

Developing a Solid and Useful Position Description

An opening/vacancy is a fantastic opportunity to make sure your department is moving forward in the most strategic and positive way possible. Time invested in thoughtfully [creating your position description](#) can make the difference between a good or bad hiring decision.

Ask the following questions to help you develop a well-rounded position description:

- ❑ Is the existing position description still good enough or is it just a good starting point?
 - *It may need a few minor adjustments or possibly a complete over-haul.*
- ❑ Have the needs of your department changed?
 - What are the current and specific needs of your department?
 - *These needs may or may not end up in the final position description.*
 - *Allow yourself to think creatively and outside of this position's responsibilities in the past.*
- ❑ Is this the time to reorganize or reclassify personnel in the department?
 - *This may be an opportunity to increase the responsibilities of a coworker who is ready to advance and simplify the responsibilities of the open position.*
 - *This may also be the opportunity to relieve an incumbent of duties they are struggling with and add duties that are still needed by the department and within their strengths and skill set.*
- ❑ What are the actual responsibilities of the position?
 - What technical skills are necessary to perform these responsibilities?
 - *Consider if the skills should be mastered before their first day on the job or are transferable skills such as MAC to PC, one database to another?*
 - What behavioral skills must the candidate have to be successful?
 - What education is required for this position and what is preferred?
 - Which of these technical and behavioral skills are preferred?
- ❑ Think about (or possibly talk with) past employees in this or similar positions.
 - What qualities/skills made them outstanding performers?
 - What qualities/skills made them mediocre or poor performers?
 - Identify the strengths and weaknesses that make or break this position.
- ❑ Talk to co-workers, managers in your department, and other stakeholders.
 - What skills and qualities do they value in this position?
 - What needs do they have as a customer of this position?

Make a comprehensive list. This information will guide you in preparing your position description well, creating your advertisements and announcements, and planning the overall selection process.