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# Writing Job Descriptions

Office of Human Resources

Updated 12/13/07

Note: These training materials were prepared for a university-wide review of staff job descriptions.

# Workshop Agenda

- I. Importance of Job Descriptions
- II. Reviewing/Developing a Job Description
- III. DePaul Guidelines and Format
- IV. Job Description Checklist



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## I. Importance of Job Descriptions

# Importance of Job Descriptions

- Define standards for the job
- Aid recruiting - evaluating applicant qualifications
- Serve as a foundation for appraising performance
- Aid in evaluating job worth – internally and externally
- Clarify the purpose and essential functions of position
- Inform the creation of training and development plans

## Importance of Supervisor's Role

- Review and maintain job descriptions
- Monitor for changes in job content
- Communicate with incumbents regarding changes
- Decide when an appropriate change is needed
- Submit current job descriptions to Human Resources

## Keeping Job Descriptions Current

There are annual and cyclical efforts that put a focus on the maintenance of staff job descriptions...and hopefully increases overall job description currency.

- Performance Appraisal Process – Introductory and Annual
- Level of Recruiting Activity
- Quality Assurance Reviews
- Changes in Organization Structure/Reporting

# Purpose of a Job Description

Job Description defined –

A well written job description describes the main elements of a job and is not a detailed listing of specifications. It provides guidance on the general nature and level of the work being performed. It describes the duties as they currently exist.



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## II. Reviewing and/or Developing a Job Description

# Developing a Job Description

## Job Analysis

The process of gathering, analyzing and organizing information about work roles. Understanding the content of the job.

Job Analysis Methods include:

- **Observation** – watch the job being performed (short-cycle jobs)
- **Questionnaires** – ask questions of incumbent & manager (large # of jobs)
- **Interview** – ask questions of the incumbent (professional jobs)
- **Work diaries or logs** – maintain record of frequency and timing of tasks over time (most jobs, but can be time consuming)

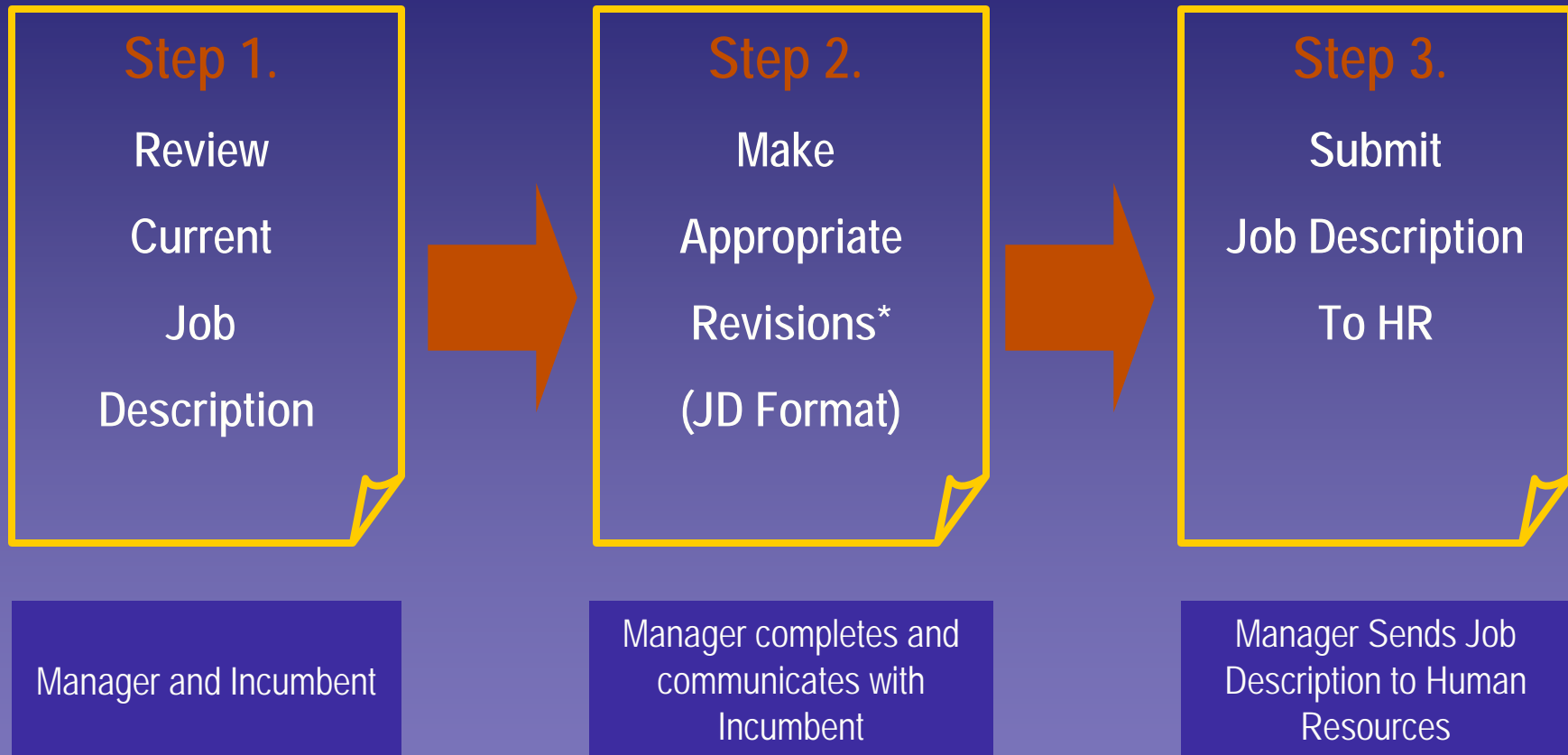
## Staff Job Description Review

Managers throughout the university are –

- Reviewing full-time staff job descriptions
- Updating job descriptions in the new JD format\*
- Creating organization chart

*\* Significant changes should be handled through the regular compensation procedures.*

# Reviewing Job Descriptions



*\* If revisions are significant – for example, a staff position becomes a managerial position then the revisions must proceed through the regular compensation re-classification process.*



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### III. DePaul University's Job Description Guidelines and Job Description Format

# Structure of a DePaul Job Description

## Three Main Sections to All Job Descriptions

- General Summary
- Principal Duties and Responsibilities
- Other Applicable Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Instructions available on the HR Web site. Login at <http://hr.depaul.edu> and select **Compensation**. Go to **Job Description Process**.

# DePaul's Job Description Format



## DePaul University Job Description

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<i>For use by Human Resources only:</i>	
Position Number:	
HR Assigned Job Code / Title:	/
Salary Grade:	
Date Approved:	
EEO Job Category:	
FLSA Exemption Classification:	<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Exempt

<i>To Be Completed By Manager:</i>	
Date Description Written:	
Dept ID:	Department Name:
Functional Title:	
Reports To Position Number:	
Job Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-Time Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary <input type="checkbox"/> Grant
Hours Per Week	<input type="checkbox"/> 35.0 <input type="checkbox"/> 37.5 <input type="checkbox"/> 40.0
Check any that apply:	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Month Position <input type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Housing

**GENERAL SUMMARY:** (Position's purpose and functions. This should be no more than 3 to 5 sentences.)

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**PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** (Essential Functions of Position. List the 5 most significant responsibilities including approximate percent of time spent on each responsibility. Total must equal 100 percent.)

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**MANAGERIAL/SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:** (Indicate the kind of decisions made, decisions referred to supervisor, number of direct reports and percentage of time spent in supervisory duties. If this section is not applicable indicate by marking N/A)

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**FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND DIMENSIONS:** (This section should reflect the size and scope of the position. Include relevant annualized dollar accountability for current fiscal year, i.e., department budget.)

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**EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:** (Preferred education requirements to perform the principle responsibilities successfully. Equivalent work experience may be substituted for a degree and should be noted.)

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# Job Description Guidelines & Format

## *To Be Completed By Manager*

- Date Description Written (reviewed) – indicates currency
- Data inputted into PeopleSoft
- Describes the position, the department and the person in the position
- 'Reports to' Position Number – describes the reporting structure
- Functional title – what you call the position (and the HR title – PeopleSoft system)
- Hours will tend to be 35.0 for exempt and non-exempt positions

# Job Description Guidelines & Format

## General Summary

- Brief paragraph - 3-5 sentences typically used for recruiting announcements
- Write after completing the 'Principal Duties and Responsibilities' section
- Basic purpose of position & level of work performed
- Answers the following questions:
  - Why does the job exist?
  - What is the person in the job responsible for accomplishing?
  - What is the overall end result of the job?

# Job Description Guidelines

## Principal Duties and Responsibilities

- Limit to 5-7 essential functions with overall importance to being successful in position
  - Assign the approximate percentage of time
  - Minimum of 10% of time
- Last of the duties is “Performs other duties as assigned” (not included in the 5-7 essential functions)

*Note: The job description is not an exhaustive list of every task the incumbent performs. Job descriptions that are too detailed are difficult to keep up to date.*

# Job Description Guidelines

For Principal Duties and Responsibilities structure the sentences

Verb / Object / Explanatory Phrase

Example

Collects **(action verb)** key job information **(object)** from various sources, e.g. work interview and direct observation **(explanatory phrase)**. Analyzes **(action verb)** the data **(object)** to identify job content and critical evaluation issues **(explanatory phrase)**.

Action Verbs online at <http://www.job-analysis.net/G053.htm>

## A word about 'specifications'

Details that describe day-to-day responsibilities, work flow/processes and performance objective information belongs in departmental documentation.

When kept separate specifications can

- Aid with people transitions,
- Support more adaptable work processes, and
- Improve the currency of a job description.

Job descriptions with many specifications tend to further the 'it's not in my job description' mindset and are difficult to maintain.

# Job Description Guidelines & Format

Other Applicable Responsibilities (2 areas refined / added):

- Managerial/Supervisory
  - Kinds of decisions and decisions referred to a supervisor
  - Number of direct reports and % of time spent on supervisory duties (include part-time and/or student employees)
  - If not applicable, then enter 'N/A'
- Financial Responsibility and Dimensions
  - Describe size and scope of financial responsibilities
  - Describe in \$: Budget dollars, assets, expenses, fundraising

# Job Description Guidelines & Format

## Other Applicable Responsibilities – continued

- Education and Experience
  - *Preferred* level to perform principal responsibilities
  - Equivalent job experience substituted for degree
- Required Certifications
  - Certification to successfully perform principal responsibilities
  - Examples: Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS)

# Job Description Guidelines & Format

## Physical Requirements

- Physical demands of the position to successfully perform principal responsibilities (walking, sitting, kneeling, visual acuity, lifting)
- Example: “position routinely lifts 25 pounds or more”
- American with Disabilities Act checklist

# Job Description Guidelines & Format

## Other Required Skills and Abilities

- Other skills or abilities
- Examples: Keyboarding skills, Software (PeopleSoft, Microsoft Office), ...

*TIP: Requirements for a position should be clearly tied to the successful performance of the job. Requirements should describe the 'minimum' level. Preferences can be stated.*



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## IV. Job Description Review - Checklist

# Job Description Review - Checklist

*Use the following checklist to aid the review/preparation of a job description –*

## General Summary

- Is there a brief overview (3-5 sentences)?
- Does the overview align with the duties?

## Principal Duties and Responsibilities

- Do the essential functions accurately reflect the job ?
- Are they limited to 5-7 core responsibilities ?
- Can the core responsibilities be categorized to reflect the specifications provided ?
- Includes ‘performs other duties as assigned’?

## Other Applicable Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Managerial responsibilities detailed?
- Scope of financial responsibility defined?
- Education and /or experience defined as ‘preferred’?
- Certifications necessary for success?
- If applicable, physical requirements defined?

## Other Requirements

- Travel, overtime, weekend work



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Thank You !!