
Youngstown State University
Guidelines for On-Campus Student Employment
Position Descriptions

Overview

Position descriptions serve a number of important functions in the employment process. At minimum, they form a helpful structure that establishes objective requirements necessary in hiring, as well as clarification of day-to-day expectations for performance. While no position description can anticipate every demand, they are essential in establishing the minimum requirements for the position. This is particularly important as the University strives to comply with guidelines established by the EEOC, the ADA, and to operate within the spirit of Affirmative Action.

The following categories reflect an organization that may be helpful in writing position descriptions appropriate for your department's student employment positions.

Position Title

In most cases a student employment position title will be one or two descriptive words that represent a category of employment. Examples include: Student Clerical Assistant, Student Office Assistant, Laboratory Monitor, Parking Attendant, Student Grounds Worker.

Position Description

A position description is a relatively brief explanation of the general activities involved in a specific job. It may be as brief as several sentences or as elaborate as several pages. Both student employee and supervisor need to be clear about the responsibilities that are "givens" in the position. It is important to describe essential functions, yet be general enough to allow for the normal range of change and unexpected activity that is typical in most work settings. Many position descriptions include an item or statement that covers the potential for additional assigned responsibilities. This "Other Duties As Assigned" category is particularly important for employees who are hired to provide general assistance.

Minimum Requirements

Minimum requirements are a critical piece of a position description. They should be used as basic screening criteria and provide a complete and clear model for what is necessary to successfully carry out the responsibilities of the position. While most supervisors are seeking candidates who exceed the minimum, it is essential that minimum requirements stated are sufficient to do the job. For example, if a student is hired as a laboratory assistant, with no mention of any physical requirements, and then is routinely expected to assist in moving heavy boxes of supplies, the minimum requirements were incomplete.

In the area of student employment it is entirely possible to have very few minimum requirements; however, the more typical error is to not include requirements that seem obvious to the employer. It will be helpful to have someone familiar with the position responsibilities, who does not supervise the position, review your initial

draft. Keep in mind that minimum requirements are in some ways a balancing act. The more detailed and stringent you make these requirements, the less freedom you will have in the hiring process; the less clear and delineated the requirements are, the greater the potential for problems in resolving difficulties that arise in hiring or evaluating will be. The most important issue in developing minimum requirements is to make certain that they all relate to essential functions of the position.

Reporting Lines

In most cases, this can be handled by a sentence identifying the title of the immediate supervisor. If the position involves a reporting line including a student supervisor, it will be helpful to explicitly identify the extent and nature of the authority of the student supervisor.

Salary

Salary designations should reflect the hourly dollar value; e.g., \$6.85, \$7.00, \$7.50, etc. In the case of stipend employment, the salary designation should include the expression, "Task-Based Stipend," the stipend's dollar value and the period which the stipend will cover; e.g., "Task-Based Stipend of \$500 for the period February 1 through April 30, 2007."