

WRITING EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENTS

Writing the “Meat” of It

1. The focus of the ECQ’s should be on your leadership abilities, not just managerial and technical. All three are important, but leadership is more important.
2. Follow the Challenge/Context/Action/Results model described in the *Guide to SES Qualifications*.
3. It is not necessary to address each ECQ separately. However, when combining ECQs the example must reflect the requirements of each of the ECQs being combined.
4. The ECQ write-up should contain specific, job-related experiences with specific accomplishments in all five ECQs.
5. Avoid addressing an ECQ by referring the reader to the other parts of the application.
6. You may use the same example for different ECQs as long as it reflects the requirements of the ECQ being addressed.
7. Avoid a “laundry list” of activities without context or accomplishments.
8. Focus on more recent experience, education, and training. Some reviewers consider experience more than five to seven years old to be stale and could result in a lower score when rating your application.
9. Highlight awards or other forms of recognition which relate specifically to an ECQ, e.g., “Human Resources Manager of the Year” award for the ECQ, Leading People.
10. Include non-Federal experiences (e.g., private sector, volunteer and professional organizations) if they support the ECQ.
11. Include relevant formal education or training that has enhanced your skills in a particular ECQ.
12. Include examples of supervisory/managerial responsibilities, special assignments, and details.
13. Include special qualifications (public speaking, publications, languages spoken, membership in related professional organizations or scientific societies, or expertise in a technical area, e.g., budget, information technology).
14. Show measurable results, especially in terms of improved customer service, increased efficiency, productivity, or money saved.
15. Avoid vague statements:
Bad: I manage various communication processes to field offices.
Good: I produce two weekly radio shows, one monthly television program and a bimonthly newsletter to 10,000 employees located in twelve regional offices.
16. If possible, show results that have since become SOP (standardized operational procedure) in your organization.
17. When using data to support your bottomline results, specify points in time (e.g. between FY 2006 and 2007).

English 101 Revisited

18. Absolutely no typos or grammatical errors.
19. Use personal “I” instead of third person.
20. Write in short, complete sentences (subject, verb, proper tense agreement, etc.).
21. Use common words and expressions instead of bureaucratic ones.
22. Economize on words and expressions (but not to a cryptic extreme):
Good: I briefed a Congressional subcommittee (5 words).
Bad: I conducted a briefing to key Congresspersons and their staffs (10 words).
23. Avoid acronyms—unless spelled out several times in the application.

Format

24. May use any format but keep length to one and 1/2 pages or less per ECQ.
25. Material should be in an easy-to-read format:
 - Use paragraphs or bullets to set items apart.
 - Use headings and subheadings to indicate categories.
 - Use all capital letters or different type of faces (bold or italics) to accent or highlight important information.
 - Leave white space and avoid if possible presenting solid text margin to margin.
 - Avoid using small type size (font size # 12 preferred).
26. Do not make reviewers hunt for experience. Avoid ‘see attachments.’ Don’t refer the reader to other parts of the application.
27. Application should be neat, clean, and typed (never handwritten).
28. If possible, avoid submitting a photocopied application. If not possible, make sure copies are clearly legible.
29. Do not attach copies of position descriptions, training certificates, and awards (you may list them on a separate sheet of paper.)
30. Number all pages.
31. Don’t assume Spell-Check and Grammar-Check will catch all errors—review every word.

Tone

32. Be friendly and professional, not stilted, formal, or chatty.
33. Do not use passive sentences. Use the active verbs with the personal “I”.
Good: I established a new team structure which abolished six supervisory positions. (Short—only 11 words—concise, clear, good use of personal “I” with an active verb).
Bad: The formal establishment of a revised organizational structure consisting of new self-directed teams was responsible for the elimination of six supervisory positions. (Too long—22 words, stilted, and passive).

References

34. Make sure that individuals you reference can attest to your ability to perform the SES job.
35. Contact references and inform them about positions for which you have applied.
36. Make sure information on references is current, e.g., telephone numbers, addresses, etc.

Other No-No's

37. As a general rule, avoid statements which describe your personal beliefs, philosophies, or commitment to a controversial social or political issue. When in doubt, leave it out.
36. Do not reveal information about your political affiliation or activities—unless you are using such experience to meet experience/qualification requirements (e.g., experience as a staff member to a member of Congress).
38. Do not identify your race, sex, national origin, color, religion, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or any other non-merit information (Note: There may be instances where you may be asked to voluntarily identify your race, sex, or national origin as part of collection of applicant data to be assess the impact of recruitment efforts. Such information is not ever kept with the application once it is received by the agency.).

And Finally...

40. When you have finished, find three objective and knowledgeable individuals, to review your application.

*The Franco Leadership Group
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