



THE ACCENT

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Job descriptions - why they are important

If a group of members were asked the question, "Have you ever been asked by the employer to do something that was outside of your job description?" The majority of members would answer yes. Many of them would also say they complied with the request. Performing duties outside your job description can have negative impacts on the employees in your workplace. The first, and most obvious one, is that by complying to the same request over a period of time, you have allowed the Employer to add a duty to your job description that was not there when the salary was determined. The second, less obvious, effect is that the duty you are performing belongs to someone else. It was factored in when the salary level for that classification was being determined. If it is seen by the Employer as something that does not require a specific skill, it will lessen its value and may result in a lower classification level for the position it belongs to.

On the Back:

The Job
Evaluation
System

The Accent is an internal publication of the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees. Comments, questions, concerns and suggestions should be sent to Cathy MacKinnon UPSE Communications Officer cmackinnon@peiupse.ca
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Because the material contained in this publication is often of a time-sensitive nature, **Please Post Or Distribute This Accent As Soon As Possible.**

Comparing Job descriptions

Take a look at the following two job descriptions. Notice how the duties are all related to the training and background required for the position.

WELDER

The purpose of this position is to perform welding maintenance and repairs to highway equipment and attachments and to manufacture a variety of items for snow and ice control or road maintenance operations. Some portion of the work may be performed on the roadside with a portable welder.

DUTIES WILL INCLUDE:

- inspect and certify work;
- metal maintenance and repair of snow plows and snow plow attachments;
- welding repairs to highway equipment including trucks, graders, sand hoppers, etc.;
- manufacturing of various items as required;
- installing and removing snow plows, and salting and sanding equipment on fleet vehicles;
- building up worn shafts for re-machining;
- performing some work at the roadside with portable welder, as requested;
- maintaining a clean work area and following safe work practices;
- completing related documents and records as required; and
- other related duties as required



MECHANIC

The purpose of this position is to perform repairs and maintenance to vehicles and equipment. Performing work at roadside may be required.

DUTIES WILL INCLUDE:

- testing and inspecting equipment for road-worthiness and employment;
- diagnosing malfunctions
- evaluating and recommending whether to repair or replace components;
- performing repairs;
- carrying out preventive maintenance;
- completing related records and documents;
- assisting other staff when requires;
- guiding helpers and apprentices when assigned;
- cleaning of work area;
- other related duties as required



How positions are classified

The Provincial Government uses a Job Evaluation System, commonly called, the “Willis System”, to evaluate all the different job classifications within the Public Service for the purpose of determining pay levels. The system is a gender-neutral point rating system based on factors common to all jobs.

The Evaluation System is based on the following Factors and Sub-factors:

Operative Skill - Operative skill is the knowledge you have gained through formal education, and your work and personal experiences. It reflects the amount of understanding a person has regarding the facts, information and skills required to perform or oversee the required aspects of a job. The level of operative skill is determined by the following three factors:

- **Functional Knowledge** - the total amount of knowledge required by the job. It can range from functional knowledge with duties and routine skills to a full systems-focused knowledge of a number areas or expert knowledge in a professional field, depending on the requirements of the job.
- **Analysis** - the requirements of the job to evaluate situations and come up with creative and innovative ways to problem solve and come up with alternative solutions when necessary.
- **Interpersonal Communications** - the amount of direct communication skills required to do the job. The nature, frequency and purpose of personal contact the job requires you to have with others both within and outside of the workplace.

Leadership Skill - Leadership skill measures the type and level of leadership abilities the job requires. It is based on two elements:

- **Leadership Knowledge** - the need to understand leadership practices i.e. – coaching, motivating and facilitating the work of others and planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising and evaluating services and resources.
- **Coordinative Skill** - the degree to which the job requires you to use your acquired knowledge. The variety and complexity of the services, programs and/or initiatives that require integration and leadership and the requirement to build teams and develop partnerships.

Responsibility - This factor measures the level of the position’s accountability in achieving the organization’s objectives. It is used to evaluate the responsibility for program delivery, as well as human, financial, material and human resources. It is based on two factors:

- **Latitude** - the amount of freedom a person has to determine work methods, policies and objectives. Is work performed under constant supervision or procedural limitations, in the form of established policies and procedures, or work standards and ethics related to a professional association or licensing body.
- **Scope** - the general size and nature of the job’s impact on the end results based on the objectives and resources of the program. How does this position affect the resources and outcomes of the program’s objectives, and how accountable is the person in this position for the resulting outcomes.

• **Working Conditions** - This factor looks at the frequency and intensity of adverse conditions associated with a specific job. It takes into consideration the amount of mental or physical effort required as well as the exposure of the worker to hazards or extreme environmental conditions.

Re-classification requests

If an employee feels that the stated purpose and duties of their job are not reflective of what the job actually entails; they may complete a position questionnaire and give a copy to their supervisor and their human resource manager, who will review the request and decide as to whether or not it will be forwarded to the Commission for review. The Employer may also request the Public Service Commission to review a classification if it feels the position classification needs to be adjusted. When new position classifications are created, UPSE is given a copy of the classification specifications and has up to 30 days to present any objections in writing to the Employer. The Employer will then meet with the Union to hear the objections and then after taking the objections into consideration they will change or confirm the specifications.