



This guide provides the basics of writing a position description for all staff positions at Western Oregon University. The use of the position description template is important to ensure the information conveyed is accurate and up to date.

Position Details

- **Job Title:** The title that applicants will see or employees will print on business cards, also known as the business title
- **Department:** Department where this position is budgeted
- **Date Prepared:** Should be updated with each revision date
- **Reports To:** List the job title of the person that directly supervises this position (**Do not** provide the name of the person currently in this role, **only** the Position Title)

Job Summary:

The summary should address the basic purpose of the job and why the position exists. Assume the reader knows nothing about this position and summarize in 3-4 sentences. Consider including key responsibilities or function and how it fits within the department.

Example of a Job Summary for an Administrative Program Specialist:

The ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM SPECIALIST assists a program manager or administrator in the ongoing direction of an institution program or operation or performs administrative research, analysis, and/or evaluation in support of an institution program or operation. Work at this level requires a comprehensive knowledge of the program or operational area.

Primary Duties and Responsibilities:

This section is the foundation of the Position Description. It conveys the complexity, scope and level of responsibility of the job. We recommend including **six** primary responsibilities (areas of key accountability-think of these as “buckets of work”) of this position.

- After each primary responsibility, provide additional information about high-level tasks associated with that primary responsibility (area of key accountability). Do not add every individual detailed task as the position description is not a step-by-step guide of how to do the job. See the example below.
- Primary responsibilities are those duties in which the incumbent would spend most of their time performing.
- Use logical sequence in describing duties and responsibilities starting with the most critical and working down from there. Percentage of time spent on these items should **not** be included.
- Write the duties in terms of what the position requires, not based upon the capabilities of any individual.



- Use action verbs that accurately describe the position’s level of ownership or involvement in the responsibility.
- Include “and performs other duties as assigned” at the end of your last numbered primary responsibility.
- More or less than six items in this section is acceptable, but you are encouraged to use restraint to stay focused on high-level buckets of responsibility. Consult your HR Partner for assistance as needed.

Example (Key Responsibility is underlined, supporting tasks related to that key responsibility are in *italics*, and action verbs are **highlighted**):

Coordinates digital advertising efforts, including social media ads, by identifying appropriate ad formats and audience targeting. **Analyzes** *data directly from social media platforms to evaluate results.* **Advises** *creative team on the development of related digital assets including ad content and landing pages.*

Example with too many details:

Coordinates all department, school, college, and university digital advertising efforts for recruitment, promotion of events and research efforts as well as other notable university endeavors, including social media ads, by identifying appropriate ad formats and audience targeting. Compiles reports to share with director and analyzes data from social media platforms, Google Analytics, and etc. to evaluate results. Advises creative team on the results of analyzed data to provide input on the development of related digital assets including ad content and landing pages.

Education and/or Experience:

Minimum requirements (education and experience) are used to establish clear and appropriate eligibility standards for a specific position. “Minimum” means --- the cut-off point; the lowest level of acceptable education and/or experience needed to successfully perform the job duties. If an applicant does not meet the minimum qualifications, they are unable to perform the job and cannot be considered as a candidate.

Educational Requirement	Equivalent Experience
High School Diploma/GED	None
Associate Degree	Two (2) years of related work experience OR Two (2) years of college (plus any additional required)
Bachelor’s Degree	Associate’s Degree/ Two years of College + Two (2) years of related work experience OR four (4) years of related work experience (plus any additional required experience)
Master’s Degree	Bachelor’s + Two (2) years of related work experience (plus any additional required experience)



Supervisory Responsibilities:

The section includes the job title of each business title that this position will directly supervise. Direct supervision refers to the formal reporting structure and should not include indirect supervision. Each business title that this position supervises should be listed along with the number of positions within that title. No names should be included.

For Example: Custodians (5)

If this position does not supervise others, then state N/A.

Decision Making & Fiscal Responsibility

Complete required drop-down fields regarding decision making and fiscal responsibility (required for all employee categories)

If position has fiscal responsibility, complete the Operating Budget field with the total (rounded) amount of funds for which the position is responsible. Depending on the position, this could include General, Auxiliary, Grant, Foundation, and/or Agency funds

- The Grant, Foundation, and Agency Funding fields are optional to complete.

Principles for making selections in the Decision Making and Fiscal Responsibility areas:

- Selections are about the position, not the person occupying the role.
- Selections should reflect the *highest level* of work *regularly performed* by a *fully trained* employee. For budget numbers, indicate the maximum amount the position will regularly influence, as described in the Fiscal Authority and Fiscal Responsibility areas.
- Choose the option that best describes how the position exists, not how someone would be trained nor an aspirational view of what the position could be in the future.

Scope of Decisions Made (i.e. how does this position make decisions)

Option	Definition
Directed	Follows written and verbal instructions or procedures. Implements decisions made by others.
Guided Driven	Follows established guidelines. May participate in the establishment of guidelines or procedures for their immediate team/department.
Policy Driven	Interprets policies and or participates in the establishment of guidelines or procedures for their department.
Authority – Unit	Acts as an authority to implement policy and or establish procedures or guidelines for their department.
Authority Division/School	– Acts as an authority to implement policy and or establishes procedures or guidelines for their school or VP area/division.
Authority – University	Acts as an authority to implement policy and or established procedures or guidelines for the University.



Impact of Decisions Made (i.e. what is the sphere of influence of those decisions)

Option	Definition
Position	Decisions impact one's own work. Erroneous decisions may have impact to immediate work team.
Unit/Department	Decisions have implications within a unit or department. Erroneous decisions may impact cost, customer service, goal achievement, reputation, etc.
School/College/Division	Decisions have implications for the school/college or VP area/Division. Erroneous decisions may impact cost, customer service, goal achievement, reputation, etc.
School/College/Division + University	Decisions have major implications to other areas of the University in addition to their own school/college or VP Area/division. Erroneous decisions may impact cost, customer service, goal achievement, reputation, etc.
University	Decisions have significant, broad implications for the entire University; contributes to overall strategy and direction for the University. Erroneous decisions may have significant financial, reputational, or community impact.



Autonomy and Discretion (i.e. how directed or independent is the work)

Option	Definition
Little Discretion	Work is routinely monitored by supervisor; follows established and/or detailed guidelines, processes and procedures. Little discretion in work.
Some Discretion	Work progress is monitored by supervisor; follows established guidelines, procedures or policies; follows precedents. Some discretion in work.
Independent Work, Results Defined	Results are defined; existing practices are used as guidelines and discretion is used to determine specific work actions; carries out work activities independently; supervisor provides guidance and is available to resolve problems.
Independent Work, Overall Direction	Results are generally defined; sets own goals and independently determines how to accomplish tasks; precedents may exist to follow; supervisor provides broad guidance and overall direction.
Broad Latitude	Provides input and/or recommendations on the results to be achieved; has broad latitude to set own goals and determine how to accomplish results with few or no guidelines to follow; acts in accordance with leadership vision.



Fiscal Authority (i.e. what is the sphere of influence for fiscal decisions)

Option	Definition
None	Has no fiscal authority.
Limited	Has limited fiscal authority based on set parameters, requests approval for financial actions beyond defined scope.
Unit/Department	Responsible for financial decisions within academic or administrative unit/department or for a subset of that unit/department. May provide input to the budgeting process.
School/College/ Division	Responsible for financial decisions that impact the School/College or VP Area/Division. May participate in the overall budgeting process.
University Level	Makes or contributes to financial decisions which broadly impact all or significant parts of the university. Responsible for fiscal controls.



Fiscal Responsibilities (i.e. what are the responsibilities within that sphere of influence)

Option	Definition
None	Does not perform tasks related to budget.
Transactions	Responsible for transactional spending and may approve or monitor transactions completed by others. Not responsible for decision-making regarding transactions.
Administration/ Oversight	Responsible for the administration/oversight of budgets. May also process transactions but has decision making authority regarding spending as defined by unit.
Budget Authority	Responsible for decisions regarding budget and expenditures.

Working Conditions

Use this section to describe specific working conditions (including danger of injury and other risks) that are typical of the position. Include how often such conditions are present.

Many positions will need a more detailed analysis of physical and mental requirements to assure compliance with governing regulations. You may attach additional 'Working Conditions' information to the position description.