

## POSITION DESCRIPTION GUIDELINES

It is the practice of California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) that a position description be provided to Staff and Management Personnel Plan (MPP) employees upon initial hire and subsequently when there is a substantial change in the essential functions of the position. In the event these guidelines conflict with a collective bargaining agreement, the collective bargaining agreement shall supersede the guidelines.

A position description serves as the foundation for many functions related to successful human resources activities such as: recruitment and selection, job classification and compensation, performance appraisal, and disability accommodation.

A copy of the Position Description should be placed in an employee's official personnel file.

### Understanding Position Descriptions

Position descriptions help employees get a sense of their job responsibilities, what is expected of them, and the standards by which they will be evaluated. The Appropriate Administrator is responsible for ensuring the position description accurately reflects the assigned duties and responsibilities. To keep the position description current, it is recommended that Appropriate Administrators review position descriptions at least annually.

Position descriptions may also help develop recruiting materials such as interview questions and screening criteria, and ensure consistency and equity among positions.

### Position Descriptions vs. Classification Standards

Each position in your department should have a separate position description that provides details regarding the essential functions of that specific position. Be careful not to confuse position descriptions with official university Classification Standards, which are designed and maintained by CSU and shared among all 23 CSU campuses. Position descriptions differ from Classification Standards in the following ways:

- Position descriptions define the essential functions of a position to meet your departmental needs, whereas Classification Standards are official CSU documents that state general duties.
- Position descriptions are used to manage performance, and recruit employees, whereas Classification Standards are used for classification purposes and job audits.

### Writing Your Position Description

In creating the position description, use the position description template found on the Human Resources website.

#### Working Titles:

Classification titles are broad and are used to distinguish a grouping of similar positions across a variety of settings, whereas a working title is specific to an actual position in an identifiable work unit.

A position may only have one working title, and should not duplicate another classification title. Working titles should clearly describe the function, responsibilities or scope of the position, and should not misrepresent the authority or function of the position.

For example, the classification “Administrative Support Assistant I or II” may not be sufficiently descriptive, particularly if there are several positions with the same classification title in the same work unit and each has a different function. A working title such as *Support Assistant*, *Customer Service Representative*, *Administrative Assistant*, and *Department Assistant* may be appropriate if this is the case.

Titles such as *Administrator*, *Director*, *Associate Director*, *Assistant Director*, *Manager*, and *Supervisor*, should only be used with positions designated as “management” or “supervisory”. Such positions have been designated as MPP (Management Personnel Plan) in accordance with the provision of the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA) and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

The following are examples that may be used in working titles. This list is not mean to be all inclusive or restrictive.

- Lead – Work leader for a small group; typically performs work that is substantially similar to co-workers.
- Analyst – Professional; performs work requiring analysis
- Specialist – Paraprofessional; may be subject matter expert for a certain specialization
- Coordinator – High level support
- Technician – Paraprofessional for technical positions

### **Outline of a Position Description**

#### **Position Summary:**

Briefly describes the primary function of the position or contribution to the department or organization. This section should be no more than a few sentences.

#### **Major Duties:**

Describes the major responsibilities assigned to a position (typically 5-7) listing them in order of importance. Indicate the approximate percentage of time spent in each area of responsibility, estimated over a year timeframe. There should be a minimum of 5% for a given duty. Primary responsibilities should represent the majority of the time allocation, with the total equaling 100%. Miscellaneous or other duties as assigned should be 5%.

Indicate duties, which are “essential functions”. A function may be essential because:

1. The position was established to perform the function
2. A limited number of employees are available to perform the function
3. Removing the function would fundamentally change the position.

It is recommended that this section list duties and responsibilities, but not the tasks through which the employee meets the responsibilities. Tasks may be listed in other documents such as guidelines or desk manuals, or be used as goals

for performance evaluations. For example, “answering the telephone” may be a significant duty for a receptionist and a minor task within one duty of the office coordinator to “back up the receptionist during breaks and absences.”

Use the following style:

**What** is done – use an action verb to begin each sentence (see Appendix A for a list of useful action verbs and their meanings).

**How** it is done – summarize the function.

**Why** it is done – the objective or the purpose of the function.

For example: Analyzes financial statements consistent with standard accounting practices to determine credit worthiness of a loan applicant.

WHAT – analyzes financial statements

HOW – consistent with standard accounting practices

WHY – to determine credit worthiness of a loan applicant

#### Physical Effort:

This section describes the physical effort which is essential to the position activities. Only one can be selected.

- Sedentary Work - involves mainly sitting; walking and standing are minimal; involves lifting light weight objects limited to 15 pounds.
- Light Work - involves mainly sitting with up to 25% of the activities involving regular standing or walking; involves lifting of medium weight objects limited to 25 pounds.
- Medium Work - up to 40% of the activities involve sitting, standing, squatting, kneeling or walking; involves lifting heavy weight objects limited to 50 pounds; may involve pushing and pulling objects within the weight limits.
- Heavy Work - 50% or more of the activities involve waling, standing, squatting, kneeling or climbing; involves lifting heavy weight object which may exceed 50 pounds.

#### Environmental Factors:

This section describes the type(s) of environmental factors which are essential to the position activities. More than one environmental factor may be selected.

- Inside (typically office environment)
- Extreme temperature (hot/cold)
- Elevated Work (Raised platform-scaffold)
- Outdoor
- Hazards

Supervision Received:

Indicates the level of supervision received by the Appropriate Administrator, using the following terms and associated meanings:

- Immediate - greatest amount of supervision; methods of performing tasks are well established; assistance is readily available.
- General Supervision - some control over administrative or technical aspects of work; definite work objectives are set, but the methods of performing tasks are frequently left to the judgment of the employee with the supervisor providing occasional advice.
- General Direction - general control over administrative aspects of work; plans and organizes methods for completing tasks and managing responsibilities; makes decisions which have a wide impact on the work of others or the work unit.
- Administrative Direction - responsibilities are defined by the scope of the organizational functions; responsible for formulating operational policies for a comprehensive and diversified program; makes top level management decisions.

Supervision Exercised:

Indicates the type of supervisory responsibilities that are associated with the position.

- No responsibility for supervising the work of others.
- Serves as a lead person for a small work group and/or students (non-manager).
  - Leads are responsible for duties that include, but are not limited to; giving work assignments to employees, providing on-the-job training for assigned duties, attempting to resolve workflow or procedural conflicts; providing input to the Appropriate Administrator on the employee's job performance.
- Manages a unit/function.
  - Typically an Administrator I
- Manages a department(s).
  - Typically an Administrator II or III
- Manages a division.
  - Typically an Administrator IV

Specialized Materials:

Indicate the equipment, machinery, tools, vehicles and/or office equipment needed for a position.

Special Working Conditions:

List any overtime requirements, 24/7 on-call, work schedule, etc.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Identify the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for the incumbent to possess in order to be successful in the position. Consider such matters as knowledge of applicable policies and procedures (State and/or CSU), analytical skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, problem-solving ability, decision-making ability, and ability to maintain

confidentiality. The knowledge, skills and abilities must be clearly related to the duties and responsibilities of the position. The following may be used as a guide:

- Knowledge – a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function gained from instruction or learned through experience.
  - Working knowledge – requires a sufficient familiarity with the subject to know basic principles and terminology and to understand and solve simple problems.
  - General knowledge – requires sufficient knowledge of a field to perform most work as assigned with little direct supervision. The work calls for comprehension of standard work situations and should include knowledge of most of the significant aspects of the subject.
  - Thorough knowledge – requires wide coverage of the subject matter area. The work calls for sufficient comprehension of the subject to solve unusual as well as common work problems, to advise on technical and policy questions, and to plan work programs.
- Skill – a technical expertise or proficiency.
- Ability – a mental or physical aptitude, capability, or competence.

Experience and Education:

Experience and education will be set based on CSU Classification and Qualification Standards for non-MPP positions. Additional experience or education should be listed as preferred.

Preferred Qualifications and/or Specialized Skills and Abilities:

These are skills or attributes unique for the position. They should link to the essential duties in the position description. Specialized skills should define "characteristics" needed to perform the job.

**Constantly Update and Assess**

In the spirit of continuous improvement and process review, position descriptions should constantly evolve based on emerging priorities or shifts in organizational and departmental needs.

Be sure to regularly assess and update position descriptions in the following ways:

- Let employees know that their position descriptions are always subject to change.
- Ensure that employees understand the difference between their Classification Standard and their position description—although it may be valid when someone says "That's not in my position description," it may indeed be in their classification standard.
- Review position descriptions when you discuss the performance expectations and development plans for the coming year with employees.
- If changes identified in your annual plan involve fundamental additions or deletions to the existing functions described in position descriptions, you may need to incorporate those changes into your employees' position descriptions.

## APPENDIX

The following list of action verbs is designed to assist in finding the strongest and most descriptive verb. The verbs are grouped together by broad categories. This list is followed by some common working definitions to provide consistency in interpreting key verbs at CSU.

<b><u>Administrative/Mgmt</u></b>	<b><u>Analyze/Evaluate</u></b>	<b><u>Receive/Provide</u></b>	<b><u>Control</u></b>
Administer	Appraise	Accept Accumulate	Audit
Coordinate	Analyze	Acquire	Check
Decision maker	Ascertain	Arrange for	Conserve
Direct	Assemble	Assemble	Control Edit
Lead	Assess	Buy	Enforce
Manage	Balance	Collect	Ensure
Oversee	Calculate	Compile	Guarantee
Supervise	Calibrate	Deliver	Inspect
	Check	Distribute	Monitor
<b><u>Admin Action</u></b>	Compare	Exchange	Prevent
Advise	Compile	Forward	Protect
Allocate	Consider	Furnish	Regulate
Appoint	Detect	Gather	Restrict
Approve	Determine	Inform	Review
Assign	Develop	Inquire	Schedule
Authorize	Diagnose	Issue Mail	Track
Conduct	Distinguish	Notify	Validate
Control	Estimate	Prepare	Verify
Consult Decide	Evaluate	Process	
Delegate	Examine	Procure	<b><u>Create</u></b>
Enforce	Forecast	Provide	Adapt
Establish	Identify	Purchase	Create
Execute	Improve	Receive	Design
Implement	Inspect	Recruit	Devise
Initiate	Interpret	Request	Develop
Organize	Investigate	Report	Establish
Originate Plan	Judge	Secure	Express
Propose	Measure	Send	Fabricate
Recommend	Plan	Solicit	Forecast
Refer Review	Propose	Submit	Initiate
Select	Rate	Supply	Install
Train	Reconcile	Transfer	Originate
	Report	Withdraw	
<b><u>Taking Action</u></b>	Research	<b><u>Communication/Interactive</u></b>	<b><u>Assisting Verbs</u></b>
Activate	Resolve	Communicate	<i>These verbs should only be used when they are an accurate description of the work/role performed.</i>
Encourage	Review	Consult Counsel	Advise
Expedite	Solve Study	Edit	Aid
Implement	Summarize	Explain	Assist
Install Maintain	Survey Test	Interview	Cooperate
Motivate	Troubleshoot	Negotiate	Guide Help
Operate Retool		Present	Participate
Troubleshoot		Teach	
Update		Write	

### Definitions of Commonly Used Verbs

<p><b>Adapt</b> – To modify or change to fit specific new conditions or situations.</p> <p><b>Administer</b> – To direct the daily operations of a program and the execution of the program goals.</p> <p><b>Advise</b> – To offer informed opinions or give specialized information to others.</p> <p><b>Analyze</b> – Identify the elements of and critically examine and relate elements to each other or separately or in relation to the whole.</p> <p><b>Allocate</b> – To assign or apportion a resource for a specific reason.</p> <p><b>Appraise</b> – To compare or assess critically with established standards.</p> <p><b>Approve</b> – Exercise final decisive authority resulting in an action.</p> <p><b>Assign</b> – Specify tasks to be performed by others.</p> <p><b>Assist</b> – To help or aid, not directly responsible.</p> <p><b>Authorize</b> – To approve, usually conveys management level authority to approve.</p> <p><b>Bind</b> – Make a commitment resulting in a financial or other obligation or arrangement.</p> <p><b>Commit</b> – Pledge to a particular course of action.</p> <p><b>Compile</b> – Put together or assemble information or data in a new format.</p> <p><b>Conduct</b> – Organize and carry out an activity, often implies leadership role.</p> <p><b>Consult</b> – Actively provide expertise and advice.</p>	<p><b>Control</b> – Direct, regulate or guide the use of resources. May also refer to monitoring activities to ensure compliance with rules or expected results.</p> <p><b>Cooperate</b> – Act jointly with others.</p> <p><b>Coordinate</b> – Organize and regulate the related actions of others to attain results.</p> <p><b>Create</b> – Produce or develop using originality and ingenuity.</p> <p><b>Delegate</b> – Assign another person tasks or duties. Usually conveys the authority of the delegator.</p> <p><b>Develop</b> – To generate and form a plan, idea or concept over time. Usually implies study and analysis.</p> <p><b>Devise</b> – Form and idea or concept or plan that is a combination of ideas and often new application of principles or arrangement of parts.</p> <p><b>Direct</b> – To govern and have control over work operations. Usually implies establishing goals and objective, as well as operating standards.</p> <p><b>Execute</b> – Put into effect and carry out a plan of action.</p> <p><b>Evaluate</b> – To determine the significance, condition or value of something through careful study or appraisal.</p> <p><b>Forecast</b> – Predict future events or occurrences based on knowledge of the topic area and specified assumptions. Assumes analysis.</p> <p><b>Guide</b> – To direct another in a course of action.</p> <p><b>Implement</b> – To fulfill an action and carry it out to the point of usage.</p>
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