

WHY DO I HAVE TO WRITE JOB DESCRIPTIONS?

Accurate and current job descriptions are the necessary “kernel” of every position at Bowdoin College. Human Resources and supervisors use them to

- Advertise, accurately represent and explain the job to applicants
- Help determine interviewing questions and an applicant’s potential to perform the job adequately
- Identify training requirements of the position
- Outline performance standards used to periodically evaluate job performance
- Make departmental and divisional organizational decisions

Our job description format is comprehensive in order to provide information for all of the functions listed above. The format includes:

- Basic Information: Job Title, Department, Compensation Band, Title of Supervisor, Job Summary
- Educations and Skills Requirements: Minimum requirements
- Experience Requirements: Licenses, Certifications, Work History
- Physical and Mental Job Demands: Specific checklist for certain demands
- Essential Functions: The position exists to perform these functions
- Working Conditions: Physical risks, environmental conditions, equipment used
- Supervisory Responsibility: number of employees

Effective job descriptions really start with the manager (or the hiring manager) who knows the most about the job, skills required to perform the job, and how the employee’s performance in the job will be measured. Employees, when asked to compose a list of essential functions, will sometimes document every single task they perform. These task lists may be helpful, but in reality, several individual tasks may be grouped together and summarized as one essential function. Managers have the ability to step back and give a more accurate representation of major responsibilities. Effective job descriptions will help an employee to work smarter and be a benchmark of what is expected of them as they progress and develop, not just when they start in the position.

If you have any questions about creating/reviewing/updating job descriptions, please do not hesitate to contact Human Resources (x 3837) for assistance.