

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

<a href="#"><u>Introduction</u></a> .....	1
<a href="#"><u>What is a Job Description?</u></a> .....	1
<a href="#"><u>What are the Essential Elements of Job Descriptions?</u></a> .....	2
<a href="#"><u>What are Task Statements?</u></a> .....	2
<a href="#"><u>What are the Uses of a Job Description?</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>What is the Difference between Essential and Non-Essential Functions?</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>What are Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities and How Do They Relate to Required Qualifications?</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>What are Working Conditions?</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>What are Desirable Qualifications?</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>When Should A Job Description Be Revised?</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>Other Suggestions and Tips</u></a> .....	6
<a href="#"><u>Sample Job Descriptions</u></a> .....	6

# **Job Descriptions**

## **Introduction**

This module will help you understand the purpose and components of essential functions job descriptions and provide you with the tools to develop them.

Job descriptions clarify what an employee is responsible for and what is expected of them. Preparing a thorough, complete job description is a critical first step in the selection process. The job description provides potential candidates with a clear description and main objective of a position and assists them in determining if they can perform the duties of the position. Candidates who determine they are unable to perform the duties or do not meet the minimum qualifications may self screen themselves from the selection process which ultimately makes the recruitment process more efficient. A meaningful duty statement is a valuable tool in orientating new employees to his/her job and role in the department.

Work with your Human Resources and Civil Rights staff to ensure that you follow any internal procedures and formats required by your department.

## **What is a Job Description?**

A job description identifies essential and non-essential tasks that are assigned to a specific position. It also identifies reporting relationships and may also describe required qualifications, minimum requirements, working conditions, and desirable qualifications. Supervisors are responsible for developing and maintaining accurate and current job descriptions for their staff. The duties should be appropriate for the classification and consistent with the class specification. It is not uncommon for duty statements to vary within the same classification due to the various departmental settings and organizational structures.

## What are the Essential Elements of Job Descriptions?

Job descriptions generally include:

- General statement describing the concept and specific duties of the position
- Classification title, position number, geographic location, division and work unit of the position, name and title of supervisor, and effective date of duties.
- If supervisor position, list classifications supervised.
- General statement describing the nature of the unit in context with the department/program
- Description of the positions [supervisory reporting relationship](#) (this information can be found in the class specification, usually under the definition of the class)
- Description of each [range of supervision for “deep class”](#) classifications
- List of typical essential and marginal functions/duties, grouped in related categories
- Duties broken down by percentage of time spent on each task or group of similar tasks
- Signature and date of employee and supervisor. You may want to include a disclaimer that the employee and supervisor acknowledges by signing the duty statement that they have discussed the expectations of the position.

## What are Task Statements?

Task statements clearly and concisely describe work that is assigned and performed by an employee as part of their duties. A task statement typically begins with an action verb and identifies the object of the task. For example, what is the purpose of the action or to whom is it done? The statement should also identify the expected outcome/output of the product and identify any necessary tools required to complete the work.

**Note:** Task statements must be consistent with current class specifications and any allocation guidelines. The task statement for the Staff Services Manager class series have been mapped to the competency model for those classes.

**The following are some specific task statements which may be used when preparing job descriptions**

- [Associate Governmental Program Analyst](#)
- [Attorney](#)

- [Staff Services Manager I](#)
- [Staff Services Manager II \(Supervisory\)](#)
- [Staff Services Manager II \(Managerial\)](#)
- [Staff Services Manager III](#)

### **What are the Uses of a Job Description?**

- Identifies duties of positions
- Organizes work efficiently enabling supervisors to better control workload
- Assists in identifying employee training needs
- Assists in evaluating and defining employee performance and expectations
- Serves as recruitment tool
- Avoids potential out-of-class situations
- Provides a defensible tool when documenting employee performance issues
- Provides a reliable foundation for position evaluation when faced with issues such as reasonable accommodation, limited duty, workers compensation, fitness for duty and disability retirement.

**Note:** When writing generic duties for more than one position in a classification, extra care must be taken to describe the duties. This is because the descriptions are inherently more general in nature, Extra care is needed in order to fully capture the work of multiple positions and not omit any essential functions.

### **What is the Difference between Essential and Non-Essential Functions?**

#### Essential Functions:

- The position exists to perform the function(s)
- Essential functions are the primary reason the position exists
- Duties are basic, necessary, and an integral part of the job
- There are a limited number of other employees available to perform the function, or among whom the function can be distributed
- The function is highly specialized, and the person in the position was hired for special expertise and ability to perform it.

According to the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA), employees must be able to perform the "essential job functions with or without a reasonable accommodation. Employers

must provide accommodations if it allows the employee to perform their essential job duties. If an employee files a discrimination charge, lawsuit, workers compensation claim or requests reasonable accommodation, a properly prepared duty statement may become critical evidence of their essential job functions and will help protect the department, the employee, and the supervisor/manager.

#### Non-Essential Functions:

- Non-essential functions are not essential as defined above
- Non-essential functions are the additional duties
- Function is incidental or a minimal part of the job
- Marginal functions can be redistributed among other staff.

### **What are Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities and How Do They Relate to Required Qualifications?**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's) are requirements an employee must possess to successfully perform the duties of a specific classification. Required qualifications and KSA's must be consistent with each other as reflected in the class specification. When preparing job descriptions it is important to know that KSA's must link to the tasks performed. Additionally, you may find that some of the KSA's in the class specification may not apply to some positions, if this is the case, they should be left off the duty statement.

Click here for a list of [KSA statements categorized by competencies and or occupational groups.](#)

### **What are Working Conditions?**

Working conditions refer to physical characteristics/surroundings of the job that make specific demands of an employee's capacity. They may describe physical or mental abilities required to perform the essential functions of the job.

#### Examples of Working Conditions:

- Occasional overnight travel (20%)

- Mandatory overtime – at least 10 hours per month
- Prolonged periods of standing, bending, sitting, kneeling
- Work in a high rise building
- Transport equipment up to 40 pounds
- Work outside in varying temperature
- Work in rough and uneven terrain
- Work in confined/restricted working environment

### **What are Desirable Qualifications?**

Desirable qualifications (optional) include special personal characteristics, interpersonal skills, and additional qualifications. These qualifications address specific business needs and represent additional attributes that will enhance the employee's ability to perform a particular function. **Examples of Desirable Qualifications (when not required in minimum qualifications):**

- Professional certification or license
- General or specialized knowledge in the field
- Ability to qualify for a fidelity bond
- Aptitude for investigative work
- Skills and abilities above the required minimums

### **When Should A Job Description Be Revised?**

#### Recommended:

- When a vacancy occurs as part of the recruitment process. This provides an opportunity to review and assess the duties of the position and the needs of the workplace prior to recruitment. After your review you may revise the job description as appropriate.

#### Alternative:

- Review existing employees' job descriptions when preparing the employee's annual performance evaluation. This is a good opportunity for supervisors and managers to engage in discussions with employees regarding the duties of their

position and ensure that their employees have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

- Preparing probationary reports

Note: Job Descriptions also need to be revised when reclassifying the duties of a position, such as upgrading or downgrading the duties of a position, or when an employee advances through the ranges of a deep class. There are also circumstances that may require an employee's duties be changed due to organizational restructuring and or re-organization. These are situations which will require you to work with your Human Resources staff to ensure that you follow any internal procedures and formats required by your department.

### **Other Suggestions and Tips**

- Ensure that task percentages total 100%
- State duties clearly and specifically. Avoid the use of jargon and or ambiguous words.
- Spell out acronyms
- As you prepare the job description , refer to the classification allocation factors
- Prepare the job description for the position, not specifically for an individual
- Collective bargaining agreements must be reviewed to identify any other specific job standards or duties
- Need for special expertise, training or education to successfully perform the function, such as continuing education or required expertise
- Consequence of not requiring an individual to perform the function, such as what happens if employee fails to meet job requirement or to perform the function

### **Sample Job Descriptions**

[Office Technician](#)

[Associate Personnel Analyst](#)

[Staff Service Manager I](#)