

Guidance Notes for completing a Job Description & Person Specification

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This guide has been written for:

- Jobholders (Academic-Related, Clerical, Craft, Manual and Technical staff only)
- Their Line Managers (for information)
- Directors/Heads of Departments & Deans of Faculty (for overview)

Please note that alternative arrangements are being agreed for academic and research staff, and these staff groups will be informed of this separately.

1. Introduction and General Guidance

This guidance has been designed to help staff to produce an up-to-date and accurate job description and person specification for the purposes of the Hay job evaluation (HayJE) project. Your job description will be submitted to a HayJE panel for evaluation. In order to ensure that all job descriptions are up-to-date and in a consistent format for the purposes of the evaluation, you will need to review your current job description with your line manager and update it into the standard template format (see below). If after reading this you require further guidance or assistance with completing the job description document please contact your line manager in the first instance, or your Human Resources Adviser. For other enquiries, please contact:

- Vicky Booker, Human Resources Policy Adviser, extension 0712, or
- Roland Baskeyfield, Projects Officer, extension 0734
- Email: jobevaluation@bbk.ac.uk

2. Terminology

- Future references in this document to 'you' will refer to one or a number of people, depending on whether you are submitting a unique or 'generic' job description.
- The term 'job description document' refers to what is finally submitted to the HayJE panel, namely, the job description, the person specification, and the organisational chart for the school or department in which the job sits, clearly showing the reporting and responsibility lines.

3. Generic Job Descriptions

- In order to ensure consistency and fairness, where two or more staff members carry out the same job, one job description (a 'generic' job description) should be submitted to cover all these staff. Your line manager will suggest which members of staff are 'generic' jobholders.
- If you are a member of staff who has been identified as a generic jobholder, but are currently on a different grade to the other jobholders, your line manager will inform you and the others of this, as the outcome of submitting a generic job description is that all jobholders will end up on the same grade. In these circumstances, if you feel that your job is not covered by the generic job description, you should discuss with your manager where there may be differences in your job, or additional duties that you carry out. Any agreed differences should then be added to the generic job description and highlighted; alternatively it may be appropriate to submit an individual job description if the differences are significant. Please note that neither of these approaches guarantee that you will end up on a different grade in the new structure from your colleagues.

4. Format and Timing

- The job description document, including the person specification and organisation chart, should be a **maximum of 5** sides of A4.
- The job description document needs to be agreed by you and your line manager as a true and accurate reflection of the responsibilities of the job. If the job is one carried out by a number of people (within the Faculty and/or School/Department), one generic document must be agreed by all relevant members of staff, see section 3 'Generic Job Descriptions'.
- In case of lack of consensus, either you or your line manager may approach HR for guidance.
- You, your line manager and the Head of Department/Dean of Faculty (where this is not the line manager) must then sign off the job description document.
- Incomplete job descriptions, e.g. those with blank sections or without appropriate sign-off will be returned for completion. Please write 'not applicable' against sections that are not relevant to the job.
- A hard copy of the signed job description document should be returned to Roland Baskeyfield, Projects Officer, HR, Malet Street, and an electronic version e-mailed to, jobevaluation@bbk.ac.uk in Word format.
- You will be advised of the timescales for completion.

5. General Advice on Writing your Job Description

- The HayJE panel will be evaluating the job not the person.
- The purpose of completing a job description is to set out the main duties of the post and to convey what is expected of you, clearly and concisely. It should be an accurate reflection of what you currently do.
- The job description should not become an inventory of every task you do, but you should not assume that the members of the job evaluation panel have any prior knowledge of your job. Therefore, you need to write a job description that will be understood by anyone outside of your department/School.
- Use plain English to give essential information about the job, avoiding the use of acronyms and 'jargon' that may not be widely recognised outside of the job or school/dept etc.

6. Availability of results

- Please note that the outcomes from the HayJE panel evaluations will not be available until the process is fully complete.

Job Description Document

7. Job Title & General Details

This section includes the following:

- Job title
- Faculty and School or Department and section the job is in
- The **job title** of the person the you report to
- The **job titles** of any jobs that you are responsible for
- Post reference number - this section will be completed by your line manager
- The current grade of the job - this section should be left blank for the purposes of the job evaluation exercise
- The date the job description is agreed

8. Purpose of the Job

This should be a short, clear statement outlining the aim of the job and the contribution that it makes.

It is helpful to construct the sentence in terms of:

- What is done, to what, and why.

For example, the job purpose of a Laboratory Technician might be:

To provide practical technical support to students in the laboratories to enable them to complete the practical work associated with their course safely and efficiently.

In the above statement it is clear WHY the job exists.

9. Main Duties of the Jobholder

Once the overall purpose of the job is clear, the job should be broken down into the main areas of responsibility. Consider:-

What are the principal areas of work in which the job must produce results in order to achieve its purpose?

Most jobs will have between 8 and 12 main areas of responsibility. As with the Job Purpose, the main responsibilities should also be concise, clear statements, which show what is done, to or with what, and why.

Here is an example:

- *Undertake routine boiler maintenance procedures to ensure that boiler efficiency is maintained.*

This can be broken down into three parts:

- Area of work:** Boiler maintenance
Responsibility: Undertake boiler maintenance procedure
Result required: Ensure boiler efficiency is maintained

Further examples:

- *To be responsible for 5 clerical and administrative staff, guide and allocate work to ensure that an effective service is given to academics and students.*
- *Source, store and maintain the laboratory equipment required to meet the technical needs of the laboratory staff.*

Sometimes the main areas of work in which you need to get results will be clearly identifiable. In other cases you may find it easier to first list separately all your tasks and activities and then group them into obvious areas.

Try to ensure that the duties convey how much freedom you have to make decisions and the constraints within which you operate. This may be an indication of how much freedom there is to organise and prioritise the workload or that of any people the job supervises. It could be the level of authority and/or autonomy you have to make decisions or authorise work to be done. This will give a picture of the nature and impact that the job has, and on what part(s) of the College.

10. Working Relationships & Contacts

Detail the most significant internal and external relationships, and the nature of the contact to give a feel for the sorts of communication undertaken in the job.

This will give an indication of the types of people you deal with and, particularly, why. Is it to pass on information, to co-ordinate or liaise with, to persuade, negotiate, etc.

For Example:

- *Daily contact with students to deliver classes and tutorials*
- *Liaise with external suppliers on a weekly basis to ensure timely delivery of goods*
- *Engage in negotiations and consultation with the trade unions with the aim of reaching agreement on various staff issues*

11. Dimensions

Here you may give information, which is relevant to the understanding of the scale of your job. It could include details such as:

- Number of staff supervised, and the level of supervision
- Number of programmes or modules the jobholder had responsibility for co-ordinating
- Numbers and level of students supervised
- Size of research grant gained

For Example:

To provide administrative support to 5 academic staff, covering a total of 100 students.

Try to keep to brief, clearly laid out statements to make it easier for the evaluators to read and absorb the information. Exceptionally, some jobs will not have readily definable dimensions; if so, please ask for advice from the Projects Officer, or the Human Resources Policy Adviser.

If there are a number of jobholders with varying dimensions, please quote the range (e.g. supervises between 10 and 20 students).

12. General Responsibilities

Generic Statements

All job descriptions should include the following standard responsibilities (already incorporated within the BBK template):

- To adhere to the College's Equal Opportunities policy in all activities, and to actively promote equality of opportunity wherever possible
- To be responsible for your own health and safety and that of your colleagues, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and relevant EC directives.
- To work in accordance with the Data Protection Act and to ensure that all new systems are reported to your Data Protection Controller.
- To undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected.
- To provide a healthy and comfortable working environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the College, except in specially designated areas.

13. Person Specification

Please attach a separate person specification to the completed Job Description Template.

The Person Specification should describe the knowledge, skills, experience, and qualifications required to perform the job to a satisfactory standard. It is important to convey what the job requires, rather than what you may actually have, as these may be different. For example, you may have a postgraduate level qualification, however, an A' Level standard qualification is the requirement for the job.

What particular professional or technical qualifications or skills are needed? Is there particular knowledge required, for example of IT systems? Does the jobholder need to have knowledge of particular regulations and is a general understanding enough or would a detailed working knowledge be required? What sort of background would be needed, would it be necessary to have experience of working in a particular field, if so for how long and at what level? Are supervisory or management skills required?

The person specification must be discussed with your line manager, to establish the relevant requirements.

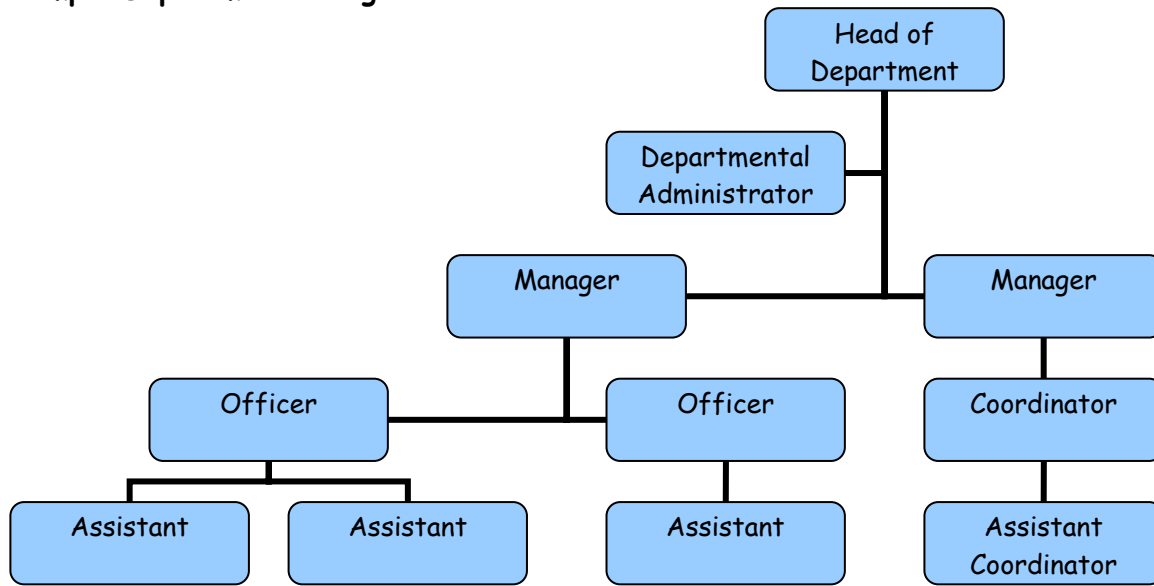
14. Organisational Chart

Please attach the agreed organisational chart for your school/department, clearly showing the job and its position in terms of reporting relationships between that of senior/junior staff and peers. If one does not already exist, please liaise with your line manager to draw one up; a chart must be included for the job to go forward to the panel.

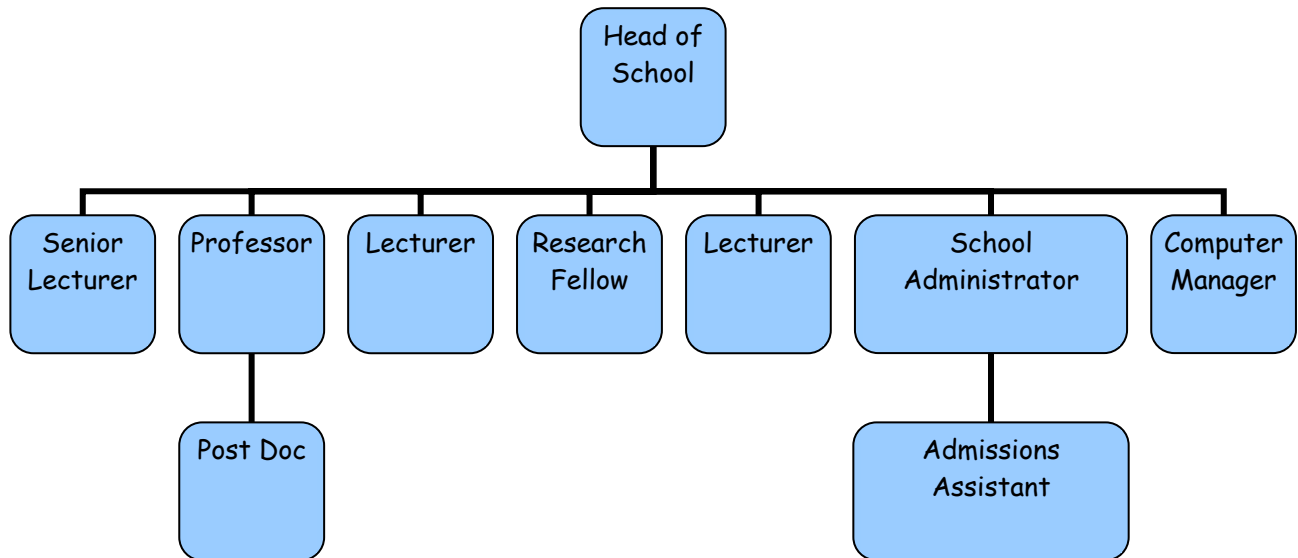
Sample Organisational Charts

Organisational charts can be created within Word and PowerPoint. To create an organisation chart in either program, from the toolbar click Insert, Picture and Organization Chart. The charts overleaf illustrate the type of organisational charts Word and PowerPoint can produce.

Sample Departmental Organisation Chart



Sample School Organisation Chart





JOB DESCRIPTION Template

JOB TITLE:

**FACULTY &
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT:**

REPORTS TO:: Give job title, not name

SUPERVISES: Give job titles, not names

POST REFERENCE: Line Manager to complete - please quote all references if there is more than one jobholder

GRADE: To be left blank

DATE:

Birkbeck is a world-class institution, a vibrant centre of academic engagement and excellence and the UK's leading provider of part-time, evening education for mature students.

There are nearly 19,000 students studying short courses, certificates, diplomas, first degrees, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research degrees. Birkbeck provides Londoners with the unique opportunity to fit study around their busy lives.

Founded in 1823 as the London Mechanics' Institute, Birkbeck was incorporated in the University of London in 1920.

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Give a brief overview of the job, its context in the School/Department, and the contribution that it makes

Main Duties of the Jobholder

List the main duties here

Working Relationships and Contacts

Outline the important relationships that the jobholder must maintain, and the sorts of issues on which that jobholder must communicate within these relationships

Dimensions

Outline the scale and areas of impact of the job (*e.g. number of students supervised, budget responsible for, research grant details, number of staff supervised etc.*)

General Responsibilities

These are standard to all Birkbeck Job Descriptions

- To adhere to the College's Equal Opportunities policy in all activities, and to actively promote equality of opportunity wherever possible.
- To be responsible for your own health and safety and that of your colleagues, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and relevant EC directives.
- To work in accordance with the Data Protection Act and to ensure that all new systems are reported to your Data Protection Controller.
- To undertake such other duties as may be reasonably expected.
- To provide a healthy and comfortable working environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the College, except in specially designated areas.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title:

Post No:

Faculty and Dept/School:

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>Knowledge <i>This relates to the level and breadth of knowledge required to do the job, e.g. an understanding of a defined system, practice, method or procedure.</i></p>		
<p>Technical/Work-based Skills <i>This relates to the skills specific to the job, e.g. language fluency, typing skills, etc</i></p>		
<p>General Skills/Attributes <i>This relates to more general characteristics required to do the job effectively, e.g., effective written communication skills, ability to delegate, motivation or commitment etc.</i></p>		
<p>Experience <i>This is the proven record of experience and achievement in a field, profession or specialism. This could include a minimum period of experience in a defined area of work (take care to ensure period stated is appropriate and not unnecessarily excessive)</i></p>		
<p>Qualifications <i>Please state the level of education and professional qualifications and/or specific occupational training required.</i></p>		

Job Description Document Confirmation Section

Job Title:

Faculty & School

/Department

Grade State current grade of the job here

I confirm that this is a true and accurate reflection of this job

.....
JOBHOLDER(S) signature

.....
Print Name

Date

Telephone Ext No.

.....
LINE MANAGER/SUPERVISOR signature

.....
Print Name

Date

Telephone Ext No.

.....
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/DEAN OF FACULTY (if different from Line Manager above) signature

.....
Print Name

Date

Telephone Ext No.

Comments/Notes