

## **UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK**

### **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR WRITING A JOB DESCRIPTION TO ACCOMPANY A JOB SIZING/EVALUATION APPLICATION**

**February 2024**

## Introduction

Where there is a requirement to size a role, an online job sizing application Form (which can be found [Here](#)) must be completed via the online application site and approved by the relevant line manager, Head of Department/School or equivalent Department or Division manager and by the most senior manager of the department or division, e.g., Dean or Director., enclosing the following documentation:

A copy of the proposed job description (where new) in word format or a tracked changed job description, completed in accordance with this guidance document and the University's Competency Framework for [Administrative](#), [Librarian](#) and [ITD](#) grades

A hierarchical organisational chart showing the proposed new role/existing role and its relationship to other roles in the Faculty/Department/School, including the grades for each post contained within (please do not include the names of role holders). If there are changes to other grades this also needs to be detailed.

The job description is central to the job sizing process. It is essential that the job description is an accurate reflection of the role being undertaken. This guidance has been designed to help produce an up-to-date and accurate job description for the purposes of making a Job Sizing application. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a Job Description Template.

For further information on Job Evaluation please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on Job Evaluation, details of which can be found on the A to Z of the HR website.

If after reading the FAQ's, further guidance or assistance is required please contact [jobsizing@ul.ie](mailto:jobsizing@ul.ie) for queries regarding job sizing.

## Terminology

The term Job Description includes, the job purpose, competencies, and the organisational chart for the of the Department/Division/Faculty in which the job sits, clearly showing the proposed reporting and responsibility lines.

## Purpose of Job Descriptions

The main purpose of any job description is to outline the main duties and responsibilities that are attached to a particular role.

## Basis for Job Descriptions

Job descriptions should be an accurate representation of the role being carried out. Avoid the use of acronyms and 'jargon' that may not be widely recognised outside of the job of the Department/Division/Faculty.

### Description Template

The blank description template has been designed to provide up to date and accurate information about the job in the form of a structured job/role description.

### Description Sections

The guidance notes will go through each section/heading of the job description, providing guidance on how to complete the form. The notes should be read thoroughly before completing each section of the template.

### Completing the Template (See Appendix 1 for Template)

Ensure the information provided is relevant to the role and that each box/section is completed thoroughly, using only the space provided in the form.

Additional information or supporting letters will not be accepted. Depending on the role, some sections may not be required to be completed. Please indicate 'not applicable' where appropriate.

The information provided should be relative to the post and should describe the role as it is required now, not as it should or might be.

### Involvement of the Line Manager

The completed Job Description Template must be completed by the line manager and the appropriate Head of Department/School/Division/Faculty. Sign off on the accuracy of the role is required from the line manager, appropriate Head of Department/School/Division/Faculty as well as the most senior member of the Academic Unit/Division.

The responsibility for funding will rest with the most senior member of Academic Unit/Division and must be confirmed before an application is submitted for consideration.

## SECTION 1: DETAILS OF THE JOB

### Role/Job Title

Enter the job title as appropriate. This must be an agreed title which exists within the current structure.

### Department/Division/Faculty      Location

The name and Location of the Department/ Division/Faculty

### Post reference number –

The current **grade** of the job – please state the current grade.

Reports To

Enter the job title(s) of the person/people this role will report to.

Direct Reports

Enter the job title(s) of the person/people that report to this role.

## SECTION 2: JOB CONTEXT

### Section 2-1: Job Purpose

This should be an accurate and concise statement of the unique contribution the job makes to the organisation in 1 or 2 sentences. The purpose does not include a detailed list of how the job is done, or a list of challenges, tasks, and activities. Write the purpose statement by answering one of the following questions:

Why the job exists – accurate and concise.

What is it that the job is intended to achieve?

It is sometimes easier to complete this section of the job description once you have completed the rest of the template, as it is in effect a summary of the job.

Examples:

To undertake duties of an administrative nature and provide administrative support to the Department as required and directed by the Line Manager.

To provide a high level of administrative support to the Head of Department/Division Head and other academics and members of staff.

To support the Head of Department in the management of administrative services throughout the Department to ensure the office runs smoothly.

### Section 2-2: Key Accountabilities

This section should be used to describe the key outputs of the job and follow a logical sequence. A helpful approach is to ask what the key areas in which results must be achieved to fulfil the overall purpose of the job.

Steps

Firstly, identify and list the tasks that are required to be carried out giving some indication as to the purpose of each task.

Analyse the initial list of tasks and, so far as possible, simplify the list by grouping/clustering related tasks together so that ideally no more than seven or eight main areas remain.

Decide on the order in which the tasks should be described e.g., most important duties first or adopt a chronological order; this can be useful when jobs are based around a core process or calendar of events.

A typical format of describing a task is as follows:

What is done (Action verb) ... to what or with whom (Object)...to achieve what result.

**Examples:**

<i>What is done</i>	<i>To what/with whom</i>	<i>To achieve what result</i>
To maintain and update	the student database	so that accurate and reliable information is available for the Head of Department
To monitor and maintain	the stationery budget	to ensure expenditure is kept within budgetary limits and stocks are always available.
To take minutes	Departmental meetings	To ensure accurate information and dissemination of information.

A list of action verbs is attached for your assistance.

## SECTION 3: CONTEXT

### Section 3a- Key Working Relationships and Contacts

In this section, please identify the most significant internal (inside the University) and external (outside the University) relationships for the job. Please also describe the overall purpose of these relationships and the frequency and nature of the contact (for example, exchanging information, negotiating, motivating etc.). Do not describe every relationship– only those that play an important part in getting the job done.

Examples:

<i>Contact with whom?</i>	<i>Nature of relationship</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Members of the Department	to provide/exchange information	to ensure work is being carried out to the required level.
Lecturers	exchange of information	to ensure lectures/tutorials run smoothly.
Students/Clients	as first point of contact	to answer routine queries.

### Section 3b: Job Boundaries

In this section briefly explain the freedoms available to the job and the constraints within which it operates. It will be useful to refer to the Competency Framework – e.g., latitude of decision making, initiative etc. as well as thinking about the procedures/process constraints of the job. Reporting relationships that exist at present should be detailed with reference to the Org Chart in particular.

### Section 3c: Working Environment/Special Circumstances

In this section briefly explain any aspects of the job which are important in understanding the context of the job.

Any seasonal/cyclical features of the job (e.g., The focus of the job changes significantly during term time).

Special environmental factors that have an impact on the job.

#### SECTION 4: Dimensions

This section records, in list rather than narrative form, the significant factual quantities on which the job has some direct or indirect impact. Please consider, where appropriate the operational, financial, and staffing aspects of the job when describing the scale of the job. Any other dimensions can be used if they are *relevant* to the job; use dimensions that best describe the scale of the job.

Typical job dimensions:

Staffing: Number/grade/job titles of staff supervised. Financial: Specify recurrent budget – cost/turnover.

Detail budgets managed, scale of each, including grant monies, discretionary funds and monies generated.

Customer: Number and type of external and internal customers. Operational: Specify range and type of activities, and/or services provided

Specify number of clients/people affected by the work

Specify number of students your job affects directly or indirectly Administrative: Management of and/or attendance at committees.

Examples:

Maintain and monitor stationery budget - €1,000

Maintain minutes of Committees

Clients – approximately 250 students – dealing with enquiries

Administrative support for 4 Academic members of staff.

Responsible for 3 administrative staff within Department/Division/Faculty

Maintain and monitor Departmental/Divisional/Faculty budgets – euro40,000

Supports 3 Committees

#### SECTION 5: Knowledge, Functional Skills, Experience & Qualifications

In this section describe/focus on the knowledge, qualifications, skills, and experience required to perform the job at the required level. It is not relevant to list personal skills, experience, and qualifications unless these match to the needs of the role.

##### Knowledge/Qualifications

Please be specific about the Knowledge and Qualifications required for the job.

Examples:

*Professional Qualification in Finance*

*Comprehensive knowledge of filing systems and record keeping.*

### Functional Skills

Please indicate which skills are required for the role.

Examples:

*Good IT skills.*

*Project Management skills. Budget Management.*

### Experience

If there is any specific requirement for previous experience, please specify the length and/or nature needed.

Examples:

*1-2 years experience in a busy office.*

*8-10 years in an Accounts environment.*

*4-5 years administration experience with at least 2 within the HE sector. Supervisory experience/office management experience.*

## SECTION 6: Competencies

The purpose of this section is to provide the opportunity to identify the key behaviours that are important and have a significant impact on the job. All the competency areas can be commented on– but in particular the following:

### Planning and Organising

In this section describe the requirement for planning and organising within the job. This may be the direct requirement to plan and organise the workload, that of other people, or the allocation and use of resources.

Some useful points to include are:

How does work come to this role?

How can the incumbent plan to deal with it?

To what extent can the incumbent plan and to what extent is the job primarily reactive?

What timescales are involved (daily/weekly/monthly)?

Examples:

Organise/prioritise on a weekly basis once duties issued by Line Manager.

React to queries from clients.

Plan stationery orders approximately 1 week in advance.



## **Decision Making and Problem Solving**

In this section look to establish:

Examples of typical decisions the person will make or be involved in, or have a significant influence on, through advising or making recommendations. If appropriate, give examples where the person will be responsible for giving advice to a university decision making body (e.g., advising a committee).

The nature of the role in making such decisions i.e., is it advisory or directly responsible?

What guidelines are in place to support decision making or alternatively constraints on freedom to act in the role (e.g., policies/procedures/ protocols/legislation)?

Examples of typical problems solved.

The nature of the role in relation to problems solved i.e., ultimate problem solved or provision of advice or support to enable another to solve the problem.

Contributions made by others to problem solving within the role.

The guidelines in place to support end solutions.

Examples:

Responsible for ordering stationery within budgetary constraints.

Make decisions on diary appointments.

Decide which member of staff to forward complex issues/problems.

## **Effective Communication**

In this section briefly explain any communication aspects.

Who will the incumbent communicate with, how often and what is the nature of the communication?

For example, will the post holder be required to:

Provide information effectively and courteously?

Influence and persuade others as part of the role?

Change behaviour, negotiate change, motivate others as a central part of the role?

Provide pastoral care for students/others and, if so, what does this involve and how often will it happen?

## **Organisational Chart**

Please attach the agreed organisational chart for the department, clearly showing the job and its position in terms of reporting relationships between that of senior/junior staff and peers. If one does not already exist, a chart must be created and included for the job to go forward for Job Evaluation assessment.

### **Section 7- Verification**

The completed Description Template must be signed by the appropriate Dean/Head of Department/School/Division.

The responsibility for funding will rest with the most senior member of Academic Unit/Division and must be confirmed before an application is submitted for consideration.

### **Date**

The date that the job description in final draft and is approved by the Dean/Head of Department/School/Division.

## ACTION VERBS

Management/ Administrative	Communication	Research	Teaching	People
administer allocate approve analyse arrange assign authorise consolidate control coordinate delegate determine develop direct establish execute (e.g., a plan) evaluate improve increase manage organise plan prioritise recommend schedule strengthen supervise	address advise arbitrate chair clarify communicate compose consult convince counsel define document draft edit educate explain formulate interpret negotiate persuade present promote publicise recruit report translate write	analyse clarify collect critique diagnose evaluate examine extract identify inspect integrate interpret interview investigate organise research search summarise survey synthesise test verify	adapt advise clarify coach communicate coordinate develop enable encourage evaluate explain facilitate guide inform instruct persuade set goals train tutor	collaborate communicate cooperate facilitate guide interview lead mediate motivate negotiate persuade recruit supervise

Technical	Financial	Creative	More Verbs (1)	More Verbs (2)
assemble build calculate compute evaluate design devise engineer execute fabricate maintain operate overhaul programme remodel repair solve upgrade	administer allocate analyse audit balance budget calculate compute develop estimate forecast manage market plan project reconcile research secure (funds)	act conceptualise create customise design develop devise direct establish found illustrate initiate institute introduce invent market originate perform plan revitalise	deliver (results) expand implement improve initiate prepare process produce promote reduce (losses) resolve (problems) restore revise screen solve specify tabulate	approve assess assist catalogue check classify collect compile demonstrate expedite familiarise generate inspect monitor operate organise purchase record represent

# Appendix 1

**TITLE OF POST: LOCATION: REPORTS TO: CONTRACT TYPE: SALARY SCALE:**

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>1. Job Purpose</b>	<p><i>The job purpose or summary for a specific job will capture at a high level the nature of the job – Provide a brief overview of the job, its context in the Department/Division/Faculty and the contribution that it makes.</i></p>
<b>2. Key Accountabilities</b>	<p><i>The key accountabilities for each job will be specific to that job and will be agreed by the Line Manager.. These are listed, ideally, in order of importance. Most posts will have between 4 to 8 main responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>Describe the important end results the post holder is expected to achieve. Start with the most important. Number each one separately. Please allocate a percentage of time that is allocated to each of these. This should total to 100%.</i></p>
<b>3. Context</b> <i>(In this section describe the background and operating environment in which the postholder works – This section is split</i>	
<i>into 3 parts – Key Working Relationships &amp; Contacts, Job Boundaries, and Working Environment/Special Circumstances)</i>	
<b>3a Key Working Relationships &amp; Contacts</b>	<p><i>The key working relationships and contacts for each role will be specific and will be agreed by the Manager. Outline the important relationships that the jobholder must maintain, and the sorts of issues on which that jobholder must communicate within these relationships. Note: reference competencies required for the role in this area</i></p>

<b>3b Working Environment/Special Circumstances</b>	<i>(Include information about the freedoms available to the job and the constraints within which it operates) Note: reference competencies required for the role in this area</i>			
<b>3c Job Boundaries</b>	<i>This would include reference to any physical, mental or environmental demands of the role.</i>			
<b>4. Dimensions</b> Budget Staff Customer Operational Administrative	<i>In this section outline the scale and areas of impact of the job (e.g. budget responsible for, impact of decisions, number of staff supervised etc.)</i>			
<b>5. Knowledge, Functional Skills, Experience &amp; Qualifications</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Essential/Desirable</b>		
	<b>Knowledge</b>			
		<b>Functional/Work-based Skills</b>		
	<b>Experience</b>			
	<b>Qualifications</b>			
<b>6. Behavioural</b>	<b>Enablers of Success</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>Competencies</b>				
