

## **GUIDANCE ON PREPARING A JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The School recognises the importance of following standard procedures in order to ensure fairness and consistency.
- 1.2 The purpose of the job descriptions should be to include the roles and responsibilities of the position on offer. Head teacher/managers should ensure that both the job description and person specification are accurate, up to date and user friendly. Both these documents are vital in supporting the framework for setting and reviewing objectives for performance management as well as for applicants to decide whether or not to apply for the post.
- 1.3 In addition these both the job description and person specification form the basis for the criteria you use to assess applicants during the recruitment process.
- 1.4 New job descriptions or major changes to existing post holders job descriptions must go through the job evaluation process.

### **2. Preparing a job description**

- 2.1 Job descriptions must be populated using Arial font size twelve and written in plain English avoiding jargon, abbreviations and bureaucratic language.
- 2.2 The location should clearly state where the job is primarily based.
- 2.3 When writing the job description ensure the appropriate language is used i.e. start each responsibility with an active verb e.g. “to manage”, “to develop”, “to write” which helps focus on the real responsibilities of the post and what it is expected to be delivered. Avoid using terms such as “to oversee” and “to lead” as this does not make it clear whether or not somebody completes a task themselves or is responsible for the completion of it. It is important to distinguish between what the role requires the post holder to do themselves as opposed to areas of work where they have a role in arranging for work to be completed.
- 2.4 Try not to include unnecessary detail; the job description should be as brief and factual as possible, listing the main tasks of the job only as opposed to a ‘shopping list’.
- 2.5 Focus on the underlying requirements of the job and not to be influenced by the current post holders as this may make the requirements too restrictive and could reduce equal opportunities.

### **3. Summary of the main duties under job purpose**

- 3.1 This should ideally be, no more than four lines briefly identifying the scope, nature and objectives of the post. The post holder’s responsibility for services provided should be included. You may wish to include the resources and functions relating to the post also.

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### **4. Generic Principal Accountabilities**

- 4.1 These should include the key principal accountabilities of the role including management responsibilities and other relationships e.g. partnership working. These should also explain the contributions the role makes towards achieving school/or organisational objectives.

### **5. Specific Additional Accountabilities**

- 5.1 These are normally directorate specific and should include departmental/ service related accountabilities.
- 5.2 This section should also include the actual contribution the post holder is expected to make in terms of key areas, main tasks, activities or duties and the range of them. You should clearly outline how, when and where the role is carried out.
- 5.3 All of the points should be as objective and clear as possible i.e. opening and distributing mail, making appointments etc. Be sure that all aspects of the role are referenced in the job description as this may affect the outcome of job evaluation and therefore grading.

### **6. Additional Information**

- 6.1 The job description should include who the post reports to and how many people the post is responsible for. If it is none, this should be clearly stated. The job description should also include whether there are any budgetary responsibilities. It should also state whether the post is subject to a CRB or any other statutory checks relating to the post. If you are unsure on this point, please contact the Traded Schools HR team.

### **7. Special Conditions**

- 7.1 Describe issues that may affect the job such as; lifting, overtime, working in confined spaces or the mobility needed, fringe benefits, hours of work etc.
- 7.2 Special conditions may include reference to other documents (Such as collective agreements) that may clarify or expand on other terms.

### **8. Discrimination**

- 8.1 Beware of including any items that may be construed as discriminatory. The following are protected by legislation for the purpose of direct or indirect discrimination; Age, Race, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Religion or Belief. Managers should also be aware that Pregnancy and Maternity discrimination is also prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010. Discrimination for trade union membership or non trade union membership is also prohibited by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
- 8.2 As well as the basis for the contract of employment the job description forms a document that can be used as evidence in the event of an employment tribunal or court of law.

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- 8.3 In line with age discrimination it is best practice to refrain from requesting experience of more than two years in any specific role. Requesting long service discriminates against younger candidates that have the ability to fulfil the requirements of a role without having had the time to gain the extensive experience. A safer alternative would be to ask for specific experience, e.g. project work, as successful projects can be better measures of aptitude.
- 8.4 An example of Direct Age discrimination could mean suggesting that a role desired somebody to be “Energetic” whereas indirect age discrimination could be requesting an applicant to have 10 years’ experience unless this can be objectively justified
- 8.5 When requesting specific skills items it is good practice to request ability to use components i.e. for Microsoft Office say instead “MS Office or equivalent”. This will help to avoid discriminating against applicants who may have the necessary skills, which may be relevant to the role.

### **9. Completing the Person Specification**

- 9.1 The person specification describes the skills, knowledge, qualifications, specific conditions and competences required to undertake the duties outlined in the job description.
- 9.2 The person specification is essential to the recruitment process as it is used to write the advertisement, assess applications, plan interview questions and selection tests and make a final selection. It should also enable the panel to give objective feedback to unsuccessful applicants and protect the school in the unlikely event of any claims of unfairness.
- 9.3 It should demonstrate clearly and concisely how applicants need to meet each of the criteria and interpret their likeliness of making a successful application. A well-written person specification should discourage people from making unnecessary applications.
- 9.4 Person Specifications must be written using the available template.
- 9.5 You should use the completed job description, which outlines the duties of the role to write the requirements of the person specification and organise them under the headings of the template ensuring consideration is made to which attributes are required. These must be objective, relevant and measurable for applicants to be assessed on merit. Do not include any points that do not relate directly to the job description.
- 9.6 Write with clarity which means avoiding non-specific terms such as “numerate” and instead express what you actually need for example “able to process invoices and calculate VAT percentages”. You should be careful not to exclude people whose aptitudes may be transferable, but gained in a different environment. When including aptitudes, experience and qualifications required ensure they are reasonable and in-line with the requirement of the post.
- 9.7 Person Specification criteria should be without jargon or discrimination. Jargon may discriminate against worthy external applicants as a result. Do not include subjective terms such as ambitious, self-starter or dynamic

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instead request evidence of continuing professional development or requirement to work flexibly etc.

9.8 Experience and aptitudes included should relate directly to the job role. The quality of experience is fundamental, as an applicant may have been underperforming in a role for some time. You may wish to include the length of experience required but more than two years is not advisable unless this can be objectively justified as it may contravene the Equality Act 2010.

9.9 Special aptitudes on the Person Specification should be measurable in order to select the best applicant for the job. The objective selection criteria should be measured or assessed via; Application, interview and or test. Aptitude or skills can be described as:-

- An inherent ability for learning or a talent,
- Quickness in learning and understanding,
- The condition or quality of being suitable; appropriateness.

9.10 Unless there is a specific legal requirement for the post to have an academic qualification you should consider experience gained on the job or during voluntary work as equivalent.

9.11 Ensure when writing Person Specifications that you are not including anything that may offend or deter applicants from groups on the grounds of Race, Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, or Age.

### **10. Assessing the criteria**

10.1 Essential criteria should be evidenced on the application form for short-listing. If they are not demonstrated at application stage we should not process applications any further.

10.2 Desirable criterion may be used to reduce the volume of applications where a large number have been received and have all meet the essential criterion. Head teacher/managers may also assist successful applicants who fail to display desirable elements at application stage by including these areas into the individuals training needs plan.