

TOOL 1.19

Job Description Template to Reduce Bias and Attract Diverse Applicants

- » **GOAL:** Provides a template for HR departments to follow, with key components to include—and those to avoid—to attract diverse job applicants
- » **TARGET UNIT:** Human Resources

Job Title

- **Use gender-neutral titles.** For example, name the position “foreperson” instead of “foreman,” or “chairperson” instead of “chairman.”
- **Do not request gender, age, or marital status, and do not require/accept photos.** Explicitly prohibit your company from listing a gender or age preference in job descriptions, and from requesting (or allowing) applicants to submit photos along with their job application. While the legality of these practices depends on the country or jurisdiction in which the company/job is located, following this guidance will help reduce bias in the recruitment process.

Company/Organization Description

- **Within the company description, consider including details about the company culture or values.** Additionally, if your company has taken proactive measures to create an inclusive work culture and to promote diversity, include those. Mention whether it has made specific commitments to promote diversity and equality, highlight progress towards gender equity (for instance, mention relevant HR statistics), or has achieved relevant standards, certifications, or awards, such as Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s “Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality” list¹⁵⁷ or EDGE Certification.¹⁵⁸

Job Responsibilities

- **Avoid gender-biased language.**
 - Use gender-neutral language and avoid using gendered pronouns.
 - Avoid words that are traditionally seen as masculine to avoid discouraging women applicants from seeing themselves in the role and applying. For examples of words to avoid, see Box 1I and Table 1I and the sources referred to in **TOOL 1.18**. Consider using “gender decoder” software to analyze your word choices.¹⁵⁹
 - List the job responsibilities rather than characteristics of the person who will fill the role.

¹⁵⁷ Human Rights Campaign, “[Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality 2022.](#)”

¹⁵⁸ Learn more about EDGE certification [here](#).

¹⁵⁹ Popular software to look for gender bias in job announcements includes the “[Gender Decoder](#)” website.

Required Qualifications

- **Evaluate which qualifications and how many years of experience are really necessary.**
 - Double check the list of required qualifications to ensure that only those that are truly necessary to carry out the job functions are listed. Where additional desired qualifications are relevant, include these in a separate list of “preferred qualifications.”
 - Change required years of experience into required experience and capacity. For example, if a job announcement states that 10 years of experience are required, is that really true, or would an excellent candidate with fewer years of experience be able to succeed in the role? Listing fewer years of experience or not listing a specified number of years could encourage excellent applicants with less experience, including those who may have taken time off for family responsibilities. To take it one step further, consider explicitly mentioning that the company welcomes applications from individuals who have taken career breaks or who are returning to the workforce after taking time for family responsibilities.
 - If language requirements are listed, pay attention to whether “native” or professional fluency is needed—the former could discourage fluent candidates from applying, solely based on country of origin.
- **Evaluate what educational background is really necessary.**
 - Consider whether a bachelor’s or master’s degree is necessary, or just a “nice to have”? Listing educational requirements can unnecessarily perpetuate socioeconomic bias and gender gaps in countries or regions in which women have less access to higher education or STEM education than men.

Physical Requirements

- **List whether there are any specific physical requirements for the job, but avoid including those that are not crucial. Doing so will avoid inadvertently excluding applicants with physical disabilities.**

A LinkedIn article highlighting inclusive job descriptions included this example: “[This role’s] work involves remaining in a stationary position most of the time in front of a computer, using a keyboard, mouse, and telephone. Regularly operate a computer and other office equipment. Occasionally move about the work site to access file cabinets, office equipment, etc. . . . Communicate or exchange information with co-workers and other individuals in person or electronically.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Kate Reilly, “[6 Ways to Successfully Signal Your Company’s DEI Commitment in a Job Posting.](#)” LinkedIn.

Working Hours & Worksite Conditions

- **Clarify the work schedule, location(s), whether the position will require working nights or weekends, and whether travel will be necessary (and what percentage of the time).**
 - Be sure to specify if the position will require working nights or weekends. For non-office positions, clarify what types of shifts are expected.
 - Including detail about options for workplace flexibility and whether remote work is encouraged or permitted will help candidates assess whether the position is a good fit.
 - If job sharing¹⁶¹ is possible, be sure to mention this.
 - Consider mentioning whether lactation and milk storage facilities are provided onsite.
 - For male-dominated industries such as mining that can present security concerns for women employees, mention any facilities or measures to promote security and gender inclusivity, such as secure transportation to and from work, or separate bathrooms, changing areas, and sleeping accommodations.

Salary

- **List the salary range for the job.** The movement for salary transparency is gaining momentum, with more and more employers listing salary ranges in job descriptions and some governments¹⁶² now incentivizing or mandating that salaries be listed. Listing the salary range for each position shows respect for the job seeker's time, saves time for both them and the company, and helps to close the gender wage gap.¹⁶³ (Additionally, not asking candidates to disclose their previous salary helps to level the playing field and uphold wage parity.) If the job description is for an internship or fellowship, list whether it is paid or unpaid. Pay interns and fellows whenever possible.

Company Benefits & Leave Policies

- **List company benefits in all job descriptions.** Although not all employers list company benefits and leave policies in their job announcements, this is a highly recommended way to set your company apart and attract top—and diverse—candidates in a competitive job market.
- **In this list, include benefits related to work-life balance and family-friendly policies.**
 - Listing benefits such as parental leave, flexible work schedules, numbers of vacation days, childcare options, and coverage or support related to fertility, adoption, and

¹⁶¹ The ILO defines job-sharing as “a voluntary arrangement whereby two persons take joint responsibility for one full-time job and divide the time they spend on it according to specific arrangements made with the employer. A common form of job-sharing is to split one full-time job into two part-time jobs.” International Labour Organization, [“Work-sharing and job-sharing.”](#)

¹⁶² Pequity, [“Pay Transparency Laws 2022: Is Your Team Ready?”](#); Growth Business, [“Salary transparency—is it happening in the UK?”](#); and Likumi, Legal Acts of the Republic of Latvia, as examples.

¹⁶³ National Women's Law Center, [“Salary Range Transparency Reduces the Wage Gap.”](#)

menopause¹⁶⁴ will help attract a diversity of candidates in terms of gender, age, and family status.

- Be specific: don't just say generous vacation time or parental leave—say how much. If your company provides parental/paternity leave, list these benefits—don't only list maternity leave.
- **List opportunities for career development, continued learning, and community service.**
 - If the company offers opportunities for career development through programs focused on mentorship, sponsorship, leadership development, continued education, tuition reimbursement, or even sabbaticals, list them. Company-sponsored programs for employees to participate in volunteering or giving back to the community can also be listed.

Equal Opportunity / Inclusivity Statement

- **Include language that expresses your company's commitment to diversity.** For example, World Bank Group job descriptions currently include this text: "We are proud to be an equal opportunity and inclusive employer with a dedicated and committed workforce, and do not discriminate based on gender, gender identity, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability."¹⁶⁵ Canada's Hire for Talent offers another example: "Our company values the diversity of the people it hires and serves. Diversity at our company means fostering a workplace in which individual differences are recognized, appreciated, respected, and responded to in ways that fully develop and utilize each person's talents and strengths."¹⁶⁶
- **Explicitly encourage diverse candidates to apply, such as by saying that women and those from historically underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.**

¹⁶⁴ Wellbeing of Women, "[Over 600 employers sign The Menopause Workplace Pledge.](#)"

¹⁶⁵ See the [World Bank Careers site](#).

¹⁶⁶ Hire for Talent, "[4.3 How to Write an Inclusive Job Posting.](#)"