

Job description template

A job description does two jobs: it attracts the right applicants, and it becomes the criteria you score against. If the requirements are vague, the scorecard is vague, and the decision ends up resting on impressions. Split requirements into essential and desirable before you advertise - and be honest about which is which, because every "essential" you invent narrows the field and may exclude people who could do the job.

The template

Replace each [bracketed placeholder]. Copy it straight from this page, or download the PDF above.

Role

Job title: [title]. Reports to: [role]. Team: [team]. Location: [location, and whether hybrid or remote, with any required office days]. Contract: [permanent / fixed term to date]. Hours: [hours, and whether they vary]. Salary: [range] - publish it. Closing date: [date].

Purpose of the role

[Two or three sentences on why the role exists and what it is accountable for. Not a list of tasks - the outcome the person owns.]

What you'll do

[5-8 bullets of the actual work, most important first. Write them as things a person does, not as capabilities: "run the monthly payroll cycle end to end", not "responsibility for payroll".]

Essential requirements

[The things somebody genuinely cannot do the job without. Each one should be assessable - you should be able to say how you will test it. If you cannot, it is not a requirement, it is a preference.]

Desirable

[Things that would help but are learnable, or that a strong candidate could pick up. Keep this list shorter than you want to.]

How we'll assess it

[Stage 1: application / CV screened against the essential requirements. Stage 2: [interview / task / trial shift], assessing [criteria]. Stage 3: [final interview], assessing [criteria]. We score against the criteria above, and we ask every candidate the same core questions.]

What we offer

[Salary range, pension contribution, holiday including bank holidays, flexible or hybrid arrangements, learning budget, sick pay, anything else real. Avoid anything you cannot evidence.]

Adjustments and how to apply

Apply by [method] by [date]. If you need any adjustment to take part in the process - at any stage - tell us at [contact] and we will arrange it. You do not need to explain why beyond what you are comfortable sharing. [Company] is committed to fair recruitment and welcomes applications from every background.

Writing it well

- Publish the salary. Withholding it filters for people willing to invest time in an unknown, which is not the same as filtering for the best candidates.
- Audit the essentials. "Degree required" and "5 years' experience" are the two most common proxies that exclude capable people for no assessable reason. If you cannot say what the requirement predicts, cut it.
- No health or disability questions. Not here and not on the application form - s.60 Equality Act 2010 prohibits asking before an offer, with narrow exceptions. Asking about adjustments to the process is fine and is what the clause above does.
- Keep it as the scoring criteria. The essential and desirable lists should be the same words that appear on your scorecard. If they drift apart, the description was decoration.

This is a starting point for a general UK employer and is not legal advice.

A free template from CoDash - codash.co.uk/templates. Edit it to match how your company actually works, and take advice on anything unusual.