



Tips for Successfully Applying for Employment at the University of Idaho

Read all instructions carefully

Reading and following the application instructions for each posting could mean the difference between getting a position or not. The special instructions to applicants may vary depending on the position.

Address Required and Preferred Qualifications

Address EACH required qualification and as many applicable preferred qualifications as you can thoroughly throughout your application materials, using specific examples. Many applicants may meet the required qualifications for the position, but not everyone will have the same depth or combination of experience, knowledge and skills. Provide as much information as you can about how qualified you are, don't make the search committee search for it!

Proof your work

Typos on an application will instantly contradict any claims of having attention to detail. Read through all of your application materials, and more than once. Having someone else look through them is beneficial as well. Do not depend on spellcheck on your computer as it might not catch everything. A word can be spelled correctly but be inappropriate for what you are attempting to communicate.

Screening

How applications are moved forward

- Document screening begins upon receiving a completed application. Later, after the closing date or first consideration date stated on the posting, applications will be further screened to determine if an applicant meets required qualifications. Applications will not receive further consideration if it does not meet all required qualifications.
- 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 employment, coursework or personal research.
- Should you be selected to move forward in the search process, you will be contacted directly by the hiring department. This could be through email or phone, so make sure your contact info is up to date.



Suggestions

■ **Be descriptive and thorough:**

Help the search committee 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 4,000 subscribers”

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

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

... “I worked there for seven years”

■ **Use positive language:**

Focus on your strengths and what you have accomplished, not what you are lacking.

Example: “I have provided multiple-line telephone support for the past six months...”

Not: “I only have six months experience...”

■ **Use action verbs:**

Try to use an active voice instead of a passive voice when describing your skills and experience.

Example: “I performed all functions associated with Payroll such as...”

Not: “I did payroll transactions for my department...”

■ **Present your materials effectively**

Formatting should be consistent throughout (indentations, alignment, margins, etc.) Remember, if you are submitting a letter, format as a letter. Make sure you are using the appropriate tense and are consistent.



Qualification Clarification – Understanding the Required and Preferred Qualifications

Are you confused about what the qualifications listed for a position really mean? The following definitions should help guide you!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experience: 	<p>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 and volunteer experience could be included as experience on a case-by case basis.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education: 	<p>Refers to college coursework or other formal training received. Education is usually referred to in terms of college degree. Depending on the position requirements partial degrees may be included. Working such as "...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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge: 	<p>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 actually 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)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good Knowledge: 	<p>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.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrated Knowledge: 	<p>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 count as work experience.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Familiarity with: 	The individual would recognize the topic but would not necessarily have in-depth knowledge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ability to: 	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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrated ability to: 	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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical ability to: 	This often refers to lifting, standing, walking, etc., Requirements of the position. The individual is not required to have experience in 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.

Documents:

In addition to the online application, many job postings will require supplemental documentation be provided. Here are some examples of common documents you may be asked to provide:

Resume: A resume is a brief outline of experience (including volunteering or internship opportunities), education, recognitions/awards, participation in professional organizations and affiliations, and/or certification/licensure. You should also include your contact information such as name, mailing address, phone number, and email address. It is often 1-2 pages. Do not include sensitive personal information such as date of birth, social security number, gender, marital status, ethnicity, race, or photos. Resumes are often tailored to the position you are applying for.

Curriculum Vitae (CV): A CV is more lengthy than a resume, and most often used in academia, as it highlights all academic and professional experience. It should include all publications, presentations, projects, and any other accomplishments. A CV is often built upon year after year; therefore it is typical for it to be many pages long.

Cover Letter: A cover letter should explain why an applicant is qualified for a particular position in brief, concise, paragraphs using specific examples. Often it is just one page but could be two. It can be addressed generically to the search committee.

Letter of Qualification: A letter of qualification should address all required qualifications and any applicable preferred qualifications for the position, using specific examples from an applicant's experience and education. It can be multiple pages. Departments will often provide instructions for the letter of qualification in the "special instructions to applicants" section of the posting. It also can be addressed generically to the search committee.



Action Words for Resumes

Do you want your resume to stand out? Use these action words to illustrate your background and experience.

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



Action Words for Resumes – Adverbs & Adjectives

accurate	diplomatic	humanizing	outstanding	strongly
actively	discrete	imaginatively	patiently	substantially
acuity	diverse	improved	perceptive	successful
adept	driving	independently	personable	sustainable
ambitiously	dynamic	intellectually	pioneering	tactful
artful	easily	innovative	proficiently	talented
assertively	effectively	instrumental	quick	team-minded
astute	efficiently	leading	readily	technically
aware	energetically	lifelong	reliable	thoughtful
broad	exceptional	logically	repeatedly	timely
calm	expert	mastery	respectful	tireless
challenging	experienced	meticulously	responsible	thoroughly
competent	extensively	natural	sensitive	unique
concerned	firm	new	skilled	unprecedented
contagious	foresight	objective	significant	vast
creative	greatly	open-minded	sophisticated	versatile
dedicated	high-level	original	steadily	vigorous
dependable	honest	outgoing	strategic	world-class

Reminders

- Express responses in complete sentences and do not use texting abbreviations or other slang. Observe formal communication guidelines such as capitalization and correct punctuation.
 - A one-sentence response will not score highly.
 - Be descriptive, thorough and detailed. You know what you've got, tell us!
 - Sign your letter, even it is by simply typing your name at the end. An unsigned letter can demonstrate to the committee that the applicant is not thorough or does not wish to verify the accuracy of what they wrote.
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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. Think about how your strengths will enable you to meet the requirements and fulfill the duties, using examples from your background. 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. For example, 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. Do your research about the department and the university in general. 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?
- 8. Promptly write a thank you note to the committee.** You can write a handwritten note, or send an email if time is an issue. Make sure the note arrives as soon as possible after the interview, as committees often move quickly. It should be brief and demonstrate your continued interest in the position and offer gratitude for the committee's time.

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? How does this position fit into 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?
- 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 as it relates to this position?
- 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?
- Tell me about your work history.
- What did you find disappointing or frustrating in your last position?
- 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?

You've got this!

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 applicant 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 30 minutes to an hour, 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 and ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.

Thank you for your interest in employment at the University of Idaho! If you would like to speak someone about the application process, please email employment@uidaho.edu or call (208) 885-3611.

Other Helpful Career Resources

■ **The Idaho Department of Labor** provides the following resources to Idaho job seekers:

- Job search assistance including 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.

Visit <https://www.labor.idaho.gov/dnn/Local-Office-Directory> for information on reaching out to your local Idaho Department of Labor office.

■ **University of Idaho Career Services** provides career resources to UI students and alumni:

The Career Services office is strongly motivated by one key goal: *Your Future is our Mission*. We also proudly support the concept of *Once A Vandal, Always a Vandal*. We accomplish both by offering all University of Idaho students and alumni with free services and resources that empower them as they make critical life decisions and pursue career success, by facilitating career exploration, experiential learning opportunities, and access to employers.

Whether you are a current student or alumnus, whether you are in Moscow, ID or Moscow, Russia, Career Services is only a call, click, or email away. We offer the following services and appointments in-person, via videoconference, phone, or email:

- Lifetime access to Handshake career platform (jobs, internships, connecting with employers)
- Resume, CV, and Cover Letter Development and Reviews
- Major and Career Exploration
- Career Assessments and Inventories
- Help with Job/Internship Search
- Interview Prep and Practice Interviews
- Graduate School Applications & Preparation
- Personal Statements, Application Essays, and Teaching/Research/Diversity Statements
- Salary & Benefit Negotiations
- Developing your Online Presence in Handshake and LinkedIn
- Portfolio Reviews
- Assistance with Applying for Jobs at the University of Idaho
- Federal Government Resume and Applications
- Resources for Working Internationally
- Workforce & Economic/Labor Data Resources
- Multiple in-person and virtual Career Fairs and Employer Connection Events every fall and spring

You can learn more about all of our services and scheduling an appointment at: <https://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/career-services>.