

Guidelines for How to Write a Job Description

Job descriptions are action-oriented documents that clearly and concisely state the primary duties performed, responsibilities carried out, and requirements in a particular job. Job descriptions are the foundation of a sound compensation system and are used for recruiting and hiring, goal setting and performance evaluation, pay grade and salary range, and for career path development.

Job Information

Includes the job code (assigned by Compensation) and job title (name of the job.)

Job Summary

This is a 3-5 sentence description explaining why the job exists. It answers the question “what is the primary work this job performs?” The summary appears on the job posting and describes to potential candidates what they would be expected to do if they are a successful match.

Organizational Performance *(This section is pre-populated and can not be edited.)*

Basic Qualifications

Candidates should meet the following qualifications upon hiring into the job.

Education: What are the minimum degree requirements necessary to perform the job successfully? Can the incumbent substitute experience for education? If substitution is allowed, is a degree really essential? Typically, when substitution is allowed, use the guideline of 2 years experience in exchange for 1 year of education.

Experience: What is the minimum amount of experience and type of experience required? (Expressed in months)

Licensure, Certification and/or Registration: What licenses, certifications or registrations are required upon hire to perform the job?

Job Requirements *(This section pre-populates but additional items may be added.)*

Physical Requirements: Describes the physical activities required to perform the job. May include mobility, dexterity, visual, or communication requirements.

Environmental Conditions: Describes the work environment where the job is performed. May include exposure to noise, vibration, atmospheric conditions or hazards.

Key Functions and Expected Performance

Key functions are the broad categories or major headings under which all of the job duties fall. Most job descriptions contain between 3 and 7 key functions. Expected performance further explains each key function by providing additional performance goals associated with each job duty. These should be specific descriptions of the level of performance expected for success in the job. The criteria listed in this section should be measurable, specific and attainable.

Helpful Resources

<http://hr.vanderbilt.edu/systems/index.htm>

(Job Description Database)

<http://hr.vanderbilt.edu/forms/index.htm>

(Documents PDQ, PDQ-EZ, ePAF)

<http://hr.vanderbilt.edu/compensation/newpositionsandreclass.php> (Position management process explained)