

How to Write a Position Description & Develop an Organizational Chart



WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

WSSU

What is a Position Description?

- Details the duties and responsibilities of a specific job.
- Helps attract the best job candidates and sets clear employee expectations.
- Provides an opportunity to clearly communicate direction and guidance.
- Explains the role of the employee in the larger organization and provides a baseline of reference.
- Serves as a major basis for outlining performance expectations, job training, job evaluation and career advancement.

When to Review a Position Description?

Job Change

New Leadership

Prior to posting a vacant position

Reorganization of a unit/department

How do I begin this process?

First, determine what is the business need of the position

Determine whether the work requires creating a new position or a modification to an existing position. If it is a vacant position, are the job duties accurate or are changes needed?

Are there other positions that have a similar role? Use existing job descriptions as a reference point.

Classification profiles and functional competencies can be used as a guide. Use the link on the Classification & Compensation website [SHRA Competency Profiles](#) to access these profiles.

Do not copy and paste profile or competency info into the job description. Competencies are generic profiles while the job description requires more specific duties related to the position

Resources for Writing Position Descriptions

When modifying a current position, the employee who is doing the work is a great resource.

Asking for feedback from other team members on what is needed.

The competency definitions are useful for Career Banded classes (SHRA) . All WSSU position descriptions and functional competencies are housed in People Admin.

Content & Length of Position Description

Information provided in the position description should be factual, objective, and specific.

Using simple, definitive terms makes it easier to understand.

Examples of duties can be a helpful supplement to portraying the job in concrete terms.

Length of the description and amount of detail to include is always a concern. There is not a set standard on this. There must be sufficient detail in explaining the how, what, and why aspects of each duty to provide a complete picture of the position.

The length will vary depending on the complexities of the position.

Factors to Consider when Writing a Position Description

Variety and Complexity of Work Variety – Includes both nature and variety of work. “Nature” includes the kind of work performed, as shown by elements such as the subject matter, functions, profession, or occupation involved. “**Variety**” considers the range of work, and the different kinds of work included in that position.

“Complexity” – Covers the nature of the intricacy of tasks, steps, processes, or methods in the work performed; the difficulty of identifying what needs to be done; and the difficulty and originality involved in performing the work.

Degree Statements for Variety and Complexity:

Like - Limited variety recurring with little differentiation among types and nature of tasks and duties.

Varied - Recurring and non-recurring assignments relating to a common goal.

Wide Range - Larger number of widely varying assignments relating to common goals.

Diverse - Many broad and functionally diverse activities and assignments relating to agency/university goals

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Analytical Requirements – This factor weights the relative character or intricacy of work processes and the corresponding range of thinking, analysis, and judgement required while doing the work. Significant in this factor is the extent to which the work requires new approaches or deviations from standard work practices.

Degree Statements for Analytical Requirements:

Limited Detail - Related work steps or processes readily understood and performed; minor variation in sources of data and types of transactions requiring minimal analysis in actions taken. Increased Detail - Different or varying work processes, variations in data and transactions requiring some analysis in determining various courses of action.

Considerable Detail - Unusual problems, unlike and changing data and transaction; considerable study and analysis required to understand the data and transactions, to determine best courses of action and to complete assignments.

Extensive Detail - Broad, unsolved, or novel problems, undefined data sources and impact relationships; ingenuity and considerable research and analysis in deciding approaches to assignments, in developing work concepts and policies, and weighing alternative solutions to intricate and complex problems.

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Decision-Making/Consequence of Error – This factor considers the questions, problems or types of situations in which the employee makes recommendations and decisions affecting programs, methods, policies or people. The degree measures judgments or actions by such criteria as instructions given, delegated authority, extent of review of work, and agency/university policies, rules and regulations.

Degree Statements for Decision – Making/Consequences of Error Requirements:

Minimal - An immediate but incidental time, financial, material loss or inconvenience which temporarily bothers people or work units within the organization; no direct effect on the public.

Limited - Some immediate delay, or inconvenience which hampers people or organizations; limited time, financial, and material loss, and/or minor discomfort to people.

Moderate - Some recognizable impact on an environmental condition, the public's health, safety, well-being, or life-style; or substantial waste of manpower, cost of time or money to people or organizations; or an immediate and substantial discomfort.

Significant - Continual and/or significant effect on a person or the public's health, safety, and welfare; major loss of time, money, material affecting the immediate and future operations of organizational or major discomfort, injury, or fatality.

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Nature of Supervision Received – This factor covers the nature and extent of planned supervisory control exercised over an employee. It measures the degree to which supervisory control limits the scope of work and the nature of decisions. In evaluating a position in terms of this factor, consideration should be given on the basis for which assignments are made.

Degree Statements for Nature of Supervision Received Requirements:

Specific Detailed instructions on new assignments. Supervision readily available while work is in progress.

General - General work objectives, expected results and target dates given on new/major assignments, unusual problems discussed. General review of the status and acceptability of key work while in progress.

Limited - Purpose and desired results known; major short-range projects jointly planned. Daily work self planned or performed with considerable independence.

Minimal - Projects jointly planned in terms of broad, long-range goals. Total freedom in carrying out technical assignments; only problems during work having significantly impact on agency/university policy discussed.

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Nature of Supervision Given – This factor evaluates the extent to which position duties require leadership and coordination of the efforts of subordinates. Supervisory responsibility refers to the degree of accountability for the performance of other employees.

Degree Statements for Supervision Given are determined by the extent of:

Planning

Organizing and Directing

Budgeting

Training

Setting Work Standards

Reviewing Work

Counseling and Disciplining Other HR Functions (i.e. selection, promotion, dismissal)

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Nature and Purpose of Public Contacts – Considerations under this factor include what efforts are required to make the initial contact, the difficulty of communicating with those contacted, and the setting in which the contact takes place (e.g., the degree to which the employee and those contacted recognize their relative roles and authorities.)

Degree Statement for Public Contacts:

Receive and Convey To obtain, clarify, or give facts directly related to work. Explain and Interpret To interpret, coordinate, and carry out policies, or resolve operating problems. Direct and Motivate To direct, influence, motivate, or control persons or groups to obtain the desired effect. Persuade and Negotiate To obtain concurrence, cooperation, or approval of proposed courses of action by justification, defense, and negotiation

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Working Condition – This factor considers the risks, hazards, and discomforts in the employee’s physical surroundings and the safety regulations required.

Degree Statements for Working Conditions:

Agreeable - Good working conditions, may occasionally involve some exposure to mildly disagreeable elements; may be exposed to hazard which could result in minor injuries which may cause loss of time.

Mildly Disagreeable - Moderate exposure to several disagreeable elements or to one element which is particularly disagreeable. Continual exposure to hazards which could result in permanent injury or disability.

Considerably Disagreeable - Continuous and intensive exposure to several extremely disagreeable elements. Continual exposure to hazards which may result in permanent disability or death.

Factors to Consider When Writing a Position Description (cont.)

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities – This factor covers the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for full performance of the work. Included are training and experience, plus any special licensing/certification requirements. There is a direct relationship between difficulty and complexity of the job and qualifications required for successful performance. The more difficult the job, the higher the qualification requirements.

Degree Statements for Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Limited - Basic administrative program or work field understanding limited in scope, depth, and complexity.

Moderate - General administrative and program understanding coupled with some understanding of concepts and practices of a work field.

Full - Complete understanding of a full range of standardized concepts and practices of a work field; or considerable administrative and program understanding.

Broad - Broad and in-depth administrative, program, and/or work field understanding in a major complex program or work field.

Diverse - Thorough and extensive understanding of programs, concepts, and practices in a major field plus general understanding of one or more different work field.

Components of a Position Description

- ❖ Proposed Classification ❖ Identifying Information (i.e. department, work hours, etc.)
- ❖ Primary Purpose of the Organizational Unit
- ❖ Primary Purpose of the Position
- ❖ Change in Responsibilities or Organizational Relationship – for modifying or Career Progression/In-range actions
- ❖ Preferred Education and Experience – preferred by the department
- ❖ Description of Work – detailed description of job duties
- ❖ Competencies (Career Banded classes) – located in People Admin
- ❖ ADA Checklist – department should have this available
- ❖ Organizational Chart

Position Details

Primary Function of Organizational Unit:

- A general description of the organizational unit to which the position is assigned, including a description of the programs and services to be provided.
- Does not have to be exhaustive – a brief paragraph will suffice.

• Primary Purpose of the Position:

- Why does this position exist and how does it relate to the unit?
- Summary of all the job duties that highlights the overall role of the position.
- Specific duties do not need to be listed in the primary purpose; listed separately under job duties.

Example: The primary purpose of this position is to implement and carryout objectives of the campus mail system, which includes processing departmental outgoing U.S. mail, providing back up for the United States Postal Service contract window, substituting for all mail routes, balancing the monthly postage billing, provide backup for outgoing mail processing, and log-in student parcels and accountable mail.

Key Responsibilities & Related Competencies

- **The job duties section should describe, in detail, the responsibilities and duties of the position.**
- Include:
 - Individual tasks and methods used to complete the tasks.
 - Structure your sentences in classic verb/object and explanatory phrases (e.g. “Greets office contacts and visitors in a friendly and sincere manner.”)
 - List the percentage of time spent in each functional area over a course of a year.
 - Write the duties in terms of what the position requires, not based upon the capabilities of any individual.
 - Use explanatory phrases telling why, how, where, or how often to add meaning and clarity (e.g. "Collects all employee travel documents on a weekly basis for reimbursement purposes.")
 - Include the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary.

Key Responsibilities & Related Competencies

The screenshot shows the WSSU HR system interface. At the top left is the WSSU logo. A navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Position Descriptions', 'Classifications', and 'Shortcuts'. A breadcrumb trail reads 'Pending Actions / ... / Modify Position Description / HR Consultant / Edit'. A dropdown menu in the top right is set to 'Human Resources'. On the left, a sidebar titled 'Editing Pending Actions' lists various tasks, with 'Key Responsibilities a...' selected. The main content area is titled 'Key Responsibilities and Related Competencies' and contains a 'Save', '<< Prev', and 'Save & Continue' buttons. Below this is a 'Check spelling' link and the title 'Key Responsibilities and Related Competencies'. A dropdown menu for 'Competency' is open, showing 'Knowledge - Professional' and a detailed description: 'Knowledge-New Duties include serving as a CAB Member which requires broad knowledge & collaboration with position and BANNER updates for comprehensive programs. Serve as CAB Implementer/Member & contribute during CAB meetings. Carry out the duties responsibilities for managing'. A 'Percentage Of Time' field is set to '25'. At the bottom, there are 'SUPPORT' and 'NEW FEATURES' buttons, and a system tray showing the time '12:08 AM' and date '10/4/2020'.

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Key Responsibilities & Related Competencies

Competency

Consulting/Advising

Please use the competencies listed above

Describe the specific job duties related to this competency

Consultation: Advises clients regarding decisions that are impacted by laws, policies, & procedures.

Researches, facilitates, negotiates, develops and documents innovative solutions to human resources issues tailored to the

Thing to Remember

Duties and responsibilities are the HEART of the position description.

- The main factors in evaluating jobs are:
 - Difficulty and complexity of work
 - Responsibility and accountability
 - Nature and scope of contacts
- Some approaches that are helpful in organizing and ordering the duties are to separate and identify tasks:
 - By functional areas in order of relative importance and approximate percentage of time spent in each area;
 - By daily work schedule; or
 - By managerial/administrative functional areas where appropriate.

NOTE: The basic duties of the position should be listed in statement form using active verbs; these are also called task statements. Tasks are composed of three elements:

- (1) ACTION – What the employee is expected to perform
- (2) RESULT – What is expected of the employee's action
- (3) ASPECTS - How, why, and what it takes to do the work.

Organizational Design

Organizational design is a step-by-step methodology which identifies dysfunctional aspects of workflow, procedures, structures and systems, realigns them to fit current business realities/goals and then develops plans to implement the new changes.

- The manner in which management achieves the right combination of differentiation and integration of the organization's operations, in response to the level of uncertainty in its external environment.
- Differentiation refers to the subdivision of functional or departmental units, each concentrating on a particular aspect of the organization's operations.
- Integration refers to the linking of differentiated units to achieve unity of effort in working toward organization's goals.

Organizational Design

An organizational chart (O-chart) is a visual representation of the organizational structure and reporting relationships of employees within a unit, department and/or division.

- Required by the Office of State Human Resources and UNC System Office to maintain our delegation of authority
- Essential in People Admin actions for:
 - New Position
 - Position Reclassification
 - Organizational Restructuring

What is an Organizational Chart?

- A visual representation of the organizational structure and reporting relationships of the employees within a unit, department and/or division. Required by the Office of State Human Resources and System Office to maintain our delegation of authority.
- Necessary for:
- New Position Actions
Position Reclassification Actions
Organizational Restructuring

WSSU Standards for Organizational Charts

Each position on the organizational chart should be identified by:

Official Job Classification/Title (as shown in Banner)

Competency Level (Career Banded **SHRA positions only**)

Employee First & Last Name

Position Number (as shown in Banner)

Position designation (i.e. SHRA, EHRA-Non-Faculty, Temporary)

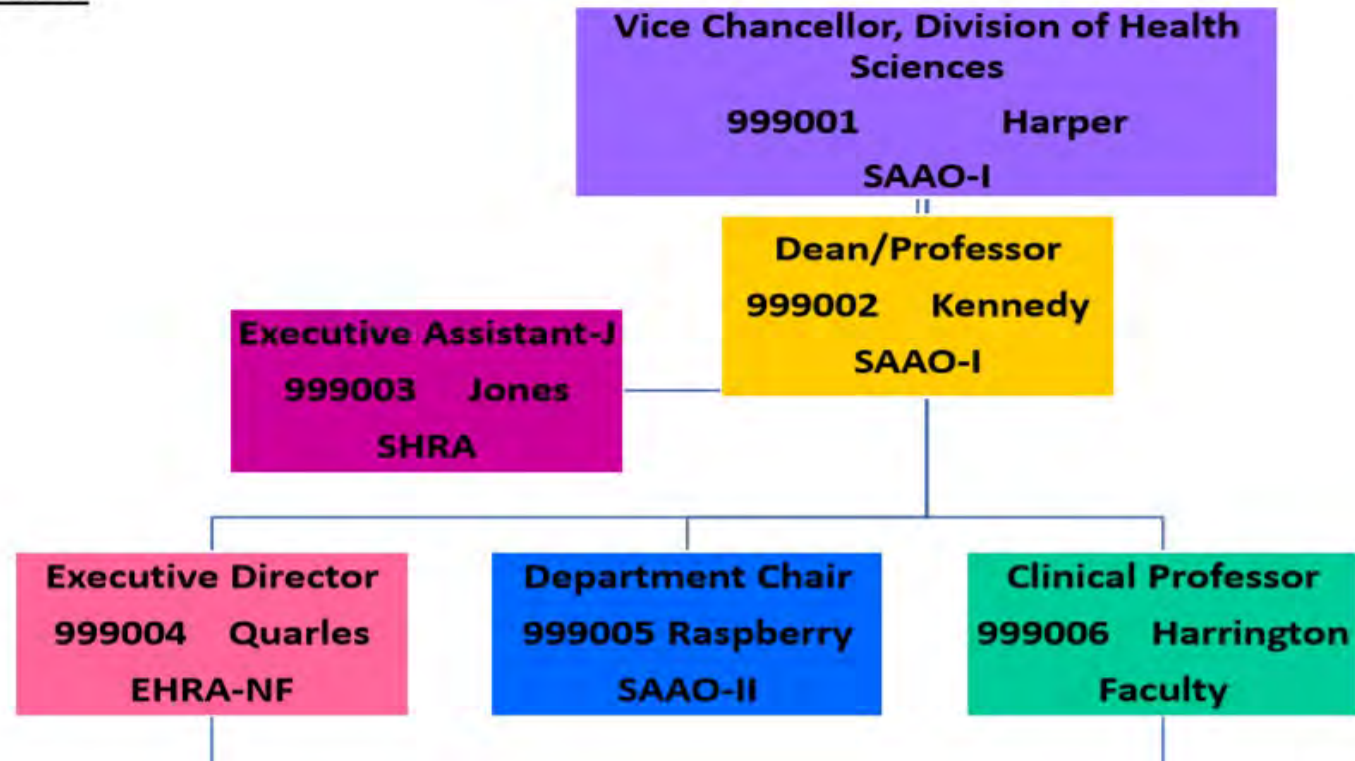
List all Vacant positions with all identifying information

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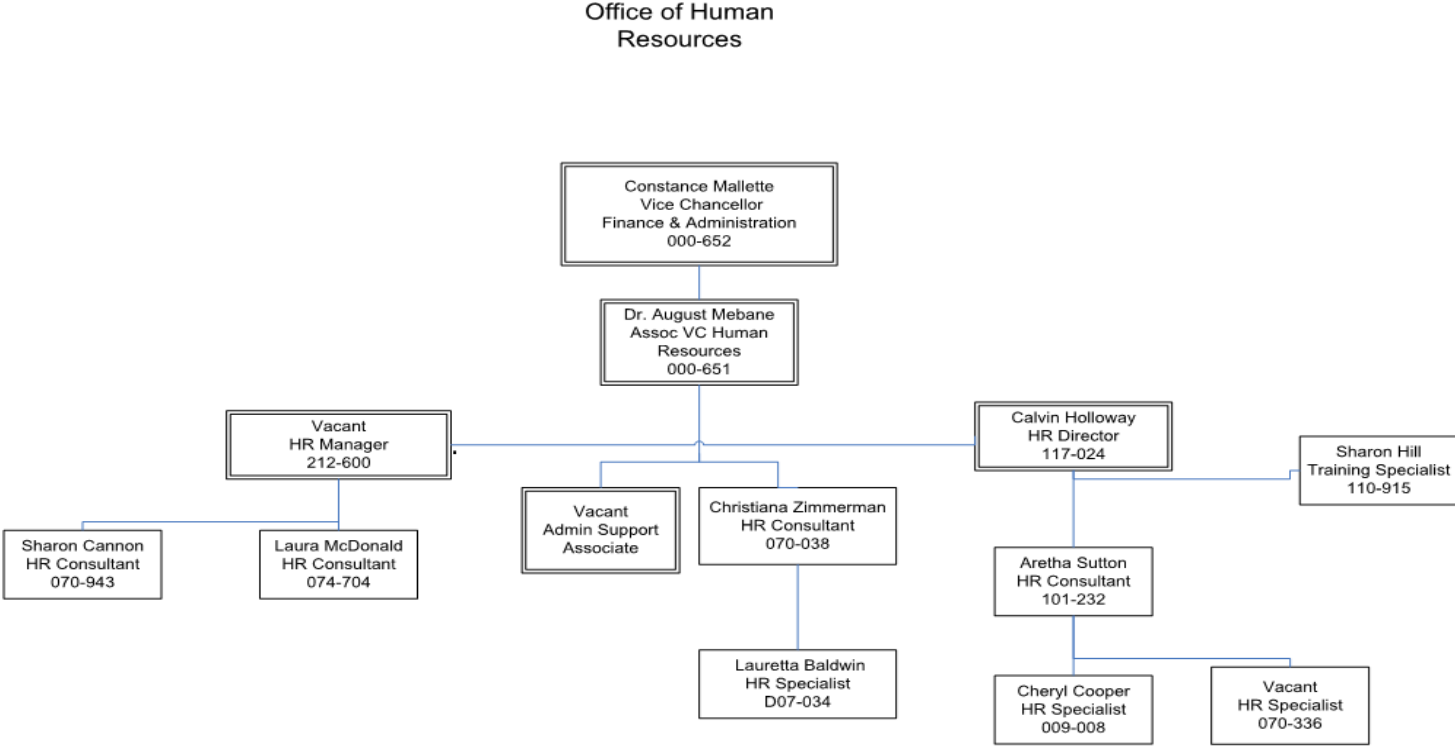
Date of document change in the lower right hand corner

Example of an **INCORRECT** ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Organizational chart:



Example of a **Correct** ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



9/21/20

QUESTIONS



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