Job Description Do’s and Don’ts

Do...

- Base the job description on the department’s needs.
- Ensure the job description is **complete** and **accurate**.
- Be aware of your audience. Those reading the job description do not know as much about the job or your organization as you do.
- Share the completed job description with the job incumbent.
- Make sure the job is doable.
  - Group together compatible job functions (i.e., group together tasks requiring similar skills).
  - Under normal circumstances, the job should be able to be successfully completed within the set work schedule.
- Use the job description as a tool:
  - To communicate job expectations to the job incumbent.
  - To manage employee performance.
  - For workload management.
  - To focus recruitment efforts.
  - To create training and development plans.
- Be precise. This is critical as vague descriptions of the job can lead to inaccurate interpretations by the incumbent, prospective employee and may result in the position being misclassified and assigned an unsuitable title and grade.
- Use descriptive action verbs (facilitate, advise, reconcile, etc.) vs. vague action verbs (prepare, assist, coordinate, etc.).
- Focus on the critical activities of the job.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Maintain consistency when using terms like "may" and "occasionally" as these should be used to describe tasks that are performed once in a while.
- Include explanatory phrases which tell why, how, where, or how often the tasks and duties are performed.
- Call Compensation if you need help.

Don’t ...

- Artificially inflate levels of education and experience required to perform the essential functions of the job. Rather, determine the MINIMUM qualifications; you can always state preferences for higher levels of education and experience, and hire someone with such qualifications if it’s a defensible choice.
- Use employee names in the job description. Focus on the job, not the person.
- Use brand (proprietary) names (i.e., Xerox machine) in the job description.
- Use acronyms.
- Group together incompatible job functions. This can create a job that very few people can fill.
- Use words subject to varying interpretations (i.e., "some," "great," "heavy"). However, **do** use examples to assure consistency of interpretation, especially for job evaluation and classification purposes.