demonstrated experience will make you the best 'fit' for the job.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the *eCareer* system, the main section in which you present job-specific qualifications is the SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS. This should supplement the information you have already provided under WORK EXPERIENCE in such a way that reviewer(s) will see a complete and detailed summary of your qualifications and experience.

The review committee members and/or the selecting official are reading the information that you provide, specifically looking for how you meet EVERY requirement on the job posting. If your accomplishments do not speak directly to your qualifications, a reviewer is likely to give your application less consideration than one that does address the information necessary to make a decision. Therefore, you will want to plan your presentation accordingly. Remember:

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">**MAKE IT EASY TO SEE THAT YOU ARE THE BEST QUALIFIED FOR THE POSITION.**</p>

View the summary as a statement of the compelling reasons why you should be the successful applicant for the position. The summary of accomplishments should highlight your strengths and skills that best match the requirements listed on the job posting. The summary should be an organized representation of your key qualifications, areas of expertise and significant accomplishments that support your candidacy for the position for which you are applying.

A good template to use when presenting accomplishments is the three-part statement (STAR), as it will direct you to providing a complete example of an accomplishment. Using this format is not a requirement; but many applicants find it to be an easy-to-use guide for presenting their accomplishments in a way that reviewers can quickly identify qualifications.

S/T = Situation or Task	What problem or issue did you encounter that needed resolution or responsibilities that need to be completed?
A = Action	What action did you personally take to resolve the issue or demonstrate your experience or qualifications?
R = Result	What was the result? Did you accomplish the desired outcome?

Here is an example: "I transformed a disorganized, inefficient warehouse into a smooth-running operation by totally redesigning the layout. I drafted the workflow process; then met with the engineering department to outline the steps of moving the equipment. I developed and managed the project timeline, which was completed within 90 days. The new layout saved the company $5,000 in recovered stock."

This example, presented using the 'STAR' statement, demonstrates several qualifications - ability to: 1) manage a project: 2) recommend process improvements; and, 3) coordinate the work of teams. It presents the entire demonstration of meeting those qualifications, AND, in only 382 characters!

Qualifications need not be acquired through only work experience. We gather experience and qualifications in all kinds of settings – paid or unpaid work, education, community or civic affiliations. Take "Ability to prepare and track a budget" as an example. You may have acquired ability by managing a budget for some outside organization such as a community or service club, or for your own business, or from working within the Postal Service. Perhaps you completed courses in accounting or finance and have knowledge about and experience in these fields.

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You already know your job qualifications. However, individuals reviewing your application will make judgments based on the information you present. Try to look at your application from the viewpoint of a reviewer. Each qualification must be addressed, and it is in your best interest to ensure that the reviewer can identify and align each requirement with your specific accomplishments. It is not a requirement to address each of the qualifications *individually*.

A suggested approach to get you started is:

° Draft the Summary of Qualifications entries in a word processing program
° List the job posting requirements (either the requirement itself or the corresponding number)
° Develop an accomplishment to align with each requirement
° Some examples may demonstrate qualification for more than one requirement
° Utilize the 'character count' option and compare against the 6000 character allotment
° Proofread and make any necessary changes to everything that has been copied and pasted
° As necessary, you can now add or delete; but remember……

<div style="color:red; text-align:center; font-weight:bold">
MAKE IT EASY TO SEE THAT YOU ARE THE BEST QUALIFIED FOR THE POSITION.
</div>

FINAL TIPS

When writing your Summary of Accomplishments use active voice and verbs to describe your duties and accomplishments in more descriptive than passive verbs so that the reviewer can comprehend what you have done. For example, instead of saying "responsible" for analyzing customer satisfaction data," you could say, "Analyzed customer satisfaction data and provided reports to management highlighting areas for improvement." Instead of saying "Duties included safety procedures," you could say, "Maintained a strong safety record by reducing loss time accidents by 50 percent." Here are some examples of common action verbs:

Streamlined	Implemented	Merged	Resolved
Planned	Built	Created	Developed
Led	Designed	Managed	Turned around

Ensure that you communicate your thoughts properly. Your application should be logical, and contain no spelling or grammatical errors, or typos. After all, your application will also be a 'real world' example of your written communications skills, which is a large component of most of our EAS positions.

Short specific examples are much better than lengthy and wordy generalities. The longer your application is, the more opportunity you will have to lose the attention of the reviewer.

▪ Do not wait until the day before the job posting closes to attempt to complete your application.
▪ Allow yourself enough time to carefully prepare and review your application.
▪ Be certain to include examples addressing your accomplishments related to the vacancy.
▪ Do not assume that the reviewers (members of the review committee or the selecting official) know you or your work qualifications.
▪ Reviewers will consider only the relevant information you provide on your application.
▪ Do not rely solely on the written Summary of Accomplishments. Describe your prior work responsibilities and accomplishments in your Work History.

CLOSING THOUGHT

SHOWCASING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

Always remember that YOU are the key to your success in achieving the goal you wish to reach.