

Extracurricular Activities. The usefulness of extracurricular activities as a predictor depends on the job. Being a field hockey player may have little relevance to being a successful manager. However, being elected captain of a hockey team may indeed be a sign of leadership qualities needed to be a successful manager. Information about extracurricular activities taken from an application blank must be relevant to the job in question. Evidence suggests that participation in extracurricular activities demonstrates interpersonal skills, indicating that it may be more valid for jobs with a heavy social component.²⁰

Training and Experience Requirements

Many past experiences predictive of future performance do not take place in a classroom. Instead, they come from life experiences in other institutions, which, fortunately, can also be captured on an application blank. A great deal of weight is often put on training and experience requirements on the theory that actions speak louder than words. Experienced surgeons tend to make better surgeons, for example. A study found that the mortality rate of procedures was about twice as high for inexperienced surgeons as for experienced surgeons. As with other jobs, though, the benefits of experience tend to be at the low levels of experience. Beyond a certain level, added experience does not help much. The drawback of putting too much emphasis on previous work experience, however, is that the amount of experience and training an applicant has may be overstated. Additionally, applicants with high potential may be overlooked because they have not had the opportunity to gain the training or experience needed.

Various methods can be used to measure training and experience. Since training and experience information is not directly equivalent across applicants, all methods require the judgment of selection decision makers. These decision makers render judgments about how to classify and weight different levels of experience. An approach termed the "behavioral consistency method" has shown the highest degree of validity because it focuses on determining the quality of an applicant's previous training and experience. One of the means by which the behavioral consistency method determines quality is by asking applicants to complete a supplemental application wherein they describe their most significant accomplishments relative to a list of key job behaviors. Due to their involved nature, however, behavioral consistency ratings are time-consuming and expensive to administer, and they require the applicant to possess some degree of analytical ability and writing skills. Thus, the choice of weighting methods rests on a trade-off between accuracy and ease and cost of administration.²¹

Licensing, Certification, and Job Knowledge

Many professions and occupations require or encourage people to demonstrate mastery of a certain body of knowledge. Such mastery is commonly measured by two distinct methods: licensure and certification. A license is required of people by law to perform an activity, whereas a certification is voluntary in the sense that it is not mandated by law (though an individual employer may require it). The purpose