



Learning with Purpose

University of Massachusetts Lowell
Wannalancit Mills
600 Suffolk Street, #301
Lowell, MA 01854-5120

Phone: (978) 934-4100
Fax: (978) 934-3045
Email: compensation@uml.edu

Human Resources and Equal Opportunity & Outreach

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

January 2012

A job description is a written statement of duties, qualifications, reporting relationship and other key factors. Job descriptions are useful in the employment process to review candidates and to evaluate the salary level of the position based on the market. For current employees, accurate job descriptions become a tool in helping to measure performance. Job descriptions should serve as a guide for both employees and managers. UMass Lowell Human Resources has created a template which should be used to create/update job descriptions. Below is an overview of the information contained in the job description.

Header: Includes the job title, creation date and revision date (if applicable), department and the title of the manager.

Position Summary: A brief summary of the position and function within the department.

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES: List 5-8 duties that occupy the majority of the position. These should be listed in order of most important to least important. The percentage of time should also be included but in increments no less than 5%. Describe the essential duties (results to be accomplished) and then list the tasks to be performed. Try to include a measure of performance.

Example: Office Assistant

1. Maintain all student records and files with accuracy by
Completing course records consistent with policy;
Maintaining grade records;
Maintaining correspondence.
2. Maintain departmental office machines by
Keeping office machines clean and in working order;
Ordering supplies when necessary;
Communicating effectively with service company;
Assisting other faculty and staff with equipment as needed.

OTHER JOB DUTIES: Not every job duty will be itemized in the job description. This section should therefore include the language "other duties as assigned." In addition, this is a section in which other duties which are not essential should be listed and may allow for accommodation. For example, if the job requires the receptionist to walk downstairs to the mail room, it is possible "retrieving mail on the second floor" may be listed as an "other" job duty to allow for accommodation if someone has a disability, for example, in which they are unable to climb stairs.

Working Conditions: This is where the position might describe the types of confidential data which is involved. This is also where travel for attendance at meetings at different campuses should be indicated. Please also list any work that might be required on evenings and weekends.

Physical Effort: List the amount of effort or exertion which is a regular part of the job. This includes minimum lifting or bending. In addition, this might include the ability to view computer screen or reports, or speak to students or employees on the telephone.

KEY JOB FACTORS

Minimum Qualifications: List the minimum requirements to perform the job such as education, experience and special skills. These need to be measurable. The individual in the position may have a higher level of education or experience-but this is where we need the *minimum* to perform the work.

Education: Here are some examples:

- Job requires basic knowledge of grammar, spelling, and simple mathematical functions such as percentages, ratios as might normally be acquired through attainment of a **high school diploma or GED**.
- Job requires technical or business knowledge normally acquired through a specific educational and/or training program in a specialty field. **An associate's degree or completion of a technical program** (of up to three years in duration) are typical.
- Job requires knowledge or principles, concepts and methodology of a highly technical, professional or administrative occupation as would normally be acquired through a **baccalaureate program**.
- Job requires a broad or in-depth body of knowledge that would normally be acquired through a **Master's level** educational program.
- Job requires substantial professional or administrative knowledge in a singular advanced professional discipline as would normally be acquired through a **doctoral educational program**, or requires broad knowledge within multiple fields of discipline.

Experience: List the minimum level of experience. Examples include one of the following:

- Less than one year of experience (and describe which area/field)
- One to three years of experience
- More than three years and up to five years
- More than five years and up to eight years
- More than eight years and up to ten years
- Over ten years of experience

Skills: List special skills required such as “Peoplesoft HRMS” or Microsoft Word, Excel, and Powerpoint.

Additional Considerations: This is where you might list “Bachelor’s Degree preferred” or “Experience in higher education preferred.” This also might be where you list a specific software program, etc. that is preferred but not required.

Impact of Actions: Describe the freedom of judgment required and types of decisions that may be made. Include the impact of errors.

Examples:

- The work is performed in accordance with established procedures and methods and will seek supervisor’s approval if issue arises which vary from the standard.
- Work requirement judgment and/or independent thinking in performing a variety of duties. Will seek supervisor’s direction as needed.
- Work requires considerable judgment and/or independent thinking, generally may be involved in developing programs and procedures. May consult with supervisor for input.

Complexity: Consider the variety and difficulty of the tasks and the use of technology, judgment and/or analytical thinking necessary. Include any budget or financial responsibilities.

- Follows established policies and procedures.
- Judgment is required in applying guidelines, policies and procedures.
- Work is substantially complex, varied or requires interpretation of technical and detailed guidelines, policies, procedures and situations. Analytical ability and inductive thinking are required.
- Work is highly technical or extremely analytical. Policies and procedures may be created and/or recommended. A high degree of analytical ability and inductive thinking is required.

Supervision Exercised: Describe the nature or type of supervision exercised. For example, scheduling, supervising, evaluation staff and/or students. Describe if position has authority to make personnel actions (hiring/firing/position changes, etc.) Describe types of position or number of staff.

Internal/External Communications: Describe the types of contacts in which the position regularly communicates within and outside the University. Example: frequent contact with suppliers, government agencies, other vendors, as well as students, faculty and staff and various departments.

Special Skills: Standard language: “The ability to work effectively with diverse groups.”