

## Best Practices for Job Description Writing



The job description is a critical document for many human resource and business activities. The following are just a few of its uses:

### Recruitment

Job descriptions help ensure employers hire individuals with the required qualifications. Job descriptions allow job candidates to determine if they are interested in the job and if they are able to perform the job.

### Compensation

Job descriptions help employers determine what the value of the job is and then in turn, the employer can determine which jobs in the marketplace are similar so they can benchmark pay with them.

### Performance Management

They provide the base expectations needed to assess an employee's performance and help set expectations for performance reviews.

### Discrimination Law Compliance

Job descriptions play a critical role in an employer's ability to defend itself against discrimination claims because they can help an organization prove that employment decisions have been made based on job requirements and not on personal preferences of the employer.

### The typical format of a job description should include:

#### Job Title

Ensure the type of job and the level of the job are reflected in the title and ensure the title is accurate to the position.

#### Exempt/Non-Exempt Status

Indicate whether the job is exempt or non-exempt as it relates to the Fair Labor Standards Act. The employer should review the requirements for exemption status prior to selecting the job's status.

#### Reporting Structure

Provide the job title of the supervisor of the position and whether or not the job supervises any other positions.

#### Summary

Provide a brief overview of the job including its purpose and responsibility level and role in the organization. Mention a few of the key qualifications of the job.



To write a useful job description, employers need to identify the duties of the job, the job's role in the organization and what qualifications are required to perform the job satisfactorily. This is best done through a complete job analysis, which should include interviewing individuals currently performing the job to ensure all the responsibilities and duties are covered.

In addition, MRA's sample job descriptions or the DOL's Occupational Information Network ([O\\*NET](#)) can provide a nice starting point. MRA members can also create job descriptions through a build-your-own tool available from the [CCH Compliance Library](#) on our website.

## Duties and Responsibilities

List all the duties and responsibilities that account for more than five percent of the employee's time. As an added element to the job description, you can add a "catch-all" bullet point that states "Performance of other duties as assigned." The employer can also include a percentage of time that each responsibility requires of the employee's time. All responsibilities should total 100%. Identify which of the duties are essential job functions to facilitate compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) reasonable accommodation requests. ADA includes three reasons a job function may be considered essential: 1) the position exists to perform that function; 2) the number of employees available to perform that function is limited; or 3) the function is highly specialized so that the employee in the position is hired for his or her expertise or ability to perform the particular function.

## Qualifications

List the qualifications necessary to perform the job. Once listed, ensure that it is noted clearly which qualifications are required (i.e., the candidate must have that qualification in order to be hired) or preferred (i.e., it would be helpful, but not essential, if the candidate had the qualification). Qualifications are various types of knowledge (including degrees), experience, skills, abilities, and licensures. Keep physical qualifications in mind when listing out what is needed, such as the ability to lift a certain amount of weight.

## Working Conditions

Explain the physical environment (e.g., unsafe) and the working conditions (e.g., frequency) in which this position will operate. A working conditions description is not usually included in professional job descriptions, as the assumption is the work will be performed in a normal office environment.

## Authorization

Include a section where the employee and the manager can sign and date the job description. This section indicates that the job description has been appropriately reviewed.


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Job descriptions are a great tool for an employer to ensure that jobs are described and delineated so that various business activities can be successfully completed.

**Need help with your job descriptions?**

**MRA's HR Hotline can help you!**

 866-HR-Hotline | 866.474.6854

 [InfoNow@mranet.org](mailto:InfoNow@mranet.org)

 [mranet.org/24-7/hr-hotline](http://mranet.org/24-7/hr-hotline)

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