

Job Descriptions



Components

Development

Maintenance

What is a Job Description

- A formal document that explains the position's:
 - Tasks/duties;
 - Skills/knowledge required to perform tasks/duties;
 - Reporting relationship - title of the position that employee reports to;
 - Detail of the work performed (inputs/outputs);
 - Fair Labor Standards Act exemption status;
 - How the work is to be completed; and
 - Frequency and purpose of the work as it relates to the organization's mission and goals.

A well articulated position/job description will allow the reader (even those unfamiliar with the role) to understand why the position exists in the organization, what the role does for the organization, and what skills and expertise one must possess in order to be able to do the work. *For Compensation & Classification, it provides the proper documentation to determine exemption status.*

Why Use Job Descriptions

- Job descriptions are used to:
 - Describe major functions and duties (limit to 5 - 7 functions/duties).
 - Describe education/license/certifications requirements.
 - Develop job postings.
 - Describe knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) necessary to do the job.
 - Describe effort.
 - Assess candidate's qualifications during selection process.
 - Help set expectations.
 - Guide performance management process.
 - Guide accommodation decisions.
 - Serve as documentation in the event of a legal challenge.
 - Summarize the organization structure (reporting relationships).
 - Describe working conditions.

Timing – Developing/Updating



Key Components

- U-M classification and working title.
- Job summary.
- Essential duties and responsibilities (with percentage of effort).
- Skills and competencies.
- Qualifications (education and experience).
 - Minimum qualifications.
 - Preferred qualifications.
- U-M provides a standard form to help schools/colleges/units (SCUs) craft a job description (see [appendix](#)).
- Date of creation/last update.



U-M Classification and Working Title

- U-M classification.
 - Standardized nomenclature to organize jobs into categories.
- Working title.
 - Reflects specific duties, specialization, or level (Coordinator, Manager, Sr Financial Controls Analyst, Project Facilitator).
 - Flexible for unit discretion.
 - Should be simple and recognizable.

Compensation and Classification website has additional principles and parameters.

Job Summary

- High-level overview (2-4 sentences) of the role's purpose that includes:
 - Purpose.
 - Key responsibilities and outcomes.
 - Contributions to the unit.
 - Department role reports into.
 - Supervisory/managerial responsibility.
 - Level of responsibility/scope.
 - Required skills/knowledge to perform each key responsibilities.

Example: The Compensation Analyst supports the development and implementation of compensation programs to ensure market competitiveness and internal equity. Reports to the Director of Compensation.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Most important tasks and percentage of effort.
 - Percentage of effort should be greater than 10% or less than 50%.
- Use action verbs (e.g., develops, manages, coordinates).
 - See [appendix](#) for a listing of action verbs.
- Focus on outcomes, not tasks (e.g., “responds to emails by forwarding to appropriate individual” not “answers emails”).
- Aim for 5-7 major function/duties.
 - See next slide for ADA compliance.

Be mindful of potential inflationary effects when describing duties in a job description. Overstating responsibilities or using language that implies a higher level of authority or complexity than the role requires can lead to misclassification, inequity in compensation, and challenges in recruitment or performance evaluation.

ADA Compliance

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), duties and responsibilities are categorized as either Essential or Marginal.

Essential	Marginal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position exists to perform that function.• Function is highly specialized.• Limited number of employees among whom the job function can be distributed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Function(s) can be eliminated.• Function(s) can be assigned elsewhere.

Skills and Competencies

- Skills are specific learned abilities required to perform a task or job (e.g., technical writing; customer service; Excel; Google Slides, data visualization).
 - Include 3–5 key skills that are non-negotiable.
- Competencies are broader, blending knowledge, behaviors, and skills to describe how work is performed (e.g., collaboration; strategic thinking; problem-solving; adaptability).
 - Include 2–3 core competencies aligned with your unit's values and culture.

Qualifications

- Qualifications and job level must align.
 - Required qualifications (need to have).
 - Education level (e.g., Bachelor's degree in Marketing or related field).
 - Certifications or licenses (if legally required).
 - Years of relevant experience (e.g., 3+ years in customer support).
 - Technical or role-specific skills (e.g., proficiency in Salesforce).
 - Preferred qualifications (nice to have).
 - Advanced degrees or certifications.
 - Experience with specific industries, tools, or systems.
 - Language fluency or additional capabilities.
 - Soft skills (e.g., “Demonstrated leadership in cross-functional teams”).

Be realistic and try to avoid “wish list” items.
Differentiate clearly between “required” and “preferred.”

Working Conditions

- Working conditions outline the physical, environmental, and situational context of the role. It helps set expectations, ensure ADA compliance, and inform reasonable accommodation decisions. May include:
 - Physical environment: Office, remote, lab, etc.
 - Schedule demands: Standard hours, shift work, weekends, on-call, overtime.
 - Physical demands: Lifting, standing, walking, repetitive motion.
 - Environmental conditions: Exposure to noise, weather, outdoors, etc.
 - Special conditions: Exposure to hazardous materials or chemicals, need for personal protective equipment.
 - Travel requirements: Local or long-distance, frequency.

Appendix

Internal Resources

- For [Campus Employment Process](#) questions, contact the Shared Services Center at 734-615-2000.
- For Michigan Medicine Employment Process questions, contact the [Michigan Medicine HR Solutions Center](#) at 734-647-5538.
- [University Talent Acquisition](#).
- [Compensation and Classification tools](#).
- [Position Description Form](#) (see next three slides).

Position Description Form

Form
36200

POSITION DESCRIPTION

For all Regular Staff and Bargained-For Positions



Page 1 of 3

The purpose of this form is to formally document the content of a job, including job functions, duties, scope, and the minimum and preferred qualifications. The statements included in this description are intended to reflect the general nature and level of work assigned to this position and should not be interpreted as all-inclusive. For more information, please contact your unit or central HR office representative.

CHECK ONE: ☐ Existing Position for Posting ☐ New Position or Job Code Change for Posting ☐ Job Code Change for Individual (must attach a submittal form)
Job Req #: Job Req #:

PART ONE (Skip to part two for New Position)

Current Incumbent Name (Last Name, First Name): UMID: Unique Name:
Current Job Market Title: Current Job Code: Current Std Hrs:
Current Working Title: Current Salary: Current Job Role/Salary Grade:
Current Department Name: Current Dept ID:

PART TWO

Immediate Supervisor Name: Market Job Title:
Department Name: Dept ID: Phone:

PART THREE

Proposed Job Market Title: Proposed Job Code: Proposed Full Time Rate:
Proposed Working Title: PCN: Proposed Salary Grade:
Proposed Career Family/Job Family: Proposed Career Band: Job Role: ☐ Professional
☐ Managerial
☐ Executive

PART FOUR - SUPERVISION: indicate the market job title and number of FTE supervised. Please check the type of supervision provided as defined below.

Administrative Supervision: Has the authority to hire, transfer, suspend, promote, discharge, reward, or recommend such action.
Functional Supervision: Has the authority to work as group leader, assist in the training of new staff members, communicate instructions, maintain employee records, and assign work to others.

Market Job Title of Position(s) Supervised	# of FTE	Administrative Supervision	Functional Supervision
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Form 36200

Revised 5/10

Available at: <http://www.hr.umich.edu/hrm/forms/pdfs/positiondescription.pdf>

CHECK ONE – Existing Position, New Position/Job Code Change, or Job Code Change for Employee

PART ONE – Employee (Incumbent) Information

PART TWO – Department and Immediate Supervisor Information

PART THREE – Proposed New Classification Information

PART FOUR – Supervision Responsibilities

PART FIVE – Other Employees in Benchmark
(Like) Positions

PART SIX – Duties, Percentage (%) of Time
(Effort), & Essential Functions (for ADA Compliance)

PART SEVEN – Position Qualifications
(Department Specific)

Form 36200	<h2 style="margin: 0;">POSITION DESCRIPTION</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">For all Regular Staff and Bargained-For Positions</p>	 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN Page 3 of 3
Current Incumbent Name (Last Name, First Name):		
PART EIGHT - Provide any additional comments or information not covered above.		
PART NINE (OPTIONAL BY DEPARTMENT): Funding plan for position/business case for request by department.		
<i>By signing below or sending this form via email, I certify that the above information is accurate to the best of my knowledge.</i>		
Employee Signature:	Date:	
TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISION/MANAGEMENT:		
Immediate Supervisor: <i>By signing below or sending this form via email, I certify the answers to the preceding questions accurately reflect the content of the position.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Completely <input type="checkbox"/> With clarifications listed below		
Clarifications:		
Supervisor's Name or Signature:	Date:	
Dean, Director or Representative Name or Signature:	Date:	
Central Human Resources Representative Name or Signature:	Date:	

- Accountabilities
- Relationships
- Working Conditions

- Funding Plan
- Business Case

Check with local HR for signature requirements

External Resources

- [O*Net Online.](#)
 - O*NET OnLine has detailed descriptions of over 900 occupations and can offer detailed information on tasks, skills, work activities, and qualifications.
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics.](#)
 - BLS.gov can help someone writing a job description by providing accurate, up-to-date data on job duties, required skills, wages, and industry trends for a wide range of occupations.
- [Chatgpt.com.](#)
 - ChatGPT can help streamline the process of writing job descriptions by generating clear, tailored, and inclusive content quickly based on role-specific details.

Action Verbs

Administrative / Operational	Analysis / Evaluation	Communication / Interpersonal	Leadership / Strategic
Administers Coordinates Maintains Organizes Schedules Processes Implements Manages	Analyzes Assesses Audits Evaluates Interprets Monitors Reviews Tracks	Communicates Collaborates Consults Informs Liaises Negotiates Presents Promotes	Leads Directs Develops Oversees Plans Strategizes Supervises Guides
Creative / Innovative	Technical / Hands On	Results / Outcome Orientated	
Designs Develops Creates Formulates Initiates Improves Innovates Refines	Builds Constructs Installs Operates Programs Repairs Tests Troubleshoots	Achieves Delivers Enhances Executes Expands Improves Increases Reduces	