

## Background:

The job description for every position with the University should include information on the reason for the position, the purpose it serves for the department/unit/school, the specific role(s) it fulfills, and how the position is integrated with or complements the work of other positions or operations within the department/unit/school. The job description will include specification of things such as the education necessary for the job, the experience necessary for the job, the working conditions for the job, and the physical and mental demands of the job.

Each job requires that an individual be able to perform or achieve certain physical tasks (ex. shelving books, corresponding electronically with students/employees, lifting a patient, traveling to a classroom to teach, etc.) and mental tasks (ex. learning, making mathematical calculations, analyzing information, withstanding job stress, etc.) to perform an essential function. Understanding that there may be many ways to perform or achieve a physical or mental job task, it is important to evaluate and describe the physical and mental demands for a position not in terms of how you imagine the specific task is achieved but in terms of the goal or outcome of that specific task.

- How: Job requires standing and reaching to shelve books.
- Goal: Job requires ensuring that books are shelved.



When creating the job description it is important to distinguish between the functions of a position that are “essential” and those that are “non-essential”. Essential functions are the basic job duties that an employee must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation. A reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that permits a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of a job, or to enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities. Non-essential job functions are those that are marginal to the purpose of a position. When evaluating positions (always done in advance of employee selection) to decide whether a function is truly essential, there are several factors that can be considered:

- The experience of employees who actually hold, or previously held, the position;
- Whether a job exists to perform that function;
- The time spent performing the function;
- The consequences of not performing the function;
- Whether other employees are available to perform the function; and
- The degree of expertise or skill required to perform the function

The following provides some guidance on your evaluation of the physical and mental demands connected to the essential functions of positions can be structured. This is an example structure and not a checklist of physical demands for every position. You should work to evaluate each specific position and articulate the physical and mental demands accordingly. The record of the evaluation should be preserved as part of the job description. For more information about disability and accommodations in the workplace, visit <http://eocr.virginia.edu/ada-coordinator>.

## Evaluation Example Structure

Describe the Physical Demands of the position and the amount of time spent and/or frequency of performing the task:

Time Spent should be expressed as the percentage of time spent in an average workday and Frequency can be expressed as “Never”, “Occasional”, “Frequent”, or “Continuous”.

| <b>Physical Demand Ex. Phrasing</b>   | <b>Job Description Language Ex.</b>   | <b>Time Spent and/or Frequency</b>                          |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Stationary Position<br/>(Motion Parameter)</b>   | Must be able to remain in a stationary position to (meet customers, monitor security cameras, observe experiments, etc.)  | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Move, Traverse<br/>(Motion Parameter)</b>  | Needs to move inside or outside the office space to (access file cabinets, arrive at assigned classroom, transport patients, etc.)  | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Operate, Activate, Use, Prepare, Inspect, Place, Detect, Position<br/>(Motion Parameter)</b>   | Position operates a computer and other office productivity machinery to (correspond with students/coworkers, submit grant materials, enter patient chart information, etc.)   | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Ascend/Descend<br/>(Motion Parameter)</b>  | The person in this position ascends/descends a ladder to (service lights, paint walls, access the roof for repairs, etc.)   | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Position self (to), Move<br/>(Motion Parameter)</b>  | This work requires that an individual position themselves to (access steam tunnels, access computer connections under desks, wash surfaces, etc.)                             | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Detect, Determine, Perceive, Identify, Recognize, Observe, Inspect<br/>(Vision Parameter)</b>  | The person in this position must be able to (detect planets with the use of a telescope, observe cell behavior from a microscope, inspect patient wounds for infection, etc.) | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Transport, Install, Remove<br/>(Strength Parameter)</b>  | This position transports objects or equipment weighing _____pounds through buildings to (set up computing stations, install laboratory equipment, remove garbage, etc.)       | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Communicate, Converse With, Convey, Exchange information<br/>(Vision or Hearing Parameter)</b> | This position communicates with students to (provide instruction, respond to patient inquiries, advise the public of safety hazards, etc.)                                    | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |

Describe the Mental Demands of the position and the amount of time spent and/or the frequency of performing the task (Note -The following are only examples and a listing specific to the specific job analyzed should be included):

| <b>Mental Demand Ex.</b>             | <b>Job Description Language Ex.</b>   | <b>Time Spent and/or Frequency</b>                          |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Comprehension</b>                 | The person in this position must be able to understand direction and adhere to established procedures for the removal and disposal of hazardous laboratory/biological materials.  | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Organization</b>                  | The person in this position must be able to gather and classify information about pending legislation for the purposes of notifying offices impacted.   | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Reasoning and Decision Making</b> | The person in this position must use logic to analyze philanthropic profile information to prioritize effective solicitation venues.  | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Communication</b>                 | The person in this position must express or exchange ideas and meaning with employees.  | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |
| <b>Resilience</b>                    | The person in this position needs to adapt well in the face of workplace stressors such as (customer service complaints, maintaining the security of people and property, competing priorities of reasonable or high significance to the successful function of the unit, etc.) | _____% of workday<br>The frequency of this demand is _____. |

List all equipment, devices, machines, software, tools, and/or vehicles that are required to perform the essential functions of the job and how they are specifically used in such performance.