

Job Description

The job description should describe the position to be filled, including primary and secondary responsibilities as well as the required/desired preparation, qualifications, and experience. A well-written job description will attract a diverse applicant pool from which the search and screen committee can select candidates to recommend to the executive committee or hiring authority.

The job description will delineate the strategic plan of a department. As a result, it should convey the institutional commitment to breadth and diversity that ultimately enriches the climate and enhances the stature of the department and the University. For example, a department could advertise for a candidate in "labor and/or women's history," rather than simply for a labor historian. This wording might attract women who would not have applied under the more restrictive description. The profile of a position should be defined in a manner that attracts all individuals qualified to fill the vacancy.

A job description that clearly specifies responsibilities and expectations will have many beneficial effects: it will assist the search committee to focus on candidate qualifications and to articulate its expectations; it will provide a framework through which to consistently evaluate candidates; it will allow potential candidates to determine whether they want to apply for the position; it will encourage a self-selection process among potential candidates; and will facilitate compliance with disability accommodation requirements. A well-written job description will also assist the search committee at the interview stage. Interview questions should assess an applicant's ability to perform the responsibilities assigned to the position. If the job description identifies essential job duties, all applicants, whether or not they have a disability, may be asked if they can perform those duties with or without reasonable accommodations. Finally, since interview questions ought to be job-related, they should reflect departmental expectations identified in the job description.

While job descriptions may vary widely, they usually include the following elements:

- name or title/s of the position;
- specific duties for which an individual will be responsible;
- education and experience required or desired;
- credentials;
- areas of specialization;
- duration of position (include when position begins; whether there is a probationary period; whether tenure track or tenured; whether fixed-term or fixed-term terminal);
- whether appointment is for academic year or annual);
- salary range;

- deadline for receipt of applications;
- name, address, and telephone number of contact person at the University of Wisconsin-Madison;
- the office or individual to whom one reports should be included for administrative or supervisory positions; and
- reference to the fact that information regarding applicants/nominees must be revealed upon request for finalists and for individuals who did not request confidentiality in writing.

A deadline for receipt of applications is required in advertisements. The date should be viewed as a guideline by which applications should be received. Careful judgment should be exercised about accepting late applications. Any request for the names of applicants/nominees would have to be fulfilled within two days of the application deadline/s. The job description is similar to the advertisement for the position. In an advertisement, however, you may wish to add a brief description of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. All advertisements must end with the statement, "The University of Wisconsin-Madison is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer." Some units have strengthened this statement to read, "Women and minorities are encouraged to apply" or "The Department is committed to the ideals and goals of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity." PLEASE NOTE that 1) all advertisements must state the following: "Unless confidentiality is requested in writing, information regarding applicants and nominees must be released upon request. Finalists cannot be guaranteed confidentiality," and 2) there are deadlines for disclosure. (For further details, please see APO Appendix 3-F in the Unclassified Personnel Policies and Procedures, which includes instructions for responding to requests for information regarding searches.)

In developing a job description, it helps to examine the requirements to be certain that they are not simply the result of traditional practices but are genuinely job-related and necessary to perform the required duties. Nothing in the job description can be discriminatory (e.g., "applicants under 30 preferred," "recent graduates preferred").

For instructional positions, it is preferable to publish or distribute job descriptions early in the academic year so that hiring decisions can be made in sufficient time to allow an individual to complete his or her institutional responsibilities and to make professional and personal plans.

As soon as a department anticipates a vacancy, it must complete a Position Vacancy Listing (PVL) form (Appendix C). This form is, in essence, an abbreviated job description.

Upon completion, the PVL and its attachments must be submitted to the department chair for review and then forwarded to the Dean's/Director's office for final review and approval before submission to the Academic Personnel Office. Once the Academic Personnel Office releases the PVL for open recruitment, the hiring unit is notified by phone and in writing. The minimum length of time for which position vacancy listings

must be posted for open recruitment varies, depending upon the salary range of the vacancy and whether a Recruitment Effort Plan is required.

The scope of recruitment required or recommended may also vary. When filling vacancies including faculty, academic staff and limited appointment positions, refer to Appendix 3-D to determine whether an REP or an RAR is required and the minimum recruitment period and scope requirements. Most faculty, and many academic staff positions, require a regional, national, and/or international search effort. Recruitment efforts listed on the REP should include contacts with organizations of women and minorities in the discipline/profession and announcements in journals and newsletters of these groups.