Purpose

The Position Description (PD) is a formal action-oriented document that summarizes the important functions of a position using clear and concise language. Position descriptions begin with a careful analysis of the important facts about a job, such as individual duties, methods used to complete the duties, the purpose and responsibilities of the job, the relationship of the job to other jobs and the qualifications needed for the job. It is important to make a job description practical by keeping it dynamic, functional and current. As many jobs are subject to change due to personal growth, organizational development and/or new technologies, flexible position descriptions will encourage employee growth for continuous organizational development.

When writing the position description, keep in mind that the PD will serve as a major basis for outlining training needs and development and conducting future performance evaluations. An accurate PD helps the employee know what is expected by clearly defining the work to be performed in relation to the overall goals of the work unit. The position description is also used as an information source for the development and implementation of an effective recruitment and selection plan if a position becomes vacant. PDs also serve as a source document for worker’s compensation or disability accommodation matters. The Position Description should be completed cooperatively by the employee and supervisor unless the position is new or vacant, in which case it should be completed by the supervisor.

A Position Description should be reviewed annually and updated when the duties or skill requirements have changed significantly. Contact Human Resources at 608-785-8013 with any questions regarding career progression or title changes.

Instructions for Completing the Form

Position Identification/Demographic Information (First Section):

Official Title: The official title designation for the position, in collaboration with Human Resources.

Working Title (if different): The non-official title for the position.

Department/Unit: The name of the unit or department in which the employee is assigned.

College/Division: The name of the college or division in which the employee is assigned.

Reports to: Name of the first line supervisor.

Position Type:

Supervisory Position: Will this position have supervisory authority of other employees?

Contract Basis:
Appointment %: Budgeted FTE

Date: Date the Position Description is created/updated.

Created/Updated By: Name and title of individual who created or updated the Position Description.

**Position Summary Statement**
This statement is generally a summary or overview of the general nature, level, purpose and objective of the position. Describe the overall purpose of the position using two to three sentences.

**Major Duties**
The major duties for a faculty position should be broken down by:
- Teaching
- Research
- Service

A percentage of time and brief explanation should accompany each area.

**Tips for Writing Effective Position Descriptions:**
- Always use the present tense of verbs.
- If necessary, use explanatory phrases telling why, how, where or how often to add meaning and clarity.
- Omit any unnecessary articles such as “a,” “an,” the,” or other words for an easy to understand description.
- Use unbiased terminology. For example: use the he/she approach or construct sentences in such a way that gender pronouns are not required.
- Avoid using words which are subject to differing interpretations. Try not to use words such as “frequently,” “some,” “complex,” “occasional,” and “several.”