

**WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY**  
**Human Resources Department**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

The following format should be used to develop a position description. This position description format replaces the position classification questionnaire (PCQ) that has been used in the past. The position description should accurately reflect the duties and responsibilities of the position. In addition, it provides all of the information necessary to classify the position. Suggestions for writing job descriptions and a sample position description are included for your convenience.

- Title: Identify a title that appropriately describes the major function of the position. (30 characters or less preferred)
- Department: This is the major department in which the position resides or is budgeted.
- Supervisor: Identify the supervisor of the position. This is the individual who is responsible for hiring, firing, completing/signing performance appraisals and making salary recommendations.
- Grade: Current grade of the position or grade you are proposing. Leave blank if this is a new position.
- Date Prepared: The date the job description was written or updated.
- FLSA: Identify whether you believe the position is exempt or non-exempt by FLSA standards. If you are proposing it be exempt, then you must complete the Department of Labor FLSA test questionnaire that can be obtained from Human Resources. If you are not sure, leave it blank.

**POSITION SUMMARY**

In this section, state the primary purpose of the position. The position summary should be no more than three or four sentences long. State the duties, functions, and responsibilities of the position without giving detailed information. Your summary is intended to give the reader a basic understanding of the position.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- Education: This section identifies the minimum qualifications in education that an employee must possess on the first day of the job to satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities of the position. State the educational qualifications in terms of areas of study and/or the type of education that would provide the knowledge required for entry into the position. You may also indicate the education preferred, but not required, for the position.
- Experience: This section identifies the minimum number of years and type of work experience that an employee needs to be qualified for the job. Work experience that is directly related to the job may be substituted for post high school education at the rate of two years of work experience for one year of

education. For example, eight years of full-time, related work in a biological research or laboratory setting may be substituted for a Bachelor's degree (a four-year degree) in a biological science.

Knowledge, Skills, Ability:

Identify occupational certifications and/or licenses that may be required (e.g., CPR, first aid, driver's license, plumber's license, etc.), competency with specific computer hardware or software, etc. For technical, labor or craft positions, identify machines, tools and equipment necessary to carry out job responsibilities. For clerical positions, include standard office equipment used.

Physical Requirements:

A checklist for determining physical requirements is attached. Complete the checklist and then summarize the most important information from the checklist into the job description.

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

This section contains a description of the duties, functions, and responsibilities of the position. Provide a numbered format with generally 6 to 12 items.

Duties should be ranked according to their importance and/or frequency with which they are performed. Only duties that are fundamental or essential to the position should be listed in this section. Please include the percentage of time the employee typically spends performing each duty. Duties that require less than 5% of time should be combined with other duties or left off the job description.

**OTHER FUNCTIONS**

This section contains a description of the duties, functions and responsibilities that are not essential to the position and could be assigned to other staff, if the University was asked to make a reasonable accommodation to an individual under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITY**

Identify the type of supervisory responsibility that is expected from this position; select the most appropriate example. Identify the number of staff and students supervised.

- responsible for own work only
- assists in providing training, work direction and problem solving assistance for student workers
- supervises, trains, provides work direction and problem solving assistance for student workers plus reviews or oversees work of less-experienced staff
- supervises staff including scheduling and assigning work, reviewing performance, recommending salary increases, promotions or discharges
- position requires the management of others through subordinates who are also supervisors including organizing and controlling the area, establishing budget plans, forecasting staffing requirements and formulating policies and procedures

### **AUTHORITY/ACCOUNTABILITY**

This section describes how much latitude a position has to make decisions without obtaining approval from the supervisor. Your opening statement might read (select one):

- works under direct (close) supervision
- works under general supervision
- works under indirect supervision
- works under minimal supervision
- works independently

In addition, list any procedure manuals, laws or standards that guide the work. Identify responsibility for managing or overseeing budgets, if any. For example:

- providing input in budget development
- tracking and monitoring the budget
- authorizing expenditures
- tracking/controlling revenues

Other examples of information in this section might include whether the position formulates, interprets or enforces policies/procedures, or whether the position determines personnel actions or assists/provides input in personnel actions.

### **PROBLEM SOLVING**

This section includes representative samples of the problems the position addresses (generally 2 – 4 examples). Please indicate the kinds of problems that are experienced and the processes used to resolve them. For example, do the problems recur to such an extent that specific processes/procedures are established to address them; or are the problems typically new/unique and require the employee to discover new methods to address each situation?

It is important to identify between general types of problems facing the incumbent rather than unique or specific examples. One-time problems (such as designing a new automated record-keeping system, setting up a new, specific computer system, etc.) or other temporary situations should not be included.