

## Basic Versus Additional Qualifications (for use in writing job descriptions)

Basic qualifications are determined prior to starting recruiting activities for a position. If a position is advertised, the basic qualification requirements must appear in the job advertisement including ASPIRE.

Basic qualifications are the qualifications a candidate must possess to be considered and that meet the following criteria:

- **Non-comparative** (e.g., three years' experience in a particular position, rather than a comparative requirement such as "must have the most years' experience, among applicants");
- **Objective** (e.g., a Bachelor's degree in accounting, but not a "technical degree from a good school");
- **Relevant** to the performance of the particular position; and
- **Demonstrable** by evidence or statements in the candidate's "expression of interest" (resume or cover letter).

As a federal contractor, Harvard must solicit and retain demographic information for individuals who apply for employment through ASPIRE and for applicants who meet the basic qualifications for the position they applied for. Establishing basic qualifications helps us determine which applicants to include and which to exclude for purposes of Harvard's Affirmative Action record keeping responsibilities.

Additional Qualifications, those that are preferred for the position but do not fall under the basic qualifications criteria. These would include:

- **Behavioral Knowledge:** Capabilities that contribute to a person's ability to excel on the job.
- **Working Conditions:** A person's interest in or ability to work in the environment in which the job is performed, especially any unique conditions (e.g., outdoor work, extensive travel, or laboratory work).
- **Qualifications labeled "Preferred":** Qualifications that, if absent, will not disqualify a candidate, but which are strongly desirable (e.g., "Bachelor's degree preferred").

Note the additional qualification designation does not limit your ability to use that qualification as a basis for selection among applicants for the position.

To determine where to place a particular qualification:

1. Make separate lists of qualifications that are required and those that are preferred.
2. Determine which of the required qualifications meet or can be refined to meet the criteria for “basic qualifications” outlined above (non-comparative, objective, relevant, and demonstrable). List these in the Basic Qualifications section of the requisition. Please note that for HUCTW positions, basic qualifications must be comparable to those listed in the [generic job descriptions](#).
3. List those required qualifications that do not meet the basic qualifications criteria in the Additional Qualifications section of the form.
4. Preferred qualifications also get listed in the Additional Qualifications section of the requisition.

Again, a job qualification may still be a required qualification even if it does not meet all the criteria for a “basic qualification”. For example, “excellent interpersonal skills” may be critical to the ability to perform a particular job. However, because this characteristic is subjective (i.e., not objective, as required to be deemed a “basic qualification”) and not demonstrable in the applicant’s “expression of interest,” this qualification cannot be listed as a basic qualification. Instead, it would be listed under “additional requirements” in the job posting form, but would still be paramount in evaluating candidates throughout the selection process. Here are some other qualifications that might be absolute requirements but would not be considered “basic qualifications:”

- excellent organizational skills,
- excellent communication skills,
- strong leadership skills,
- strong analytical abilities,
- problem-solving abilities, and
- detail oriented

5. In some cases, a required qualification can be re-framed so that you may use it as a “basic qualification.” For example, if the position requires a “Bachelor’s degree from a good school,” that description falls short of the “objective” requirement for basic qualifications, as “good school” is a subjective judgment. However, you might consider instead the more objective “Bachelor’s degree required,” “B.S. in Accounting or Finance required,” or “four year degree required.” List a degree requirement as a basic requirement only if you are sure that you will not want to consider anyone who does not possess it, regardless of their overall qualifications.