

Job Description Writing Guide

Position Details and Job Responsibilities

Job Title: The title that applicants will see or employees will print on business cards. The title should appropriately describe both the level of responsibility and role of the job.

Department: Department where this position is budgeted

Date Prepared: Should be updated with each revision date

Reports To: Indicate the Position Title that directly supervises this position

Job Summary:

The summary should address the purpose of the job and why the position exists. Summarize in 3-4 sentences. Consider including key responsibilities or function and how it fits within the department.

Primary Responsibilities:

This section is the foundation of the Job Description. It conveys the complexity, scope and level of responsibility of a job. It should include six primary responsibilities (areas of key accountability-think of these as "buckets of work") of this position.

- After each primary responsibility, provide additional information about high-level tasks associated with that primary responsibility (area of key accountability). Do not add every individual detailed task as the job description is not a step-by-step guide of how to do the job.
- Primary responsibilities are those duties in which the incumbent would spend most of their time performing.
- Use logical sequence in describing duties and responsibilities starting with the most critical and working down from there. Percentage of time spent on these items is not necessary.
- Write the duties in terms of what the position requires, not based upon the capabilities of any individual.
- Use [action verbs](#) that accurately describe the position's level of ownership or involvement in the responsibility.
- Include "and performs other duties as assigned" at the end of your last numbered primary responsibility.
- [Review Job Description Do's and Don'ts.](#)
- Consult your HR Partner for assistance with the position details or job duties section of your job description. Review Job Description Do's and Don'ts.

Example (Key Responsibility is underlined, supporting tasks related to that key responsibility are in *italics*, action verbs are **highlighted**):

1. **Coordinates** digital advertising efforts, including social media ads, by identifying appropriate ad formats and audience targeting. **Analyzes** *data directly from social media platforms to evaluate results.* **Advises** *creative team on the development of related digital assets including ad content and landing pages.*

Example with **too many** details:

2. Coordinates all department, school, college, and university digital advertising efforts for recruitment, promotion of events and research efforts as well as other notable university endeavors, including social media ads, by identifying appropriate ad formats and audience targeting. Compiles reports to share with director and analyzes data from social media platforms, Google Analytics, and Sprout Social to evaluate results. Advises creative team on the results of analyzed data to provide input on the development of related digital assets including ad content and landing pages.

Establishing the Criteria for Successful Performance

Criteria are the competencies and qualifications that determine if the individual is minimally qualified for the position and what knowledge, skills and abilities are needed in order for the individual to be successful in the role.

Minimum Qualifications:

Minimum requirements are used to establish clear and appropriate eligibility standards for a specific position. Requirements:

- Indicate minimum education and experience.
 - Describe educational requirements including specific degree and area of study. Describe previous work experience required including any specific past responsibilities, number of years/months of experience, specific licensure or certifications.
- Should not be so restrictive that they exclude candidates who might reasonably have the ability to do the job.
- Should not present artificial barriers to employment.
- Need to be practical in the sense that they are obtainable in the general labor market.
- Need to be tied directly to the job duties.
- Consider adding flexibility here like "or an equivalent combination of education and experience" if you want to consider individuals who may have more or less education or experience.

“Minimum” means --- the cut-off point; the lowest level of acceptable education and/or experience needed to successfully perform the job duties. If they do not meet the minimum qualifications, you cannot consider them for the position.

Preferred qualifications will be added after the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) section below. An individual must meet both the Minimum Qualifications and KSAs in order to be qualified for the position.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA):

[KSAs](#) are the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a person must possess in order to perform the duties of the position. KSAs serve as a guide to evaluate and assess a person’s likelihood for success in a position. Generally, a job description should have between 5-10 KSAs.

Knowledge – the subjects, topics, and items of information that an individual should know at the time they are hired into the job. Knowledge represents bodies of information that are applied directly to the performance of work functions.

Example: Knowledge of accounting, budgetary, and management principles, practices, and procedures.

Skills – technical or manual proficiencies, which are usually learned or acquired through training. Skills should be measurable and observable.

Example: Skill in managing one’s own time and setting priorities.

Abilities – the demonstrable capacity to apply several knowledge and skills simultaneously in order to complete a task or perform an observable behavior. Abilities may also relate to personal or social attributes, which tend to be innate or acquired without formal instructions. Abilities are enduring talents that can help a person do a job.

Example: Ability to demonstrate sensitivity, respect, and be discreet when dealing with confidential matters.

See the [KSAs examples](#) within this guide or consult your HR Partner for assistance with these criteria.

Preferred Qualifications:

Preferred or desirable criteria enhance a person’s capacity to do the job. These qualifications are “extras” that can help set applicants apart and can be used to establish the primary and secondary candidate pools. Include the preferred education, experience, certifications, and/or licenses here.

Supervisory Responsibilities:

List the job title and number of individuals for each job title in which this position will supervise. If the position has no supervisory responsibilities, it is acceptable to indicate "None" in this section.

Physical Requirements:

Identify all physical requirements for the position. Using the codes and chart below **NR**, **O**, **F**, **C**, in the Maximum Required Frequency column below.

Frequency Ranking	Percent of Time	Range of Hours Worked Given Length of Shift:			
		8 Hours	9 Hours	10 Hours	12 Hours
Not Required Or Never (NR)					
Occasionally (O)	0 - 33%	0 to 2.5	0 to 3	0 to 3.5	0 to 4
Frequently (F)	34 - 66%	2.5 to 5.5	3 to 6	3.5 to 7	4 to 8
Continuously (C)	67 - 100%	5.5 to 8	6 to 9	7 to 10	8 to 12

Maximum Required Frequency	Functional Activities (Typical)
	Sitting - able to remain in a stationary position
	Standing - able to remain standing in a stationary position
	Climbing - use objects to ascend and/or descend
	Positions self to accomplish tasks (squat, stoop, crouch, crawl, kneel)
	Lift/move items weighing up to 10 pounds (0 – 10 lbs.)
	Lift/move items weighing up to 20 pounds (11 – 20 lbs.)
	Lift/move items weighing up to 35 pounds (21 – 35 lbs.)
	Lift/move items weighing up to 50 pounds (36 – 50 lbs.)
	Lift/move items weighing up to 100+ pounds (76 ≥ 100 lbs.)
	Push/pull - move items from one area to another
	Reach – ability to retrieve items above shoulders
	Use of keyboard and mouse (sporadic 10 key)
	Able to communicate with internal and external customers
	Must be able to detect items from a close distance
	Must be able to detect items from a long distance
	Must be able to distinguish colors

Maximum Required Frequency	Work Environment/Conditions
	Works in outdoor weather conditions
	Works inside
	Exposure to solvents or chemicals
	Exposure to excess noise
	Exposure to dust, fumes, gases, or other irritating substances (paint, glue)

Job Description Dos and Don'ts

Before writing a job description, here are some helpful hints to consider:

DO:

- Refer to the Job Description Writing Guide and use the approved Job Description Template
- Attend a Job Description Workshop offered by your HR Partner
- Use a factual and impersonal style when writing the job description
- Base the job description on the department's needs
- Write an accurate, concise and complete job description
- Use complete sentences
- Keep sentence structure as simple as possible, omitting unnecessary words that do not contribute pertinent information
- Begin each duty/responsibility with an action verb (see page [X](#) for example list)
- Be consistent when using terms like "may" and "occasionally." (These should be used to describe tasks that are performed once in a while, or tasks that only some employees perform)
- Refer to job titles rather than incumbents, i.e., Reports to ____ Manager instead of Reports to Mary Smith
- Be precise. This is critical for accurate job evaluation and analysis.
- Focus on critical activities
- Call your HR Partner for guidance

DON'T:

- Use the narrative form when writing a job description
- Base the content of the job description on the capabilities, skills, and interests of the incumbent
- Write the job description based upon the desired job classification
- Write the job description as a step by step guide on how to do the job
- Include minor or occasional tasks, which are not unique to a specific job

Action Verbs for use in Job Descriptions

Manages	Communicates	Creates	Leads Projects	Improves	Supports	Researches
Cultivate	Authors	Builds	Controls	Accelerates	Advises	Analyzes
Directs	Briefs	Conceptualizes	Coordinates	Customizes	Advocates	Assesses
Enables	Collaborates	Designs	Delivers	Modifies	Coaches	Calculates
Facilitates	Composes	Develops	Executes	Redesigns	Counsels	Evaluates
Fosters	Determines	Devises	Heads	Reorganizes	Consults	Forecasts
Inspires	Documents	Formulates	Orchestrates	Restructures	Educates	Gathers
Mentors	Edits	Implements	Organizes	Revitalizes	Promotes	Interprets
Oversees	Illustrates	Launches	Plans	Streamlines	Recommends	Measures
Supervises	Prepares	Spearheads	Prepares	Updates	Secures	Tracks

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) Examples

Scientist:

- Should have demonstrated scientific, analytical, and numerical skills.
- Ability to be flexible.
- A logical and independent mind.
- Meticulous attention to detail and accuracy.
- Patience and determination.
- Teamwork and Interpersonal skills.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to communicate with a diverse group of individuals.

Social Science/Health Professions:

- Must have excellent communication skills and the ability to be compassionate and empathetic while working with a diverse population.
- Must demonstrate adaptability and persistence while working with individuals, their treatment plans and University students.
- Must maintain currency on relevant research, professional certifications and continuing education.
- Must demonstrate sensitivity, respect, and be discreet when dealing with confidential matters.
- Must be detail orientated and timely with all required notes, files and documentation.

Administrative:

- Adept in office systems and technology.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to communicate

with a diverse group of individuals.

- Excellent organization and time management skills.
- Resourceful and determined to provide a positive experience for others.
- Detail oriented
- Ability to anticipate needs

Lead/Supervisory/Managerial level Leadership:

- Demonstrates the ability to deliver accurate, concise and quality communication (verbal and written) in a timely manner and provide quality feedback.
- Resourceful and determined to provide a positive experience for others.
- Ability to establish goals and objectives.
- Ability to effectively plan and delegate the work of others.
- Takes initiative to seek opportunities for development for both self and the team.

Senior Level Leadership:

- Business Strategy & Acumen: Understands higher education and can use industry/professional terminology fluently. Thinks strategically and seeks to align department services and goals with institutional strategic goals. Asks critical questions to delve to root cause to identify solutions. Understands the interconnection of decisions, actions, outcomes and measures.
- Professional Knowledge and Application: Takes initiative to develop and apply professional knowledge and skills in order to enhance individual effectiveness and improve organizational performance. Creates opportunities to apply new learnings and best practices into innovative solutions that positively impact results. Seeks opportunities for development for both self and the team.
- Business Execution: Leverages professional expertise and University knowledge to assess areas of opportunity, identify solutions and effectively execute the plan. Demonstrates a high level of planning and organizational skills and the ability to move projects forward to completion. Self-motivated and accountable for results. Seeks advice and input from others and recognizes when to escalate issues or seek help.
- Communication: Demonstrates the ability to deliver accurate, concise and quality communication (verbal and written) in a timely manner. Encourages an open exchange of ideas and differing perspectives. Adapts communication style to meet the needs of diverse audiences and situations. Listens to understand others. Provides quality feedback.
- Relationship Management: Works to build and manage productive relationships

with peers, leaders and customer groups. Effectively engages and interacts with others to collaborate and provide value-added support that enhances department results and team effectiveness. Affects outcomes and direction of customer's decisions through effective relationships, trust and credibility.

- Leadership: Demonstrates an openness and flexibility towards new ideas and concepts and effectively influences or facilitates during times of change. Helps others become more effective through development and coaching. Utilizes candid feedback, knowledge, resources and opportunities to improve the performance of others and to increase their contributions. Sets clear expectations for performance, provides meaningful feedback, holds employees accountable and recognizes successes.

General / Universal:

- Skill in managing one's own time and the time of others.
- Skill in using mathematics to solve problems.
- Skill in completing assignments accurately and with attention to detail.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet close deadlines.
- Ability to analyze, organize and prioritize work while meeting multiple deadlines.
- Ability to analyze and prepare documents, reports, and correspondence.
- Ability to prepare concise reports.
- Ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.
- Ability to review work for accuracy.
- Ability to obtain a driver's license prior to employment.
- Ability to work evenings, nights and weekends as necessary.
- Ability to process and handle confidential information with discretion.
- Ability to engage students and to create and enhance their connection to the institution and each other.
- Ability to communicate and interact effectively with a diverse group of people.
- Knowledge of, or the ability to learn, University policies and procedures.
- Knowledge of accounting, budgetary, and management principles, practices, and procedures.