

The Job Description & Person Specification

What is a Job Description & Person Specification For?

Job description and person specifications help to clarify the real purpose of a job, the accountabilities and major responsibilities of a job and also the key attributes, education and experience desirable for the person conducting the job.

The job description has a number of uses:

- Provided to those conducting job interviews and those being interviewed
- Objective setting at the beginning of year and appraisals at year-end
- Setting or reviewing salary grades by Compensation and Benefits personnel
- External recruitment
- Skills assessment
- Succession planning and career development.

It can be completed by the Manager of the position or the incumbent and reviewed by the Manager. It should be reviewed and/or updated every 24-36 months to ensure it remains relevant.

Tips about Job Descriptions

Experience says it is not useful to write job descriptions for every job, just to have them. It is important that employees do not limit their work to only those tasks listed on the job description.

Guidelines for Completing the Example Template (also on this website)

Position Reports To and Position Supervises: The job title (not name) to whom this role reports and the roles reporting into it in the organizational structure

Principal Working Relationships: Who does this role interact with on a regular basis, e.g. internal and external customers

General Section is straightforward background information on the position.

Job Objective / Role Definition: Is a one or two sentence explanation of the objective or definition of the job. It should answer why does this job exist? Or how does it add value? Another way to look at it is how you would explain the job to someone in 30-45 seconds.

Primary Responsibilities & Accountabilities: Outlines the major responsibilities or components of the job. These should only be the key components of the job and not more than 5-6 of them. These would typically be used as a basis for developing performance objectives for the position, as they would be deliverables of these accountabilities.

Authority Limits: Budgets and people reporting to this role



Salary Range & Benefits: The salary range and benefits offered for this role

Other Information, etc The final section is to capture any additional information relevant to the job, but not captured previously. This would include things like travel requirements, budget responsibility, languages needed or any other job specific information.

The Person Specification

This document describes the type of experience and qualifications the ideal person for the role should have:

Capabilities Required: Outlines the key competencies/skills and personal attributes necessary to be successful in this job. Each of them should be noted with an 'E' for essential or 'D' for desirable.

Education and / or previous experience needed is for listing any special educational background or previous experience needed. This would include university degrees, certifications, and amount and type of previous work experience required.

Direct Reports, etc should list positions reporting to this job and the number(s) of each to give a sense of the managerial span of the job.

