

How to Write a Good Student or Graduate Job Description

Employers often ask us “How do I write a good job description?” Or more importantly “How do I write a job description that will attract good quality students and graduates?”

In Careers and Employability, we’re lucky enough to work daily with both employers and students, giving us a unique and balanced insight into what works, what stands out and, most essentially, what students are applying for!

With all this in mind, we’ve put together our top tips on writing a job description that makes sense for students and graduates:

1. Don’t forget the essentials

- **What’s in a name?** – Make sure that your job title is relevant and simple (and if possible...interesting). Avoid role reference numbers or terms that only make sense internally within your company. Does the job title truly sum up what the candidate will be doing?
- **It’s all about the money!** – Clearly state the salary and, where possible, avoid vague terms. Feedback from students and graduates demonstrates that, due to relative inexperience in employment, they don’t understand the rates and scales encompassed by “competitive”. Millennials are also used to having masses of information available instantly online, so terms like “TBC” or “N/A” are seen as secretive and aren’t trusted.
- **Where do we go from here?** – Remember to include your contact details and the required application method. If you want the applicant to submit a Covering Letter with their CV, be explicit and tell them what you expect. If you want candidates to apply online? Provide a direct link to the vacancy.

2. Keep it simple

- **Short but sweet** – Keep your text to a minimum and avoid long paragraphs, use bullet points where possible.
- **What are you talking about!?** – Try to avoid using acronyms and jargon. This is easier said than done when you regularly use terms like KPI, POA and industry-based abbreviations. When you were starting out, would you have understood every technical term? If you’re working with a standard company job description and really can’t strip this information out, perhaps include a glossary in an attachment to help the applicant.

3. Order your information

- **Is it me you’re looking for?** – Many employers leave the bit about who they’re looking for until the end of the job description, but when a graduate is reviewing multiple roles they need to know quickly if they qualify for the role before reading more. Put this near the beginning, especially if you require specific qualifications and technical knowledge. If you’re happy to consider any discipline and welcome a variety of experiences in your applicants, make sure you state this too.
- **Who are you?** – Include a short description about what your company does and what your company culture is like. This will allow the jobseeker to know what kind of vision and values you have within the company. If you’d like to provide a longer description about the history of your company, perhaps include this as an optional hyperlink or attachment.
- **Day-to-day** – What will be the daily remit of their role? Will applicants be at a desk all day? Will they travel and is this changeable? It’s important to be clear about what your candidate will be working on for the majority of the time in order for you both to find the right fit. This section is a perfect segment to bullet-point.

4. Capture their attention

- **Yoo-hoo, look over here!** – Catch the attention of your potential applicant with an opening statement which describes the most interesting or unique aspect of the role. For example:

“Want to work for a company that will nurture your strengths? Try your hand at various projects within the company to find the right department for you”.

A word of caution though...try to avoid ambiguous statements like “Want to change the world one customer at a time?” or “Ready for an Adventure?”, as these don’t tell the applicant anything about the role. Feedback shows this type of marketing speech prevents students and graduates from applying.

- **Find your perfect match** – Your job description should be a reflection of your company’s personality. If you work in a corporate, business-orientated environment then your text should be formal, factual and to the point. Work in a busy, fast-paced and high energy space? Describe your staff motivations and rewards. The more you tell your applicants about the way your company works, the more likely your new colleagues are to be the right fit.

So that’s it! Easy, right? Well not always. We know that not all of these tips can be applied to every job description (and that you don’t always have time to write a masterpiece) but, if nothing else, we hope it gets you thinking about your job descriptions from the graduate’s perspective.

If things still look murky then why not get in touch? A member of the Employer Engagement Team would be happy to discuss your role by phone or email at any time.

⇒ **Call:** 01244 513066 ⇒ **Email:** employers@chester.ac.uk

Some other helpful information

What to pay your graduate employee(s)

The current average graduate salary in the UK is approx. £22k but as you may have noticed some graduate roles start at £16K, and some (very lucky individuals) have been known to secure up to £70k. There are many contributing factors to a graduate wage (including industry, required specialist skills and location) but depending on the type of alumna you are targeting, the guide to average graduate salaries in [this table](#) from The Complete University Guide will give you an idea of what graduates expect to earn. You can also find more information about average salaries by region and occupation with [Salary Track](#).

Your new staff member’s wage will also depend on the type of tasks you expect them to take on and the level of responsibility they will hold. If their role is heavily supervised, clerical or administrative, and there is opportunity for them to progress up through the company once they’ve found their feet, then starting them on something lower (17-18K) might be appropriate. However, if you expect to drop them in at the deep end, run with a new project or require them to have specialist skills and technical knowledge (very relevant in the Engineering and IT sectors) then expect to pay a bit more (£25-35k in the North West).

Ways we can work with you

See our [employer’s services page on CareerHub](#) for more information about how Careers and Employability bring students and graduates together with local and national organisations and employers.

Our vacancy policy

If you’d like to advertise a paid role to students and/or graduates then [visit CareerHub](#) and view our [vacancy policy](#).