Introduction
This document provides instructions on how to complete the Ohio University position description, as well as some general background on the uses and importance of clear, accurate position descriptions.

How was the position description format developed?
The new format was developed through a collaborative effort between University Human Resources and Mercer Consulting (an outside firm that specializes in working with higher education institutions).

The position description is used to collect information for all positions
• New
• Existing (with or without an incumbent)
• Exempt (Salaried, Administrative Staff)
• Non-Exempt (Paid Hourly, Classified Staff)

The position description is designed to easily collect clear, consistent, relevant information about each position. The position description should be fairly easy to complete as much of the document is multiple choice.

Why are position descriptions important?
Position descriptions are important because they document the essential functions and requirements that are associated with each position at the University. Having this information available in a consistent format facilitates analysis and ensures greater accuracy in many important activities, including:

• **Position Classification** (to ensure that positions are assigned to the appropriate salary grades)
• **Market Pricing** (to assist in determining the competitive rate of pay for the job)
• **Performance Evaluations** (to ensure that the employee and supervisor have a clear, shared understanding of the position’s responsibilities and requirements)
• **Recruiting** (to help identify the most appropriately qualified candidates and provide new hires with a clear understanding of the responsibilities and requirements)

Who will be responsible for writing position descriptions?
Each planning unit will designate a representative(s) to manage the position description process for their unit. These representatives will be responsible for ensuring that current, accurate and complete position descriptions are written for all staff members within the department.

For current incumbents, writing the position description should be a joint effort between the employee and supervisor. Working together ensures that the employee and supervisor will have the opportunity to develop a description that accurately and clearly describes the essential functions and other content information, and that the content reflects the needs of the both department and the University.

For new positions the planning unit representative will create the position description and submit it to UHR Compensation for review.
It may be necessary for the supervisor to complete position descriptions. This would be appropriate if the incumbent was new to the position, if the position is new or newly structured and if the department were newly reorganized.

**How will position descriptions be kept current?**

Reviewing the position description should become part of the annual performance evaluation. By incorporating the review into this existing process, maintaining current position descriptions should be fairly easy.

**Overview of the Position Description Format**

The position description format is comprised of the following sections:

- Position Tracking Information
- Primary Accountabilities
- People Management Responsibilities
- Fiscal Responsibilities
- Education
- Work Experience
- Management Experience
- Knowledge
- Collaboration/Service
- Decision Making
- Independence of Action
- Physical/Environmental Demands
- Additional Information

In order to streamline the writing process and document consistent information, the majority of these topics are structured as multiple choices. Select the item that best fits the position; there is an optional area in each section for additional information, if you would like to provide more details.
Instructions for Writing Position Descriptions

This section breaks the position description format down into its distinct elements and provides instructions and guidance on completing that section.

**Position Tracking Information**
Details about the position such as title, reporting relationship, position code, etc.

- Use correct titles, not personal names, when referring to others
- Consult with HR if you are uncertain about any of this information

**Position Summary**
A brief summary of the overall purpose of the position

- Summarize the position’s responsibilities and role in no more than 4 sentences. (Think of this as the “elevator speech.” How would you describe your position to someone in a very short period of time?)
- If you are finding it difficult to summarize your position, proceed to the next section. You might find it easier to complete the summary once you have worked through the more detailed descriptions of Primary Accountabilities and the other sections of the description
- An example of a Position Summary for an Administrative Assistant might be:
  ─ This position supports the operations of XXXX Department by providing administrative assistance to the Director and several managers. Oversees the day to day clerical activities of the office by planning and directing the work of student workers.

**Primary Accountabilities**
A detailed description of the major accountabilities

- The goal of this section is to describe the most critical accountabilities along with the related duties and activities.
- List up to 5 Primary Accountabilities, in descending order of importance and time required. The statement should indicate the end result for which the position is accountable and the related duties. See the examples below:
  ─ Maintain audio-visual equipment inventory by
    - Tracking borrowed equipment
    - Entering new equipment into the equipment log
    - Ensuring the accuracy of the equipment inventory and database
  ─ Prepare monthly financial reports by
    - Collecting and verifying financial data
    - Entering current data into spreadsheets
    - Running analysis reports
    - Consolidating final figures into standard monthly financial reports
- If you are having difficulty identifying just 5 Primary Accountabilities, try listing the duties that comprise the position, then group them into related clusters. Once you have the duties clustered, it may be easier to see patterns and to write the Primary Accountabilities statement.
• In order to give an accurate picture of the relative importance of each accountability, indicate the approximate percent of time (on an annual basis) that you spend on each essential function.
  — We recognize that this isn’t easy and that the percentage will be a rough estimate, but it is important in describing the Primary Accountabilities
  — In general, any essential function with a percentage of less than 5% should not be included (if you have a function that requires less than 5% of your time, it is likely to be a subset of a broader function or it isn’t one of your position’s most critical accountabilities)
• When describing a Primary Accountability, please use the following pattern

  \[ \text{Action Word} \ + \ \text{Subject} \ + \ \text{Duties/Activities} \]

For example:

  “Monitor department budget by maintaining accurate expense records.”

\[ \text{Action Word} \quad \text{Subject} \quad \text{Duties/Activities} \]

— Please refer to page 5 for a list of Action Words commonly used in position descriptions.

The remaining topics should be easily completed by checking the appropriate descriptors and adding any additional details you believe would be helpful in describing the position.

When the position description is completed, both the employee and supervisor should retain a copy, and a copy should be sent to UHR Compensation electronically by emailing: (compensation@ohio.edu) If the position is new or in need of evaluation due to a vacancy the position will be placed in the compensation evaluation queue for assignment of pay grade.
Commonly Used Action Words
The following terms are appropriate for describing position responsibilities clearly. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of acceptable terms. You may use other terms that accurately describe the position responsibilities.

**Administer** – to perform or direct in a prescribed manner

**Advise** – to counsel, recommend or suggest

**Analyze** – to study methodically to determine a solution or alternatives

**Appraise** – to evaluate or judge

**Approve** – authorize action; exercise final authority; act independently without further consultation

**Assist** – to provide help, support or aid. *Be certain to indicate the job title or entity being assisted.*

**Audit** – examine to verify accuracy, or conformity with requirements

**Authorize** – give others the power or right to act with final or definite authority

**Conduct** – to direct the course of

**Control** – to exercise authority over; to regulate

**Coordinate** – to break parts into proper relationships and to harmonize in a common action or effort

**Counsel** – give advice and guidance to another

**Delegate** – entrust to another person’s care and management

**Design** – to conceive, invent or form a plan for

**Determine** – obtain definite and firsthand knowledge of

**Develop** – to bring gradually into existence; to expand or realize potential

**Ensure** – to make sure or certain

**Facilitate** – to make easier or to expedite

**Implement** – to provide a plan, procedure or guidance to ensure completion or fulfillment of

**Maintain** – to keep in existence; to defend or sustain; to preserve or retain
Manage – to plan, organize and control a function by leading and directing subordinates without giving detailed supervision

Monitor – watch, observe or check for a special purpose; keep track

Plan – to formulate a scheme or program for the accomplishment or attainment of

Promote – to contribute to the progress or growth of; to advocate or urge the adoption of

Propose – offer for acceptance or adoption

Provide – furnish necessary information or services

Oversee – to watch over and direct; to supervise

Recommend – to counsel or advise that something be done; to promote something as reputable, worthwhile, desirable

Review – to examine with an eye to criticism, correction or approval

Serve – actively carry out duties within the framework of a specialized activity, such as a committee

Supervise – to direct and inspect the performance of subordinates; to instruct subordinates in details of the work they perform (either directly or by enforcement of well-established rules), allot work, observe performance in detail and work with subordinates to improve performance