

Preparing to Recruit

Advertising

Selection

Appointment

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**The Position Description** can be used for a variety of purposes, including recruitment, job evaluation, and to ensure mutual understanding between the employee and the supervisor about the allocation of responsibilities. This documentation is a guide to help you prepare a Position Description. Please read it carefully. It should answer the questions you might wish to ask about this task. If you have any difficulties you can contact your Faculty or Divisional HR Consultant. (<http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/services/personnel/hrcs.html>)

### When writing a Position Description you should bear in mind that:

1. You are describing the **job, not the person** in it.
2. The Position Description must describe what the job **is**, not what **it was, will be next year, might be, or ought to be**. The aim is to describe the permanent ongoing job. Omit any temporary duties or characteristics.
3. It is essential, though not always easy, to specify the **whole job**. Some jobs operate over cycles of varying lengths. Many administrative jobs have monthly, quarterly and annual cycles. Others may continually involve specific once-only assignments. Still others have accountabilities which may be seldom exercised but which are important when describing the whole job.
4. The Position Description must not make explicit or implicit reference to the sex of the position holder.

### The position description should contain:

1. **Position Summary:** a concise statement that makes clear the overall and broad objective of the job and avoids detail:

For Example:

*“This is a high quality customer service and administrative support role that provides the first source of advice and guidance in relation to University policy, procedures and processes. You are required to exercise judgment, set priorities and schedule work to meet deadlines”.*

2. **Organisational Environment:** A brief description of the broad context within which the position operates, describing the work of the unit/division. This section can include challenges and constraints.
3. **Statistics:** measurable statistics such as budgets, volume of work, value of assets controlled and number of staff
4. **Reporting Relationships:** supervisor's position and positions reporting to the jobholder
5. **Key Duties and Responsibilities:** The major responsibilities of the position, including the expected outcomes, standard and timeframes. i.e. the what and the how.
6. **Selection Criteria:** the basis upon which applicants will be assessed. Includes qualifications, experience, and skills that are essential for competent performance in the job.

## **WRITING RELEVANT SELECTION CRITERIA**

Selection criteria describe skills, knowledge, qualities, experience needed to do a job and are the basis for developing interview questions, evaluating candidates and shortlisting applicants.

It is crucial that everyone involved on a Selection Committee understands the list of selection criteria and use them as the focal point throughout candidate assessment. Essential criteria are those critical skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience that are vital to a person's ability to perform the duties of the position. As a rule there should be no more than 7 criteria.

### **The Basics**

Selection criteria should closely reflect the content of the position description and departmental needs.

Determining essential criteria must be decided upon before applications are reviewed.

Agreement on the relative importance of each of the essential criteria will make it easier to choose between candidates later in the selection process. This is particularly helpful when there is more than one strong candidate, each with different skill sets.

### **Mix of Criteria**

Consider a broad mix of selection criteria when looking for the ideal candidate. The "best" candidate might not be the one with the most publications, prestigious degrees or the most seniority.

A balanced list of criteria might include:

1. Length and type of experience as it relates to the position.
2. Technical and/or pedagogical skills that might be specific to a particular job (e.g. research methodology, graduate teaching experience, computer programming, supervisory expertise).

3. Performance skills that an individual may use on or off-the-job (eg. written and oral communication, analytical ability, persistence, assertiveness).
4. Unique experiences or ideas that an individual brings to the campus or department.
5. Affirmative action goals.
6. Understanding or ability to implement the principles of EEO see <http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/services/recruitment/equity.pdf>
7. Understanding and/or ability to implement OH&S principles and procedures <http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/services/recruitment/ohs.pdf>
8. Ability to function as part of a team.
9. Creativity and flexibility in adapting to a challenging environment.
10. Problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities.
11. Leadership potential among peers and subordinates.
12. Evidence of ability to be an effective teacher, colleague and role model in a diverse setting.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Review the position description and have someone knowledgeable about the job review the description. Or have somebody unfamiliar with the job review the description for clarity. Revise as appropriate.

Finalise the position description, obtain the necessary approval and submit to Human Resources for evaluation and processing.