

Tips on writing Position Descriptions

A position description includes the following information:

1. Background
2. Reporting Relationships
3. Position Objectives
4. Key Accountabilities
5. Financial Delegation
6. Selection Criteria
 - Essential
 - Desirable
7. Benefits and Conditions

Background

- a. Describe the core focus of the work area.
- b. Describe the context of the position within the work area.

Reporting Relationships

Include information on who the role reports to, any roles reporting to the position and peer roles.

Position Objectives

What is required of the position?

Key Accountabilities

- a. These are short statements of what tasks the position will undertake. Do not detail these tasks, but provide a detailed statement of duties which may be attached to the Position Description.
- b. There should be at least five (5) key accountabilities.
- c. Each Position Description must include accountabilities relating to the conduct of work as shown on the [Position Description Template](#).

Financial Delegation

To be used only when the position has financial delegation, otherwise delete this section.

Selection Criteria

Insert at least five (5) selection criteria. These are the attributes, knowledge, skills and experience required for the position.

Essential

These are critical for satisfactory performance of the job. It is expected that candidates will meet all essential criteria to be considered eligible for appointment.

Desirable

These will enhance a person's capacity to do the job. They are usually not listed as essential, but it is expected that they can be acquired, once in employment. Specific knowledge about the University and its environment can be of benefit, but it can also be learnt.

To be considered when selecting Selection Criteria:

- ❖ Provide logical and consistent links between the selection criteria, key accountabilities/role statement and the advertisement.
- ❖ List criteria in priority order.
- ❖ List essential and desirable criteria separately.
- ❖ Ensure equity and diversity principles are observed.
- ❖ Keep it brief. No more than six (6) essential selection criteria.
- ❖ Keep the criteria realistic.
- ❖ Do not overstate the attributes.
- ❖ Write criteria that will make it easy to evaluate your candidates.
- ❖ Do not use University terminology as external candidates will be unfamiliar with it.
- ❖ Exercise care in your use of adjectives.
- ❖ Specialist knowledge should relate to the relevant field of practice.
- ❖ Knowledge of specifics of the University environment should be listed as desirable.
- ❖ Educational qualifications should be listed as desirable as many skills and abilities can be acquired without formal education.
- ❖ Consider desirable characteristics where it is difficult to differentiate the candidates on essential criteria.
- ❖ Describe the skills and experience required, not the type of person who may have them.

<i>Key expressions in selection criteria:</i>	
Background in	Refers to educational qualifications or area of specialisation.
Experience in	Has performed the task.
Proven record in	Can substantiate experience or skill, preferably with documentation.
Knowledge of	Actual experience or from learning.
Awareness of	Familiarity with a matter, conscious of its existence.
Understanding of	More than knowledge, comprehension of the matter and perception of its significance.
Aptitude for	Suitable for the task or role, has potential but not proven capacity or ability.
Capacity to	Able to or qualified to perform a task. Can draw on transferable skills.
Ability to	Have the skills, knowledge or competency to complete a task. Has previously completed such tasks.
Qualifiers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Well developed ❖ Demonstrated ❖ Extensive ❖ High level 	All indicate that what is being claimed is soundly supported with concrete examples showing breadth and depth of experience and/or capability. Decide on level required when writing the Position Description.
<i>Five functions and their usual meanings:</i>	
Manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Doing things right. ❖ Asking "how and when". ❖ Achieving objectives.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Doing the right thing. ❖ Asking "what and why". ❖ Setting directions. ❖ Acting as a change agent. ❖ Being a spokesperson. ❖ Being an innovator or originator.
Supervise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coordinate, direct and inspect at first hand other people's work performance and output.
Organise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Determine specific activities necessary to accomplish planned goals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Grouping activities into a logical pattern, framework or structure. ❖ Carry out activities, or assign them to specific positions or staff members.
Administer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Directing the execution of a program, according to guidelines or regulations. ❖ Administering a program that may involve the management of resources, supervision of a team and organisation of program details.

Benefits and Conditions

Benefits and conditions are listed at the end of each Position Description, however if there are specific benefits and conditions relevant to the position, you can insert them here.