



# Work-Study Job Description Development Guide

## Purpose:

Creating a thorough, attractive, and informative job description is critical to attracting qualified Work-Study (WS) job applicants. The job description is the first and sometimes only piece of information job seekers have to determine whether your position is within their interests and qualifications. Therefore, it is essential to provide the most thorough and attractive job posting possible.

This guide seeks to assist you in optimizing job posting development efforts by creating a framework you can use to develop an amazing job description. We do this by utilizing the steps outlined in this diagram below.



In the document below, you will find a helpful guide on how to review the needs of the position, distill those needs into essential components, and translate those components into a job description for posting on JobX.

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## Job Details Overview

WS students review and apply to jobs using the JobX system each year. When learning about various position, they rely on the **Job Details** screen, a summarized collection of information, descriptions, and requirements for an overview of each position. This screen is often their sole source of critical information when determining whether the candidate and position are a good match for one another. One example of such a screen can be found in the image below.

Job Details	
<b>Academic/Student Affairs Assistant School of Nursing</b>	
Job ID	4611
Job Type	On-Campus
Employer	School of Nursing
Date Posted	Aug 10, 2016
Category	General Office
Job Description	<p>Working with academic and student affairs staff and program directors assisting with general organizational and office tasks as needed - utilizing some of the following skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. knowledge of Microsoft Office applications - Word, Excel and Outlook</li> <li>2. ability to sort, file and retrieve documents as needed</li> <li>3. complete a project with minimal instructions (labels, reorganization of files)</li> <li>4. coordinating paper documents with technical data bases - data entry, word processing, and basic mathematical formulas</li> <li>5. research and comparison of data, facts, statements and other information</li> </ol>
Job Requirements	<p>Participate in office as team player. Ability to assert self to seek information by asking questions and demonstrating understanding of concepts &amp; programs content</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. previous experience in professional work environment</li> <li>2. willingness to dress (business casual) while working in office</li> <li>3. good written, verbal and social communication skills</li> <li>4. customer service skills</li> <li>5. ability to enter data and/or formulas in Excel files</li> <li>6. use of office equipment - fax, scanner, printer, laptop and other</li> <li>7. desire to contribute to big picture of student services by doing small and necessary tasks</li> <li>8. ability to commit to agreed schedule of service</li> <li>9. flexible, easy-going and comfortable in diverse environment</li> </ol>
Available Openings	1
Hours	10.0 to 15.0 hours per week
Hourly Rate	\$10.05/hour to \$11.80/hour
Time Frame	Academic Year
Contact Name	
Contact Email	
Work Location	
Phone	
Fax	

These screens allow students to easily compare jobs and find essential details quickly. However, as both the Job Description and Job Requirements sections are free-form responses created by supervisors, the quality of information in these areas varies widely between positions. This can make it difficult for students to understand the duties and requirements of many positions and to compare positions to determine which option is the best fit for the student.

Unfortunately, positions lacking clarity and appeal in the Job Description and Job Requirements areas are often overlooked or disregarded by qualified applicants in favor of more easily understood position descriptions and requirements, regardless of the actual quality of fit. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that students can only file a limited amount of simultaneous applications and must be discerning with their selections. Therefore, to encourage the best applicants to apply for your job, it is essential that your Job Details be clear, concise, and accurate.

This information below is an attempt to assist you in writing excellent Job Description and Job Requirement information. Utilizing the structure laid out in this guide also provides an added benefit in that it will assist you in the job interview process as laid out in subsequent WS program resource development guides.



## Develop Duties

The first step in writing the job description involves performing a job analysis: determining what **job duties** the student will be performing. If you have an existing position, most of this work may have already been completed. Simply reviewing what the current jobholder does on a regular basis will allow you to develop your initial list of duties. Where possible, it may also be helpful to interview the current employee(s) about their job duties and/or observe the job duties as they are being performed.

If you do not have an existing position or are seeking to update a position, your task will take some additional effort. To start, you should consider what tasks and goals you might have for the position on a daily, weekly, semesterly, and annual basis to determine your job duties as a starting point. You might also consider what duties are currently needed, what duties performed by other staff might be reallocated, and in what new areas this position may be able to provide assistance.

For both new and existing positions, you may also wish to review job descriptions for employees in similar roles. The responsibilities and duties required by these positions might provide you with a work area you may have overlooked. Asking other supervisors in your department to share their job descriptions is often the quickest method of obtaining this information, and both WS and non-WS positions can be used for the review. While no two positions are ever exactly alike, other positions will always provide a useful source of information and comparison when drafting job descriptions.

Whether developing a new job description or reviewing an old, it is always helpful to review the list of job duties with others in the office who will work with the position. The feedback of other stakeholders regarding current and potential job duties can be invaluable in shedding light on both current and potential job duties which can help sculpt the description to better match the duties of the role.

## Create Components

Once you have a sense of the responsibilities and accomplishments of the position, you can begin distilling the information down into individual **job components** and the **job factors** needed to accomplish them.

**Job components** can be thought of as the larger tasks undertaken by a position. These are usually combined or summarized versions of the job duties you've already assembled. For example, a student might be in charge of multiple pieces of equipment within the office. Rather than listing each individual piece of equipment, you could summarize the job duties into one **job component** which might read, "Operate standard office equipment." You'll want to reduce the list to a small enough number that someone who reads the list isn't overwhelmed. For most undergraduate WS job searchers, limiting the list to 10 or fewer items is sufficient.

**Job factors** are a list of the requirements necessary to complete the job components. In most cases, they can be reduced to the following 4 categories of **Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other Factors**, collectively are known as KSAO's. Each factor is explained in more detail below. Please note that the **Other Factors** are actually a mixture of items which may or may not apply to your specific position depending and the major categories are described.



- **Knowledge**
  - A body of information that the applicant comprehends which is acquired through experience or study
- **Skills**
  - An observable competence to perform a learned task
- **Abilities**
  - An innate or learned capacity to successfully complete a task
- **Other Factors**
  - The physical characteristics an employee needs to complete job duties with or without a reasonable accommodation
  - The environmental working conditions an employee must be able to perform under
  - Any education, certification, experience, or other documented proof of learning the employee must possess
  - Any additional factors required of the employee not otherwise noted

When developing your list of job factors, you'll also want to try to find commonalities and overlap in order to condense the total number of elements. Attempting to limit each factor to no more than 4 points will assist applicants in understanding what you are asking of them and will lead to better quality and larger quantities of applicants. This is especially true of KSA's; long lists of these factors can seem quite daunting to applicants, even if the required items are each minor.

## Build A Job Posting

Once you've assembled the aforementioned information, you'll be ready to begin crafting the **Job Posting**, which contains the two free-form components discussed at the beginning of these guide: the **Job Description** and the **Job Requirements**.

The image shows a screenshot of a web-based form for creating a job posting. It features two main text input areas, each with a rich text editor toolbar above it. The toolbar includes icons for HTML, undo, bold (B), italic (I), underline (U), bulleted list, numbered list, link, and unlink. The top section is labeled "Job Description" and includes the instruction "Please be as detailed as possible." The bottom section is labeled "Job Requirements" and also includes the instruction "Please be as detailed as possible." The form is enclosed in a blue border.



## Job Description

The **Job Description** is primarily comprised of the **job components** from the previous section along with a few additional items which we'll discuss shortly. In essence, this section serves to both summarize the duties of the job and entice the student to apply by providing an overview of the benefits of the position. As such, we've made a list of required and recommended fields that you should consider using.

### Required Fields:

- Student Gains
  - It is helpful to start the position by providing an overview of potential benefits of the job earned through work. This serves both to provide an overview of the positive aspects of the position and help students determine if the position will be a good fit for their interests. These gains can be industry-specific experience, training on techniques, insight into UNC operations, interpersonal skills, or any of a variety of other benefits unrelated to the actual wages.
  - Example: This position provides students with an exposure to the field of X, resume building work-experience through Y, and professional networking opportunities with Z.
- Job Components
  - Once students are aware of the benefits, you should describe the work they will be performing by listing the developed **job components**. To provide additional clarity, you might consider arranging the components in a logical order and/or using lists or bullet points to help organize the information. Arranging the job components in order of task frequency can also be quite helpful in providing applicants with a sense of their job duties.
- Work Environment
  - A brief description of the work environment is the final required field. An overview of the job location is helpful in both providing students with a more thorough view of the position and helping candidates to find the right job fit. Simply providing information on whether the job occurs in an office, laboratory, classroom, outside, or off-campus can greatly increase the likelihood that the applicant is better prepared to accept the job, if offered a position.

### Recommended Fields:

- Additional Information on the Employer
  - Students may be interested in a job without understanding the larger ramifications of the position; knowing how that job connects to the larger operations of the campus or the work of the employer can often make the position more appealing to the job seeker. By simply including a link to your website or an article about the work you do, interested students can complete additional research to determine whether the position is a good fit.
- Atypical Elements
  - If the position is unusual, beneficial, or hazardous in a way that many job seekers may not realize, it is in your best interest to disclose the fact at this point. Doing so allows you to explain and, if needed, mitigate the issue. Additionally, providing that information at this point assures that you do not attempt to hire an applicant who may later back out due to the presence of a negative element or overlook the position due to the lack of disclosure regarding a positive element.
  - Examples of than element that would apply here would include the need to work at multiple sites, exposure to hazardous agents, need for the candidate to fill a year-round or multi-year role, optional



training opportunities at no cost, or the chance for the employee to be included in a poster, paper, or presentation.

- Scheduling
  - You should disclose if the position will operate outside of normal business hours, in abbreviated shifts, in long blocks of time, or if the position has minimal or total flexibility when scheduling. WS employees are students first and foremost; as such, they need to ensure that their position does not interfere with their academic work. Providing this information in the job description can ensure that you do not spend time reviewing candidates who will be unable to meet your scheduling needs.

## Job Requirements

After providing information on the duties and associated factors, the **Job Requirements** section provides you an opportunity to list the requirements a candidate will need to possess in order to fulfill the position and be successful. The content for this section will be largely comprised of the **job factors** already developed earlier in the process, but you'll have decisions to make in structure as this information can be organized in a variety of different ways.

While the arrangement of data is up to you as the supervisor, listing the requirements in order of importance is the most common and logical method of posting. However, adding the requirements by KSAO, frequency of use, or in the order required by the **Job Description** are all equally valid methods of organization. Feel free to use the system you believe will be of the most clarity to your applicants. Also, regardless of the listing method, consider using visual tools to help organize the data (such as numbering or bullet points) to ensure that applicants can easily review all posted information.

Additionally, when composing this section, it can be helpful to clearly convey to candidates the level and timing at which job factors are required. Many of the KSAO's may be required on the first day of employment, but you should clarify if a job factor can be learned after hire. For example, stating that a student needs a working knowledge of basic laboratory safety but can earn their Lab Safety Certification after hire can provide a much clearer view of the position to applicants. This clarification can help ensure that qualified candidates do not self-select out of the process due to confusion regarding these requirements.

## Learning Outcomes

New for 2018-19 is a field that provides applicants with a better idea of the type of skills learned through the position. The WS Program has partnered with University Career Services in identifying seven employer-desired Career Readiness Competencies and constructing a list of learned skills and outcomes that fit within each competency. Using the information previously generated through this process, you'll want to identify three or more skills students will be developing in this position. These learning outcomes are highly visible and transparent ways for students to identify positions that meet their academic, professional, or even personal goals.

While the selection order and number of skills chosen is at your discretion, we do recommend carefully consider the quantity, type, and order of skills being selected to ensure the list makes sense with the other details of your posting.

## Posting

Once you've finished writing the **Job Description, Job Requirements, & Learning Outcomes** sections, you're ready to begin setting up the position in JobX. For assistance with that process, please review the JobX Supervisor Training guide. We'd also suggest retaining a copy of this information for use in the interview and selection process. You can find instructions on how to develop a high-quality interview using the information you created in this guide using the Interview Question Development Guide.