



Tips for Creating a Position Description

During the TTC Project employee conversations, managers/supervisors will review new position descriptions (PDs) with employees. **To build the new PD, managers/supervisors will work with HR staff to define responsibility percentages and the optional elements of unique responsibilities and tasks.**

WRITING UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITIES

UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE:

- ✓ **Critical components of the position**
 - Additional unique responsibilities should address **key aspects** of the position not already included under essential responsibilities
 - Each responsibility should take 5% or more of the employee's time and effort
 - If the employee does not perform these duties, the organization would not be able to operate effectively, meet its goals, or provide key services
- ✓ **Optional part of the PD**

If the essential responsibilities from the standard job description (SJD) adequately capture the key responsibilities of the position, it is **not necessary** to add more responsibilities to the PD
- ✓ **Limited to four or fewer responsibilities**
 - Managers should include **no more than four** additional unique responsibilities
 - If more than four responsibilities are needed, managers should discuss with their Human Resources contact whether a different SJD would better match the position
- ✓ **High-level responsibilities – not tasks**
 - Responsibilities describe the core functions of the job at a **high level**
 - Tasks are specific to individual positions and focus on how the work is completed, or the tools to perform work

Include a unique responsibility if it is:

An area of specialty or focus

Example

An HR Generalist focuses on employee onboarding for the division as part of their position. Other HR Generalists on the team do not have this focus.

Possible unique responsibility: Evaluates, develops and implements employee onboarding processes and resources.

A responsibility that requires special knowledge, skills or abilities

Example 1

A Painter is certified in lead-safe renovation and is responsible for painting projects where lead is present.

Possible unique responsibility: Responsible for lead abatement activity to include the disposal of lead-base materials according to federal and state regulations.

Example 2

An Accountant works in a unit that partners with UW Health and needs to understand accounting policies and procedures at UW Health.

Possible unique responsibility: Partners with UW Health and processes financial transactions in accordance with UW Health policies and procedures.

Avoid adding unique responsibilities if the work is:

Temporary

Example

A Department Administrator takes on payroll responsibilities because the individual who processes payroll is on short-term leave. A responsibility should be a continual expectation of the job, not something an employee takes on because of temporary changes in work volume or staffing.

Already captured in other responsibilities

Example

A Laboratory Manager's position description already has a responsibility of, "Monitors program budgets and expenditures". It is not necessary to include an additional responsibility of, "Tracks and reports on spending against projected budget."

A task

Example

A Food Service Assistant's responsibilities should not include, "Slices ten pounds of tomatoes daily." Specific tasks can be included in the Task section of the PD or recorded in another document outside of the PD.

Teaching Unique Responsibility

If an employee has teaching as a unique responsibility, use the following standardized language:

"Facilitates classroom, online, and/or laboratory instruction for one or more courses, including assessment of student performance"

The standardized language ensures consistent description of instructional responsibilities across positions and allows reporting on individuals with teaching responsibilities in the future. Additional unique responsibilities related to instructions can be added.

Writing Tips

- Start with active verbs
- Use verbs in present tense
- Use verbs in third-person singular (e.g., *develops* instead of *develop*)
- Avoid referencing specifics such as a particular work unit, reporting relationships, or software program
- Convey one key concept per responsibility
- Limit each responsibility to 250 characters

Watch Out

If additional responsibilities significantly change the nature of the position, managers should work with HR contacts to explore an alternative title/SJD.

Example 1

An Accountant I has an added responsibility of managing the automated financial system for the unit. It would be more appropriate for this employee to be matched to Accountant II, who performs the responsibilities of Accountant I and maintains automated financial systems.

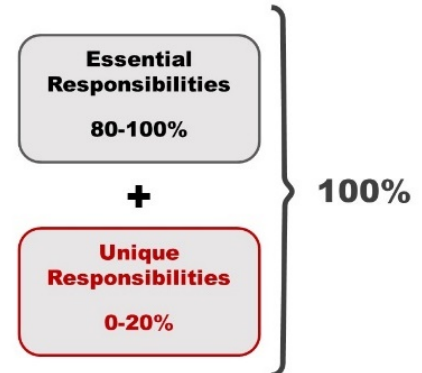
Example 2

A Specimen Receiving Technician has added responsibilities of analyzing research data and assisting with experiments. It would be more appropriate to match this employee to Lab Technician, whose responsibilities include analyzing data and assisting research staff in experiments.

DETERMINING RESPONSIBILITY PERCENTAGES

The PD identifies the general percentage of time and effort dedicated to each essential and unique responsibility.

- The total of essential responsibilities must be between 80 and 100%
- The total of unique responsibilities must be between 0 and 20%
- The total of all responsibilities (essential and unique) must add up to 100%
- A responsibility applicable to the position must be 5% or greater
- If a responsibility is not performed by an employee, enter 0%



Watch Out

The SJD that the position is matched to may not be the best fit if:

- Multiple responsibilities listed in SJD have 0%
- All unique responsibilities total more than 20%

SPECIFYING TASKS

- The Task section is an optional section of the PD
- Managers can list **up to 15 tasks** expected in the position
- Tasks listed in the PD should correlate with responsibilities listed earlier in the PD
- Each task is limited to 250 characters
- Managers can document a longer list of tasks in a separate document outside of the position, such as a standard operating procedures document, training documentation or checklist

Example

An Administrative Assistant has responsibility for scheduling logistics and securing resources for meetings, conferences, travel, and work unit operations.

A task for this position may include: "Coordinates quarterly all-staff meeting, which includes scheduling room and AV equipment, tracking invitations and attendees, and preparing all meeting materials."

Find additional information in the [Online Manager/Supervisor Training](#), Module 4: Creating Position Descriptions.