



How to Write a Statement of Qualifications

A Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) or Supplemental Questionnaire (SQ) is often required to apply for a career with the state of California. An SOQ is a way for employers to learn about an applicant's qualifications and experience in job-related areas. The Statements of Qualifications are like interview questions that you answer in writing with specific examples. Typically, an SOQ consists of one or more questions asking you to address your qualifications. An SOQ may be scored as part of the application screening process and may serve as a writing sample and written interview for the recruitment. Not every position requires an SOQ, so double check the instructions for each position you apply to.

The best advice for writing an SOQ is to make it unique to you and tailored to the job position. If you are asked to provide an SOQ, this is your opportunity to showcase the skills, experience, and knowledge you have to be successful in the position. Your SOQ can set you apart and communicate to the employer why you are the best candidate for the job.

Check out the tips below on how to write an effective SOQ.

Plan

- Read the entire job advertisement, including the duty statement and, if included, desirable qualifications. The duty statement can be found as a link in the job advertisement.
- Review and consider each SOQ question in relation to your experience. Do not sell yourself short – include all relevant experience including paid and unpaid work, volunteer, training, and academic experience.
- Allow yourself enough time to complete the SOQ and required document(s).

Write

- Unless directed otherwise, include your name and the job control number at the top of each page of your SOQ.
- Refer to each question in your response. Follow directions for how to do so if they are included otherwise you may choose between numbering your responses or restating the question.
- Provide specific examples of your experience that demonstrate your qualifications (including where, when, what, how, and why).
- Describe how your knowledge, skills, and abilities align with the expectations in the duty statement and desired qualifications in the job posting.
- Refrain from simply repeating what is on your resume or STD 678. SOQs should describe and enhance your resume. At the same time, do not assume your reader has reviewed your resume as there may be different reviewers for each portion of your application.

- If the question has multiple parts, answer all parts.
- If a question does not pertain to you, answer with the most closely related experience to showcase your transferable skills.
- Define acronyms and explain references to uncommon terms – you don't want to leave your reader guessing!
- Don't plagiarize – the ideas and words should be your own.
- Assume reviewers are reading hundreds of SOQs and make use of clear topic sentences, paragraph breaks and subheadings or bullet points to increase readability.
- Attend to correct spelling, grammar, legibility, and the clarity of your writing as these are usually evaluated.

Review

- Review to ensure you have addressed all questions and desirable qualifications.
- Check you have followed all SOQ instructions such as required font type, font size, length, etc. Not following the SOQ instructions may disqualify you.
- Proofread for spelling, grammar, and clarity.

Final tip: Save your SOQ responses in case you are asked to respond to similar SOQ questions in the future.

A promotional banner for 'Work for California'. On the left, a man with glasses and a beard is smiling while looking at a laptop. The background is a light grey geometric pattern. A diagonal stripe in blue and orange runs across the banner. The text 'WorkForCalifornia.ca.gov' is in the top left. The main headline is 'Work with a Purpose' in blue, followed by 'Take the next step in your career with the State of California' and 'Find hiring events and more!' in a smaller blue font. The 'Work for California' logo, featuring a blue bear silhouette, is in the bottom right.

WorkForCalifornia.ca.gov

Work with a Purpose

Take the next step in your career
with the State of California

Find hiring events and more!

Work for 
California