




JOB DESCRIPTIONS
How To Write, Edit and Maintain Them



Today's Experts



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DEFINITION





The Importance of Job Descriptions

- Define standards for the job
- Help in recruitment efforts
- Help analyze the organization
- Aid in compliance with employment laws
- Serve as a foundation for appraising performance
- Provide a basis for job evaluation
- Assist with the creation of training and development



Definition

A well-written job description describes the main elements of a job and is not a detailed listing of specifications. It provides guidance on the general nature and level of the work being performed. It describes the duties as they currently exist.



Supervisor and Manager Role

- Review and maintain job descriptions
- Monitor for changes in job content
- Communicate with incumbents regarding changes
- Decide when an appropriate change is needed
- Submit current job descriptions to Human Resources for their review and approval

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Elements

- Job identification
- Job summary
- Essential functions
- Accountabilities
- Job specifications



The image shows a document titled "Job Description" with bullet points: "Brief statements on job" and "List of important functions of the job".

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How are they used

Think about the entire employment life cycle – at what points might having an accurate, well-written job description become important to an organization?



The image shows a sign for "POSITIONS VACANT GENERAL" with "Controller" listed as a position.

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Events - Recruitment

- Postings-Advertisements
- Interviews
- Candidate evaluation
- Pre-employment physicals



The image is a job advertisement for "Officer/Assistant Manager" with requirements for degree, experience, and application process.

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Events - Orientation

- Duties
- Responsibilities
- Relationship and interaction with other positions
- Accountabilities

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Events - Performance

- Coaching
- Evaluation
- Training Needs
- Verbal/Written Warnings
- Corrective Action/Discipline

Job Opportunity JOBS
A Virginia Public Employees' company seeking competent, self-motivated, and energetic individuals to fill the position of:

Officer/Assistant Manager

Required qualification & experience:

- Degree in Business Administration/Finance/Economics. Candidate having professional certification in HR is preferred.
- Minimum of 2 years of work experience in coordination.
- Ability to be responsible to give support in the area of administration, communication, payroll and HR.
- Must be available to work in DC/VA.

To apply visit for details on these positions, visit the link: <http://www.icma.org/jobs> or website: www.icma.org. Apply within 15 days from publication date of this advertisement.

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Events - Fitness

- Workers Compensation
- Personal illness or injury
- Performance issues

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Events - Other

- Succession Planning
- Wage and salary administration
- Safety programs and initiatives



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JOB ANALYSIS



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Methods for Job Analysis

- Review and maintain job descriptions
- Monitor for changes in job content
- Communicate with incumbents regarding changes
- Decide when an appropriate change is needed
- Submit current job descriptions to Human Resources for their review and approval



Common Problems

- Exaggerate or downplay importance of job
- Fail to pinpoint critical job elements
- Ignore decision making aspects of job
- Describe qualifications not really needed for job success





Essential Functions

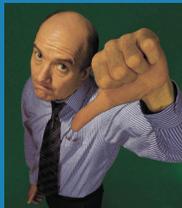
- Define the essential duties
- Use behavioral language
- Focus on functions rather than means
- Target outcomes rather than activities
- Be specific, but not procedural





What Doesn't Belong

- Negative statements
- Generalized statements
- Abbreviations
- Occasional or temporary duties



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LEGAL AND REGULATORY



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Compliance

There are a number of laws for which job descriptions are a crucial part of an employer's compliance efforts.



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Compliance Factors

- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- Americans With Disabilities Act
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act
- Equal Pay Act
- Pregnancy Discrimination Act
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act





FLSA

- Job descriptions are critical for the process of classifying jobs as exempt or nonexempt.
- Proper classification is dependent upon actual duties and responsibilities, NOT by job title.
- Misclassification of employees as being exempt from overtime is the most common violation of the FLSA.
- Engage the services of an employment lawyer or human resources consultant to assist in the process.



ADA - #1

1. The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employment discrimination against a “qualified individual” who happens to have a disability.





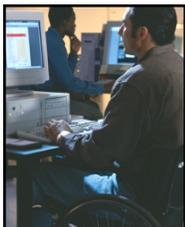
ADA - #2

2. A “qualified individual” is someone who can perform the “essential functions” of a position either with or without “reasonable accommodation.”



ADA - #3

3. Employers determine the essential functions, but in cases of a complaint, the burden of proof is on the employer for demonstrating and justifying its decisions.



The ADA

- > The ADA protects individuals who:
 - > Have a disability
 - > Have a history of disability
 - > Are regarded as having a disability

Sample Language

A computer programmer job might be described as “the ability to develop programs that accomplish necessary objectives”, rather than “the ability to use hands to write programs.”

A job that requires mastery of information contained in technical manuals would be stated as the “ability to learn technical material”, rather than the “ability to read technical manuals”.

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WRITING THE JOB DESCRIPTION



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Your Mantra...

WE ARE LOOKING AT THE JOB/POSITION

NOT THE PERSON DOING THE JOB

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Format

- Length
- Layout
- Standardization
- Classification Job Description VS. Custom Job Description
- Title Series and Consistency



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Content

- ✓ One paragraph job summary
- ✓ List of job duties and responsibilities (essential functions)
- ✓ List of accountabilities
- ✓ Unique physical demands and/or working conditions
- ✓ List of qualifications
 - Education and Training
 - Certifications or Licenses
 - Experience
 - Basic knowledge, ability and skills
- ✓ Competencies – job, department, organizational
- ✓ Disclaimers

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HOW TO WRITE....



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Helpful Tips for Writing Job Descriptions

- Begin each essential function or job duty statement with an active verb, (i.e., prepare, calculate, coordinate).
- Avoid using acronyms. Use nontechnical language when possible.
- List duties in order of importance or to reflect how majority of time is spent.



Helpful Tips for Writing Job Descriptions

- Do not provide excessive detail; be concise.
- Focus on what is required; not how it is done.
- Avoid non-descriptive verbs such as “assists” or “handles” when possible.



Determine Levels Needed

Consider whether there are, or should be, different levels for a position, for example:

- Administrative Assistant I
 - Administrative Assistant II
 - Administrative Assistant III
- Or
- Water Operator
 - Senior Water Operator
 - Chief Water Operator



Determine Levels Needed

- Carefully define the differences.
- Experience alone does not justify different levels – duties and required skills and responsibilities must differ.
- Develop a job matrix to make comparisons.



Compliance Considerations When Writing

- ❖ For ADA compliance, duties must reflect reality, i.e., what is actually required of people in the position is what rules.
- ❖ For FLSA classification; exemption from overtime depends upon what an individual actually does on the job, NOT what the job title is.



Union and Employee Considerations

- ❖ Must consider collective bargaining obligations.
- ❖ Job descriptions are sometimes a negotiable item depending on the State and labor laws.
- ❖ Having employees involved in the development and review process helps with collective bargaining.



Jobs are always changing...

- Most jobs are dynamic, i.e., they are constantly changing; it is critical to periodically review and revise the organization's job descriptions.
 - Consider annually – maybe at performance review time.
 - Revise on an ad-hoc basis when major changes occur in duties, skill requirement, etc.
 - Another typical time and opportunity is when you are recruiting someone for the position.
 - Job reclassification is another time; if you are updated your pay and classification plan.

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REVIEW GUIDELINES



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Organization of Information

- ❖ Sequence of operations approach
- ❖ Major duty approach
- ❖ Relative importance approach
- ❖ Percentage of time approach
- ❖ Team approach



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Helpful Reviewing Guidelines

- ❖ Words are chosen carefully
- ❖ Each sentence begins with an active verb
- ❖ Language is non discriminatory and gender neutral
- ❖ Job description is focused
- ❖ Language qualifies whenever possible
- ❖ It is easy to read and understand



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Helpful Reviewing Guidelines

- ❖ Include essential information only - adding more unnecessary paragraphs won't increase the position's status, grade level or pay.
- ❖ Described the desired outcome only; all job descriptions are summaries.
- ❖ Focus on essential activities – this is not a procedures manual, brevity is preferred.
- ❖ Refer to job titles rather than people.



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