

Position Description Components Guide

**University of Wisconsin
Oshkosh**



What is Position Description?

A formal and legal action-oriented document that summarizes the important functions of a position using clear and concise language.

Why do we use them?

- Recruitments
 - Advertising
 - Tiering
 - Interviewing
- Wage and Salary Administration
- Titling
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Determination
- Performance Evaluations/Goals/Training
- Reorganizations
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Section Breakdown

Position Summary Statement

- A summary or overview of the general nature, level, purpose and objective of the position
- Describe the overall purpose of the position using three to four sentences
- Include who the position reports to, division and department, work schedule and hours

Essential Job Functions and Responsibilities

This section describes the major duties and responsibilities of the occupant of the position for which accountability can be assigned. This should include every essential job duty or responsibility that is critical to the successful performance of the job. Include the top four or five areas of responsibilities the position will perform and include fiscal, supervisory and decision making responsibilities.

- Include an outcome-based list of tasks representing the primary duties of the position
- Acronyms need to be spelled out at least once in position description
- Begin with the most important functional and relational responsibilities and continue down in order of significance
- The % represents the about of time spent annually to achieve the primary goal
- Include a small % for miscellaneous duties
- Do not list one time assignments of 6 months or less

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Identify the minimum amount of qualifications needed to perform the essential job functions, such as education, formal certifications, experience, knowledge and skills. Any critical skills and expertise *required* for the job should be included.

Example for Required Knowledge: Bachelor's Degree in business related program, working knowledge about annual financial reporting requirements for the public sector.

Requirements will be listed as metrics for tiering application materials.

- Degrees are typically only required for Unclassified positions (Academic Staff and Faculty) unless there is a strong case for a University Staff position to obtain a specific degree or certification as a requirement of a position; it may be listed as a preferred qualification for University Staff
- These requirements should be related to the goals of the position
- May include general computer applications such as Word, Excel, Outlook, Access. If requiring specific software program experience, use inclusive language. For example: "Knowledge of database programs such as, WISDM, PeopleSoft or website software such as, Wordpress and Plone."
- The ability to obtain a valid driver license needs to be a requirement if traveling is a requirement of the position

Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Identify any qualifications that are *preferred*, but not required for the job.

Example for Preferred Knowledge: Master's Degree in Accounting and five years experience in a higher education institution.

- Any preferred knowledge, skills and abilities must still be relatable to the goals of the position
- University Staff positions may include degrees in this section

Essential Skills

- Physical demands that are **required** of the job
 - Walking, lifting, standing, equipment operations, etc.
- Working conditions and environment
 - Necessary travel, evenings, weekends, working outside in hot/cold/rain/snow weather, etc.

Tips for Writing Effective Position Descriptions

- Always use the present tense of verbs
- If necessary, use explanatory phrases telling why, how, where or how often to add meaning and clarity
- Omit any unnecessary articles such as "a," "an," "the," or other words for an easy to understand description
- Use unbiased terminology. For example, construct sentences in such a way that gender pronouns are not required
- Avoid using words which are subject to differing interpretations. Try not to use words such as "frequently," "some," "complex," "occasional," and "several."