

## JOB DESCRIPTION GUIDANCE NOTES

The following provides guidance on development of Job Descriptions. This guidance should be used when completing the Job Description Template.

- **When writing a job description, do not use words and phrases taken straight from the job evaluation handbook or national profiles.**
- This will result in the matching panel potentially rejecting the job description or asking for it to be rewritten. Many of the phrases used in the factor plan are defined within the handbook and by themselves in a job description will not mean very much.
- Remember to use straightforward, plain English phrases and sentences, avoid abbreviations and always explain what you mean by your terminology.

### 1. JOB IDENTIFICATION

The information required in this section is straightforward and is required primarily for administration. Please complete all sections apart from the job reference and note that the job holder(s) should not be named. Job descriptions will be anonymous for grading purposes. Please do not include the anticipated AFC Pay band in the job title or elsewhere in the job description.

Organisations should apply a unique code to job descriptions to enable accurate record keeping. The HR department may devise a confidential system to link job holders with their job descriptions and accordingly will complete the jobholder reference.

Job Title:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• accurately reflects the nature of the job and the duties performed</li><li>• reflects its ranking order with other jobs</li><li>• free of gender or age implications</li><li>• self-explanatory for recruitment purposes (in most online job searches, the job title is the main key word searched).</li></ul>
Responsible to (insert job title):	
Department(s):	
Directorate:	
Operating Division:	
Job Reference:	
No of Job Holders:	
Last Update (insert date):	

## 2. JOB PURPOSE

This section should consist of an accurate, concise statement in one sentence or paragraph of why the job exists. It should allow readers to immediately focus on the job's overall role in the organisation and should provide an insight into the job and the context within which it works.

The job purpose statement should not be a lengthy review of the operation of the post and its problems. It should give a clear response to the question “why does the job exist?” and should seek to reflect the uniqueness of the job's contribution.

For example, many different jobs in a finance department would fall within a job purpose statement that said “to assist in the day to day financial management of the organisation”. A more helpful statement would be one which reflected more specifically what the job has to do and by identifying the particular section in which the job operates, such as debtors or creditors.

It is often helpful to complete the remainder of the job description to develop an overall view of it, and then come back to this section to complete it, using the insights gained from the rest of the template to clarify thoughts on the job's overall purpose.

## 3. DIMENSIONS

This section should reflect the size, scope and activity of the role. For managerial and supervisory jobs, it may be useful to be more specific e.g.:

- size of capital and revenue budgets – when quoting figures, it is important to show only figures on which jobholders' activities have some impact;
- staff numbers – show the total number of staff who report to the job, stating whether direct or through intermediate supervisors/managers. It is helpful to have a breakdown of existing grade, group and/or function for those jobs where large numbers of staff are involved;
- staff management – if this is part of the jobholder's responsibilities, details can be added here and this information should be consistent with the content in the key result areas section below.

For clinical jobs, it may be useful to describe the patient group dealt with and the interaction with other clinical and non-clinical staff e.g.

- provides housekeeping service to three wards;
- develops care packages for specific groups of patients;
- provides specialist non-clinical advice to specific groups of staff.

#### 4. ORGANISATIONAL POSITION

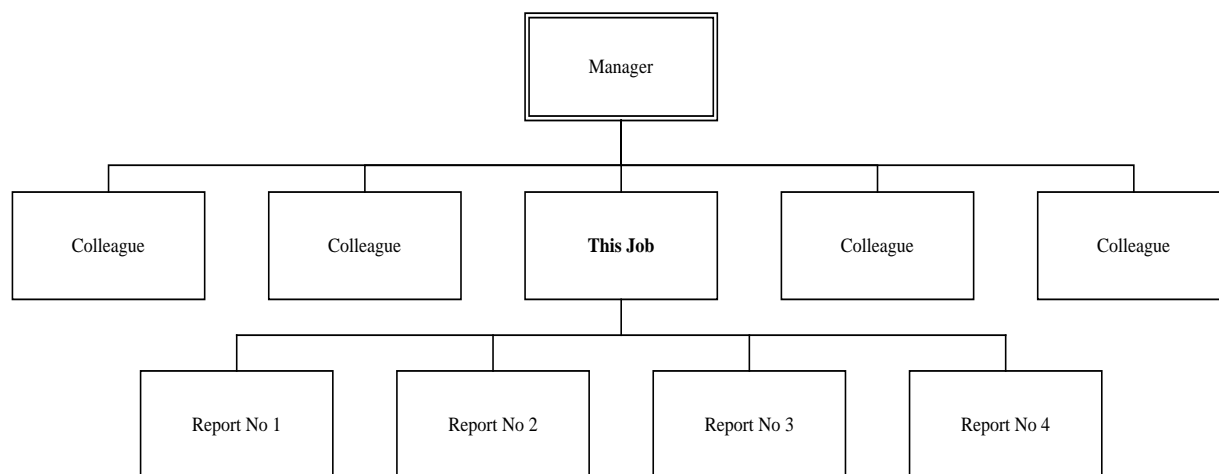
The purpose of this section is to establish how the job fits into the rest of the organisation. It should be clear to whom the job holder is responsible and whether they have any other key lines of accountability, e.g. to a professional head.

Please therefore record:

- a) the manager's job;
- b) job titles of colleagues reporting to the same manager/peers;
- c) jobs reporting directly to the job holder.

It is usually best to draw the chart with the manager in the centre at the top, the job in question immediately below with peers on either side. Jobs which report to the job holder should then be shown below. The example below gives a useful style. The names of individual job holders should not be shown on the chart, just job titles.

Please ensure that the job title for 'this job' in the organisation chart matches the job title in the Job ID section and that other titles referred to throughout the job description also match those stated on the organisation chart.



It is often more convenient to attach a separate sheet with the structure chart, rather than having to incorporate it in the body of the job description. This is perfectly acceptable – simply enter “organisation chart attached” in this section.

If there are any unusual organisational relationships which need to be explained or emphasised, this should also be done in this section.

## 5. ROLE OF DEPARTMENT

This section should provide an explanation of what the department, division or section does, so that anyone reading the job description will understand in general terms what activities it performs and give a clear indication of where the job fits in.

## 6. KEY RESULT AREAS

This is one of the most important sections of the job description. There is no one right way of completing this section for every job, but the aim should be to specify the key duties and responsibilities of the job.

Some jobs can be expressed best in terms of the key results or outputs of the job demonstrating what the responsibility is and why it is undertaken, not how. It is essential that the key results are a true reflection of the role to avoid under or over emphasising the extent/level of responsibility. For example often there can be confusion around the use of terminology relating to supervision and management of staff and it is important that this is clear in the job description e.g.

- Responsible for the day to day management of a group of staff including work allocation, performance/attendance issues, participating in recruitment, appraisal and personal development planning etc;
- Responsible for supervision of reception staff, including work allocation and checking.

It may also be useful/necessary to list some of the principal activities of the role.

You could indicate the amount of time expected to be dedicated to each task, which should be represented as a percentage, for example:

- Filing 20%
- Data entry 40%.

Descriptions of duties should be no more than two or three sentences in length and should be outcome-based, containing **an action, an object and a purpose**. For example: 'Compiles monthly reports to allow monitoring of the department's budget'.

- Use examples to illustrate where possible. Make sure responsibilities are relevant.
- The list of duties and responsibilities will vary in length, but as a rule, should be as short as possible and not list every individual task carried out, otherwise the document becomes an operational manual rather than a job description.
- Keep it factual and do not repeat tasks/responsibilities.

- **Avoid gender specific or discriminatory language.**

It is important however that, when listing tasks, that the level of involvement and role is clearly reflected.

A good example would be:

- Plans, evaluates and implements nursing care 70%
- Carries out monthly quality inspection audits to assess compliance with departmental standards (5%)

However incomplete examples would be:

- *Involvement in audit and research 5%* - this does not give the reader an indication of the level and nature of audit and research activities or tasks;
- *Assists in X-Ray dept when required 10%* - this does not reflect the actual role and further information would be required to confirm this;
- *Will support the Lead Nurse to promote a culture of continuous development, improvement methodology, performance and quality improvement* – this does not explain what the postholder does to provide support, the tasks or activities carried out.

Where it is a clear job requirement to periodically take charge of a work section, ward or department, the details of that requirement should be described, including the duration and frequency.

## **7a. EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY**

This section should describe the main machinery and/or equipment used in the job, or to which the job otherwise relates e.g. for maintenance. This could range from sophisticated medical equipment, to computers, to domestic cleaning machinery. It includes all clinical equipment such as syringes and blood pressure monitors. A brief description should be given of the use of the equipment in the job, even if it appears obvious to the job holder.

## **7b. SYSTEMS**

This section should describe any systems that the post works with or contributes to, for example in relation to information management. This may range from keeping simple manual records to working with complex computer databases. The nature of the job's role in relation to the system should be described (e.g. security, processing and generating information; inputting information on behalf of others; creation, updating and maintenance of information databases or systems) and the degree to which it is shared with others.

Examples might include:

- completion of timesheets and forwarding them to the salaries department ;
- maintaining patient records;

- formatting and populating databases.

## 8. ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW OF WORK

This section should contain an explanation of where work comes from/goes to, especially those items that are self-generated by the jobholder.

Most jobs operate within procedures, plans, budgets, projects, etc. Within professionals and managerial jobs, there is a strong emphasis on being able to anticipate problems or needs and to take steps to resolve them without being asked.

There should also be a clear indication of how the jobholder is supervised and/or their work reviewed, e.g. personal contact, formal meetings, written reports, etc. There should be a clear indication of how the control works.

## 9. DECISIONS AND JUDGEMENTS

Most jobs operate within defined procedures, plans, budgets, programmes, etc. In some jobs the day to day work is very clearly assigned by a manager or supervisor, whereas in other cases, particularly in professional and managerial jobs, the jobholder is expected to anticipate problems or needs and get on with resolving them without being asked, e.g. developing managerial policies and procedures, patient diagnosis or planning care. However, even many task-focused jobs will still have some degree of discretion. For example this may simply be the order in which tasks are carried out.

In this section please describe:

- The areas of discretion, areas where post holder is expected to anticipate or resolve problems independently;
- Typical judgements made in the course of the job.

Where it is a clear job requirement to periodically take charge of a work section, ward or department, the details of that requirement should be described, including the duration and frequency.

## 10. MOST CHALLENGING/DIFFICULT PARTS OF THE JOB

This section is intended to give a 'feel' for the job's most challenging or difficult aspects of the job. The purpose of the question is to elicit information about the issues that confront the jobholder and tax his or her skills the most. There should not normally be more than one or two of these.

For some jobs it may seem that there are no difficult aspects, and if that is the view of the jobholder, it will be sufficient to say "not relevant" in this section. However it should be borne in

mind that degrees of difficulty or complexity are relative to the nature of the job, and most will have some tasks, duties or responsibilities which are felt to be more complex/difficult/challenging than the rest, and it is helpful to be aware of what these are. This may include times when the job has reduced access to supervision or support such as when assigned to take charge of the department, or during standby or on-call duty.

## **11. COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS**

This section should be used to describe:

- Who the job holder communicates with;
- What the communication is about (for example, is it about clinical conditions, is it about appointments, is it about budgets? is it about service change?);
- Any difficulties encountered in communication (either because of the subject matter or because of factors associated with the people who the job holder is communicating with).
- Avoid making a list of main internal and external contacts.
- The content should enable the reader to understand the complexity of the communication.

This section may be split by internal and external communications with a description following the advice above.

## **12. PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS OF THE JOB**

This section should be used to describe the nature and frequency of:

- The physical skills needed for the job (e.g. requirements for speed and accuracy, keyboard and driving skills, manual handling skills); it is important for the description to be sufficient to understand the degree of intricacy required for manual handling skills;
- The physical effort needed for the job (e.g. moving equipment, manipulating patients, working in cramped or restricted position); include reference to the type of equipment including an indication of weight where this may not be obvious to the reader and give an indication of typical frequency;
- The mental demands of the job (e.g. concentration needed, extent to which workload is predictable, frequency of interruptions and what causes these – include an example for illustration);
- The emotional demands of the job (e.g. dealing with bereaved relatives, conveying unwelcome news to staff or patients. Include the frequency of exposure and a description of the circumstances when using examples);

- Environmental and working conditions of the job (e.g. exposure to body fluids, inclement weather, exposure to verbal/physical aggression. Include the frequency when using examples).

### 13. KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO DO THE JOB

This section is intended to identify the knowledge, training, qualifications and/or experience required to carry out the duties of the job satisfactorily.

It should not take into account any additional qualifications or experience the current/previous jobholder may have/had. The stated level of knowledge should be that which is currently required and **not what the existing/previous post holder has/had**. It should identify the essential requirements, **not the desirable ones**. *Please read the notes on the use of Person Specifications at the end of this section.*

This section should include theoretical and practical knowledge; professional; specialist or technical knowledge; and knowledge of the policies, practices and procedures associated with the job. (The latter is particularly important where limited or no formal qualifications are required when recruiting).

It takes account of the educational level normally expected as well as equivalent levels of knowledge gained without undertaking formal courses of study; and the practical experience required to fulfil the job responsibilities satisfactorily.

Generalised statements such as “requires extensive experience” should be avoided. If experience is essential, this section should state:

- The level of experience;
- How specialised the experience needs to be.
- The types of knowledge gained through experience

#### Top tips to remember

- do not ask for years of experience
- specifying years of experience or service is time-based so potentially indirectly age discriminatory

**Asking for many years of experience may fall foul of both age discrimination and gender discrimination law**, as it could prevent younger people and women from applying for certain jobs. Instead of specifying years of experience or service, employers should specify the type, breadth or level of experience needed for the particular job and the skills and competencies required.

#### Person Specifications



The Job Evaluation Handbook section on assessing the knowledge, training and experience required for a post includes the following guidance:

The person specification may understate the knowledge actually needed to carry out the job because it is set at a recruitment level on the expectation that the rest of the required knowledge will be acquired in-house through on the job training and experience, for example:

- Clerical posts for which the recruitment level of knowledge is a number of GCSEs, whereas the actual knowledge required includes a range of clerical and administrative procedures.
- Managerial posts for which the recruitment level of knowledge is a number of GCSEs plus a specified period of health service experience, when the actual knowledge required includes the range of administrative procedures used by the team managed plus supervisory/managerial knowledge or experience.
- Healthcare jobs where a form of specialist knowledge is stated on the person specification as desirable, rather than essential, because the organisation is willing to provide training in the particular specialist field.

Where a competency profile or person specification has been devised for the job, this may be attached to the job description. **However, the job description should clearly state what knowledge, training and experience is required to perform the role satisfactorily as this will be the primary source of information used when grading the post.**

#### 14. JOB DESCRIPTION AGREEMENT

A separate job description will need to be signed off by each jobholder to whom the job description applies.

Job Holder's Signature:

Date:

Head of Department Signature:

Date: