

Job Description Writing Tips

A Job Description is a critical snapshot of information that describes a position's duties and responsibilities and provides a clear understanding of a position's function. Sometimes it may be difficult to capture the appropriate information that should be in a Job Description. Worry no more! Here are a few tips to write an amazing Job Description.

1. Initial Preparation

- Do some initial preparation and advanced thinking:
 - What are the 4 - 6 major end results the job must accomplish on an ongoing basis?
 - What are the activities associated with getting these end results accomplished?
 - What type of independent judgment and discretion is exercised? Who makes decisions and what types are made?
- Begin by listing the activities associated with the position and place them into related groupings. Review the groupings to identify the nature of the accountability associated with the activities.
- List the responsibilities in descending order of importance and assign a percent of time spent on each. This helps the reader get a clearer picture of the position. (Note: the FLSA regulations no longer use "percent of time" in the duties tests, so this percentage will be used primarily to understand the position content). This also won't be included in the final draft, but it's helpful in understanding the predominant focus of the position.

2. Put Yourself in the Reader's Place

- Think about how to describe the position to someone who is unfamiliar with the position or department.
- Avoid the use of jargon, acronyms, or other non-standard language. When using acronyms, make sure to spell out the full name first so that your reader knows what the acronyms mean.

3. Structure Your Statements

- Are you using consistent language or voice throughout the description?
- Be specific about the duties performed.
- Only place essential functions in the Job Description.
- **Use the following model as a way to structure each statement:**

Manages daily and annual performance of subordinates by mentoring, delegating tasks and assignments, conducting annual performance reviews and providing guidance and feedback.

Action Word + Subject + Specific Activities

4. See a Completed Sample

- **Refer to the sample position description below.**
 - Manages the schedules for the tutors, monitors attendance of both tutors and students, prepares data reports for faculty and staff on various tutoring performance outcomes for analytical review as requested.
 - Serves as trouble-shooter in solving routine administrative or procedural problems with other departments as assigned
 - Maintains policy and decision files, regulations, historical files and similar documentation applicable to the programs administered
 - Provides support for various administrative tasks, which include assisting faculty and staff with special projects
 - Monitors and handles maintenance related issue for the department and prepare Fixit requests
 - Receives and distributes incoming mail and packages; aid faculty in sending mail and shipments
 - Orders supplies and maintains office supply inventory
 - Plans work distribution for peak periods and train temporary employees and student workers to provide quality customer service to office visitors: assist students with general questions about registration, office hours, credit transfers, major declaration, course pre-requisites and other inquiries as they arise
 - Serves as receptionist, greet and refer calls, respond to inquiries from students, University staff, sponsors or the general public with an extensive knowledge of departmental programs and courses
 - Responsible for monitoring the departmental general email and voicemail accounts and forwarding messages to the appropriate party for reply in a timely manner
 - Performs other duties as assigned. The omission of specific duties does not preclude the supervisor from assigning duties that are logically related to the position.

- Additional Resources
 - GWU Guide to Writing Effective Job Summaries (MARTHA)
 - GWU Job Description Templates (Coming soon to PA7)