When applying for a job or internship, you must customize your application materials. Your aim is to use your resume, cover letter, and other materials to prove to a prospective employer that you have the skills, experience, and characteristics that fulfill the needs of the role.

In order to adjust your materials to meet the employer’s needs, you need to determine the essential qualifications the employer is seeking. Analyze job descriptions of interest to identify these key skills.

**IDENTIFY REQUESTED QUALIFICATIONS**

Use the job description below as an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Assistant, Office of Institutional Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose of Job:</strong> Assist Office of Institutional Effectiveness staff with collection and analysis of institutional data, mainly using Microsoft Excel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desired Major(s):</strong> All majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Microsoft Office Suite (primarily Excel) experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong oral and written communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accuracy and attention to detail are essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sophomore (or higher) standing at Webster University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statistical knowledge (means and frequencies) helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated work schedule:</strong> Up to 20 hours per week, daytime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read the job description thoroughly, making note of the skills and qualifications requested by the employer. Underline or highlight the job description to clearly see these qualifications.
NOTE PATTERNS

Make note of patterns in the qualifications requested. For instance, there are two references to Microsoft Excel in this job description. This would indicate that having a well-developed knowledge and skill level in this software program will be beneficial in this job.

Research Assistant, Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Purpose of Job: Assist Office of Institutional Effectiveness staff with collection and analysis of institutional data, mainly using Microsoft Excel.

Desired Major(s): All majors

Qualifications:

- Microsoft Office Suite (primarily Excel) experience
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Accuracy and attention to detail are essential
- Sophomore (or higher) standing at Webster University
- Statistical knowledge (means and frequencies) helpful

Anticipated work schedule: Up to 20 hours per week, daytime

PATTERNS:

- Ability to use Excel
- Detail/data-focused
- Communication skills

EVALUATE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Think about each of the major skill areas and patterns you noted, brainstorming and creating a list of ways you have exhibited those skills through jobs, course projects, or other activities. This list should serve as a source of information as you decide which pieces of your education, experience, and skills to highlight in your application materials. For example, this prospective employer has a strong interest in a candidate with Microsoft Excel experience. Make a list of situations in which you have used that software program. You should include your experience with Excel in the resume and cover letter you submit for this job and be prepared to talk about examples of your experience with Excel should you be invited to interview.

TRY IT YOURSELF

- Find a job or internship description that interests you.
- Highlight the key skills requested by the employer.
- Make a list of patterns or commonalities you notice in the skills requested by the employer.
- Brainstorm about your experiences that have helped you develop those skills.