

## Tips for Creating and Updating Position Descriptions

### What Do Position Descriptions Do?

- Give managers clear guidelines for hiring, developing, and managing employees.
- Provide clear job expectations to employees.
- Support employee compensation, performance, and development decisions.
- Act as an important and effective tool in responding to legal requirements and/or challenges.

### Things to Consider:

- How would you describe this job to someone who doesn't know anything about it?
- What are the major end results this job must regularly accomplish? You're looking to identify duties that are essential versus "nice to have."
- What type of decision-making latitude is there in this role? Does the person make recommendations to a decision-maker or actually make the decision?
- Use gender-neutral pronouns like s/he and his/her.
- Please do not write the position description with a particular person in mind. Position descriptions are about the role, not a certain person.

### Things to Remember:

- Review the job responsibilities with the current incumbent, who typically knows the role better than anyone else does.
- Be sure to include the following job details when filling out the PeopleAdmin job description:
  - Confirm the actual work schedule for the position (i.e. is this position a 9 month or 12 month position? what are the work hours for this position? Is this a full time benefit eligible position? Etc.).
  - If known, be sure to include the Labor Distribution Fund from which the position will be paid as well as the timesheet/leave report queue.
  - Note the supervisory information (to whom does this position report? are there any titles that report to this position, if so – which position(s)?).

### Position Summary:

- Summary of the job duties and responsibilities.
- Make the summary attractive to the potential job applicants.
- Include information about your division, department and/or program.

### Minimum Qualifications (these are your "must haves" for the role):

- Typically a shorter list that includes objective criteria such as education, experience, and certifications.
- Evaluators must be clear that an applicant's application materials show that s/he meets the minimum qualifications before interviewing them.
- Educational requirements: what educational background is actually needed for success on the job? It is important to note that, because we work in a university

setting, many people have advanced degrees. If the job incumbent has a bachelor or master degree it doesn't necessarily mean that the job requires one.

#### Preferred Qualifications (these are your "nice to haves" for the role):

- Preferred qualifications help the search committee to differentiate among applicants who meet all minimum qualifications.
- This is typically a longer list that includes more subjective criteria that can be flushed out in an interview (e.g. effective interpersonal communication skills).
- Soft skills such as verbal communication, collaboration and collegiality are typically preferred qualifications.
- Preferred qualifications are not deal breakers. In other words, if an applicant does not meet one of the preferred requirements, s/he can still be hired for the position.
- Preferred qualifications are very important. When all the candidates you are evaluating meet the minimum qualifications during the recruiting process, these are the factors that will determine your top candidates and final choice.

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- List key job functions in order of significance, along with a percentage that represents the level of importance and amount of time typically spent on that function.
- Describe the duties and responsibilities as clearly and specifically as you can.
  - Use clear action words and specific adjectives for each task.
  - For instance, if the description simply says "Excel Spreadsheets," it leaves the reader wondering if the incumbent creates them, enters data into them, creates or uses pivot tables, etc. A much more descriptive example would be "Creates excel spreadsheets from raw data, including pivot tables, formulas such as if/then, performs data entry to update, sorts, analyzes and summarizes in reports for the leadership."

#### Physical Requirements:

- Accurate physical requirements are important for worker's compensation and fitness for duty challenges.
- Physical requirements are crucial to the document and should be updated as the job changes.

#### Related Resources:

- **Model Position Description**
- **Hiring Manager Toolkit:**  
[https://www.udayton.edu/hr/employee\\_resources/hiring\\_manager\\_toolkit.php](https://www.udayton.edu/hr/employee_resources/hiring_manager_toolkit.php)
- **Training sessions offered through HR Learning and Development**