



JOB DESCRIPTIONS

the easy complete guide for employers

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CHAPTER 1 – JOB AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

STEP 1 - WHO DO YOU NEED?

DEFINE THE POSITION AND THE PERSON REQUIRED

The first step in getting the right person for the position is to ask two questions –

- What are the key tasks and responsibilities of the position?
- What are the knowledge, skills and abilities and attributes needed?

Both these questions will be answered by completing a **position analysis**. The outcome of the position analysis will be a

- position description, and a
- person description.

DEJARGONISER

There is often confusion around the terms knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes (KSAAs).

The following are simple clear to understand definitions of each term.

Abilities

How capable the person is in a particular field e.g. above average numerical ability

Knowledge

What the person needs to know and understand to effectively perform the required work e.g. university knowledge of numerical processes.

Skill

What the person must be able to do and demonstrate to effectively perform the required work. Skill reflects a level of proficiency in applying knowledge e.g. proficiency at completing numerical problems. Skills can be both technical e.g. welding or non-technical e.g. interpersonal skills

Personal Attributes

Personal characteristics and motivations, which reflect how a person typically deals with his or her world, e.g. service motivation, attention to detail etc.

*These four areas are often combined and referred to as **competencies or performance factors**.*

Performance factors = Knowledge + Skill + Abilities + Attributes

HOW TO DO A POSITION ANALYSIS

1. Review the present position description

If there is a current position description, check to see if it is still applicable or not. If not update it by observing the person presently in the position and interviewing people connected to the position.

2. Observe the position

If possible observe a person doing the job. Ask yourself the following questions

- What is the person doing?
- What skills and personal attributes does he or she need?
- What are the working conditions?
- Who does the person interact with?

3. Interview person(s) connected to the position.

If possible interview a person currently doing the position as well as at least one other person who works closely with the person in the position. Use the following as a list of questions that you may choose from when interviewing.

POSITION ANALYSIS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Exploring the position	Exploring the person required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your position title?• To whom do you report?• Who reports to you?• What are the main objectives of your position?• What budget are you responsible for?• What do you spend most of your time doing?• What tasks need to be done?• Which tasks are most important?• Who do you communicate with most?• What forms of communication do you use?• What physical work is involved?• What decisions do you have to make?• What demands are made of you?• Is there any travel involved in the position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What level of education is required for the position?• What level of literacy is required?• What level of numerical skills is required?• What level of verbal (written and oral) skills is required?• What buying or sales skills are required?• What computer skills are required?• What level of physical fitness is required?• What level of mechanical skills is required?• What personal characteristics are needed to do this job well?• What problem-solving skills are needed?• What level of creativity is needed?• What other skills do you need to do this job?

HOW TO DO A POSITION DESCRIPTION

The information gathered by observing the job and interviewing now has to be written up into a Position Description

The Employment Relations Act 2000 makes it a LEGAL REQUIREMENT to have a position description.

A position description outlines the purpose of the job, and the key factors required for a person to perform effectively in the position; as well as the expected results.

<p>CHECKLIST</p> <p>DOES YOUR POSITION DESCRIPTION INCLUDE -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The position title✓ Reporting relationships✓ Goals and objectives of the position✓ Key tasks and responsibilities of the position✓ Key knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes✓ Key competencies (optional)✓ Performance Standards (optional)
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Please see Documents tab for an example of a position description.

CHAPTER 2 – PERFORMANCE FACTORS

IDENTIFYING PERFORMANCE FACTORS

The position description describes the wide range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes required for the position (KSAs). It would not be practical to try and assess every single performance factor. For this reason it is acceptable to choose 10 to 14 performance factors. From these a smaller group of the KSAs that are KEY TO SUCCESS in the position has to be chosen. These are known as the PERFORMANCE FACTORS.

Performance factors are the factors most important to success on the job.

Performance factors are the selection criteria or standards for a position. They are the KEY knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes (KSAs) that a person needs in order to succeed in position.

KEY POINT

LEGALLY DEFENSIBLE PERFORMANCE FACTORS

- Performance factors MUST relate to the position
- Performance factors MUST comply with legal requirements e.g. the Human Rights Act.

Essential, Desirable and Bonus Performance Factors

Performance factors are usually divided into 3 categories -

- The **ESSENTIAL** Performance factors or KSAs – these are the “Must Have” KSAs
- The **DESIRABLE** Performance factors or KSAs – these are the “It would be nice to have” KSAs
- The **BONUS** Performance factors or KSAs – these are the “could have” KSAs. They would add value to the organisation, but are not fundamental to the position; they are the “icing on the top”.

This distinction is important: Essential performance factors are known as “Knockout” factors as they describe the minimum requirements for a person. Applicants not meeting the “knockout” factors are not considered for the position.

Note that if the skill can be quickly and easily developed in the workplace, it can be classified as a desirable rather than an essential performance factor. As an example, the following table demonstrates some performance factors that would be essential, desirable, or a bonus to a sales role.

EXAMPLE PERFORMANCE FACTORS FOR A SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Essential KSAs	Desirable KSAs	Bonus KSAs
Driver's licence Motivation to influence Negotiating ability Communication skills	Sales knowledge Sales experience Product knowledge	Network of clients

KEY POINTS

THE GOLDEN RULES

- Do not hire anyone who does not have the essential Performance factors (KSAs)
- Only consider desirable Performance factors (KSAs) if resources exist to develop the person
- Do not let bonus Performance factors (KSAs) replace essential KSAs.