

GUIDE

To Collecting Job Information

Job information is collected so that jobs can be evaluated and compared. Job information is collected and often presented in the form of a job statement or description. Job descriptions should be detailed, complete, accurate, reflective of the current job requirements, and free of gender bias.

Important points to remember

Employers collect job information by using questionnaires, by interviewing employees and/or supervisors, through observation of the work done, or a combination of the above. Incumbents are generally best able to provide information about their jobs.

Keeping job information current helps when tracking changes in job content and in maintaining pay equity. Review the following points to see if attention has to be brought to a given area:

1. describe all ongoing aspects of the job; include duties or responsibilities that you are expected to carry out, even if on an infrequent basis – for example, you prepare a report once every two months, but this report is usually 20 pages or longer, requires statistical research and analysis, and takes 4 to 6 days to prepare;
2. list each job duty and its related tasks, starting with the duties that take the largest portion of time: a duty is a distinct area of responsibility (ex., conference coordination) and a task is a particular work action performed to accomplish the duty (ex., schedule speakers for bi-monthly departmental seminars by calling individuals from established listings, ascertaining availability, determining event dates and composing correspondence);
3. include enough detail about the job; be clear and concise – for example, “handles mail” could mean the following: receiving, logging, reading, and distributing the mail, locating background material related to the correspondence and attaching it for the reader’s information;
4. show how often, how much or how long a task or a responsibility takes to perform;
5. indicate the approximate amount of working time spent on each major duty using percentages, number of hours per day, frequency (daily, weekly, monthly);

6. explain technical terms describing processes and equipment in easy to understand language; be specific about the degree of responsibility involved and the equipment, processes and work aids used;
7. ask yourself “how” and “why” – this may help you more accurately describe aspects of the job: use an alternative task statement format where there is too much information in a single sentence;
8. define abilities that had not been previously rated or that are now being realigned due to changes in the job environment or requirements;
9. focus on the facts – do not overstate or understate duties, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics;
10. avoid the general references to personality, interest, intelligence or judgement;
11. avoid use of ambiguous or qualitative words, such as “assist” or “complex” without providing clarifying examples;
12. begin each task statement with an action verb present tense, e.g. write, calibrate, analyze – use the “Glossary of Active Verbs” to help clarify actions and tasks;
13. exclude duties and responsibilities no longer performed, or any future requirements that are contemplated;
14. exclude skills, education or experience a staff member has or may acquire that are not required by the current position;
15. develop (following the supervisor’s recommendation, for example) a composite position description representative of a group when two or more individuals hold the same type of position (e.g., Customer Service Clerks);
16. ensure that employees don’t assume responsibilities and authority which is not theirs – however, supervisors should make clear those responsibilities that are required.

Also important

Some changes in jobs are abrupt and marked while others are more gradual. When changes do occur, remember these things:

- an incumbent being promoted or changing to a new job does not mean that the job itself changes and should be re-evaluated;
- job information should be focused on jobs, not on an individual’s performance in their job;
- a copy of the reviewed and/or modified position description should be kept on file and made available to the individual in the position on request.

How do I get more information?

We are here to help. We can answer your questions by e-mail at pecinfo@mol.gov.on.ca or by phone at (416) 314-1896, or toll-free at 1-800-387-8813. Publications and seminars are available free of charge. Request these by contacting us at pecseminars@mol.gov.on.ca or through our site at www.gov.on.ca/lab/pec

All communications are confidential.

The Pay Equity Commission

This fact sheet is for information only, and is not intended to restrict Review Officers or the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal in their determination of matters. Refer to the Pay Equity Act for exact interpretation.