

Strength in People

POSITION DESCRIPTION SURVEY QUESTIONS

A Tool to Help Develop Effective Position Descriptions

"Using the University's strengths for more successful searches"

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POSITION DESCRIPTION QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following set of questions is intended to be used at the very beginning of an academic search, to help the Dean or dean's designee working with the Search Committee prepare to write the position description and announcement. The questions should also assist in clarifying the committee's collective understanding of the needs of the position and the priorities that will determine the criteria used in making decisions during the selection process.

The questions can be answered individually by the Dean or dean's designee and each committee member and then discussed by the group, or used as the basis for a group discussion without individual responses.

SET 1

Department (unit, college, etc.) Profile

1. How would you describe the stature of this department (or unit, or college, etc.)?
 - within ASU
 - nationally/internationally
2. What are the three major strengths of the department (unit, college, etc.) for which this position is being searched?
3. What are the three major weaknesses of the department (unit, college, etc.)?
4. Where would you like to see this department (unit, college, etc.) in five years relative to its current position within ASU and nationally/internationally?
5. What do you consider to be the three major barriers to achieving the goals in #4?

SET 2

Successful Candidate Profile

6. Describe the three most important qualities you would like to see in the person chosen for the position to be searched.
7. What would you like to see the successful candidate accomplish in the first year after hire?
8. What kinds of experience do you believe are essential for the new hire to have in order to succeed in this position?
9. Describe one essential element that you would like to see the successful candidate articulate in his or her vision for the department (unit, college, etc.)
10. Describe, in your judgment, the three most important minimum qualifications for the position, in priority order.

RECONCILING SETS 1 AND 2

How do the answers in Set 2 relate to the responses in Set 1?

- If there is a clear and consistent connection between the two sets of answers, it is time to proceed with the position description and announcement!
- If the profile of the department (unit, college, etc.) and the profile of the successful candidate appear to be “out of synch,” the committee needs to work on creating a better relationship between the needs of the department (unit, college, etc.) and the desired qualifications of the candidate.
- Since the profile of the department (unit, college, etc.) is based upon the current situation, the qualifications of the candidate need to be matched to the needs of the department (unit, college, etc.).
- A sound approach might be to review the department (unit, college) profile, particularly its weaknesses and five-year goals, and create a candidate qualification list that contains the skills and experience that would best address those weaknesses and goals, at the same time building upon strengths.