

Consolidated Staffing Unit (CSU)



Applicant Guide

Prepared for Bureau of Prisons Employees
by the
Consolidated Staffing Unit
Grand Prairie, Texas
(972) 352-4200
Fax: (972) 352-4577
E-mail: GRA-HRM/ConsolidatedStaffingUnit@bop.gov

April 2007



This document addresses some frequently asked questions, pointers on how to maximize consideration for positions, issues to avoid in the application process, and some reference tools that may assist you in your endeavors to switch positions or promote within the Bureau. In evaluating this document, we hope you will gain a better understanding of what is required to be submitted, the importance of the information submitted, and how you can maximize your application.

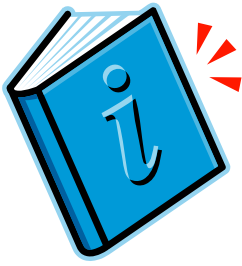


Table of Contents

Frequently Asked Questions	4
Positions Requiring Transcripts	19
Common Errors Associated with:	
GS-006 Series	20
GS-030/ GS-188 Series.....	21
GS-101 Series	23
GS-510 Series	24
GS-1102 Series	26
GS-1710 Series	27
How Do I Qualify?	28
Describing Work Experience	29
Qualification and Résumé Tips	30
Power Words	32
USAJOBS/BOP-Careers User Guide	34
Open Continuous User Guide.....	41
Sample Résumés	46



Frequently Asked Questions



How does BOP-Careers work?

BOP-Careers is an automation process that streamlines the federal hiring process. Interested applicants can review vacancy announcements and answer position-specific questions while on-line. The system also allows applicants to create, edit and archive up to five electronic résumés in USAJOBS. After the vacancy announcement closes, the Consolidated Staffing Unit uses the system to review résumé data for qualifications and it provides scoring values of the candidates according to pre-established criteria associated with KSAs, awards, and performance. The best qualified candidates are identified and forwarded to selecting officials through electronically generated certificates.

What types of positions will be filled using BOP-Careers?

All General Schedule and Wage Grade positions in the Bureau of Prisons (except AW and Wardens - Management Selection System) will be filled using BOP-Careers.

Is BOP-Careers secure?

Yes. Our vendor, Monster Government Solutions, hosts the application, and it runs on a secure database system with the Bureau of Prisons as the owner of the data. The system meets the Department of Justice's information security requirements. The information is maintained in accordance with Privacy Act requirements.

Why did we adopt the BOP-Careers System?

BOP-Careers is a streamlined, fair, and more consistent application, rating, and ranking system for applicants. In addition, it falls in line with the intent of OMB initiatives, as well as, the Merit System Principles. It provides access to staff 24 hours a day and applicants can apply on line from home, their local library, café, etc. You may apply anywhere with an Internet connection.

Why should staff feel comfortable with the system?

Applicants can feel confident in a fair and impartial system of evaluation. The CSU is a remote site with no direct ties or vested interest to any one location. It is required to follow all personnel rules and regulations and is subject to oversight and auditing to ensure compliance. It is designed to streamline functions for the field and for you. Like anything new, there is a transition. Most staff, who have applied to several jobs, really

like the system. If you have a well-prepared résumé in USAJOBS, it takes very little time to apply to subsequent vacancies.

How do I search for open BOP-Careers vacancy announcements?

You may search and apply for open vacancy announcements through USAJOBS.

There are several ways open vacancy announcement information may be obtained. The most direct is for employees to register in USAJOBS (which will need to be done to apply for a job) and request e-mail notification (to the e-mail address of choice) when a position of interest is advertised. The registration process is simple to follow and guides the applicant on a step-by-step basis.

A faster means to obtain this information is to conduct an agency search on the USAJOBS site via SallyPort. Accessing USAJOBS via SallyPort removes some of the search criteria necessary (i.e., Federal Prisons or Bureau of Prisons) to conduct a narrower search. To access USAJOBS via SallyPort, the following steps are to be taken:

- click on Links, BOP Links
- select Employee Resources
- scroll down about halfway down the page and the Career Opportunities box will be visible
- select USAJOBS - BOP page

Once the last selection is made, the user will be taken to the USAJOBS site, from there:

- enter a particular series, or highlight "Select All"
- enter a particular location, or highlight "Select All"
- answer "Yes" to the three questions located at the bottom of the screen ("Yes" must be selected to view internal merit promotion announcements).

The results, depending on what was entered, will display all available jobs under a single occupational series (i.e., 1101), or all open announcements in the BOP (both BOP-Careers, as well as local and Nationwide announcements).

Why should I register ahead of time?

You should register, even if the job you want is not currently advertised, for primarily three reasons. First, it familiarizes you with USAJOBS. Secondly, it saves you time when your desired job is announced. Lastly, and probably best for you, once you register, just indicate that you want to be notified by e-mail when a job of your liking is announced! This feature greatly eases your job search and helps you avoid missing a promotion opportunity.

What if I don't have an e-mail address?

It is permissible to use your government e-mail address in accordance with the Standards of Employee Conduct and the Rules of Behavior regarding computer usage. The e-mail address you enter during registration must be a usable address (i.e., Jdoe@bop.gov). Talk to your Computer Services Manager if you need help with your government e-mail address. Additionally, there are several Internet Service Providers that offer free email accounts, such as Hotmail, Lycos and Yahoo. You can access one of these providers from a non-BOP computer, to register for a free email account.

Why do I have to use USAJOBS to apply for a job?

Most Federal agencies use USAJOBS to recruit applicants for their positions. The Bureau of Prisons has integrated its job search system with USAJOBS to make it quicker and easier for applicants to find and apply for jobs in which they are interested. You must create a user account and at least one Federal résumé at USAJOBS. Information you provide in USAJOBS is general information completed by applicants. The information you provide and your Federal résumé will become part of your application and will automatically be transferred to the BOP-Careers System, when you apply on-line.

What happens in the BOP-Careers System?

In BOP-Careers, you will answer vacancy specific questions necessary to evaluate your qualifications for the specific job to which you are applying. When completed, the information you provided at USAJOBS and the answers to the questions will become your application. After the vacancy closes, the Human Resource Specialist uses the BOP-Careers System to identify best qualified candidates and refer them for consideration for the vacancy.

When exactly do jobs close in BOP-Careers?

Job Announcements close at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), on the closing date of the vacancy announcement. After midnight, jobs that have closed will no longer be available for viewing or applying.

Can I create a résumé online?

Yes, during your registration with USAJOBS, you should complete a Federal résumé. (Ensure you annotate your BOP history with a narrative of experience by a breakdown of duty locations and/or position changes). In fact, you have the capability of creating and storing up to five résumés. Once created, you can update or change your résumés. When you apply for a particular vacancy, the system automatically attaches your selected résumé to that particular vacancy announcement as part of your application. If you apply for more than one vacancy, you may wish to tailor your résumé at that time to correspond more closely with the new vacancy announcement.

What if I need help applying online? What if I don't understand the process or get confused along the way?

Help is available either by phone or e-mail. The Consolidated Staffing Unit utilizes a help desk system. It can be reached at (972) 352-4200 (M-F 6:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., CST) or via e-mail at BOP-HRM/Consolidated Staffing Unit (internal) or GRA-HRM/ConsolidatedStaffingUnit@bop.gov. However, help does not include providing applicants with the answers to the vacancy questions.

Brochures, pamphlets, and flyers have been forwarded to each Employee Services Office for distribution. Visit your local Employee Services Office, or you may access the information from the Employee Resources page.

If you are halfway through your application (vacancy questions and KSAs) and have to stop, will the system save your input?

Yes, your responses will be saved provided you click the "save" icon at the bottom of each page prior to leaving the system. Clicking on other USAJOBS tabs during the application process will not save your information. To complete the application from where you left off, you must search for the announcement vacancy, click "Apply Online", log in to USAJOBS to retrieve and select your desired résumé, and continue with the application process. NOTE: Any alterations to your application will be overwritten once you click save.

What happens if I don't submit a résumé with my personal information when applying for a job?

You must complete a USAJOBS résumé to apply online for a vacancy. If you do not submit a résumé by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on the closing date of the vacancy announcement, you will not be considered for that position.

Can I submit my résumé via e-mail?

No. In order to apply for positions in BOP-Careers, you must log into USAJOBS and apply on-line.

How important is the résumé?

Critical. The résumé plays a critical role in the application process. First of all, it is utilized in conjunction with your responses to determine your qualifications. Secondly, if you make BQ, it is forwarded to the selecting official for review along with all other résumés on the BQ list. Therefore, your résumé should be thorough and document your Bureau history and any outside experience that is applicable toward the job for which you are applying. The résumé could be the difference between qualifying and not qualifying or could mean the difference between being selected over another candidate or not.

How often can I update my résumé?

You can update your résumé at any time. In USAJOBS you can save as many as five résumés. You may update the résumé/application submitted to a job announcement until 11:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST), on the closing date of the vacancy announcement. If you update your résumé and want to include the updated résumé with your vacancy application, you must re-apply to the vacancy and send the updated resume.

When I fill out my résumé, I run out of characters in the first section. Is it possible to expand the characters available?

No, but in the USAJOBS Résumé Builder you can add a second employment field by selecting "Add Work Experience" and then continue entering your duties. USAJOBS allows you to add supplemental information, up to 22,000 characters, while in the résumé builder section. If applicants wish to copy and paste résumés, it is advisable to convert your material to "Plain Text" in lieu of the common "Rich Text".

If the system only accepts online applications, how do I send other attachments, such as my college transcripts, etc.?

You do not need to send additional documentation, unless it is stated on the vacancy announcement and/or you are using education to qualify. If additional documentation is required, you have the option of mailing, scanning, or faxing it to the announcing office

(address/fax/e-mail listed on vacancy announcement). Make sure you annotate your documentation with your name and vacancy announcement number.

How can applicants upload attachments to the résumé?

Currently, there are no functions which allow you to upload attachments to your online application.

Can I save my application for one position and use it for another?

You can save a copy of your résumé for future use. You can also save up to five résumés in the USAJOBS system. If you have multiple résumés you can tailor them for the jobs for which you are interested. You cannot however, save an entire electronic application and resubmit it.

If I am missing something with my application, will someone call me and let me know?

No. Every applicant is responsible for following the instructions as outlined in the vacancy announcement and submitting all required supporting documentation to the Consolidated Staffing Unit. There are no exceptions. All applicants are treated equally. Your supporting documentation must be received by the Consolidated Staffing Unit by the closing date of the vacancy announcement. To confirm receipt of supporting documentation (i.e., transcripts, DD-214, licensures, etc . . .) Send an e-mail request to GRA-HRM/ConsolidatedStaffingUnit@bop.gov. Make sure your request includes the vacancy announcement number and the documentation sent. You will receive e-mail confirmation of receipt of your documentation from the Consolidated Staffing Unit.

NOTE: Applicant data is not reviewed until after the position closes.

How quickly will my application be rated?

Your application will be rated by BOP-Careers upon completion and final submission of the vacancy questions. However, a quality review of your qualifications and the information provided will be conducted by a Human Resource Specialist at Grand Prairie before the rating is finalized.

Should an applicant retain a copy of his/her application once complete?

Yes, applicants should retain all copies of the application process for their records including the vacancy announcement, résumé, and application confirmation page.

Is there any way I can see which positions I have applied for or find out the status of these vacancies?

There are three methods for tracking your application. First, you can print the application confirmation screen from USAJOBS when you complete the application process. Second, you can request to receive a copy of your responses to the application questions and a copy of your résumé when you finish applying for jobs in BOP-Careers. Third, you can review you applications online when you login to USAJOBS and select “ Track your online job Applications.” This will allow you to view your USAJOBS online application history.

When requesting assistance from a Human Resource Specialist at Grand Prairie, please have the vacancy announcement number and title of the position available.

Will BOP-Careers accept paper applications?

No. Exceptions will be made in the instance of extreme hardship cases (e.g., BOP employee on active duty in a remote area without internet access, a non-BOP applicant lives in a remote area where it would pose a major hardship for the applicant to get to a computer in any location). The Consolidated Staffing Unit will assist applicants in any way possible to submit their applications online by the closing date of the vacancy announcement. Applicants who meet hardship criteria will be requested to respond to the same questions as applicants applying online and submit a signed copy to the Consolidated Staffing Unit prior to the closing date. The Human Resources Specialist will input the data into the system on the applicant's behalf for the specific job for which the applicant is applying only. To obtain a paper application, you **MUST** contact the Consolidated Staffing Unit before the closing date of the vacancy announcement.

How is my application rated?

The responses you provide to the questions are the basis for the numerical rating calculated by the system, in accordance with the weighting of questions as determined by the crediting plan for the position.

NOTE: Qualifications are reviewed by a Human Resource Specialist at Grand Prairie.

How specific do I need to be when detailing my qualifications?

Applicants need to provide detailed information regarding their qualifications. Your response to the specialized experience question in conjunction with your résumé is used to determine qualifications. Your responses should contain your core duties. Be specific. If the duties were performed on a part-time basis, you **MUST** indicate the number of hours and length of the time the duties were performed. In addition, if you make the BQ List, the selecting officials will be reviewing your résumé. It is an opportunity to present yourself as a viable candidate for selection.

How do I know what the qualifications are for a job?

In each vacancy announcement there is a description of some benchmarks/ examples of the types of experience that are being sought. This outlined experience is related to the position, the position description, and the qualification standards handbook. All of these things are generally available to the applicant. You will already have the vacancy announcement and if the position description is standardized, you can access the position description via Sallyport from the Resources tab. The Qualifications Handbook is available at www.opm.gov. These tools may assist you in 1) identifying whether you have the required experience; 2) identifying any education or minimum qualifications required; and 3) serving as an excellent tool when developing your résumé.

If I apply for a job in the same series as the job I currently hold, does my résumé and vacancy application need to be specific or am I automatically qualified?

No, you are not automatically qualified. Applicants are responsible for providing detailed information regarding their qualifications for a position. Therefore, each application must contain a sufficient amount of detailed information in order to determine qualifications. The applicant's résumé should contain this information.

If a position has an educational requirement, do I have to submit transcripts each time I apply?

Yes. If the position has a positive educational requirement or a minimum educational requirement, the applicant must submit transcripts for verification. Once this determination is made, the specialized experience requirements are then reviewed. Applicants should maintain an official copy of their transcripts. The Consolidated Staffing Unit will accept a copy of the transcript. For example, a Case Manager applying for a CMC position, must submit transcripts. The 101 occupational series has a basic or minimum educational requirement that must be verified before a determination is made

as to whether the applicant meets the time-in-grade and specialized experience requirements.

I have some credits toward a degree but have not obtained my B.A. Should I ever submit transcripts for a job?

Yes, if the position allows for education to be creditable toward qualifying for a position or for a combination of education and experience. Generally, the vacancy announcement will identify when a combination of education and/or experience can be utilized. Sometimes, if you come up short on experience, the education you did complete can be prorated and utilized to meet the qualification requirements. For instance, in order to qualify for an Employee Services Specialist, GS-05, an applicant would need to possess a 4 year degree or 3 years of general experience. If you were applying to this position and had 1 ½ years of general experience, you would possess 50% of the required experience requirement. If you also had an Associate's Degree, you would possess 50% of the required educational requirement. Your experience would (50%) would be combined with your education (50%) in order for you to meet 100% of the qualification requirement for the position.

Since BOP-Careers will rate me according to my self-assessment and response to the questions, what prevents me from selecting those choices which appear to carry greater weight?

Nothing will prevent you from doing this. However, intentionally falsifying or answering questions to mislead the automated process is no different than providing false or misleading information on your application under the paper process. Applicants are reminded that this is a federal job application system. Providing intentional false information, creating fake ID's or Social Security Numbers, or failing to answer all questions truthfully and completely may be grounds for not hiring you, for disbarment from Federal Service, or for dismissal after being hired. Intentionally falsifying a Federal job application, attempting to violate the privacy of others, or attempting to compromise this system is punishable by fine or imprisonment (U.S. Code, Title 18, section 1001).

I selected answer choice #1 for all my KSAs. Does this mean I scored the highest possible points for each KSA?

No. The answer choices for each KSA response have different numerical values. Selecting answer choice #1 does not necessarily correspond with the highest numerical value for a particular KSA. The KSA answer choices are in no particular order. Read each answer choice carefully and select the one that best describes your experience.

Should I complete the narrative follow up question? Will CSU review my answer?

When completing the KSAs, applicants select the answer choice which best describes their experience. Should the applicants possess experience similar, but not exact to those listed, applicants may select the "similar experience" answer choice and provide a narrative response. The narrative response is only required if the applicant selects the "similar experience" answer choice. However, answering the narrative response with "All of the above" is not acceptable and will result in your answer choice being changed to "None of the above."

Where do I enter my Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)?

Applicants are given a series of answer choices which describes the position's KSA's. Applicants then select the answer choice which best describes their experience. Should you possess experience similar, but not exact to those listed, you may select the "similar experience" answer choice and provide a narrative response.

How will the HR Office verify my experience, education or responses to my questions?

BOP-Careers does not diminish or abolish the HR Specialist's role in verifying qualifications of individuals. The résumé, can be used to clarify or support the information you provided when answering vacancy questions. If you are a current BOP employee, the HR Specialist has access to your official personnel record.

Do I need my last SF-50 and performance evaluation when applying under BOP-Careers?

No. BOP-Careers eliminates the need for paper with the exception of education/transcripts, licensures, and other documents specific to a particular vacancy announcement. The vacancy announcement will identify any documents that need to be sent separate from the electronic system. Otherwise, most positions can be handled simply through the automation process itself.

What if someone submits false information?

BOP-Careers is a Federal job application system. Providing intentional false information, creating fake IDs, or failing to answer all questions truthfully and completely may be grounds for not hiring, for disbarment from Federal employment, or for dismissal after a person begins work. Intentionally falsifying a Federal job application, attempting

to violate the privacy of others, or attempting to compromise the operation of this system may be punishable by fine or imprisonment (see US Code, Title 18, section 1001).

I am currently in a position which requires minimum education requirements (i.e., case manager, supervisor of education). Do I still need to provide a transcript when applying to a position in the same occupational series (i.e., 0101, 1710)?

Yes. If the position has a positive education requirement or minimum education requirement, the applicant must submit transcripts to verify they meet the basic qualifications for the position. Once this determination is made, the specialized experience requirements are then reviewed. Applicants should maintain an official copy of their transcripts. CSU will accept a copy of the transcript.

For example, I'm a Case Manager and I want to apply for a CMC position. Do I need to submit my transcripts? Yes. The 101 series has a basic or minimum education requirement. The education requirement has to be verified before a determination is made as to whether you meet the time in grade and specialized experience requirements.

How do I remove my name from consideration after I have applied to the announcement?

To remove your name from consideration you must send an e-mail to the GRA-HRM/ConsolidatedStaffingUnit@bop.gov mailbox. Your message must include the vacancy announcement number, position title, closing date, and a statement indicating your request to withdraw your application from consideration.

How quickly will my application be reviewed?

Your application is automatically rated by the BOP-Careers system when you complete the online application. However, a quality review of your qualifications and information submitted will be performed by a Human Resource Specialist at Grand Prairie.

How are Best Qualified (BQ) lists developed? Can the Consolidated Staffing Unit select BQ applicants at random?

There is a set formula on how BQ lists are identified and there is no deviation from the system. Application scores are derived from the your responses to the KSA, awards and performance questions. This provides for a fair and consistent method of forwarding the truly BQ candidates from the eligible candidates.

I have made BQ every time I put in for this type of position. Why was I not found to be BQ this time?

Each merit promotion board consists of different numbers of candidates, variations in the quality of candidates, and variations to each applicant's score. It is possible to be found BQ for a position one time and not make BQ for the same job under another announcement. *The number of candidates and the scores of candidates vary from job to job. This is why you may not always make BQ.*

I responded to all the KSAs and selected choice #1 for each element. This means I scored the highest score possible for each KSA right ?

No. The selection choices for KSA responses each have a different numeric value. Selecting #1 does not necessarily mean that was the highest level for that KSA. The highest level may have been selection #2, #3, etc. The KSA choices are randomly listed. Some are high, medium, or low scoring range. Should the applicant possess experience similar, but not exact, to those listed, applicants may select the "similar experience" answer choice and **MUST** provide a narrative response. Answering the narrative question with "All of the above," is unacceptable and will result in your answer choice being changed to "None of the above."

If I apply for a promotion to a job in the same series I currently hold, I don't have to be specific with my paperwork do I? I automatically qualify, correct?

No. The applicant is responsible for providing detailed information regarding how they qualify for a position. Therefore, *each application must specifically identify enough information in order to determine whether you qualify based upon specialized experience equivalent to the next lower grade. The applicant's résumé should provide that detailed information.*

I am applying for a wage grade position. Do I need to identify my experience on my résumé or is answering the KSAs enough?

Yes, for verification purposes. Wage grade applicants qualify based upon their KSA responses. Applicants, however, must list in their résumé detailed information on how their experience was gained. Applicants should list the job, the time frames, and the duties in the body of the résumé. Remember, the résumé is what the selecting official is going to be looking at for selection.

What do applicants have the most trouble with?

The most common problem identified for any position is a failure to provide enough detailed information related to the job in order to determine an applicant's qualifications. You need to be as specific as possible. Your response to the specialized experience question in conjunction with your résumé is used to determine qualifications. Your responses should contain your core duties. Be specific. If the duties were performed on a part-time basis, you **MUST** indicate the number of hours and length of the time the duties were performed. In addition, if you make the BQ List, the selecting officials will be reviewing your résumé. It is an opportunity to present yourself as a viable candidate for selection.

I have some credits toward a degree but have not obtained my B.A. Should I ever submit transcripts for a job?

If the position allows for education to be creditable toward qualifying for a position or a combination of education and experience, yes. Generally, the vacancy announcement will identify when combinations of education and/or experience can be utilized. Sometimes, if you come up short on experience, the education you did complete can be prorated and utilized toward qualifications as well.

For instance, I want to apply to a Employee Services Specialist position at the GS-05 level. The qualifications for a GS-05 are a 4 year degree or 3 years of general experience. I only have 1-1/2 years of general experience related to the job (50% of what is required). But, I have an Associates Degree. That degree meets ½ the educational requirement (50%). The combination of the two meets the 100% necessary to qualify for the job. So yes, partial transcripts can be beneficial to an applicant.

Why does Grand Prairie reannounce positions?

The Consolidated Staffing Unit (CSU) serves as a processing center. CSU receives and processes the requests of the institutions, regional offices and central office. CSU does not make any decisions on whether a job should be reannounced. The decision to reannounce a position is made by the selecting official.

What is a career ladder?

A career ladder is the normal grade progression through which employees advance to the highest grade of their current position (also called the full-performance level) without having to apply for and compete with other employees. A career ladder consists of grades ranging from the lowest level of the position at which an employee can be hired, to the full-performance level. For example, for a position that is announced at the GS-5/7/9/11 grade levels, the top grade of the career ladder is GS-11. An employee who is

selected at the GS-7 grade level is eligible to receive career ladder promotions up to the GS-11 grade level without further competition. If this same person gets promoted to the GS-9 after one year and decides to apply for a different position, announced at the GS-9/11 level, this person would not have to compete.

Open Continuous

How often can I update my Open Continuous paperwork?

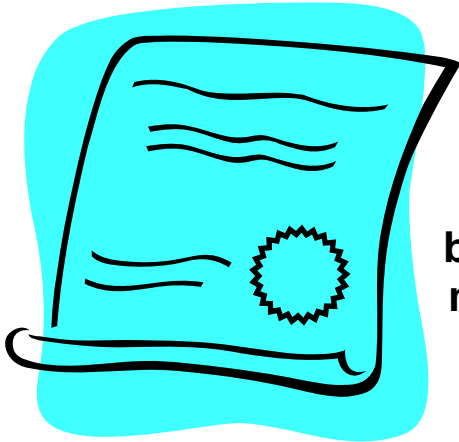
You can go back into the system and update your paperwork at any time. This includes updating awards information, performance evaluation information, changing your KSA responses, or updating your résumé. You can change information daily if you like. What you do need to watch out for are the cut-off dates that are established. For instance, if June 15, 2006, is a cut-off date all changes entered prior to June 15, 2006, will be reflected when Open Continuous boards are pulled. If you make changes after June 15, 2006, the changes will not be reflected until the July cut-off dates when boards are pulled for that monthly cut-off. So changes can be made anytime, but, you must be cognizant of your cut-off dates in case they will affect when your action(s) take effect.

I want to remove duty locations from my Lieutenant or Captain's paperwork. How do I do that?

To remove a duty location, you must send an e-mail to GRA-HRM/ConsolidatedStaffingUnit@bop.gov AND you must update your location preferences on your online application. Sending the e-mail message to the Consolidated Staffing Unit will only remove the location preference for the current cut-off period. Your e-mail message must include the vacancy announcement number, position title, and the duty location you wish to remove from your application. To remove the location from future cut-off periods, you must update your online application and remove the location.

Is it true that only three names get referred on the BQ list?

No. The BQ list changes from job to job and location to location. For instance, a Captain position at a particular institution may yield more than 10 applicants on a BQ list (due to the numbers of applicants). That same position at another particular institution may only result in 5. The number of applicants and their scores will determine the BQ cut off for each job. So it will vary, and you may make BQ at one location and not at another.



**Common positions requiring
basic/minimum qualification reviews which
must be verified with transcripts each time
an applicant applies:**

Case Manager, CMC, Assistant CMC

Teacher

Contract Specialist

Accountant

Psychologist (DAP, Forensic, Chief, etc.)

Medical Officers and Nurses (Any position in the 610 series)

Other

(several other positions may also include educational requirements.
Transcripts will be noted as required in the vacancy announcement and/or
application process.)



Common Applicant Errors:

Positions in the 006 Series

Most common mistakes associated with this series:

For positions above the GS-11, there are three core areas identified under the standard. An applicant's résumé should incorporate information under all three areas. The most common area missed is item number one. Applicants at times fail to articulate how their experience impacts correctional programs and inmates. Below is the criteria outlined under the Qualifications Standards Handbook for the 006 Series.

For positions at GS-11 and above, experience must also have demonstrated the ability to perform supervisory or administrative duties successfully. This *includes (1) understanding the problems of custody, treatment, training, and release of inmates of penal or correctional institutions; (2) a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of an institution's internal policies, programs, regulations, and procedures; and (3) training subordinates, coordinating and directing activities and functions, evaluating performance of operations and the effectiveness of programs, and maintaining high standards or work objectives.* This experience must have been gained in an administrative position, or in other positions that included the successful direction, or assistance in the direction of, an entire correctional program or a major phase of such a program.

Most applicants who do not qualify fail to identify their role as Duty Officer and the duties associated in that area. In addition, they fail to articulate how their program area impacts correctional programs. For instance, an Employee Services Manager negotiates and tailors management initiated actions which are implemented institution-wide. These changes may impact program areas, staff working environments, or impact inmates directly or indirectly. To do this work, an individual must have knowledge of the interrelationship of correctional programs, and its affects on inmates and staff, etc.

Recreation Positions (GS-030 and GS-188)

Most common mistakes associated with this series:

I have applied for Recreation Specialist and Sports Specialist positions. How can I be qualified for one and not the other?

Depends upon how you are qualifying. Although extremely similar in function, these two positions have different qualification points. For example, if you are qualifying based upon education, a Sport Specialist is harder to qualify for than a Recreation Specialist. Below is the qualifying information for each under education:

Sports Specialist - Degree in physical education

Recreation Specialist - Degree in general recreation, outdoor recreation, recreation and parks leadership, wild land recreation management, natural resources recreation, youth recreation, public, urban, or community recreation, special populations recreation or physical education.

If you are utilizing experience, here are the differences:

Sports Specialist

General Experience (for GS-5 positions): Experience that provided a knowledge of the physical and psychological factors in individual and team sports, and the nature, purposes, and organization of recreational or competitive individual and team sports. Examples of qualifying general experience include:

Physical education specialist.

Athletic director, administrator, or coach in an educational, community, or industrial sports program.

Umpire, official, or manager of individual or team sports competitions.

Specialized Experience (for positions above GS-5): Experience that demonstrated the ability to:

Plan, supervise, administer, or carry out a sports program that includes a variety of individual and team sports; and

Guide participants in developing the skills needed for participation in sports activities and to teach the techniques of various sports.

Examples of qualifying specialized experience include:

Managing or administering a sports program in a community, industrial activity, or secondary school or college.

Planning, teaching, or evaluating a physical education curriculum for secondary or higher academic levels.

Managing, umpiring, or officiating at amateur or professional athletic events, competitions, or games.

Recreation Specialist

General Experience (for GS-5 positions): Experience that provided a knowledge of the goals, principles, methods, and techniques of recreation and an understanding of the interests of individuals or groups.

Specialized Experience (for positions above GS-5): Experience that demonstrated the ability to apply the principles of one or more specialty areas of recreation. Examples of qualifying specialized experience include:

Planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, or evaluating community, industrial, outdoor, institutional, or other recreational programs.

Planning, establishing, or evaluating a recreational curriculum for junior college or higher academic levels.

Instructing in the principles and techniques of recreational program planning and management.

Serving in a leadership role in the programs and activities of local, regional, and/or national recreational organizations.

Case Management (GS-101) (Case Manager, Assistant CMC, CMC)

Most common mistakes associated with this series:

Failure to supply transcripts
Applicants not meeting the Basic Education Requirements

The basic requirements needed under the 101 series are:

Degree: that included at least 24 semester hours of course work in the behavioral or social sciences.

OR

Combination of education and experience--that included at least 24 semester hours of course work in the behavioral or social sciences, and that provided applicants with knowledge of the behavioral or social sciences equivalent to a 4-year degree as shown above.

Evaluation of Education: Courses such as sociology, correctional administration, criminal justice, government/political science, psychology, social work, counseling, and other related social or behavioral science courses may be used to satisfy the 24-semester-hour requirement.

Graduate education must have been in corrections or a related field such as criminal justice, sociology, psychology, counseling, social work, or other course work related to the position.

Plus any specialized experience as identified in the vacancy announcement.

Accountant (all positions under 510 series)

Most common mistakes associated with this series:

Failure to supply transcripts

Meeting the minimum course work necessary

Failure to identify higher level accounting work versus technical work for specialized experience

Basic Requirements:

Degree: accounting or a degree in a related field such as business administration, finance, or public administration that included or was supplemented by 24 semester hours in accounting. The 24 hours may include up to 6 hours of credit in business law. (The term "accounting" means "accounting and/or auditing" in this standard. Similarly, "accountant" should be interpreted, generally, as "accountant and/or auditor.")

OR

Combination of education and experience--at least 4 years of experience in accounting, or an equivalent combination of accounting experience, college-level education, and training that provided professional accounting knowledge. The applicant's background must also include *one* of the following:

A. Twenty-four semester hours in accounting or auditing courses of appropriate type and quality. This can include up to 6 hours of business law;

B. A certificate as Certified Public Accountant or a Certified Internal Auditor, obtained through written examination; or

A. Completion of the requirements for a degree that included substantial course work in accounting or auditing, e.g., 15 semester hours, but that does not fully satisfy the 24-semester-hour requirement of paragraph A, provided that (a) the applicant has successfully worked at the full-performance level in accounting, auditing, or a related field, e.g., valuation engineering or financial institution examining; (b) a panel of at least two higher level professional accountants or auditors has determined that the applicant has demonstrated a good knowledge of accounting and of related and underlying fields that equals in breadth, depth, currency, and level of advancement that which is normally associated with successful completion of the 4-year course of study described in

paragraph A; and except for literal nonconformance to the requirement of 24 semester hours in accounting, the applicant's education, training, and experience fully meet the specified requirements.

Plus any specialized experience as identified in the vacancy announcement.

Contract Specialist (GS-1102)

Most common mistakes associated with this series:

Pro-rating time associated with contracting functions
Meeting the minimum education requirement

Basic Requirements for GS-5 through GS-12

1. A 4 year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field;

OR

2. At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Plus any specialized experience as identified in the vacancy announcement.

Teacher, Assistant SOE, SOE (GS-1710)

Most common mistakes associated with this series:

Failure to supply transcripts

Failure to identify outside teaching experience in the résumé

Basic Requirements needed under the 1710 Teaching Series are:

For Teaching Positions:

Degree: that included or was supplemented by supervised student teaching, and at least one course in each of the following areas: general psychology, human development, history and/or philosophy of education, and teaching methods at the learning level of the position to be filled, i.e., elementary or secondary learning level. For secondary school teaching positions, applicants must also have had at least 24 semester hours (or the equivalent) of course work in each of the principal fields of instruction.

OR

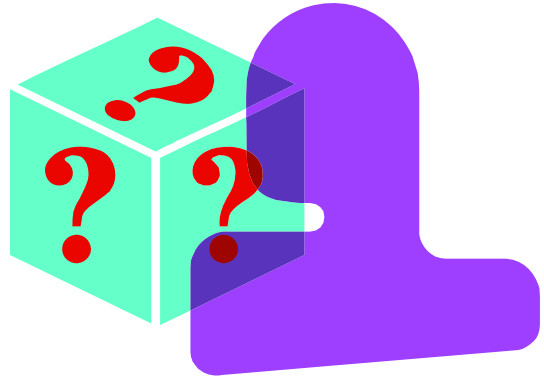
Combination of education and experience--Applicants who have completed a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree but who do not meet the specific course requirements shown above meet minimum qualification requirements if they have completed at least 1 full academic year of professional teaching experience at the elementary or secondary school level as appropriate to the position to be filled. Professional teaching experience is defined as full and primary responsibility for the instruction of assigned students under general supervision in a recognized or accredited school or institution. This includes responsibility for preparation and presentation of lessons and the evaluation of students' progress throughout the learning period, including a determination of the students' success or failure according to established criteria.

OR

Combination of education and National Teacher Examination (NTE) scores--Applicants who have completed a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree but who do not meet the specific course requirements shown above meet minimum qualification requirements if they have obtained a score of 660 in each of the NTE core examinations and any specialty area examinations appropriate to the position to be filled.

Plus any specialized experience as identified in the vacancy announcement.

How Do I Qualify.....



While the KSA questions give you points for your accomplishments, you must first qualify for the position based on the Qualification Standards determined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), before they can be considered in your application.

Qualifying experience is based on what you provide in your résumé. Never assume that your job title gives the rater a pre-determined description for the job. It is important that you give a detailed outline regarding your duties. Note: The individual reviewing your application must examine it based upon what you submit. They can not infer or assume something that is not present. They must develop a nexus to how you qualify based upon the content you provide and ensure it is justified under the qualification standards.

How do you know what experience is required to qualify?

Carefully read and study the vacancy announcements.

- The “Major Duties” section will give you what the job you are applying for entails—what will be expected of you.
- In the “Qualifications” section, you will be told exactly what the requirements are, and examples of education and/or any experience that is necessary. At the end of qualifications, there is a hyper-link where you can click and be transferred to the OPM Website that is appropriate for that job series.

These identifiers will provide you with the type of information the rater will be looking for.



Describing Work Experience:

Usually, you want to start with your most recent job, but if prior work experience is more relevant, it may be to your advantage to start with that first. Include your job title, company and address, dates of employment, salary, hours worked per week, and your supervisor with a phone number. **For each position, write about your duties and accomplishments as they relate to the duties and requirements listed in the particular vacancy or vacancies for similar positions.**

List jobs in reverse chronological order. Make sure you include correct dates of employment and job titles. Describe your duties, especially detailing the areas that will help you to qualify for the position to which you are applying.

Remember, what you list on your résumé is what the selecting official will be reviewing. It may be to your advantage to have a well detailed description of your entire career. It could make the difference between selection and non-selection.

Specialized Experience:

Many positions announced will reference “you must have at least one year specialized experience at the next lower grade level” (some can be in combination of education and/or experience).

It is extremely important for you to provide a detailed description of duties and experience as it relates to the job you are performing and any relational duties you are performing relevant to the position to be filled. For instance, let's say you are putting in for a Public Affairs position. You are currently a CMC and you outline all your basic CMC duties and note that you serve as the alternate PIO. Well, that doesn't help much in crossing to another job series. However, detailing the CMC duties, expanding on relational items such as; preparing congressional responses, contacting and communicating with external agencies, responding to information requests under the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, and outlining the specific duties you performed as the alternate PIO would assist an individual in crossing the job series. These duties are relational to the position to be filled. This is just an example of tailoring your paperwork.

It is also important that when you answer the question pertaining to how you qualify, you provide a detailed response and notate percentages and time frames for duties as applicable.



Qualification and Résumé Tips

All applications must be tailored to the position for which you are applying. It is a waste of time to simply send the same application for all job vacancies. You need to highlight your strengths and experience for each job announcement within the body of your résumé.

Your application's content is critical. If you neglect to mention key work related experiences and submit all required documentation that is required for the position, you will be rated ineligible. The more effort you put into this process the better off you will be.

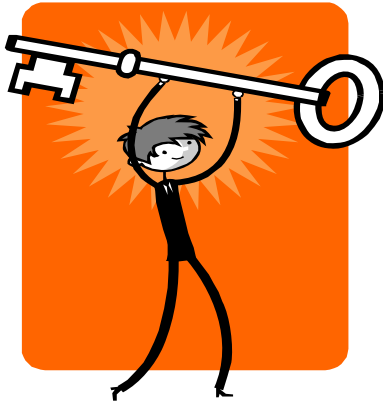
- ✓ Analyze your own experience and qualifications and then relate them directly to the requirements for the job you are applying.
- ✓ Pay careful and painstaking attention when completing your application, especially when completing the experience descriptions.
- ✓ Utilize a concise, well-organized approach, and carefully target job relevant skills and experience.
- ✓ Remember when you submit your résumé, you are marketing your skills, experience, and potential. It is your opportunity to qualify and sell yourself to the selecting official.

What to Include In Your Application:

- ✓ Duties listed on the vacancy announcement are taken directly from the job description for the vacant position. Your résumé should be carefully developed to ensure the description of your skills and experience reflects information pertinent to the position being filled.
- ✓ Utilize the resources directly available to you.
- ✓ Review the major duties in the vacancy announcement (seek common experience and similar experience).

- √ Review the examples of qualification experience (look for common and similar experience).
- √ Look at the Qualification Standards Handbook (look for examples of similar experiences).
- √ The KSAs serve as benchmarks of related experience. Under each KSA question is a series of answer choices. All of which are directly related to the position. (If each choice is a sample and you have that experience, it only makes sense that you include it in your résumé for experience)

This information is what you want to utilize to discern whether you have job related abilities and experience for qualifying. These tools can be extremely beneficial if utilized appropriately.



POWER WORDS

- ability accelerated accomplished achieved addressed administered advised allocated answered appeared applied appointed appraised approved arranged assessed assigned assisted assumed assured audited awarded
- bought briefed broadened brought budgeted built
- capable capability capacity competence competent complete completely consistent contributions cataloged caused changed chaired clarified classified closed collected combined commented communicated compared compiled completed computed conceived concluded conducted conceptualized considered consolidated constructed consulted continued contracted controlled converted coordinated corrected counseled counted created critiqued cut
- dealt decided defined delegated delivered demonstrated developing described designed determined developed devised diagnosed directed discussed distributed documented doubled drafted
- earned edited educated efficient effective effectiveness enlarging equipped excellent exceptional expanding experienced effected eliminated endorsed enlarged enlisted ensured entered established estimated evaluated examined executed expanded expedited experienced experimented explained explored expressed extended
- filed filled financed focused forecast formulated found founded
- gathered generated global graded granted guided
- halved handled helped
- identified implemented improved incorporated increased increasing indexed initiated influenced innovated inspected installed instituted instructed insured interpreted interviewed introduced invented invested investigated involved issued
- joined
- kept knowledgeable
- launched learned leased lectured led licensed listed logged
- made maintained managed matched major mature maturity measured mediated met modified monitored motivated moved
- named nationwide navigated negotiated
- observed opened operated ordered organized outstanding oversaw
- participated perceived performed performance positive potential productive proficient profitable proven persuaded planned prepared presented processed procured programmed prohibited projected promoted proposed provided published purchased pursued
- qualified questioned

● raised ranked rated realized received recommended reconciled recorded record
repeatedly resourceful responsible results recruited redesigned reduced regulated
rehabilitated related reorganized repaired replaced replied reported represented
researched resolved responded restored revamped reviewed revise

● saved scheduled selected served serviced set-up shaped shared showed
significant significantly sound specialist substantial substantially successful stable
simplified sold solved sorted sought sparked specified spoke staffed started streamlined
strengthened stressed stretched structured studied submitted substituted succeeded
suggested summarized superseded supervised surveyed systematized

● tackled targeted taught terminated tested thorough thoroughly took toured traced
tracked traded trained transferred transcribed transformed translated transported
traveled treated trimmed tripled turned tutored

● umpired uncovered understood understudied unified unraveled updated
upgraded used utilized

● verbalized verified versatile vigorous visited

● waged well-educated well-rounded worldwide weighed widened won worked
wrote