



Letter to Applicants

We often receive questions regarding applicants not receiving interviews for positions. Often times it is because of incomplete or insufficient resumes or applications. Federal government personnel offices have very strict grading requirements. If an applicant does not receive a certain number of points based on the content of their application or resume, it may not be included in the packet sent to the selecting official who conducts interviews. Here is how it works...

Each job announcement has a Qualifications section. Sometimes it's a paragraph, sometimes bullet points. When a paragraph, break each sentence out into one (or more) bullet points. Here's an example for a Community Recreation Aid position:

QUALIFICATIONS

The incumbent must hold a high school diploma or GED. Must be able to learn MWR policies, rules and regulations, involving the Community Recreation program. Must have ability to communicate orally and in writing. Successful completion of a National Agency check is required upon employment. Obtain Emergency First Responder or CPR certification, Food Handlers and C.A.R.E. training, where applicable within the first 90 days of employment. Basic reading comprehension in order to adhere to published rules, regulations, standard operating procedures, checklists, and other guides. Basic custodial tasks. Basic computer operations and keyboarding. Basic arithmetic. Basic customer service skills.

This translates into:

Qualifications:

- high school diploma or GED
- ability to learn policies, rules and regulations
- ability to communicate orally and in writing
- basic reading comprehension in order to adhere to published rules, regulations, standard operating procedures, checklists and other guides.
- basic custodial tasks
- basic computer operations
- basic arithmetic
- basic customer service skills

*there were a couple of other things in the paragraph, e.g. background check upon hire and training required w/in 90 days; those can be left off of this since they're "after hire" requirements

Although most people have not already written resumes for their first job and rely on standard applications, it's much easier to submit a resume format (in my opinion) in order to get adequately graded; although you could theoretically put the information in the various sections of the application. Below is an example resume for this position, for someone with little or no work experience (although the format would be almost identical for a higher level position with lots of relevant work experience):

John Doe
123 ABC Street
Meridian, MS 393##
601-###-####
johndoe@email.com

Qualifications

(This section changes with EVERY job you apply for)

- High School diploma from [Insert High School and Year Graduated]

Continued on next page...

- Ability to learn policies, rules and regulations, as evident by graduating from [*Insert High School*]
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing, as evident by graduating from [*Insert High School*]
- Basic reading comprehension in order to adhere to rules, regulations, standard operating procedures, checklists and other guides, as evident by graduating from [*Insert High School*]
- Ability to perform basic custodial tasks, with knowledge gained through 5 years of performing chores of sweeping, mopping, mowing the lawn, and other similar chores at home, and through 2 years of experience performing these duties while babysitting for various employers.
- Ability to perform basic computer operations, gained through 4 years of utilizing computers at [*Insert High School*]
- Ability to perform basic arithmetic, as evident by graduating from [*Insert High School*]
- Basic customer service skills, acquired through 2 years of babysitting for various employers, and through 2 years of volunteering for [*Insert Organization*].

Employment History

(This section can stay the same for each job applied for)

Title: Babysitter

Employer: [*Insert Employer, for this particular circumstance "Various Employers" may be applicable*]

Dates: [*Insert range of employment*]

Duties: *(This section is at the applicant's discretion and is really dependent on the position being applied for. The more complex the job, the more there may be a need to dive into the duties to support the claims of the qualifications. Recommend at least a general description of a couple of sentences or a few bullet points.)*

Education

School: [*Insert School Name Here*]

Dates: [*Insert dates of attendance*]

Diploma: [*Insert major, seal, etc., if applicable*]

**The following three items are examples of extras to add, that can make you stand out compared to other applicants...*

Awards

Extracurricular

Volunteering

(Write Volunteer items similar to Employment History to support qualifications!)

References

(List 3 of them)

Name: [*Insert Name*]

Position: [*Insert Position/Employer*]

Phone: [*Insert Phone #*]

****END OF RESUME***

If you are submitting an application instead of a resume, still be sure to pay attention to the Qualifications section of the announcement. Be sure to find a place to list as many of these required qualifications as possible. Put applicable qualification bullet points under the duties of the applicable employer. List volunteer positions in the employment areas (noting that they are volunteer positions) and indicating the appropriate qualification bullet points. Be sure to use the "Additional Skills" section to include qualifications to maximize possible points.

Please note that the content in this letter is based on my opinions and experience. It is meant to be helpful, but is not the only way to do it, and there is a lot of guidance out there if you look for it. I hope you find this helpful, and we look forward to receiving your resume or application soon!

JONATHAN COLE
MWR DIRECTOR, NAS MERIDIAN