

OPT: Explaining Relevance of Job to Program of Study

The core purpose of the OPT program is to receive practical work training in a job related to your program of study. Therefore, with each OPT job you report, the government requires you to explain how your job is relevant to your program of study, which you will do when you complete OIA's reporting form. Your response to this question is critical in ensuring your compliance with OPT employment requirements.

A good response to explaining job relevance should include the following:

1. Your program of study and/or specific courses you have taken (no need to list all classes)
2. Specific job duties AND how those job duties will allow you to practice or further develop what you learned in your program and/or in the specific courses you mention.

You should not simply list your job duties.

Good Examples

<p>I have recently earned my degree in Information Systems. In my job, I will be developing and supporting new web systems and software applications. This will allow me to practice the technical skills I learned in the following classes: BIS 628 - Application Development, BIS 638 - Database Mgmt Bus System, BIS 698 - Information Systems Project, BIS 636 - Systems Analysis and Design, BIS 627 - Web Site Development.</p>	<p>Mention of program of study</p> <p>Mention of specific job duties</p> <p>Mention of specific courses and a clear connection of job duties to these courses.</p>
<p>I have a Master's degree in Information system where I learned about SQL server database and data modeling. My day to day job duties as a database developer require me to work with data modeling and SQL server databases.</p>	<p>Mention of program of study</p> <p>Mention of job duties and how those duties relate to what was learned in the program.</p>
<p>In my position, I will be teaching math to college school students as well as quantitative/statistical literacy courses. I will also be leading research projects in STEM programs. This will allow me to practice what I learned in my PhD in Teaching College Mathematics program.</p>	<p>One possibility for improvement: Try to establish the connection between the job duties and the program of study <u>in writing</u>. In this example specifically, most people will easily see the connection between a position teaching college math and a PhD program entitled "Teaching College Mathematics." That, however, might not be the case for all jobs and programs.</p>

Bad Examples

1) installing, configuring, and upgrading operating systems and software, 2) troubleshooting computer systems, and 3) acting as a technical resource in assisting users to resolve problems with equipment and data.

I leverage my Excel skills for maintaining data. Also, I use the company own system to operate daily tasks.

MSIS course work was well structured. The courses helped to develop my programming and management skills. Application development helped me build applications from the scratch. The capstone Project course combined all the courses together and helped me to build the applications in a three-tier architecture: Courses like Project management and System Analysis and Design have helped to understand how to plan, initiate and execute any project. Other courses like information systems and research in information systems helped me to write case studies.

Master of Science in Information Systems is the program for future business analysts. My position in TT Network Integration is a business analyst.

Job duties alone do not establish relevance. There is no mention of program of study or classes taken. There is also no clear connection between the job duties listed here and how they will allow for practice of what was learned in the program.

Simply listing classes and what was learned does not establish relevance. Mention of job duties and how those duties facilitate further development of what was learned is critical.

A stronger connection is needed here between the program of study and the job duties. This statement places the burden on the reader to establish the connection for themselves, which not everyone will be able to do. Unlike the college math example on page 1, not everyone will know what a business analyst does or what knowledge is acquired in an information systems program. Likewise, the duties of a business analyst vary from employer to employer. Therefore, make sure your response establishes in writing what your duties are and how they allow you to further develop the skills you learned in your program.