



## BEST PRACTICES FOR WRITING JOB POSTINGS

**AUDIENCE:** HR Community, Hiring Managers/Supervisors, Department Administrators

In alignment with our institutional statement on diversity and in support of the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s mission, vision, values, and commitments, this resource provides best practices for writing job postings.

### GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

When writing job postings, it's important to use clear and concise language that accurately reflects the role and its requirements, ensuring the tone is inviting to attract prospective candidates. Here are some general best practices to ensure your job posting has a welcoming and inclusive tone, attracting a diverse pool of qualified candidates.

- Identify your screening criteria before finalizing the job posting content. These criteria will guide and inform the creation of the job requirements for the job posting.
- Ensure your job posting clearly outlines both the qualifications and skills you are seeking, as well as the benefits and opportunities the candidate will gain from joining your team. This balance helps attract candidates who are not only well-qualified for the role but also excited about what your organization has to offer.
- Be concise and avoid duplication. ALL UW–Madison job postings automatically include UW–Madison’s Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action statement, accommodation request information, criminal and campus background check requirements, confidentiality details, and the annual campus fire and safety report. Additionally, all postings feature a standard description and value statement about UW–Madison, with the final paragraph highlighting our commitment to inclusive excellence; there is no need to repeat this information or add a unit-specific statement.
- Seek feedback from various individuals before finalizing the job posting. This may include members of the search and screen committee, team members, collaborators, the current role holder, etc.
- Review for plain language for accessibility purposes, and to increase the likelihood of candidates engaging with your position. Consider attending the Office of Human Resources [Plain Language Training](#) for more specific takeaways on how to achieve this.
- Consider the audience you’re writing for – what is engaging for individuals working in that specific industry/sector?

### BUSINESS TITLE



A [business title](#) offers a more detailed and specific description compared to an employee's official job title (title of record). This additional detail can help applicants gain a clearer understanding of the role's responsibilities and expectations. By providing a business title, you can highlight the unique aspects of the position, making it easier for potential candidates to see how their skills and experiences align with the job. This clarity can attract applicants who are well-qualified for the role. Be sure to spell out acronyms, particularly those that are university/unit specific.

## **JOB SUMMARY**

Your job summary should provide a clear, concise and inviting overview of what the applicant will be doing in the role. This section is meant to give potential candidates a better understanding of the day-to-day responsibilities and key functions of the position. It should complement, but not duplicate, the standard job description (SJD). Focus on highlighting the unique aspects of the role and how it fits within the organization, helping candidates envision their individual value and impact on the position. Here are two examples to reference:

### **Job Summary: Admissions Director**

*As the Admissions Director, you will be at the forefront of shaping the future of our institution by leading the admissions process and ensuring we attract a talented student body. Your role is pivotal in driving our mission to provide an inclusive and high-quality educational experience.*

*In this position, you will oversee the entire admissions cycle, from developing strategic recruitment plans to managing application reviews and coordinating outreach efforts. You will work closely with various departments to create compelling marketing materials and organize events that showcase our institution's strengths and values.*

*Your leadership will be instrumental in fostering relationships with prospective students, families, and educational partners, ensuring a seamless and supportive admissions journey. By implementing innovative strategies and leveraging data-driven insights, you will help us reach our enrollment goals and enhance our reputation.*

*Beyond the operational aspects, your efforts will directly impact the composition of our student body, enriching our community and contributing to a vibrant and dynamic campus environment.*

*Join us in this influential role and help us build a brighter future for our students and our institution.*

### **Job Summary: Custodian**

*As a Custodian at UW-Madison, you will play a crucial role in maintaining a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for all employees, visitors, and stakeholders. Your work will directly contribute to the overall well-being and productivity of our team, ensuring that our facilities are always in top condition.*

*In this role, you will be responsible for a variety of tasks, including cleaning and sanitizing restrooms, offices, and common areas, managing waste disposal, and performing minor maintenance tasks. Your attention to detail and commitment to high standards will help create a positive and professional atmosphere.*

*Beyond the daily responsibilities, you will be an integral part of our team, supporting events and special projects, and contributing to a culture of respect and care. Your efforts will be highly valued as they*

*enable our organization to function smoothly and efficiently, making a tangible impact on everyone's experience within our facilities.*

*Join us in this essential role and help us maintain a space where everyone can thrive.*

## EDUCATION

When determining if a degree is truly necessary for a job, it's important to critically evaluate the specific requirements of the role. Ask yourself who you might be excluding by requiring a degree—such as individuals with extensive practical experience but no formal education—and who you might be including, like recent graduates who may lack hands-on experience. Consider the core knowledge, skills, and abilities that are essential for the position and whether these can be acquired through alternative means such as work experience, certifications, or vocational training. This approach can help you create a more inclusive hiring process that values diverse backgrounds and experiences.

[The JEMS Education Field: Guidelines and Best Practices](#) document may be useful to review as you develop your job posting.

## QUALIFICATIONS

When listing qualifications for a job posting, it's important to follow best practices to ensure clarity, inclusivity, and effectiveness. Here are some key points to consider:

- **Be Specific and Clear:** Clearly outline the essential qualifications, including required education, experience, skills, and certifications. Avoid using vague terms like "must be experienced" without specifying the type of experience required. Clearly defining the necessary experience helps applicants understand the expectations and assists search and screen committees in maintaining a consistent and fair screening process.
- **Differentiate Between Required and Preferred Qualifications:** Clearly separate the must-have qualifications from the nice-to-have ones. Another way of thinking about this: what is needed on day one of the new job, and what can be learned within the candidate's probationary/evaluation period. This helps candidates understand the minimum requirements and what additional skills or experiences could set them apart, as research has shown that [over-extensive lists](#) of qualifications dissuades candidates from applying. Here are some resources you may find helpful:
  - [Developing Inclusive Job Criteria](#)
  - [Title and Standard Job Description Library](#)
- **Use Inclusive Language:** Avoid gendered language and University-specific jargon. Using neutral terms allows candidates with transferable skills to see themselves in the role.
- **Focus on Skills and Competencies:** Emphasize the skills and competencies needed for the job rather than just formal education or years of experience. This can help attract a more diverse pool of candidates who may have gained relevant skills through non-traditional paths. Discuss with hiring managers and the search committee to understand how these skills and competencies may come up through non-traditional paths.
- **Be Realistic and Reasonable:** Ensure that the qualifications listed are realistic and necessary for the role. Overly stringent requirements can deter qualified candidates from applying.



- **Avoid Redundancy:** Ensure that the qualifications section does not repeat information found elsewhere in the job posting, such as the Education section. Keep it concise and focused on what is essential for the role.
- **Consider Legal Requirements:** Be aware of any legal requirements related to job qualifications, such as equal opportunity employment laws. Ensure that your qualifications do not inadvertently discriminate against any group.

## SALARY AND SALARY DETAILS

When including salary and salary details in an inclusive job posting, it's important to provide clear, transparent, and equitable information. Here are some best practices:

- **State the Salary Range:** Clearly state the salary range for the position. This transparency helps set expectations and can attract a wider pool of applicants who feel confident that the compensation aligns with their needs and market standards. Here is a resource that you may find helpful:
  - [Advertising Salaries and Total Compensation: Best Practices](#)
- **Explain the Basis for Salary:** Provide context on how the salary is determined, such as based on experience, education, or specific skills. This helps applicants understand how their qualifications might influence their compensation.
- **Highlight Benefits:** In addition to the salary, outline the benefits that come with the job. This can include health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, professional development opportunities, remote work possibilities, and any other incentives. Highlighting these can make the position more attractive and show your commitment to employee well-being.
- **Be Transparent About Negotiation:** Indicate whether the salary is negotiable. This openness can encourage candidates to engage in salary discussions confidently. Consider adding a hiring bonus for your position, ensuring it falls within your division's (or [the University's](#)) bonus policy.'

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

When providing additional information for job postings, it's important to include details that may not have been covered in other sections. Here are some key elements for consideration in this section:

- Articulate relevant immigration eligibility information, if applicable at all or for specific visa waivers) for your position, clearly state this in the PVL. Two examples follow:
  - *University sponsorship is not available for this position, including transfers of sponsorship. The selected applicant will be responsible for ensuring their continuous eligibility to work in the United States (i.e. a citizen or national of the United States, a lawful permanent resident, a foreign national authorized to work in the United States without the need of an employer sponsorship) on or before the effective date of appointment.*
  - *The department will not be able to support a request for a J-1 waiver. If you choose to pursue a waiver and apply for our position, the University will not reimburse you for your legal or waiver fees.*
- Articulate if position is a [Position of Trust](#)



- **Work-Life Balance:** Mention any policies or practices that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, and wellness programs. This can be a significant factor for many candidates when considering a new role.
- **Location and Facilities:** Provide information about the job location, including any amenities or facilities available to employees. This can include parking, or public transportation options.

## HOW TO APPLY

- Clearly articulate what applicants should submit as part of their application and what to demonstrate in their materials.
- Assess what applicant materials **are truly necessary for the position and for this step of the process**. Consider the materials and determine if they create barriers for applicants. Ask applicants to provide only what is needed for the initial screening. For example, this may mean collecting applicant references later in the process.
- Understand that the job description and the candidate’s application materials should, ideally, be a two-way conversation. Consider asking applicants to address specific topics in their application materials.
- Provide transparency in your review process, so applicants understand how they will be evaluated. Here are two examples to reference:
  - *“To apply for this position, please click on the “Apply Now” button. You will be asked to upload a resume and cover letter as a part of the application process. Please ensure that the resume and cover letter address your qualifications.”*
  - *“We are eager to learn more about how your experience and passion may align with this position. Please submit a cover letter referring to your related work experience and a resume detailing your educational and professional background. The application reviewers will be relying on written application materials to determine who may advance to preliminary interviews.”*
  - *“To apply for this position, please upload a resume and a cover letter. In your application materials, please address your experience working in X environments, solving Y issues, and any other relevant information to describe your qualifications for this position”*

If you have any additional questions, please contact Talent Acquisition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Office of Human Resources. They are available Monday through Friday, from 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM, and can be reached at 608-265-2257 or uwjobs@wisc.edu.

