



Guidelines for Building Effective Job Descriptions

Updated August 2026

This resource is intended for supervisory staff and/or board members.

Writing a job description is an important step in building and supporting your team. Job descriptions should be reviewed annually for everyone at the organization. This is part of the performance review process and can help reveal duplication of work as well as clear up any confusion of who is required to do a particular task. This review also allows you to check in on how realistic and accurate the descriptions are and make adjustments based on the museum's ever-changing reality.

Creating and reviewing job descriptions may sound like a lot of work, but these can also be used for:

1. **Grants:** to appeal to the granting institution
2. **Hiring:** to advertise the position and attract qualified applicants, as a basis for interview questions, and for shortlisting applicants and comparing skills
3. **Performance appraisal:** to compare against requirements and achievements
4. **Board members:** to understand how the organization is run and how goals are met

The format of the job description is up to you, but there are a few things you should ensure to include on all job descriptions:

- Job title
- Type of commitment (contract/seasonal vs. permanent, full time vs. part time vs. casual, paid vs. volunteer)
- Information about the organization (including organization name and statement of purpose)
- Where the job is located (physical location, as well as options for in-person, hybrid or remote work)
- Compensation and benefits (not applicable for volunteer roles)
- Key responsibilities and tasks
- Skills required: consider both hard and soft skills including any software skills (ex. Google Workspace, CollectiveAccess, Microsoft Office, Photoshop, Canva, etc.)
- Experience and qualifications required
- Evaluation (How is the job evaluated? Who does this individual report to?)

For job postings, you must also include:

- Application closing date
- Contact information and any instructions for applicants (ex. *Please send resumes to hiring@museumname no later than 7 May 2029. The subject line of the email should say Interpretation Assistant. Only email applications will be accepted.*)

- Generally, you will not ask applicants to include any accommodations they might need in the hiring process until after they have been selected for an interview.
- Statement of whether or not AI will be used in the hiring process. If AI will be used, indicate which system and for what purpose (ex. Note-taking, screening applications, etc.)

While not completely necessary, you may want to include a statement on who should apply. A student or recent grad? Relevant group to your museum's mandate? Keep in mind Equity Diversity Inclusion & Accessibility (EDIA) and fair hiring practices. If you are unsure about the language you are using in your job description, you can reference both the [2019 Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#) and the [2026 Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code](#).

Advice for building a strong summer student job description:

1. When applying for grants to hire summer students, you will have to include a description of the work the student is expected to complete. Think about the skills that a student could learn from working with your organization. *What can they learn? Which skills are unique to heritage and which are transferrable? How will this position support their future career objectives?*
2. Funding bodies will want to see that you are providing some form of mentorship. Think about how you will be able to support the student. *Who at the museum is best suited to mentor summer students? How much supervision will there be? How often will work be reviewed? How will the student know if they are succeeding in their role? What can you do to support their learning? Why is your organization best suited to teaching these skills? Why is your museum the best place for students to work?*
3. Understand where the funding is coming from. *What percentage of the funding is covered by a grant? Will you have to cover the rest of the cost? How will you plan to achieve that?*
4. Consider how the compensation for this role compares to other similar roles. *Are you able to offer competitive wages? Are you able to offer any perks?*

I'm looking to hire. Where should I advertise the position?

- [ANSM Job board](#) (just reach out to us and we'll post it for you!)
- [Canada Job Bank](#)
- [CareerBeacon](#)
- [CMA jobs in Heritage](#)
- Local employment centres
- Social Media
- [Work in Culture](#)

Example Job Description:



[Amazing Job Title]

Full-Time (35 hours per week), Permanent

In-Person, \$[\$\$]/hr

[Name of Organization] is looking for an enthusiastic [job title] to help support our work.

About [Name of Organization]: Here is a brief description of the organization and our purpose.

About the role:

Reporting to [supervisor role], this role [brief description of job's purpose and key duties].

Key Responsibilities:

- Here is a bulleted list of key responsibilities and tasks.

Qualifications/requirements:

- Applicants must have [number] years of experience in [related field, specific role, etc]
- Applicants must have [educational background, certification, etc]
- Proficiency in [skill] is considered an asset
- Specific requirements for this role as per grant
- Other requirements or skills necessary for the role
- Other skills or traits that are nice to have

Working environment: This role is in-person at the museum at [street address & town], Nova Scotia. Our working hours are [time range] [days of the week] with occasional evenings and weekends during the high season (May-September). We are a small but mighty team of [number of staff] passionate museum workers and [number of volunteers] wonderful volunteers.

Compensation: \$[hourly wage]/ hr, hours per week. [Note how many weeks vacation are included as well as any benefits or perks. Ex. Two weeks paid vacation plus one week winter holiday closure. 20% discount at our museum café].

Additional Information: Performance review will be undertaken following a three month probation period and annually thereafter. Employment is subject to availability of funds from [Organization Name operational and project funding].

Who Should Apply: If you're a person who enjoys [task], we would love to have you join our team!

How to Apply: Please send resumes and cover letters to [email address] no later than [time] on [day, month, year]. Please include [job title] as the subject line. Please note that AI will not be used during this process and only successful applicants will be contacted for an interview.

[Organization Name | Organization Website | Social Media Information]