

How to Define Job Responsibilities

The process of managing performance is essentially one of holding people accountable for their performance. It starts with the setting of performance expectations and ends with sanctions--rewards and penalties--on appraised performance.

As a supervisor, defining an overall job purpose is the first step in setting performance expectations. The job purpose reflects the essential function of the job. This is usually the first item under Key Duties and Responsibilities. This job purpose is mutually agreed upon and understood between the supervisor and employee to ensure that both are clear on the overall job expectation. It also provides a fair basis for appraising performance.

To write a clear and meaningful job purpose, use the following formula:

The _____ (job title) is responsible for _____(what) and _____(why).

Example: the Financial Accountant (**job title**) is responsible for supervising all conference general ledger entries and balances (**what**) to provide an accurate record of conference transactions and for the preparation of monthly and year-end financial reporting (**why**).

"Job title" is the title of the job. "What" describes the main function of the job. It is not necessary to list all job tasks. "Why" explains why the job is done. This should be written very clearly to avoid confusion. When an employee understands the why of their job, they are more likely to be motivated and to understand their role in the organization.

The next step is to identify the key responsibilities that make up the job. Key responsibilities are the main components or key results of the job. Three to seven main components will ensure a list that represents a good overview of the job. Note that these key responsibilities represent results from doing a job, not a listing of tasks that one performs.

Determining key responsibilities:

- *Defines for the employee what they are expected to achieve;*
- *Provides an objective basis for the appraisal; and*
- *Provides a framework for the job.*

The formula for identifying key responsibilities looks like this:

The _____(job title)_____ _____(verb)_____
_____(what)_____ by _____(how)_____

Job title" is the title of the job.

"Verb" describes the action the employee will take.

"What" describes the end product.

"How" describes how the work will be done. It provides techniques that measure quality, quantity, and time factors.

Example of a clearly written key responsibility for the following position is:

The Financial Accountant (**job title**) ensures (**verb**) that all conference administrative staff are fully trained in using conference account numbers to track departmental expenses (**what**) by providing regular training information sessions and quarterly audits (**how**).

The Job Purpose Statement and Key Responsibilities deal with "the what" of an individual's performance. Performance standards identify "how" or "how well" a job is done. "How" deals with quality. The Florida Conference has established basic performance 'standards' or 'factors' that are designed to provide the basis for performance evaluation.

These standards should be applied to each individual's performance and appear in the Performance Evaluation document. Additional standards may be developed by supervisors or managers for specific departments or to all employees in a specific classification. Standards should align with the Conference's values, mission, and goals.