

## State Application Checklist

**What:** State application templates are the standard form you use to document your education and professional experience. A state application is required when applying for a state job and may also be referred to as an STD 678 where STD stands for Standard.

**Where:** In the “My Account” section of CalCareers, locate “Application Templates (STD678)” in the left-hand navigation bar under “Templates / Documents.” You can create and save up to 10 different versions.

**Why:** Since resumes come in all different sizes and styles, the state provides a standard form to capture applicants’ education and professional history. A standard application ensures all job seekers have the same “playing field” to demonstrate their experience. Employers may use the state application to assess candidate’s knowledges, skills, abilities and their experience in meeting minimum qualifications.

The best state applications provide ample, relevant information for reviewers to understand your experience and are tailored to the job position to which you are applying. This is your opportunity to showcase the knowledge, skills, and abilities you possess that will make you a good fit for the position.

### Checklist:

- Create 1 or 2 “base” applications as soon as possible.**
  - Filling out an application can take some time so start early. These base application templates can then be updated and tailored when you’re ready to apply for a job.
- Complete all fields accurately on your state application (STD 678).**
  - Make sure you have correct dates and titles for all your experiences.
- Provide the right amount of information:**
  - Spell out any acronyms and avoid technical jargon without providing definitions.
  - Include paid and volunteer experiences.
  - Describe duties as clearly as possible spotlighting your knowledge, skills and abilities.
  - The more relevant information to the position, the better.
  - You have 1,500 characters available for each Duties Performed section which is more than a typical resume – it’s your time to shine!
  - If you don’t list it, the hiring manager cannot assume, based on your classification or job title, what duties you performed. You cannot receive credit unless you list it.

- Ask yourself, “Does the information I have provided in the duties performed section prove I meet the minimum qualifications for the classification?”
- **Tailor your information to specific jobs and save different versions.**
  - First, understand the job by reading through the job description, duty statement, minimum qualifications on classification specifications, and desirable qualifications.
  - Tailoring might look like:
    - **Re-ordering** your responsibilities within a job to match the highest priority experiences the hiring manager is looking for.
    - **Using more descriptive language.** You can search the internet for “strong verbs for resumes” or look at example resumes online from candidates that share your experience for ideas. Consider changing some of the verbs or descriptors you have already shared about yourself to be more aligned with the duty statement e.g. “managing” vs “leading.”
    - **Deleting** experiences that are not relevant to this position.
    - **Adding** experiences you have that you hadn’t previously considered – e.g. potentially unpaid work, new training, etc.
- **Proofread.**
  - Export to PDF to ensure you see what the hiring managers will see (Select Print > Export Job Application to PDF)
  - Consider the following proofreading strategies:
    - Ask colleagues, friends or family.
    - If you have time, “sleep on it” and proofread the next day.
    - Print and use a red pen.
    - Read it out loud.
    - Use grammar software and spellcheck.
- **(Optional) Use your resume to complement the STD 678.**
  - Resumes may or may not be required. If using a resume, make sure it complements your STD678 and follow these best practices:
    - Use a professional template.
    - Don’t just copy/paste between resume and STD 678.
    - Leverage skill-based templates to summarize and convey your skills, awards or technology proficiencies.
    - Use an objective or goal statement.
    - Generally suggested to keep it to 1-2 pages total.

**Pro Tip:** Maintain a running list of accomplishments and projects so you can add these to future state applications.



## 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.



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The banner features a smiling man with glasses looking at a laptop. A diagonal blue and orange stripe runs across the top left. The background is a light grey geometric pattern.