

Tips for Writing a Job Description



Having a clear and complete job description is essential for finding the best fit for your job and department. The key to a great job description is to be as specific as possible about the tasks, duties, and responsibilities your student employees will be required to do. This is a launching point for future professional development discussions with your students. Here are three steps to writing a great job description:

1. **Identify:** Start by identifying the simplest and most basic elements of the job. List about 10-20 of these tasks. Then organize and summarize them into like groups.
2. **Overview:** Once you have your tasks, duties, and responsibilities listed and grouped, write an overview of the position. The overview is like a summary and should be no longer than a few sentences. You should identify the department and reporting structure. The list of tasks, duties, and responsibilities will follow the overview.
3. **Additional Information:** Add any additional information that may be useful to your prospective employees.

Examples

Below are a few examples of taking job descriptions from good to great.

GOOD	GREAT
This is a great position for any student who is tech-savvy.	The Lab Help Desk Assistant is a member of a team-oriented staff and shares in the responsibility of providing the campus community with technology support services. The Lab Help Desk Assistant is responsible for providing first and second level technical support that ensures client questions and problems are resolved in a timely and professional manner. She/he is also responsible for helping develop and maintain the following client support systems: Helpdesk, Library Student Helpdesk, and the trouble ticket system. All Lab Help Desk Assistants report to the manager of Helpdesk Services.
This person will need to provide excellent customer service to clients and provide office assistance as needed.	The ABC Organization is in need of an office assistant. This person should be a detail-oriented, organized self-starter who can work independently with minimal supervision. Duties include but are not limited to: - Greeting visitors to the office and answering questions in a professional manner - Answering the main line and direction calls/taking messages as needed - Assist staff with copying and filing as needed - Data-entry using Excel - Assist with mailings and other duties as assigned

Identify Key Qualifications

Determine what your minimum and preferred qualifications are for the job. Minimum qualifications are what the person absolutely must have to start the job and preferred qualifications identify your ideal candidate. The key is to find a happy medium between the two. Below are examples of the most common mistakes to avoid when setting your qualifications and options you can choose instead.

Vague Language

DON'T	DO
Excellent customer service skills	Greeting visitors, friendly attitude, experience working with a diverse population
Office skills	Highly organized, attention to detail, previous experience in an office setting
Computer-savvy	Knowledge of Mac and PC; experience working with Microsoft Access Databases; knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite, HTML

Unnecessarily Limiting Your Pool

DON'T	DO
Must be a music major	Must be able to read music sheets and play at least one instrument
Must have a GPA of 3.0 or above	Must earn a 3.0 or above in the following courses
Juniors or Seniors only	Focus on experiences and skills student may have on campus that will help them in this position vs. assuming a junior or senior will do a better job

Biased Statements

DON'T	DO
Male student to help with heavy lifting and moving of boxes	Must be able to lift 50 lbs or more
No international students	Focus on the communication skills you require for the position: - Must be proficient in speaking and writing [language] - Must have excellent command of [language] - Must be able to translate from [language] to [language]

