

Writing a Position Description

What is a Position Description?

A position description is a written document that describes the purpose, duties, responsibilities, tasks, and relationships of a particular job. It is a snapshot in time as the job exists.

Why do we need Position Descriptions?

Position descriptions for staff positions are necessary for a variety of reasons. Position descriptions are used to:

- Guide supervisors when evaluating work distribution and departmental organization.
- Analyze jobs to determine appropriate pay ranges and classifications.
- Establish a basis for recruitment, selection, and hiring.
- Help incumbents understand their jobs better.
- Allows performance reviews to be clear and accurate.

What should be included in the Position Description?

Listing of duties and responsibilities in the position description should be limited to what is required to perform the job. Duties and responsibilities no longer performed or those that may be required in the future should not be included in the description. The description is to be written in terms of the position itself, not the capabilities of any individual.

The requirements listed (such as education, work experience, Skills, abilities and knowledge) on the position description must support the essential functions.

Suggestions and tips for writing a Position Description

Well written position descriptions are written in a factual and impersonal style. It should be accurate concise, and complete. Before writing a position description, you may want to consider these suggestions:

- Contact Human Resources for exact SLCC job title.
- Keep sentence structure as simple as possible; omit unnecessary words that do not contribute pertinent information.
- Begin each duty/task with an action verb.
- Avoid the narrative form.
- Be consistent when using terms like “may” and “occasionally.” These should be used to describe tasks that are performed once in a while, or tasks that only some employee’s perform.
- Refer to job titles rather than incumbents, i.e., “Reports to _____ Manager” instead of “Reports to Jane Doe.”
- Be precise. This is critical for accurate job evaluation and analysis.
- Focus on critical activities. Place minor occasional tasks, which are not unique to a specific job into the non-essential responsibilities area of the position description.
- Use logical sequence in describing duties and responsibilities, and be consistent.

To enter a position description, go to the PARS website at <https://jobs.slcc.edu/hr>

