



# Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

## Human Resources Department

## How to Write Job Descriptions

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Why do we have job descriptions?

- So employees know what is expected of them.
- To help employees understand how their work makes a contribution to the department and the Institute as a whole.
- To communicate with applicants during the hiring process.
- To define the minimum education and experience that would make someone qualified for a position.
- To assist with determining appropriate compensation levels for the position.
- To define the essential elements of the position, used if the employee requests changes to their duties as an accommodation under the ADA.

NOTE: The job description is an official document, therefore it should be written in appropriate language. Personal characteristics such as age, gender, race, religion, should never be used to define a position.

<b>A job description:</b>	<b>A job description is not:</b>
Is clear.	A list of tasks
Is written in straight-forward, simple language.	
Accurately describes the functions of the position and is not tailored to the incumbent.	
Broadly defines key responsibilities. An appropriate level of detail can usually be achieved in two pages or less.	
Shows how the position supports the strategic plan / mission of the department and the Institute.	
Lists the essential responsibilities and tasks. Essential tasks are those that are fundamental to the position – the position exists to perform that function. This does not include incidental tasks. Essential tasks could not be	

removed from the position without changing the basic nature of the job.	
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### Revising an existing job description:

- Job descriptions can be updated at any time. However, well-written job descriptions generally don't need frequent updating, if the language is broad enough. Minor changes in specific projects, tasks, budget amounts, and so on do not need to be noted. Major changes would include adding or changing whole areas of responsibility, usually requiring new skills and knowledge to perform.
- Either the supervisor or the employee can request an update to the job description but the supervisor is ultimately responsible for determining whether an update is warranted. Consult Human Resources with questions.
- The employee should be involved in editing or proposing changes to an existing job description. His or her knowledge of the position should be given serious consideration. It is important to note, however, that the supervisor is ultimately responsible for defining the job.
- Some job descriptions cover more than one person doing the same job. Changes to the job description would need to be true across the board for everyone doing that same job.
- The supervisor, along with HR, must approve all changes to a job description.

# Job Description Format

## Title

If developing a new title, it may be helpful to review other job titles at the Institute – please consult with HR. If your field has a national professional association, sample job descriptions and alternate titles can often be found there as well.

## General Information

**Position Number:** (Check with HR or the Budget Office if you're not sure about this)

**Department or Office:** (Note your department)

**FLSA Status:** (HR will determine)

**Reports To:** (Title of the supervisor's position)

**Date:** (insert the month/year the job description was created or revised, e.g., 5/2014)

## Position Summary

This section should list the main reason the job exists. Ideally, this can be expressed in 1 - 3 concise sentences, reflecting the most important aspects of the job. This section can also reference the department and/or Institute's strategic goals and/or mission.

## Essential Responsibilities

- This section describes the key functions of the position.
- Loosely prioritize this list so that the most important tasks are at the top.
- Avoid excessive detail; this list does not need to specifically name every single task. A good rule of thumb is to aim for 8 – 14 points. It can be helpful to create a detailed draft for this section by listing all activities, then group them into related 'families' of tasks and create a sentence or two that is broad enough to cover everything in that group.
- Ideally, each point includes the purpose and/or the result to be accomplished. For example,
  - “Work with senior administrators to set appropriate goals for the \_\_\_ program, determine the most effective methods to achieve those goals, implement innovative program activities that engage employees, and evaluate results in order to ensure the Institute leads our industry in \_\_\_ results.” rather than “Oversee \_\_\_\_\_ program.”

- Do not include information that changes frequently (i.e. refer to ‘applicable procedures’ rather than describing the procedure itself.)
- Include as a standard point “Other duties as assigned”

## **Education/Experience**

- Define the minimum level of education and training that would be required for someone to be successful in the position: “High School / Associate’s Degree / Bachelor’s Degree in a related field is required” and / or “Master’s Degree preferred.”
- Define the minimum level of qualifications, not the ideal. If you are hiring, you will not be able to consider candidates who don’t meet this minimum standard. Hopefully you will have many applicants with higher qualifications than the minimum to choose from.
- Note that current incumbents do not have to meet the minimum standard. If the job requires an Associate’s Degree, but the current staff person does not have such a degree, that’s fine. Put the true requirement in the job description to ensure accuracy. The existing staff person will not be affected by this.
- Note the minimum level of work experience required. “At least \_\_\_ years of related experience is required”
- You can use “preferred” to indicate things you would like to have, but don’t necessarily require.
- Also include specific types of experience that are required or preferred. For example, “Experience in closing leadership level donations is required.” “Project management experience preferred.”
- Again, this is the minimum, not the ideal.
- Current incumbents are not required to meet this standard.

## **Skills/Knowledge/Abilities**

- Note the skills, knowledge and abilities required or preferred.
- For example,
  - Effective interpersonal skills required,
  - Well-developed written and oral communication required,
  - Experienced Hyperion user preferred

## **Other**

- Note any other significant qualifications required or preferred.
- Note the physical demands of the position. For example, “Ability to climb stairs frequently, lift up to 50 pounds occasionally, and kneel, stoop, or crawl regularly.”
- Note any travel requirements.
- Note significant weekend or evening work commitments.
- Note any licenses or additional certifications required or preferred.



## Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

### JOB DESCRIPTION

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**Job Title:**

**FLSA Status**

**Department:**

**Position Number:**

**Reports To:**

**Date:**

**Position Summary:**

**Essential Responsibilities:**

**Skills/Knowledge/Abilities:**

**Education/Experience:**

**Physical Requirements/Environment**

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey maintains a smoke-free workplace and complies with the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and Drug-Free Workplace Act. The position requires moderate-to-heavy physical exertion.

Essential job functions require ability to sit for extended periods of time, walk, bend, climb, push/pull, lift and carry up to 25 pounds occasionally. Also requires fine dexterity and ability to grasp, i.e. for writing and word processing/data entry.