TAILORING A RESUME & COVER LETTER

ANALYZING A JOB DESCRIPTION

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When pursuing an internship or full-time job, it is crucial to tailor your application materials to align with the specific requirements outlined in the job description. The goal is to effectively leverage the potential of your resume, cover letter, and any additional application materials requested by the employer to demonstrate that you possess the desired knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to excel in the role.

To effectively tailor your application and maximize its impact, it is essential to meticulously review the job description in order to identify and highlight the key skills requested by the employer. By doing so, you can ensure that your application aligns seamlessly with the employer's requirements, thereby enhancing your prospects for success in the application process.

Continue reading to learn how to effectively analyze a job description, allowing you to gain deeper insights and make informed decisions in your application process.

IDENTIFY REQUESTED QUALIFICATIONS

Engage in a comprehensive review of the job description, taking note of the specific skills and qualifications requested by the employer.

View the sample job description below and note the highlighted skills and qualifications that are critical for achieving success in the position.

Research Assistant, Office of Institutional Effectiveness (Webster University, Webster Groves, Missouri)
Purpose of Position: Assist the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Staff with the ==collection and analysis== of institutional data. Proficiency in ==Microsoft Excel== is particularly crucial for effectively fulfilling this role.
Desired Major(s): Business Administration, Data Analytics, Data Science
Qualifications:
  • Proficiency in Office 365 Applications (primarily ==Excel, SharePoint, and Teams==)
  • Strong ==verbal and written communication skills==
  • ==Accuracy and attention to detail== are essential
  • ==Statistical knowledge== (means and frequencies) helpful
  • Sophomore (or higher) standing at Webster University
Anticipated work schedule: Up to 20 hours per week (while classes are in session) between 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

NOTE PATTERNS

Thoroughly examine the job description to note patterns in the qualifications outlined by the employer. For instance, in the Research Assistant job description, **Microsoft Excel is mentioned twice,** indicating that proficient knowledge and skill level using this software will significantly contribute to success in this role.

In addition, the emphasis on data collection and analysis, proficiency in SharePoint and Teams, effective verbal and written communication skills, and statistical knowledge all emphasize the importance of a **detail-oriented and data-focused** candidate who can **communicate clearly and accurately.**

By identifying these qualifications, you can tailor your application to showcase your expertise in these areas and highlight how you are an ideal fit for the position.

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EVALUATE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Delve into the details of the job description, meticulously analyzing each key skill area and recurring patterns that have caught your attention. Take some time to brainstorm and compile a comprehensive list of instances where you have demonstrated these skills, whether through previous employment, course projects, or other relevant activities. This comprehensive list will prove to be a priceless asset, empowering you to strategically emphasize the most pertinent aspects of your education, experience, and skills within your application materials.

TAILOR APPLICATION MATERIALS

Once the job description has been thoroughly analyzed and a connection has been established between current and past experiences and the key responsibilities of the position, it is time to refine the application materials by emphasizing the skills highlighted in the position description.

View a tailored resume and cover letter for the Research Assistant position, designed to align with the specific qualifications highlighted in the job description (pages 3 - 4). Additionally, page 5 provides insights into the potential conclusions an employer might draw when a candidate tailors their application materials to match the requirements outlined in the job description closely.

Research Assistant, Office of Institutional Effectiveness (Webster University, Webster Groves, Missouri)

Purpose of Position: Assist the Office of Institutional Effectiveness Staff with the collection and analysis of institutional data. Proficiency in Microsoft Excel is particularly crucial for effectively fulfilling this role.

Desired Major(s): Business Administration, Data Analytics, Data Science

Qualifications:

- Proficiency in Office 365 Applications (primarily Excel, SharePoint, and Teams)
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Accuracy and attention to detail are essential
- Statistical knowledge (means and frequencies) helpful
- Sophomore (or higher) standing at Webster University

Anticipated work schedule: Up to 20 hours per week (while classes are in session) between 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Review Yolanda's tailored resume below, and **note the highlighted skills and experiences that Yolanda has showcased in their document, aligning them with the prominent skills listed in the Research Assistant job description.** Page 5 outlines insights into the potential conclusions an employer might draw when a candidate tailors their application materials to match the requirements outlined in the job description closely.

YOLANDA GARDEN

Webster Groves, MO | 314.246.6982 | yolandagarden@webster.edu

OBJECTIVE

Junior Business Administration major with exceptional experience using Microsoft Excel to organize and analyze data seeking a Federal Work-Study job in a collaborative work environment.

EDUCATION

Webster University   Webster Groves, MO
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration   December 2025 (Expected)
Emphasis in Accounting
- **Related Coursework:** Introduction to Statistics and Business Analytics
- **Grade Point Average:** 3.65/4.0

WORK EXPERIENCE

Webster University   Webster Groves, MO
Housing Operations Student Assistant   September 2022 - May 2023
- Assisted in maintaining accurate and up-to-date housing records and databases using Microsoft Excel
- Collaborated with team members to organize and maintain electronic files and documents using Microsoft SharePoint
- Supported the coordination and scheduling of meetings, appointments, and events using Microsoft Teams
- Assisted in managing housing inquiries, emails, and phone calls, providing timely and professional communication to students, staff, and other stakeholders

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Student Government Association | Webster University   Webster Groves, MO
Senator, George Herbert Walker School of Business & Technology   May 2022 - Present
- Serve as a representative of the student body, voicing concerns, needs, and interests within the student government and to the university administration
- Participate in the legislative process by proposing, debating, and voting on resolutions, policies, and initiatives that impact Webster students

SKILLS

- **Microsoft Office 365 Applications:** Excel, Forms, PowerPoint, SharePoint, Teams, and Word
- **Programming Languages:** Python 3, SciPy, APIs, Pandas, NumPy, and Matplotlib
- **Databases:** SQL and PostgreSQL/pgAdmin

Review Yolanda's tailored cover letter below, and **note the highlighted skills and experiences that Yolanda has showcased in their document, aligning them with the prominent skills listed in the Research Assistant job description.** Page 5 outlines insights into the potential conclusions an employer might draw when a candidate tailors their application materials to match the requirements outlined in the job description closely.

YOLANDA GARDEN

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June 8, 2023

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Webster University Library

101 Edgar Rd.

Webster Groves, MO 63119

Dear Hiring Manager:

I am excited to submit my application for the Research Assistant position at Webster University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness. As a Business Administration major and a Federal Work-Study eligible student, I possess a strong skill set in Microsoft Excel, SharePoint, and Teams, along with proven expertise in data collection and analysis. I am confident that my qualifications align perfectly with the requirements of this position.

In my role as a Housing Operations Student Assistant, I developed a strong foundation in maintaining accurate and up-to-date records and databases using Microsoft Excel. With my proficiency in Excel, I successfully organized and managed housing data, ensuring its accuracy and accessibility. My statistical knowledge, including means and frequencies, further enhances my ability to contribute to data analysis tasks as a Research Assistant.

Moreover, my experience collaborating with colleagues to organize and maintain electronic files and documents using Microsoft SharePoint has sharpened my attention to detail and reinforced the critical importance of accurate data management. I am dedicated to upholding high standards of accuracy and precision in my work. Furthermore, my coursework and various projects have honed my verbal and written communication skills, enabling me to effectively convey research findings and collaborate with colleagues.

I am eager to discuss in more detail how my qualifications align with the Research Assistant position. I have attached my resume for your consideration. Thank you for reviewing my application, and I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you about how I can contribute to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Garden

Yolanda Garden

TAILORING A RESUME & COVER LETTER
POTENTIAL CONCLUSIONS

In an intensely competitive job market, it is important to tailor your application materials to suit the requirements of each specific job opportunity. The ultimate objective is to capture the employer's attention and ignite their curiosity, compelling them to delve deeper into your skills and experience during an interview.

To illustrate this point, we have utilized the Research Assistant job description as an example, showcasing the essential skills and responsibilities outlined in the position's description. We present Yolanda as a candidate who has tailored their resume and cover letter to align with the required skills and responsibilities of the position. Below, you will find an examination of potential conclusions an employer may draw regarding the inclusion of the requested skills in Yolanda's resume and cover letter.

RESUME CONCLUSIONS

Yolanda's application shows a strong sense of purpose. This is clear from the mention of their Excel mastery in the objective statement. Furthermore, Yolanda's academic background coincides with the desired major specified in the job description, enhanced by relevant coursework that highlights their proficiency in statistical analysis.

To further display alignment with the job requirements, Yolanda illustrates their possession of key skills outlined in the job description through examples from their tenure as a Housing Operations Student Assistant. This not only showcases their hands-on experience but also underscores their ability to seamlessly integrate themselves into the Research Assistant position.

Yolanda concludes their application by reaffirming their proficiency in the essential technical skills emphasized in the job description. This thorough approach ensures that Yolanda's strengths are prominently showcased and align seamlessly with the desired qualifications for the Research Assistant position.

COVER LETTER CONCLUSIONS

Yolanda presents themselves as an exceptional candidate for the Research Assistant position, adeptly highlighting the key qualifications outlined in the job posting. Their academic major, coupled with their proficiency in Excel, SharePoint, and Teams, and their extensive experience in data collection and analysis, forms a comprehensive skill set that sets a strong foundation for success in this role.

Yolanda skillfully demonstrates the transferability of their Excel proficiency to the Research Assistant position by providing a practical example from their previous role as a Housing Operations Student Assistant. This showcases their ability to effectively apply Excel skills in a relevant context, solidifying their credibility in data management and analysis.

Yolanda further emphasizes their expertise in SharePoint and how it relates to their exceptional attention to detail. Their ability to organize and maintain electronic files using SharePoint exemplifies their commitment to precision, a vital attribute for the Research Assistant position.

Additionally, Yolanda effectively communicates the valuable impact of their academic coursework and project experiences in honing their verbal and written communication skills. Recognizing the paramount importance of clear and effective communication in conveying research findings and collaborating with colleagues, Yolanda's enhanced communication abilities position them as an excellent fit for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Overall, Yolanda's comprehensive array of qualifications, practical examples, and strong communication skills position them as a highly promising candidate for the Research Assistant role.

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TRY IT OUT

Put your learning into practice by examining the provided example job description for the Social Media Intern position below. Follow the steps below to **carefully analyze the position description, while identifying the crucial skills and qualifications that a desired candidate should emphasize** in a tailored resume and cover letter.

- **Pay close attention to the essential qualifications:** Carefully review the job description and identify the qualifications that are crucial for the candidate to possess.
- **Identify recurring patterns:** Look for any recurring themes or requirements within the job description that the employer emphasizes.
- **Evaluate your own experience and skills:** Assess your own qualifications, experiences, and skills in relation to the position's requirements.
- **Tailor your application materials:** Customize your application materials, such as your resume and cover letter, to reflect your understanding of the job's qualifications and align them with your own experiences and skills.

This exercise will allow you to apply your knowledge and showcase your ability to align your strengths with the requirements of the position.

Social Media Intern, Office of Global Marketing & Communications (Webster University, Webster Groves, Missouri)

Purpose of Position: Provide support to the university's social media initiatives and actively contribute to the enhancement of its online visibility. Demonstrating a high level of proficiency in utilizing diverse social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter), encompassing their distinctive features and analytics, is imperative to effectively execute the responsibilities of this position.

Desired Major(s): Open to all undergraduate majors at Webster University

Qualifications:

- Strong passion for social media, digital marketing, and emerging trends in the online space.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Basic understanding of social media marketing strategies and content creation.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a team environment.
- Attention to detail and strong organizational skills.
- Familiarity with design tools and photo/video editing software is a plus (Adobe Creative Applications).

Anticipated work schedule: Up to 15 hours per week (while classes are in session) between 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM