

# Supervisor's Guide to Writing Job Descriptions

For Stetson University

# **Table of Contents**

Overview: .....	3
Basic Structure: .....	4
Common Essential Functions .....	5
Common Work Environment and Special Considerations:.....	7
Common Required/Desired Qualifications: .....	7
Common Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: .....	8
Diversity and Inclusion in Job Descriptions:.....	9

## **Overview:**

A job description is a written document summarizing the functions a job performs for the organization and the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform those functions. Job descriptions are tools that guide key human resource processes, such as job evaluation, recruitment, performance management, and organizational planning. Job descriptions also serve a legal purpose, as they outline the essential functions, which help determine exempt and non-exempt status under the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the essential physical skills necessary to do the job for American's with Disabilities Act and Workers Compensation purposes. Keeping job descriptions updated and ensuring the requirements are consistent with the role and across different levels of positions is vital to maintaining these processes.

The following pages contain information that Human Resources and supervisors may find useful in creating and revising job descriptions at Stetson. Included in this document are sections designed to assist in preparing job descriptions that are consistent, useful and appropriate for each position. There are also sections providing examples of common essential functions, required and desired qualifications, Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's), and other considerations. Please note that these lists are not all inclusive and should be used as a guide only. However, job descriptions should be tailored to the tasks being performed by the employee, necessary qualifications and KSAs should be tailored to the specific job category (e.g. Facilities, Public Safety, Arts and Sciences, Development, Marketing) to provide the most realistic overview of what the job entails for employees, applicants and supervisors.

## **Basic Structure:**

The following components should be present in all Stetson job descriptions:

### **Position Overview:**

A short (two or three sentences) summary giving the overall purpose of the job. The information contained here should not restate information contained in the essential functions section.

### **Essential Job Functions and Responsibilities:**

These are descriptive statements of the responsibilities an employee spends a majority of their time completing. These are the most critical functions the employee performs, and not a comprehensive list of all functions or tasks. Essential functions should be ordered with the most important functions, or those functions that take up the most significant portion of the employees time listed first. Other functions should come after in order of most to least important. This is critical for establishing exempt/non-exempt status. Essential functions should begin with, or at least contain, an action verb related to the actions the employee takes on the task listed (please refer to the examples beginning on page 5 below).

Additionally, this section should contain any work considerations that are important to the job and the candidate. These might contain descriptions of the time and travel requirements of the job, or the physical nature of the work performed. This might also describe the typical environment the employee will encounter.

**Required Qualifications** – These are the qualifications necessary to do the job and without them, an employee could not successfully perform in the role.

- These requirements should be directly related to the essential functions.
- Required qualifications are items the Employment team in Human Resources may use to screen applicants.
  - Applicants without these qualifications will not be forwarded to the hiring manager and/or screening committee.
- These requirements must also be able to be determined from the applicant's resume, application, and other submitted documentation.

**Desired Qualifications** – These are the additional qualifications the ideal candidate for a job will have. They must, however, remain related to the essential functions.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)** – These describe information, proficiencies, expertise, or demonstrated performance competencies related to the completion of essential functions of the job. These should describe what a person must have in order to successfully complete the essential functions of the job.

## **Common Essential Functions**

Examples of **Essential Function** statements: (Note, these are from different job descriptions and not related)

- Analyzes published market data and makes recommendations by interpreting current pay practices to resolve compensation/grade classification concerns.
- Maintains training registration/calendar system and other online tools related to the training function.
- Creates and tracks purchase orders and supply orders using online tools.
- Creates, edits, organizes, and maintains various documents, reports, and spreadsheets, both soft copy, using Word, PowerPoint, and Excel and hard copy.
- Provides accurate, up-to-date information on programs and services to prospective and currently enrolled students.
- Keeps informed of all Federal, State and Institutional regulations and guidelines of programs assigned and serves as subject-matter expert in those areas.
- Supervises the staff of the Career Resource Center and recommends training/professional development, provides evaluations, etc.
- Answers telephone calls promptly and courteously, and provides accurate information or refers callers to appropriate personnel.

All Stetson job descriptions should contain the following statement as the last item under **Essential Functions**:

- Performs other site and position specific duties as assigned.

### **Common Action Verbs for Essential Functions:**

Action verbs should be used to start all **Essential Functions** in a job description. The list of action verbs below provides examples and is not a comprehensive list.

*Accomplishes, Achieves, Acquires, Activates, Adapts, Addresses, Adjusts, Administers, Adopts, Advances, Advocates, Allocates, Allots, Analyzes, Answers, Applies, Appoints, Appraises, Approves, Arranges, Assembles, Assesses, Assigns, Assists, Audits, Augments, Authorizes*

*Balances, Builds*

*Calculates, Calibrates, Carries out, Changes, Charges, Checks, Chooses, Circulates, Classifies, Cleans up, Climbs, Closes, Collaborates, Collects, Combines, Compares, Compiles, Completes, Composes, Computes, Condenses, Confers, Confirms, Connects, Consolidates, Constructs, Consults, Contributes, Controls, Converts, Conveys, Coordinates, Copies, Corrects, Correlates, Counsels, Counts, Creates, Critiques*

*Debates, Decides, Defends, Defines, Delegates, Deliberates, Delivers, Demonstrates, Describes, Designs, Designates, Detects, Determines, Develops, Devises, Diagnoses, Diagrams, Differentiates, Directs,*

*Disassembles, Disburses, Discharges, Disciplines, Disconnects, Discovers, Discusses, Dismantles, Dispatches, Displays, Disseminates, Distinguishes, Distributes, Diversifies, Drafts, Drives, Dumps, Duplicates*

*Edits, Elaborates, Elicits, Eliminates, Employs, Empowers, Encourages, Endorses, Energizes, Engineers, Enlists, Enriches, Ensures, Enters, Entertains, Enumerates, Erects, Establishes, Estimates, Evaluates, Examines, Exchanges, Executes, Exhibits, Experiments, Explains, Extracts*

*Fabricates, Facilitates, Fashions, Fastens, Files, Fills, Forecasts, Forges, Forms, Formulates, Fortifies, Fosters, Founds, Frames*

*Garners, Gathers, Gauges, Generates, Governs, Grades, Grasps, Groups, Guards, Guides*

*Hires, Hypothesizes*

*Identifies, Illustrates, Implements, Imports, Improves, Inaugurates, Indicates, Influences, Informs, Initiates, Innovates, Inspects, Inspires, Installs, Institutes, Instructs, Interprets, Interviews, Invents, Inventories, Investigates, Invigorates, Involves, Issues, Itemizes*

*Joins, Judges, Justifies*

*Labels, Launches, Leads, Lists, Listens, Loads, Locates*

*Makes, Manages, Manipulates, Manufactures, Maps, Matches, Maximizes, Measures, Mediates, Mends, Mixes, Modernizes, Modifies, Monitors, Motivates, Moves, Multiplies*

*Names, Negotiates, Notifies*

*Observes, Obtains, Opens, Operates, Optimizes, Orders, Organizes, Originates, Outlines, Overhauls, Oversees*

*Packages, Performs, Permits, Persuades, Picks up, Plans, Posts, Predicts, Prepares, Prescribes, Presents, Preserves, Prevents, Procures, Produces, Programs, Promotes, Proves, Provides, Proposes, Purchases, Pushes*

*Quantifies, Questions*

*Raises, Ranks, Rates, Rebuilds, Recalls, Recites, Recommends, Reconciles, Records, Reduces, Refers, Refines, Reforms, Refreshes, Registers, Regulates, Reinforces, Reiterates, Rejects, Releases, Repairs, Replaces, Replies, Reports, Represents, Reproduces, Rescues, Researches, Resolves, Responds, Restores, Restructures, Retrieves, Revamps, Reviews, Revises, Revives, Revolutionizes, Rewards*

*Salvages, Scans, Schedules, Scores, Screens, Searches, Selects, Sells, Sends, Serves, Services, Shapes, Solicits, Solves, Sorts, Spearheads, Specifies, Stacks, Starts, Stimulates, Stores, Strengthens, Structures, Studies, Submits, Succeeds in, Summarizes, Supplies, Surveys, Sustains, Synthesizes, Systematizes*

*Tabulates, Teaches, Tells, Tends, Tests, Traces, Trades, Trains, Transfers, Transforms, Translates, Transmits, Treats, Troubleshoots, Tutors*

*Updates, Uses, Ushers*

*Validates, Verifies*

*Weighs, Writes*

### **Common Work Environment and Special Considerations:**

The following are a list of common workplace settings and environmental hazards. The applicable statements should be included in the essential functions section of the job description and be relevant to the essential functions of the job. Below are some examples of common items found in this section.

- Works in an office environment.
- Works in a classroom/lab setting.
- Works primarily outdoors and is exposed to sun and other weather conditions.
- May be required to travel to and from College campuses and other destinations.
- May be required to travel out of town on a periodic basis.
- May be required to work flexible hours, including nights and weekends.
- May work in confined or enclosed spaces.
- May work from settings such as ladders, lifts, scaffolding, or other situations requiring exposure to heights.
- May experience airborne dust and mold, common to a Library setting.

### **Common Required/Desired Qualifications:**

**Required Qualifications** are the qualifications necessary to do the job and without them, an employee could not successfully perform in the role. **Required Qualifications** are items the Employment team in Human Resources uses to screen applicants. Applicants without these qualifications will not be forwarded to the hiring manager and/or screening committee. **Desired Qualifications** contain additional degree and / or experience that the ideal job candidate will have. This list is meant to be an example and is not a comprehensive list.

- Graduation from an accredited high school or possession of an acceptable equivalency diploma.
- Associate's degree from a regionally or nationally accredited college or university in [insert field of study] or related field.
- Bachelor's degree from a regionally or nationally accredited college or university in [insert field of study] or related field.
- Master's degree from a regionally or nationally accredited college or university in [insert field of study] or related field.
- Doctorate degree from a regionally or nationally accredited college or university in [insert field

of study] or related field.

- A minimum of [number] year(s) of experience in [insert field/industry].
- Experience in [insert field/industry].
- Experience working with students in a College or University setting.
- Experience working in a customer service setting.
- Experience utilizing Microsoft Office programs (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access).
- Experience utilizing Elucian Banner [or other HRIS system].
- Valid Florida driver's license or the ability to obtain a Florida license within 30 days. (*Required for all positions that drive College vehicles including gas or electric utility vehicles such as Cushman or GEM.*)

In order to provide for more inclusive searches, Stetson advises that the more required qualifications (especially education, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities) placed into a job description, the more likely the candidates for that position will have similar backgrounds and experiences. This limits the overall applicant pool and decreases the opportunity to find candidates who may be excellent, but may not have had opportunities to gain all of the required qualifications. The idea is to be as broad with qualifications as supervisors can reasonably be, to allow people who may not have yet had the opportunity for those experiences to gain them on the job. It creates a wider pool of candidates, which should lead to an increase in inclusive efforts.

### **Common Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Job descriptions should have a good mix of **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)** accurately describing the information, proficiencies, or expertise related to the essential functions of the job. There should be no more than 7-10 **KSAs**. Some items, for example "Organizational Skills" are stated differently due to the level or complexity of the position. Below are some examples of common **KSAs**.

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. **(This should be present in all JD's)**
- Ability to exhibit a professional, courteous demeanor. **(This should be present in all JD's)**
- Commitment to supporting the University's goal of being a diverse community of inclusive excellence. **(This should be present in all JD's)**
- Working knowledge of [specific area] computer applications, such as Elucian Banner [add/revise others].
- Knowledge of concepts such as talent review, development of high potentials, succession planning and performance management.
- Excellent planning and organizing skills; ability to anticipate outcomes.
- Excellent MS Office skills (Word, Excel and PowerPoint).
- Strong presentation skills and ability to create PowerPoint presentations for delivery to students, faculty, staff, and outside constituencies.
- Excellent problem-solving and analytical skills, as well as critical thinking ability.
- Excellent organization skills and attention to detail.
- Strong business process and service skills including giving and receiving feedback, active listening, conflict resolution, negotiation, group facilitation, delegation, coaching, influencing and visioning.
- Critical thinking skills, ability to deal with ambiguity, resolve complex problems, and effectively



manage projects.

- Strong analytical skills, process orientation and business savvy.
- Strong influencing and negotiation skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively in a team environment.
- Strong facilitation and coordination skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines and work in a fast-paced multi-priority environment.
- Ability to treat confidential information with sensitivity.
- Ability to design, develop and implement competency based learning.
- Ability to use classroom technology, including but not limited to PCs, video conferencing equipment, LCD data/video projectors, and Smart Consoles.
- Ability to integrate talent staffing opportunities with training and development solutions.
- Ability to create a learning and talent organization with minimal use of external consultants or vendors.
- Ability to successfully develop and manage relationships at all levels of the organization and influence a variety of stakeholders.
- Ability to be administratively self-supportive and work hands-on with own initiative to accomplish objectives.
- Ability to plan and organize job responsibilities and priorities.
- Ability to lead and motivate others to achieve objectives.
- Ability to consult with, challenge and influence management to align processes and practices with college objectives.
- Ability to analyze, and use assessment data from diverse instructional areas.
- Ability to effectively plan work activities, schedules, priorities and utilization of resources.
- Ability to create new and innovative solutions.
- Ability to initiate and follow through on concepts related to improving student learning.
- Ability to analyze problems, identify alternative solutions, project consequences of proposed actions and implement recommendations in support of goals.
- Ability to use appropriate technology to organize, synthesize, and communicate data.
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team.

### **Diversity and Inclusion in Job Descriptions:**

There are several areas of the job description that can be improved or enhanced to make descriptions more inclusive in nature, and more attractive to a wider cross-section of the applicant base. This list is not all encompassing, and any effort at broadening the applicant base or seeking out diverse experiences is important. Some areas of note are listed below:

- Avoid overly narrowing qualifications or areas of knowledge. For example, most jobs on campus interact with our University ERP system, Elucian Banner. Rather than requiring knowledge in Banner, most positions outside of IT could instead desire experience working with ERP systems in general. This allows the applicant pool to be more broad, and include more traditionally underrepresented groups.
- For positions that interact with students, highlighting the need for those who have experience or a commitment to mentoring under-represented populations helps make the position more attractive to a wider base of applicants.

- Highlight inter-departmental collaboration opportunities, as these allow applicants with a wider set of experiences to showcase their abilities at successfully completing position responsibilities.
- Explain Stetson's success at developing internal talent, and highlight ways in which the applicant would have opportunities to assist with interdepartmental projects, campus-wide committees, training and development opportunities, or other ways in which a candidate might be able to further their own career goals.