

## GUIDE TO WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

### PURPOSE

The following guide outlines the general model used in developing accurate job descriptions. Job descriptions are used to derive performance expectations for the position incumbent and mutual understanding of the overall purpose of the position. Job descriptions must have certain criteria that comply with Federal guidelines such as the Americans with disabilities Act (ADA).

### ELEMENTS OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

- **Job Purpose:** Provides a brief summary of the position, stating the main function of the job and its relationship to the mission of Gonzaga University.
- **Essential Functions:** Outline the fundamental job duties associated with the position, capturing the essence of the job. The essential functions of a position are so critical to the position that it cannot be omitted from the description of the job without significantly changing the position's role within the department or division.

Essential functions contain the following criteria:

- Reason the position exists is to perform these functions.
- The functions may be highly specialized so that the incumbent is hired for his/her expertise or ability to perform the particular duties.
- There are a limited number of employees available among whom the performance of that job can be distributed.
- Functions significantly impact the description of a position, that it would require a change in classification if altered.
- Provide examples of work required. Examples should be a clear picture of the work performed and the responsibilities of the position.
- "Other duties as assigned" should be the last element listed below Essential Functions category.
- **Other Functions:** Outline job functions that are associated with the position and commonly require interaction with other positions. Provide examples of interaction necessary to complete these functions and any applicable supervision requirements.
- **Supervision Given/Received:** Defines the supervision that position is responsible for, including other positions either directly or functionally. Outlines the decision-making and independent judgement requirements for this position.

Defines the supervision received by another position within the department. Types of supervision that should be indicated

- **Minimum Qualifications:** Outline the minimum requirements necessary for the incumbent to complete the work. The following criteria should be included in this section:
  - Years of experience. The statement of experience should usually be shown as “X years of experience.”
  - Education requirements. The following terminology should be used:
    - “High School diploma or GED equivalent”
    - “Years of college with course work in,” for some college courses required without a degree.
    - “Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor’s degree in,” for degree required positions.
    - “Or any equivalent combination of education and experience,” for combination on either.
  - Specific knowledge or skill set.
  - Technical skills if applicable.
- **Desired Qualifications:** Outline the knowledge, skills and abilities that are desired and would enhance the success of the incumbent in the position. These are qualifications that the supervisor would find preferable and are above and beyond those necessary to perform the essential functions.
- **Physical Qualifications:** Outline the physical and mental requirements of the position. Detail the working conditions related to the position. The job safety analysis form from HR will assist in auditing the physical requirements of a position. This should include how much estimated time is spent in a variety of physical activities or conditions. An overall understanding of the working conditions must be outlined in the job description. An example of such wording is;
  - “The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by the employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position.”
 If you have questions on this section, please contact Human Resources.

## **OUTCOME**

The finished product should be a complete, specific and accurate job description. The supervisor will utilize a job description for establishing performance expectations for the incumbent of that job. The employee and supervisor should have a mutual understanding of the essential functions and requirements of the position.

Job descriptions are a valuable tool for establishing these performance expectations, outlining requirements for success of the position and identifying a benchmark to market data for salary purposes.