HOW TO WRITE POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

1) What is the purpose of a position description?

It is a communication tool used to describe a specific position to include:

- **Purpose** of the position
- **Main duties & responsibilities** (including % of time allotted to those main duties)
- **Qualifications** needed
- **Basic conditions of employment** (to include physical demands & environmental working conditions, what type of supervision will be received and given, any special conditions such as licenses required)

It is a communication tool used by:

- **Administrative Offices** – for organizational design, to share expectations & measure performance against those expectations
- **Human Resources** – as a basis for recruitments, for classification studies to determine appropriate classification and salary
- **Outside Agencies** – for comparison purposes and worker's compensation inquiries
- **Incumbent**– to have a clear understanding of the position and performance expectations

It is also a requirement from the Office of the Chancellor.

2) Who prepares the position description and why?

The appropriate manager prepares the PD with help from the incumbent if the position is filled.

- Position descriptions are created for vacant positions (recruitments) and/or new positions, reassignments of an incumbent, and/or part of a reorganization or reclassification.
- For positions with incumbents; managers are encouraged to work closely with the incumbent.
- Responsibility for the final assignment of duties rests with management.

3) Consistent format of position descriptions is important. The main sections are:

- ✓ General Information
- ✓ Action Requested
- ✓ Purpose of position
- ✓ Duties & Responsibilities
- ✓ Qualifications & special conditions
- ✓ Physical & environmental working conditions
- ✓ Supervision
- ✓ Signature

4) Define the purpose of the position – **Position Purpose**. This section describes the overall purpose or basic primary function of the position. Basically, it tells the reason the position exists.

- Write a brief statement or paragraph describing the broad purpose of the intended position in such a way that it is distinguished from all other similar positions in the unit.
- Create Linkages – Every position contributes to the accomplishment of the specific goals and mission of the department in which it is located as well as those of the University. Refer to these in the purpose.

Example – PURPOSE STATEMENT- **ASA II – Academic Office**

- *"The purpose of the position is to provide clerical support to the Department Chair of _____, including opening, replying to, or forwarding mail to appropriate staff, maintaining files and records, scheduling and arranging appointments, drafting simple correspondence, and providing budget support."*

Example – PURPOSE STATEMENT- **Custodian – Housing**

Creates a linkage to the mission of the department & then summarizes the duties

- *The incumbent in this position is a member of the University Housing team. In conjunction with the Executive Director, Associate Directors and other managers, staff, and students, this position assists in carrying out the mission and philosophy of University Housing and is responsible for supporting and contributing to an atmosphere that facilitates respect, inclusivity and collaboration.*

  This position provides general cleaning and custodial care and support for assigned campus buildings, facilities, structures and adjacent areas and/or portions thereof, including, but not limited to, campus offices; locker rooms; student residences, patios, entryways and walkways, and workshops. Custodial staff may work independently or as part of a custodial team.

5) **Duties & Responsibilities**: The average job will have several major job duties, sometimes referred to as essential functions of the job. These are duties in which the incumbent must demonstrate satisfactory performance.

- Identify these **major job duties** and assign a percentage to each
- Using the major job duties as your header, **make a list of individual tasks** associated with it.
- Add **"other job duties"** under that heading – combining a variety of duties (5 – 10%) in a misc. category is acceptable.
- The total of all job duties **must add up to 100%.**

When possible, the incumbent should take some time to jot down duties/tasks as they are performed, including those performed intermittently (ie. once/semester). Once captured, describe them briefly using the following questions:

- What action is taken? Be sure to use **action verbs** (write, analyze, type, etc.) Avoid using unclear words such as perform, coordinate, handle, process or oversee
- What is the **object of the action you perform?** Ex., types reports, writes memos.

Other Tips:

- **Avoid acronyms** – unless you have previously identified what the acronym stands for.
- **Use present tense** – for example, write "the incumbent provides a variety of clerical support services…: not, "the incumbent will be responsible for…"
- **Create Linkages** to Performance Criteria and the Mission and Goals of the Department and/or University.

In the **examples** below, note how the quality of the statement changes your understanding of the duties being explained:

- **BAD**: Processes invoices for payments.
- **GOOD**: Working under minimal supervision, matches invoices against purchase orders, checks extensions, discounts, freight charges, coding and authorized signatures. When correct, attaches a separate sheet and lists invoice date, number and account.

- **BAD**: Handles incoming mail
- **GOOD**: Distributes mail once daily into faculty and staff mailboxes

Write in a "Matter of Fact" tone. For example, instead of *"The incumbent serves as a liaison to high level offices coordinating highly sensitive matters…" write "The incumbent receives visitors, answers incoming phone calls, prioritizes incoming correspondence, and routes interoffice mail."*

Describe duties in a manner appropriate to the scope and level of authority of the position. For example, instead of, *"Develops and implements faculty contracts", write "Drafts faculty contracts for management review by collecting all necessary information and using the merge function to complete the template." There is* ***no need to describe every detail*** *of the work; the idea is to provide examples of the work performed consistent with the level of responsibility and independent judgment utilized in the position.*

6) **Required Qualifications**

- **Education and Experience**: should match (be consistent with) those listed on the classification standards. Do not copy and paste from the classification standards.

- **Licenses, Certificates and Credentials**: List any required for the position. If using a template, be sure to **review** each pre-loaded statement listed to determine if it is actually a

requirement for the position that you are concerned with.

- Include any required **Skills, Knowledge and Abilities (SKA's)** appropriate to the classification. Refer to the Classification Standards as needed. Below are some common SKA's. **Review, and use as appropriate:**
  - Demonstrated customer service experience requiring a very high level of diplomacy and professionalism.
  - Ability to use tact and diplomacy to effectively handle a broad range of high level and sensitive interpersonal situations with diverse personalities, and to respond appropriately to conflicts and problems.
  - Ability to initiate, establish, and foster communication and teamwork by maintaining a positive, cooperative, productive work atmosphere in the University with the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships within a diverse population and with those from various cultural backgrounds.
  - Excellent communication skills; ability to effectively communicate information in a clear and understandable manner, both verbally and in writing.
  - Thorough knowledge of English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
  - Ability to interpret, communicate and apply policies and procedures.
  - Demonstrated ability to maintain a high degree of confidentiality.
  - Excellent organizational and time management skills with the ability to set own priorities to coordinate multiple assignments with fluctuating and time-sensitive deadlines.
  - Excellent computer skills and competence with a variety of computer applications including word-processing, spreadsheets, databases, on-line systems, Internet as well as online calendaring and email.
  - Working knowledge of or ability to quickly learn University infrastructure, policies and procedures.
  - List, as needed, the ability to operate specific machines and/or equipment; knowledge and skills of specific hardware/software, etc.

7) **Preferred Qualifications:** include any additional knowledge, skills, experience, certificates, education or licenses that are **desired** for this position.

8) **Special Conditions:** add any special conditions related to the position. Below are some common special conditions. **Review and include as appropriate:**
  - Must be willing to travel and attend training programs off-site for occasional professional development.
  - Must be able to work overtime, occasional holidays, and adjust working hours to meet special jobs. May be called back periodically to perform work as needed on an emergency basis.
  - **For Pay Plan Positions:** This position is paid under the 10/12 OR 11/12 pay plan, where salary for 10 months or 11 months is distributed over 12 months with INSERT MONTH(S) off (with pay, benefits, and vacation/sick leave accrual continuing through months off).

- Must be able to successfully pass a pre-employment background/fingerprint check.
- Candidate must be committed to the adherence of NCAA rules and regulations.

9) **Physical demands**: indicate the type of physical effort which is essential to the position activities:
   - ❑ SEDENTARY WORK – involves mainly sitting; minimal walking and standing; lifting light weight objects limited to 15 pounds.
   - ❑ LIGHT WORK – involves mainly sitting, up to 25% standing or walking; lifting medium weight objects limited to 25 pounds.
   - ❑ MEDIUM WORK – up to 40% of the activities involve sitting, standing, squatting, kneeling or walking; lifting heavy weight objects limited to 50 pounds; may involve pushing and pulling objects within the weight limits.
   - ❑ HEAVY WORK – 50% or more of the activities involve walking, standing, squatting, kneeling or climbing; lifting heavy weight objects which may exceed 50 pounds.

10) **Work environment**: indicate the type(s) of environmental factors which are essential to the position activities:
   - ❑ Exposed to excessive noise
   - ❑ Around moving machinery
   - ❑ Exposed to marked changes in temperature and/or humidity
   - ❑ Exposed to dust, fumes, gases, radiation, or microwave
   - ❑ Drives motorized equipment
   - ❑ Works in confined quarters
   - ❑ Works in high places

11) Supervision:
   - ❑ The CSU System is governed by The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA) which defines a **"Manager" or an employee assigned to the CSU Management Personnel Plan (MPP)** as one who is to perform managerial duties as described on the **"HEERA Managers & Leads"** document provided on the H.R. website .
   - ❑ In general, per campus practice, leads should not have "Manager", "Supervisor", or "Director" as part of their working title, nor should they be performing managerial duties.

Supervision Received should be consistent with the classification standards:

   - ❑ Direct Supervision – Employee receives immediate, close and regular supervision
   - ❑ General Supervision – Employee receives some delegation of responsibility and independence
   - ❑ General Direction – Employee functions independently under broad guidelines
   - ❑ Administrative Direction - Responsibilities are defined by the scope of the organizational functions; responsible for formulating operational policies for a comprehensive and diversified program; makes top level management decisions. (Management Only)

Supervision Given should be according to "HEERA Managers & Leads" document available under "resources".

12) **Classification Review Requests:**

- To be completed only with classification review requests made by either the employee or the administrator.
- Describe what has changed about the position. Complete this section when significant changes to a position have occurred.
- Please include an Organization Chart–this provides the classifier with information which shows how the position fits into the larger department. A cabinet officer's signature is required.

13) **Signatures:** Your signature denotes that this position description is an accurate statement of assigned duties. It is not an exhaustive statement of duties. Management has the right to add or change duties. A cabinet officer's signature is only required with classification review requests.

All CSU Bakersfield employees should have a completed Position Description in their personnel file. These should be updated on a cyclical basis approximately every 3 years. If you need assistance or training on writing a Position Description, please contact Human Resources.