

## **Creating and Editing a Classified Position Description**

Western has an [updated position description form](#) that is required when a position is created, a position comes open for recruitment, or a position review is requested by the employee or supervisor. Western HR urges supervisors to review an employee's position description on at least an annual basis, particularly at the time of completing the employee's performance evaluation.

The supervisor of the position is responsible for completing the position description. The State provides [a guide](#) for creating position descriptions that includes much of the information below.

### **Summary Information**

- *Incumbent's Name*: Only fill out if there is a current incumbent in this position.
- *Position*: What is the working title of the position (if different from the classification)? For instance, "Assistant to the Director of the Book Center" might be someone's position, but their classification is Administrative Assistant 2.
- *Current Classification*: Only fill in if there is an incumbent in the position. If this is a new position or a recruitment, leave blank.
- *Current Salary Grade*: Only fill in if there is an incumbent in the position.
- *Position Number*: This is the number that tracks the position internally at Western. It will be six digits, beginning with a "9." This information can be found in FAST, Banner or by reviewing the position's line on the budget. If this is a new position, leave blank, as there is no position number yet assigned to the position.
- *Department/College*: Fill in where this position resides.
- *Division*: Fill in the division where this position resides.
- *Supervisor's Name, Title and Position Number*: Fill in for the direct (first-line) supervisor. Please include the supervisor's classification and working title (if classified) or just the working title (if professional staff)

### **Position Objective**

The purpose of a position objective is to describe the position's main role in the organization and to show the employee how their work helps the organization achieve its mission. The objective should be clear and concise and include a brief statement about the department's mission and an explanation of how the position supports that mission.

#### **Examples:**

*Program Coordinator*: The Ethnic Student Center (ESC) is a student-run organization within the Association Students (AS) of WWU that assists students to affirm their identity, build a sense of community and cultivate leadership. This position will oversee, coordinate and supervise the day-to-day administrative, operational and programming needs for the ESC including all major student programs, events and activities related to the ESC.

*Communications Consultant 2:* Huxley College of the Environment is a premier college for the education of future environmental experts and leaders. Huxley's distinctive, interdisciplinary curriculum grants degrees in Environmental Studies (B.A., B.A.E., M.A., M.Ed.) and Environmental Sciences (B.S., M.S.). This position coordinates Huxley College's marketing and communications in consultation with Western Foundation and the College Dean, including creating content; planning, designing, creating and updating web content for Huxley College's website using Drupal and other software programs; editing communications materials from others; and coordinating projects through the online and print publication process.

*IT Specialist 4:* WWU's Computer Science department requires fast and advanced expertise in delivering educational experiences that adapt and change with classroom needs. The Computer Science Support Group provides desktop support, central infrastructure support, expertise in network administration and assists in the education of Computer Science Students. This position is part of the Computer Science Support Group and provides network infrastructure, process and planning support to the department.

### **Assigned Work Activities (Position's Duties and Tasks)**

The key purpose of this section of the position description is to describe the duties and tasks of the position to enable Western HR to determine the position's job classification; to identify the work that the employee must perform, including the scope of their independent decision making and supervision; to identify the required qualifications someone must have to fill the position; and to identify the essential functions of the position that must be performed with or without reasonable accommodation.

Key Tips for Creating Assigned Work Activities:

- Duties: Each duty must have tasks and a percentage assigned to it.
  - Process:
    - List the position's most important duty first. This usually will coincide with what the position spends the most time doing. List the position's remaining duties in order of importance.
    - For each duty, list the key, specific tasks performed as part of that duty.
      - Use clear action verbs for duties and tasks
        - The State's "clear action verbs" can be found [here](#).
        - Harvard Law School has [a list of action verbs](#). The list is not inclusive, but is helpful if you require additional action verbs.
      - Describe the purpose, outcome or result of the work
      - Describe who directs the work and who must review the work
      - Describe the level of independence, the degree of authority/control and the reporting requirements for the work
      - Avoid any statements related directly to the incumbent or the incumbent's performance – the position description is about the *position*, not the individual



manage and supervise projects for Director; budget management; extracting and compiling data for reports for Director; compose business communications including emails and letters; return and make telephone calls; manage Director's calendar and schedule; oversee departmental travel; manage departmental records.

The State also provides [examples](#) of Assigned Work Activity statements.

### **Lead Work/Supervisory Responsibilities**

**Lead:** A lead is an employee who performs the same or similar duties as other employees in his/her work group and has the designated responsibility to regularly assign, instruct, and check the work of those employees on an ongoing basis.

**Supervisor:** A supervisor is an employee who is assigned responsibility by management to participate in all of the following functions with respect to their subordinate employees:

- Selecting staff
- Training and development
- Planning and assignment of work
- Evaluating performance
- Resolving grievances
- Taking corrective action

Participation in these functions is not routine and requires the exercise of individual judgment.

Note: As a general rule of thumb, 4-5 student employees are the equivalent of a permanent employee.

### **Relationship with Supervisor**

The amount of supervision required for a position is determined by the following factors:

- Amount of higher-level oversight the employee receives
- Latitude the employee has in determining which work methods and priorities to apply
- Scope of decision-making authority delegated to the employee
- Extent to which the employee's completed assignments are reviewed

There are four basic types of supervision:

#### **(1) Direct or close supervision**

- Supervisor or lead provides daily oversight of work activities.
- Employee is given specific instructions regarding duties to perform, assignments to complete and sequence of work steps and processes to follow.
- Employee follows clearly defined work procedures, processes, formats, and priorities.
- Work is frequently reviewed for accuracy, completion, and adherence to instructions and established standards, processes and procedures.

**(2) General supervision**

- Employee performs recurring assignments without daily oversight by applying established guidelines, policies, procedures, and work methods.
- Employee prioritizes day-to-day work tasks. Supervisor provides guidance and must approve deviation from established guidelines, policies, procedures, and work methods.
- Decision-making is limited in context to the completion of work tasks. Completed work is consistent with established guidelines, policies, procedures and work methods. Supervisory guidance is provided in new or unusual situations.
- Work is periodically reviewed for compliance with guidelines, policies and procedures.

**(3) General direction**

- Employee independently performs all assignments using knowledge of established policies and work objectives.
- Employee plans and organizes the work and assists in determining priorities and deadlines. May deviate from standard work methods, guidelines or procedures in order to meet work objectives.
- Employee exercises independent decision-making authority and discretion to decide which work methods to use, tasks to perform and procedures to follow to meet work objectives.
- Completed work is reviewed for effectiveness in producing expected results.

**(4) Administrative direction**

- Employee works independently within the scope and context of rules, regulations, and employer objectives.
- Employee independently plans, designs and carries out programs, projects and studies in accordance with broad policy statements or legal requirements.
- Employee exercises independent decision-making authority for determining work objectives and goals to be accomplished.
- Completed work is reviewed for compliance with laws and regulations and adherence to program goals, objectives, budgetary limitations, and general employer policies.

**Position Qualifications**

Competencies: Think about the core [competencies](#) that this position requires. Competencies are the measurable or observable knowledge, skills, abilities & behaviors critical to successful job performance. Choosing the right competencies allows Western HR to determine which job classes and classifications fit a department’s business needs, allows a department to recruit, select, manage and train employees and allows individual employees to professionally develop within their job class. The three main competency groups are [Knowledge](#), [Skill & Ability](#) and [Behavioral](#).

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Things to Consider:

- Do the required qualifications provide assurance of a minimum level of competency to perform the job?
- Do the required qualifications fit the position? Are the required qualification too lax or too stringent?
- Did the previous incumbent lack a necessary qualification that needs to be added?
- Did the previous incumbent need additional experience for the position?
- What experience/education/training best prepares someone for this position?
- What experience does the new hire need to have upon entering the position?
- What processes, policies and procedures will the new hire be able to learn in the first few weeks and months on the job?
- What work must someone in this position be willing to do with and without supervision?

**Signature Block**

The position description should be submitted to HR in two formats: .pdf with complete signatures and in a Word document. The supervisor's and appointing authority's signatures are required. If there is an incumbent in the position (i.e. the position description is not being submitted for the purpose of recruitment), the incumbent is required to sign the position description acknowledging they have received a copy.

**Additional Assistance**

Do you have additional questions or need additional assistance to complete the position description? Please contact the Classification/Compensation Manager.

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Source: <http://www.hr.wa.gov/CompClass/Allocation/Pages/EnsureCurrentPD.aspx>