

## Guidelines for Completing a Job Description

The job description should accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities of the position. When well-written, it produces a realistic picture of a job and answers the question, “What skills, experiences and education does this role require?” It should not include every detail of how and what work is performed so that it remains useful even when minor changes occur. Either a staff member or supervisor may write the job description, but the supervisor must approve it.

Here are some writing style recommendations for writing a clear job description:

- Use a clear, direct style throughout the description
- Avoid the narrative form. Keep sentence structure as simple as possible
- Begin each sentence with a descriptive action verb in the present tense (i.e. writes, operates, or performs), using parallel structure
- Focus on essential activities; omit trivial duties and occasional tasks
- Adhere to a logical sequence in defining responsibilities and be precise
- Avoid vague words like "handle" that do not specify what actions the position takes
- Use factual, non-technical language whenever possible
- If acronyms are used, spell out the words the first time they are mentioned
- Refer to job title rather than individual names

The following outlines the major sections of the job description and some effective strategies completing each section:

### Section 1: Identifying Information

- Key details of the role
- Titles should communicate the purpose of the position and should be short and concise and describe the level of responsibility and the role of the job
- Job family is a group of jobs requiring similar skills, knowledge and expertise
- Indicates the proposed grade and FLSA status (exempt or nonexempt) of the position

### Section 2: Position Purpose

- Concise overview of the role and responsibilities of the position
- Comprehensive overview of the role and responsibilities describing the role
- Why the job exists—not “how” the work is accomplished

### Section 3: Major Responsibilities

- Outlines the 4 to 5 key major responsibilities including projects and cyclical work (this should be 1-2 sentences each)
- Allocate percentage of total time spent over the course of a year

### Supporting Actions

- Outline how major tasks and functions are accomplished

- Begin each sentence with present tense action verb; avoid verbs that do not indicate the action involved.
- Use brief, to the point sentences that describe the action and the result.

#### **Section 4: Decisions Position is Free To Make**

- Freedom to act vested in the position
- Areas that the position primarily impacts or influences
- Describe the level of decision making and independent judgment. This is important to determine if the position is exempt or non-exempt.
- Include decisions which are escalated to the supervisors, noting when escalation is needed

#### **Section 5: Dimensions**

- List the areas for which the position has direct and indirect accountability
- Provide quantitative data
- Provide information about the type and number of positions this position manages

#### **Section 6: Job Qualifications and Competencies**

- Identify the minimum education, knowledge, skills and abilities and experience necessary for entry into the job. The minimum qualifications should align with the job responsibilities.
- Be descriptive in the level and type of experience required
- Include “or equivalent combination of education and experience” statement for positions that do not have a minimum education requirement.
- Specify skills necessary to perform the job competently, not the incumbent's qualifications
- Focus on the most critical skills necessary

#### **Section 7: Physical Demands and Working Conditions**

- This section is critical to ensure job descriptions support accessibility standards under ADA