This guide provides the basics of writing a job description and covers the following sections of the job description:

* Position Details
* Core/Major Responsibilities (What you do?)
* Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities (How you do it? How you measure satisfactory performance? What are the expected outcomes?)

**Position Details**

The Position Details section of the EWP / Job Description contains general information about the job – department name, position number, the job description summary

**Working Title** – The working title for a job should be based upon the main function or role of the job. It is important to stray away from vague and very specific job titles, instead create a working title that appropriately describes both the level of responsibility and role of the job. Here are some examples of good working titles and those that need some improvement:

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| **Good Working Titles** | **Working Titles that Need Improvement** |
| Program Director  Administrative Assistant  Help Desk Support Analyst  Business Manager | Director of the XYZ Program at School of AB  Assistant to the Director of ABC Dept  Systems Programmer II  Administrator III |

**Director:** head of an organized group or administrative unit

**Executive Director**: highest-ranking executive in a department

**Coordinator:** organize activities and to negotiate with others in order to ensure they work together effectively

**Job Description Summary** – The job description summary:

* Contains 1-3 paragraphs
* Summarizes the main points of the job description which may include functions, and duties; education and experience requirements; and any other pertinent information (i.e. scheduling requirements, travel, etc)
* Is used in job postings

**Core/Major Responsibilites**

The Core Responsibilities section is the foundation of the Job Description. It conveys the complexity, scope, and level of responsibility of a job. Due to the significance of this section, it is important to accurately, concisely, and completely describe the duties and responsibilities of a job.

This section of the Job Description is comprised of three main elements:

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| **Core Responsibilities** | The main areas of responsibility within a job, or a “buckets of work.” A job description must contain at least two Core Responsibilities. |
| **Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities** | Sentences that provide how each responsibility will be measured.  How you measure satisfactory performance. Must be quantifiable or objective.  How you know it’s been done.  Outcomes. |
| **Percentage of Time** | Estimates the portion of the job that is spent on a particular Core Responsibility |

**Job Duties Writing Method**

When the Core Responsibilities are well written and organized, they can accurately convey the complexity, scope, and level of responsibility of a job.

* Brainstorm a list of all the duties required to perform the job. These are the individual tasks completed on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis. Below is an example of a task list:
  + Arrange for catering
  + Compose and types correspondence
  + Coordinate logistical support for meetings, seminars, and department events
  + Determine and secures the event location
  + Make travel arrangements
  + Prepare budgetary reports
* Review the list and group the duties based upon the specific functions and responsibilities of the position, also known as Core Responsibilities.
* Establish the Core Responsibilities. For this group, the Core Responsibilities may include: Event Coordination, Administration Support, Budget Administration, etc.
* Condense the specific job duties into two to three concise “Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities,” beginning each statement with an **action verb** (see page 6 for a list).

Here is an example of a well written and organized Core Responsibility Section in a Job Description:

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| **Core Responsibility** | ***Event Coordination:*** Coordinate all Dean’s Office events. |
| **Measure** | Secure the event location within 3 weeks of event  Schedule presenters within 3 weeks of event  Coordinate the production of event marketing materials and programs within 3 weeks of event  Maintain the RSVP list daily  Making all catering arrangements within 1 week of event  Supervise the event staff and greet the guests at time of event  Event Coordination activities are expected to be carried out with minor supervision |
| **Percentage of Time** | 15% |

To summarize, here are some things to remember when completing the Core Responsibilities section of the job description:

* The Core Responsibilities section should contain 2-5 Core Responsibilities (or as many as necessary for complete understanding.
* Title each Core Responsibility section to summarize the function/role
* Include 2-3 concise Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities for each Core Responsibility. The Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities expand upon the particular area of responsibility as well as the role and complexity of the position.
* Begin Duty Statement with an action verb (see page 6 for a list)
* Limit the listing Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities and Core Responsibilities to what is required to perform the job.
* Do not include duties that are no longer performed or those that may be required in the future.
* Write the duties in terms of what the position requires, not based upon the capabilities of any individual.
* Determine an accurate percentage of time the incumbent should spend on that particular Core Responsibility over the course of a year.

**Measures for Core/Major Responsibilities**

* Conveys the expectations of the job
* Depicts the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be successful in the job
* Provides a basis for measuring performance; means to determine effectiveness

**Considerations**

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| **Minimum Education Level Required** | Bachelor’s Degree or equivalent training and experience |
| **The minimum experience level required**  All qualifications listed **must** be job related | Relevant administrative, marketing and/or event planning experience is preferred |
| **The amount of supervision received by the employee**  How, and to what extent, is the employee’s work checked?  Note the distinction between initial or special training and ongoing supervision. | The incumbent reports to the Assistant Director. After initial orientation, the incumbent will be given general direction from the Assistant Director, but is expected to perform duties and responsibilities independently |
| **The analytical skill required**  What is the complexity or standardization of the tasks which are performed? | The job requires excellent analytical and communication skills as statistical and financial reporting is an essential element to this position |
| **The impact of actions carried by this position**  What are the probable results of inadvertent error or mistake in judgement, interpretation, or exercise of responsibility? | Poorly executed events could result in a negative image for the School and the University or potentially lose funding opportunities |
| **The scope of the human resources impact on this position**  Explain supervisory role in hiring, firing, promoting, evaluating, increasing salaries, etc. of other employees. Explain how, and to what extent, the work of others is checked by the employee. | Performance Management (for employees who supervise others):  • Expectations are clear, well communicated, and relate to the goals and objectives of the department or unit;  • Staff receive frequent, constructive feedback, including interim evaluations as appropriate;  • Staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to accomplish goals;  • The requirements of the performance planning and evaluation system are met and evaluations are completed by established deadlines with proper documentation;  • Performance issues are addressed and documented as they occur.  • Safety issues are reviewed and communicated to assure a safe and healthy workplace.  Provide and/or facilitate job modifications for employees who may return to work from work-related or non-work-related illnesses and injuries. Provide timely documentation and responses to UMW’s RTW co-coordinators to establish appropriate return-to-work opportunities that reduce lost time, in accordance with Executive Order 94 (Workplace Safety and Employee Health). |
| **BOTH the level and nature of the INTERNAL contacts**  What, if any, University departments does the incumbent contact?  Why are these contacts made and how frequently are they made? | The incumbent has regular contact with senior level University staff and faculty, such as Cabinet members, Deans, Directors, etc. In addition, the incumbent maintains contact with several areas across the University including University Marketing Communications, Institutional Advancement, the Special Events Office, etc. |
| **BOTH the level and nature of the EXTERNAL contacts** | External contacts include staff members at other colleges and universities, government, and community representatives |

**Job Descriptions Do’s And Don’t’s**

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

**Do*:***

* Use factual and impersonal style when wiring the job description
* Base the job description on the department’s needs
* Write an accurate, concise, and complete job description
* Keep sentence structure as simple as possible, omitting unnecessary words that do not contribute pertinent information
* Begin each duty/task with an action verb (see page 6 for a list)
* Be consistent when using terms like “may” and “occasionally.” (These should be used to describe tasks that are performed once in a while.)
* Be precise. This is critical for accurate job evaluation and analysis
* Focus on critical activities
* Use logical sequence in describing duties and responsibilities (Key Responsibilities first, followed by corresponding duties)

**Don’t**

* Use the narrative form when writing a job description
* Base the content on 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 step by step guide on how to do the job
* Include minor or occasional tasks, which are not unique to specific job

**Action Verbs**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Accommodate | Communicate | Draft | Interface | Recruit |
| Achieve | Compile | Edit | Interpret | Reduce |
| Acquire | Complete | Eliminate | Interview | Regulate |
| Address | Compose | Enforce | Investigate | Report |
| Adjust | Compute | Establish | Issue | Research |
| Administer | Conduct | Evaluate | Lift | Resolve |
| Advise | Confer | Execute | Maintain | Review |
| Allocate | Consolidate | Expand | Manage | Schedule |
| Analyze | Construct | Explore | Monitor | Search |
| Apply | Consult | Facilitate | Motivate | Select |
| Appoint | Control | Formulate | Negotiate | Solve |
| Approve | Coordinate | Furnish | Observe | Specify |
| Arrange | Correspond | Generate | Operate | Strategize |
| Assess | Counsel | Guide | Organize | Streamline |
| Assign | Create | Handle | Participate | Strengthen |
| Assist | Customize | Hire | Perform | Summarize |
| Audit | Delegate | Identify | Plan | Support |
| Augment | Deliver | Illustrate | Predict | Teach |
| Authorize | Demonstrate | Implement | Prepare | Train |
| Budget | Design | Improve | Present | Translate |
| Calculate | Develop | Improvise | Process | Troubleshoot |
| Circulate | Devise | Incorporate | Program | Update |
| Clarify | Direct | Increase | Provide | Validate |
| Clear | Disseminate | Inform | Quantify | Verify |
| Collaborate | Distinguish | Initiate | Recognize |  |
| Collect | Distribute | Instruct | Recommend |  |
| Combine | Document | Interact | Record |  |