

Guidance Note

Writing a Job Description

This guidance note should be used when completing the Job Description and Grade Proposal form (i.e. the Job Description) and gives pointers as to what information is required in each of the sections and sub sections of the form. A job description needs to be written and evaluated when:

1. a new post is created
2. the existing post holder leaves and a replacement is required
3. the existing role has changed and the job description no longer accurately reflects what is required from the post holder

Section A: Job Description

The form should be completed taking into account of what is required for the role and NOT for the role-holder.

Job summary

This should be one or two sentences summarising why the role exists, and what it is intended to achieve. This may be easier to write once you have completed the rest of the form.

Organisation chart

This should include the role titles of; the person to whom the post holder reports to and all roles reporting to the role holder. If your organisation chart is available on the intranet you may wish to add a link to the chart rather than reproduce it.

Main duties

You might find it easiest to describe the accountabilities by outlining what is done, to what or with whom to achieve what end result. It is not necessary to list every duty carried out by the post holder, but should clearly outline the type of responsibilities the post holder would have and the amount of time (approximately) they are likely to spend on each duty.

Knowledge, Skills, Qualifications, Experience Required

What knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience must the role holder have to make possible the achievement of a high (fully acceptable) performance? If the post is vacant, what would the specification be for filling the post? Focus on the requirements for the role, NOT on the qualities possessed by the current role holder.

Dimensions

List of significant factual quantities on which the job has an impact.

Use dimensions that best describe the requirements of the role, including activity on the part of the University over which the role has direct accountability.

Typical dimensions include the following:

- staffing: number, job titles, grades of roles supervised
- financial: recurrent budget, monies that the role holder should typically be generating
- customer: number and type of internal and external customers
- operational: range, number, type of activities and services provided, number of customers/people affected by the role holder's work; impact on the Budget Centre/School, College/Corporate Service, University.

Planning and organising

Describe the JOB REQUIREMENTS for planning and organising. This may be the requirement to plan and organise your own work, that of other people, and/or the allocation and use of resources.

Some points to include are:

- how the work should come to the role holder
- how the role holder plans to deal with the work
- the extent the job requires the role holder to plan ahead and to what extent the job is reactive
- the typical, and minimum, maximum, time-span of the actions controlled by the role holder
- how far typically (and the minimum and maximum) the role holder has to plan ahead?
- how the planning influences the direction of the University
- for what part of the University the job is responsible

Problem solving and decision making

Provide examples of typical decisions that the job holder should make, or have a significant influence on through advising or making recommendations. For each example, describe whether the decision making is either advisory or the role holder is responsible for the decision. Also what guidelines are in place to support the job holder's decision making or alternatively constraints on the role holder's freedom to make a decision (e.g. policies, procedures, protocols, legislation).

Internal and external relationships

Identify the most significant relationships inside and outside the University that should play an important part in getting the role done successfully? For band 100 to 500, list the people the post holder must deal with regularly to do a good job.

For each relationship identify: who; what (nature of relationship or for Band 100 to 500 the type of communication); when/frequency; why (what key output of the role depends on this relationship).

Next Steps

Once the form is completed please forward to your HR representative, along with any other useful information, relating to the post/current post holder, including the preferred Band/Grade proposed, for evaluation. If a post with an existing post-holder is re-graded, the effective date of the re-grading will normally be the date the agreed job description was received by the relevant Head of HR for grading. Also, in such cases, the post-holder is normally awarded one increment on re-grading.