

6.4 Position Descriptions

Guidelines for the Development of Position Descriptions

A position description is an accurate and factual document prepared by a manager. It should reflect the current duties assigned to a position rather than the individual. It should reflect well-founded position management principles and avoid unnecessary duplication of work. There should be sufficient content to support an evaluation of the position and facilitate comparisons with other positions.

A position description should be reviewed annually and updated when the duties or skill requirements have changed significantly. It is advisable to first contact the Classification Program Manager (Employment Services) to discuss the impact of planned changes in the assignments. In the case of a significant departmental or unit reorganization, the managers should discuss plans with the Classification and Compensation Manager well in advance of the actual redistribution of duties and prior to discussion with employees. A completed ADA Essential Functions Supplement to the Position Description is required for all positions submitted for review (See attached forms).

Background: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that an employer must carefully describe the job functions. It is illegal for an employer to not hire a qualified individual because of a disability if the disability can be reasonably accommodated. Therefore, the employer must distinguish between essential and occasional job functions.

For your use and convenience, this guide contains a printable Position Description Form and an example of how to complete the form. The printable form and automated form version is available on the Human Resources web page.

Accurate descriptions can be useful for several employment purposes:

1. As a resource for hiring, both in determining the minimum qualifications for a job and providing applicants with a realistic view of the job;
2. As documentation of the essential job functions for consideration in evaluating reasonable accommodations for a disabled employee and, if necessary, in defending a lawsuit under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
3. As criteria for conducting performance evaluations; and
4. As a guide for physicians to use in pre-employment and return-to-work physical examinations.

Where to begin: Start with the Position Analysis and end with a formal Position Description.

The intent of a position analysis is to ensure the organization has a sound business based need for the position. It is also a good way to organize your thoughts and the details of the position.

- If applicable, review the generic classification description. Does this type of job appear to meet your needs?
- Describe the position: full or part-time, temporary or regular, position share or other special circumstances?
- If this is a new position, have you talked with your Human Resources Representative? Have you initiated the appropriate approval process?
- What does the position accomplish? What were the duties of the most recent incumbent? Are they still necessary?
- Who will this position report to? Are there any special considerations/issues, such as multiple reporting relationships?
- How does this position fit into the department? Where does it connect with others?
- Does the department have current unmet needs this position could fill?
- What ramifications do upcoming organizational changes have on this position?
- What new directions are in the future for the department? Do they impact this position?
- Who can provide information about this position before the "formal" Position Description is written?

The working title. You don't need to use a fancy title for each job; simply use one that describes the basic function of the position in your organization (e.g., receptionist, secretary). Remember, however, that a Position Description should describe the duties that must be performed by anyone who holds the position, not the duties to be performed by a particular person. Keep in mind that this will be used in determining exemption status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

The Class, Bargaining Unit and FLSA Status will be determined by Human Resources based on the CSU Classification Standard. You can view the standards at www.csufrenso.edu/humres/classification.html

Describe the *Overview or primary purpose* of the position in a single paragraph, if possible. Start by asking, "What are we paying this person to do?" If the primary purpose of the position is to coordinate a wide range of complex special projects, the say so. Too often managers describe the mundane detail of how the job gets done rather than the objective. It is important to address the factors typically used in classifying the position, degree of autonomy, judgment and discretion, scope and complexity of assignments, and impact on the organization.

List the major duties. The major are those that are (a) the reason the position was created, (b) regularly performed by the person who holds the position, and/or (c) a significant percentage of all the duties performed by an employee in the position. Consider what would happen to

the job if the function were removed. In listing the essential functions, you should seek input from employees as well as supervisors to ensure that the duties listed on the Position Description are actually performed by the employees in the position. When writing out the essential functions of a job, try to use specific and descriptive phrases rather than general language. For example, "contacts computer service repair companies and coordinates repairs of computer equipment" is much more precise and descriptive than "responsible for repair of computer equipment."

Describe the physical and mental requirements of each job. Each job requires an employee to be able to perform certain physical functions (e.g., sitting, walking, lifting, eye-hand coordination) and mental functions (e.g., reading, simple math calculations, withstanding moderate amounts of stress). To minimize the risks of disability discrimination claims, these physical and mental functions must be listed on the Position Description. Look at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) regulations and guidelines on disability for ideas on the types of physical and mental functions that should be addressed in a Position Description.

In describing a particular function, remember to focus on the goal of the job, not on how the job is done.

Wrong: "Job entails lifting boxes from point A to point B"

Right: "Job entails ensuring that boxes get from point A to point B."

Include descriptions of work environment and equipment. This information often provides applicants and employees with a more concrete understanding of what they will be expected to do. For example, a description of the work environment could include information on whether the person will work indoors or out, in heat or cold, or in clean or dirty conditions. Applicants and employees also find it helpful to know if they must be able to use computers or typewriters, drive a car, and so on.

List any special requirements for the job. Many positions require employees to possess educational degrees, professional licenses, a certain amount of work experience, and/or specialized skills. These special requirements should be listed on the on description and should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain job-related.

List required work habits. Work habits include regular attendance, teamwork, initiative, dependability, and promptness, treating employees with respect and dignity. If it is important for an employee to have one or more of these work habits in order to perform the job, then they should be listed on the Position Description. If they are accurate, they may later support your claim that an employee is ill suited to a particular job.

The Result: Employees should be hired, trained, evaluated, compensated, promoted, counseled, disciplined, and/or terminated on the basis of their ability to meet and perform the

requirements listed on the position description. Position descriptions are also helpful in managerial decision making during reorganizations and program funding.

Tips on Drafting Position Descriptions:

- Ensure that persons directly involved with the job (employees and line managers) have input concerning the job functions included.
- Have human resource personnel confirm that all Position Descriptions are drafted in compliance with the ADA (e.g., they delineate essential as opposed to marginal functions and are result-rather than means-oriented).
- Review all qualifications required to ensure that they are sufficiently related to the specific job and are in compliance with CSU job classification standards.
- Review and update all descriptions on a regular basis so that they accurately describe the job in its most current form.

Position Description

Working Title: _____ Classification: _____
Employee Name: _____ Department: _____
Bargaining Unit: _____ FLSA STATUS: _____

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Overview:

Major Duties of the job include:

Secondary Duties include:

Supervisor and supervisory responsibilities:

Supervisor: _____
Responsible for performance evaluations: _____
Supervises: _____

Minimum Requirements: Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

(Minimum requirements that must be met to perform major job duties)

Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

1. PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

To complete this section, use the following frequency definitions to record the appropriate symbol for a normal work day.

C	=	CONSTANT	--daily
F	=	FREQUENT	--weekly
O	=	OCCASIONAL	--monthly
N	=	NEVER	--activity does not exist as regular requirement

To complete the essential functions of this position, the employee is required to: *(for each item, record appropriate symbol in parenthesis and give an example of the type of task requiring that physical capacity.)*

Stand	(___)	Crawl	(___)
Walk	(___)	Climb	(___)
Run	(___)	Balance	(___)
Sit	(___)	Bend/Stoop	(___)
Lift	(___)	Kneel/Squat	(___)
up to 20 lbs.	(___)	Reach	(___)
21 to 50 lbs.	(___)	Talk	(___)
over 50 lbs.	(___)	Hear	(___)
Carry	(___)	See	(___)
up to 20 lbs.	(___)	Drive vehicle	(___)
21 to 50 lbs.	(___)	Wear respirator	(___)
over 50 lbs.	(___)	Use wrist/fingers	(___)
Push/Pull	(___)		
up to 20 lbs.	(___)		
21 to 50 lbs.	(___)		
over 50 lbs.	(___)		

2. PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Place an 'X' if employee is exposed to condition 20% or more during the normal work day. *(For each item marked, give an example of the condition.)*

Working near hazardous equipment and machinery	_____
Walking on uneven ground	_____
Exposure to dust, gas or fumes	_____
Exposure to excessive noise	_____
Exposure to extremes in temperature or humidity	_____
Work at heights	_____
Other	_____