**WRITING A GOOD JOB DESCRIPTION**

A job description (JD) is an essential document for every position. [A good job descriptio](http://recruitloop.wpengine.com/do-your-employees-suck-check-your-job-descriptions/)n facilitates matching jobs to national profiles and should

* describe the skills and responsibilities needed to perform the role;
* define where the job fits within the organisation/departmental structure;
* form the basis for the employment contract; and
* Be a valuable performance management tool.

A job description is a description of what the job is, taking account of the needs of the service. This would not usually include information on all sixteen factors of the JE scheme. JDs are not the same as national JE profiles, which are summaries of evaluated roles and to which JDs are compared in order to determine a band outcome.

**Work with Job Evaluation (JE) leads, let them see a final version**

Because you know that the JD will be the basis for banding a job under the NHS Job Evaluation Scheme (JE scheme), it will help to involve the Job Evaluation leads in the process where possible. They will be able to ensure that the contents of the Job Description are clear for job matching purposes.

**Job title**

The first important element of a JD is the job title, which should have the following qualities:

* It accurately reflects the nature of the job, responsibilities and the duties performed
* It reflects its ranking order with other jobs
* It is free of gender or age implications
* It is self-explanatory for recruitment purposes (in most online job searches, the job title is the main keyword searched).

**Describe what the service needs, not what you want**

Never write a job description with a person in mind. The most important aspect of a Job Description is that it reflects what the service needs.

**Describe the main purpose of job**

This should be the essence of the role, for example to provide HR advice to managers. Just concentrate on the main reason for the job existing, you will be able to add specific tasks and responsibilities in the next section.

**Set out the main tasks and responsibilities clearly and factually**

The job description should contain a list of duties and responsibilities associated with the role. You could indicate the amount of time expected to be dedicated to each task, which should be represented as a percentage (i.e. filing 20%, data entry 40% etc).

Descriptions of duties should be no more than two or three sentences in length and should be outcome-based, containing an action, an object and a purpose (eg ‘compiles monthly reports to allow monitoring of the department’s budget’). Use examples to illustrate where possible. Make sure responsibilities are relevant.

The list of duties and responsibilities will vary in length, but as a rule, should be as short as possible, otherwise the document becomes an operational manual rather than a job description. Keep it factual and do not repeat tasks/responsibilities. Avoid gender specific or discriminatory language.

**Include an organisational structure chart and set out who the jobholder reports to and who reports to the jobholder**

This will be helpful for a job matching panel to understand how departments are structured and how roles are interfaced. It also confirms to prospective candidates where their job will sit in the structure.

**Attach a personnel specification**

This is essential in attracting the right level of candidate and assists job matching panels with factor 2.

**Are skills, knowledge, qualifications, experience essential?**

Take time to confirm that the description of the level of skills, knowledge and training required are essential for the job. In some roles, qualifications are necessary in order to register to practice, but for many roles there should be alternative ways of achieving a certain level. The guidance to factor 2 in the Job Evaluation Handbook will help with this. [www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org)

**Do not ask for years of experience.**

Asking for many years of experience may fall foul of both age discrimination and gender discrimination law, as it could prevent younger people and women from applying for certain jobs.

Instead of specifying years of experience or service, which is time-based so potentially indirectly age discriminatory, employers should specify the type, breadth or level of experience needed for the particular job and the skills and competencies required.

**Do not set out the Job Description to cover all 16 JE scheme factors**

A JD describes a role while the language of the JE profile is for analysing the information on the Job Description and therefore should not be the same. Where the language is the same the JE profile the Job Description is likely to be rejected. However, you can look at profiles to get an idea of the kind of levels needed for a role.

There are some factors that would not be expected to be covered in a Job Description, such as effort factors. There is provision for collecting that information in the JE Handbook, either by using partnership job analysts or by agreeing a pro forma for the jobholder and their line manager to complete.

**Do not use words and phrases taken straight from the JE Handbook or profiles**

This will result in the matching panel feeling similar suspicion as in the example above. Many of the phrases used in the factor plan are defined within the Handbook and by themselves in a JD will not mean very much.

Please use straightforward, plain English phrases and sentences and avoid abbreviations. If using words such as “complex” please explain what is meant.

Please describe any systems/databases that the post holder may be required to maintain or access. For example, there may be a requirement for HR and Workforce to access ESR (Employee Service Record)