### QMUL Job Profiles

### Guidance Notes

**August 2016**

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Appendix A – Activity Examples

1. Introduction

1.1 A Queen Mary job profile comprises a **job description**, which provides an accurate representation of the role, and a **person specification**, which details the qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience that are required in order for the jobholder to perform the role effectively.

1.2 A job profile is used for a number of different purposes:

* To enable HR to correctly evaluate the grade of a post, ensuring employees are rewarded fairly and consistently for the work they are asked to undertake.
* To target and attract appropriate candidates to apply for a vacancy.
* To help recruiters identify the most suitable candidates during the shortlisting and selection processes.
* To facilitate the communication of expectations about performance to candidates at the recruitment stage, and subsequently during employment.

1.3 While it can take time and effort to draft and update recruitment documents, time spent identifying what is really required for a role, and how to plainly express it in writing, will pay dividends in terms of the final usability of a job profile for the above purposes.

2. Getting started

2.1 Before writing a job profile, first consider the design of your department or team and the job’s place in this. Questions to ask include:

* What are the purpose and objectives for the department/team?
* What are the critical skills required to deliver these?
* How are these skills best grouped into separate roles?
* How are these roles best grouped together to make sensible units to be managed?
* To what extent does the overall structure reflect the priorities for the department/team?

**New posts/vacancies**

2.2 Where a new post is created, a position becomes vacant, or during restructures, managers should think carefully about whether there is an ongoing need for the position and if so, whether it is still needed at the same level and in the same format. Before commencing recruitment, there is a good opportunity to reassess the needs of the department in line with strategic objectives.

3. Designing the role

3.1 Consider the size and scope of the role. The following questions may help structure your thinking and your answers should then be reflected when you write the job profile (see Section 5, below).

* **Purpose**. What is the role’s core purpose? What is it there to deliver and implement? What would we miss if it was not there?
* **Structural fit**. Where does the role fit within the team or school / department or university more generally?
* **Duties and responsibilities**. What are the main accountabilities of the role: what will the post-holder do, for whom and with what outcome?
* **Focus**. To what extent is the role about delivering in the present vs. developing and shaping strategies and plans for the future? In other words, to what extent is it operational or strategic?
* **Key relationships**. Who are the post-holder’s internal and external customers and other important relationships?
* **Impact**. What is the reach or impact of the role? Will it have an effect on everyone across the university or on a specific smaller population? Is it locally focused or national/international?
* **Specialism**. How specialist is the role, concentrating on using particular knowledge and skilIs vs. covering a broad range of activities?
* **Decisions**. What decisions can the post-holder make?
* **Time horizons**. What timescales does the post-holder work to? (e.g. weekly, quarterly, annual, 5-year etc.)
* **Challenges**. What are the key challenges that the role faces (e.g. deadlines, difficult customers, sensitive situations)?
* **Resources**. Does the job have responsibility for any people or financial management or other resources?
* **Thinking**. How much thinking does the job involve?
  + For example is it about planning and organising for the short- or the long-term?
  + For example, is there problem solving involved and to what extent is this the application of existing policies and processes or about using high levels of creativity?
  + **Autonomy**. To what extent will the post-holder work free from supervision or other controls?
  + **Communication**. What types of communication will the post-holder use, for example:
  + Exchanging information
  + Influencing and persuading
  + Negotiating and working in partnership
* **Full-/part-time.** Could the job be done part-time or as a job share?

**Examples of Duties and Responsibilities**

3.2 To help you describe the duties and responsibilities, review the examples in Appendix A which have been designed to assist you in thinking further about the size and scope of the role.

3.3 These examples have been categorised under four headings (though it is not necessary to include these, or any other, subheadings in the job description):

* Relationships
* Resources
* Decision-making & autonomy (including planning)
* Data & information

3.4 Below each heading is a table of types of activity and examples that could be included in a job description. For ease of understanding, these are shown at three levels of responsibility but some duties will fall between these levels so each type of activity should be considered on a continuum. These examples are not exhaustive and some jobs will involve duties that do not fall into one of the four categories.

**Generic Role Profiles**

3.5 Generic role profiles are not job descriptions; rather they are intended to provide a representative (though not exhaustive) description of the work activities typically required of a role at a given level. The representative duties are **generic** and should not, therefore, be copied and pasted into job descriptions.

**Example**

3.6 A generic representative activity might be:

To engage and negotiate with external contacts to secure consultancy or generate income opportunities.

Using the above, a duty suitable for inclusion in a job description for a Development Executive at QMUL could be:

To manage a portfolio of prospective major donors, cultivating relationships and soliciting gifts worth £25,000+.

4. Key principles

**Why evaluation?**

4.1 QMUL is committed to equal pay for work of equal value and aims to reward all employees fairly and consistently for the work they are required to undertake by the university. The HR Department uses the well-recognised Hay job evaluation methodology to evaluate the grade of QMUL jobs to provide a base for comparing jobs that may be very different in their content but be broadly of a similar size.

**The Job, not the Person**

4.2 Job evaluation is used to assess the requirements of a role, not the individual contribution of an employee.

Over time, an individual’s skill set and contribution, or the university’s requirements, can organically change the shape and nature of a role and may legitimately lead to a reconsideration of the grade of the role.

**Regrades**

4.3 Job evaluation cannot assess an employee’s performance in their role, or their overall “market value”.

4.4 Where an employee puts forward a case for a re-grade, managers should consider whether there is a business need for the revised role, whether any development activity has truly become an integral part of the role or whether the individual’s contribution should be recognised by another means (e.g. through the staff bonus scheme, acting up allowance, or market supplement).

4.5 Not all changes to a job profile will lead to a re-grade. Changes must be substantial and permanent (e.g. a change in the level of responsibility, the addition of further skills or expertise, the addition of an entirely new aspect of the role such as line management where previously there was none).

4.6 The job evaluation process does not consider changes in volume or demand so “more of the same” will not impact on the grade of a role.

4.7 Even where there are changes to a job profile, this does not necessarily mean that the grade of the role will change. The size of a role can vary even within a single salary band so, for example, the depth and breadth of the job responsibilities may increase without warranting a change in grade. Conversely, where responsibilities are added to a role that is already broad, it may cross a grade boundary with relative ease. So a similar type of change may affect two different roles to different degrees. This may seem outwardly unfair, but actually maintains the fairness principle where other elements of the job are rated differently.

4.8 Similarly, jobs that may look the same on the surface, may be quite different in ways that are not immediately obvious. It may be one specific duty or responsibility that distinguishes two roles in different grades that are otherwise reasonably similar. Therefore, managers should exercise caution when comparing roles across departments and assuming they are identical.

**Language**

4.9 When devising a new job profile, or updating an existing one, please consider the language you use, particularly in relation to its clarity, avoidance of management-speak and in support of our equality agenda. When writing recruitment documents:

* Use plain English and avoid technical or specialist jargon and acronyms
* Avoid terms such as “mature person” or “young graduate” which could be discriminatory
* Do not state how many years’ experience is required. Instead, write “substantial experience in…” or “comprehensive knowledge of ...”
* Be explicit about the physical requirements of the role, explaining exactly what is required (e.g. able to carry cleaning equipment such as vacuum cleaners, refuse sacks and move furniture).
* Use verbs which you can visualise (e.g. “*taking ownership* of a policy” could be better described as “*writing and updating* a policy in line with legislative changes”; likewise ”*ensuring* the safety of students in laboratories” might involve “*conducting* risk assessments” or “*demonstrating* the correct use of equipment”). Classic verbs to avoid, because they say little, include:
  + manage
  + ensure

**Formatting the Job Profile**

4.10 Job adverts and job profiles are published on the QMUL website and in other online (and sometimes print) sources. Managers should consider the formatting and presentation of the documents in order to uphold the reputation of the university. In particular:

* Use the font and size of the text as advised in the template documents
* Avoid large chunks of text and use bullet points to improve readability
* Spell check the documents
* Use the same tense throughout
* Check the salary falls within the grade given
* Ask a colleague to put themselves in the shoes of a prospective external candidate and read through the final document providing feedback on the presentation of the job profile and any areas of ambiguity.

5. Writing the Job Profile: the Job Description

5.1 The revised QMUL Job Profiles have four parts:

**Job Details**

5.2 This sections covers the job title of the post, the school/institute/department, which post it reports to, the grade (if it has already been evaluated), whether it is full time or part time (no need to specify hours here), the appointment period and the location of the post (i.e. which QMUL campus).

**Job Context**

5.3 Here, you describe the setting of the post within the school/institute/department/unit:

* What does the department/school/institute/unit do? What services does it offer?
* What are its priorities (e.g. cross-disciplinary research, equality and diversity, continuous improvement etc.)?
* What is the culture of the team?

5.4 Sometimes it may be appropriate to reference the wider context of QMUL and its ambitions and strategies. However, a standard short paragraph about QMUL as an institution should be included at the start of the job advert so anything in the job description should be specific to the post.

**Examples**

5.5 Institute of Bioengineering

The QMUL Institute of Bioengineering (IoB) is a new cross-faculty initiative bringing together over 50 researchers from the Faculties of Science & Engineering and Medicine & Dentistry. The Institute will provide a focus for ground-breaking research aimed at the development of new medical technologies to meet the key healthcare challenges of the 21st century.

5.6 Clinical Skills Laboratory, Institute of Dentistry

The Institute of Dentistry is rapidly developing and offers undergraduate, Masters and PhD level education. The Institute is committed to delivering the highest quality training and has received awards for innovation, teaching and training. The Clinical Skills Laboratory is a purpose built facility enabling students to develop a range of dental skills in a simulated supportive environment.

5.7 Accounts Payable

Accounts Payable is the department of Financial Services responsible for all payments to suppliers for goods and services and the reimbursement of travel expenses. The department ensures payments are made in a timely and accurate manner, meeting the needs and expectations of customers.

5.8 The School of Mathematical Sciences

The School of Mathematical Sciences has a strong research output and demanding educational standards for its students, but all members benefit from a high level of academic and social integration. There are a large number of regular seminar and workshop activities. In addition, the School is committed to equality of opportunity and holds a departmental-level Bronze Athena SWAN Award and is a registered supporter of the LMS Good Practice scheme.

**Job Purpose**

5.9 This is an accurate and concise statement of why the job exists, summarising the overall purpose of the job in the context of QMUL. One sentence is usually sufficient for this purpose. It may be easier to complete this section last, once you have given full consideration to all aspects of the job.

**Examples**

5.10 Executive Assistant to the Vice Principals:

To provide high-level and comprehensive administrative support to two Vice-Principals, ensuring the smooth and efficient running of the VPs’ diaries and meetings, as well as operations across the wider office.

5.11 Laboratory Manager:

To manage a team of four technical staff ensuring an integrated and coordinated specialist laboratory support service for the School’s research and teaching programmes.

5.12 Helpdesk and Switchboard Manager:

To develop and manage a responsive, self-service enabled and customer focused help desk and switchboard provision for all Estates and Facilities service operations.

5.13 Kitchen Assistant:

To support back-of-house and front-of house catering operations to ensure a positive customer experience at QMUL outlets, thus securing repeat visits and revenue.

**Main Duties and Responsibilities**

5.14 It is not necessary to list every task the jobholder will undertake. Job applicants will not read copious amounts of text. You should therefore focus on a minimum of 6-8 and **a maximum of 12-15** of the primary duties and responsibilities of the jobholder.

5.15 For each duty, you should consider:

* what is done
* to what / to whom
* with what outcome.

Additionally, your overall text should reflect the shape of the role relative to the parameters you will have considered in Section 3 above, for example:

* Focus
* Relationships
* Impact
* Decisions
* Time horizons
* Challenges
* Resources
* Thinking
* Autonomy
* Communication

5.16 To act as the first point of contact for the Irish Political Prisoners project, responding professionally and courteously to queries in person, by email and by phone, upholding the reputation of the project, School of Law and QMUL at all times. (Research Assistant)

To greet customers to the catering outlets, approaching and assisting them proactively to create a welcoming and friendly environment. (Catering Assistant)

To organise and administer regular Faculty meetings, developing and overseeing the annual schedule, collating the agenda, preparing papers, recording minutes and monitoring follow up actions to ensure efficient and smooth-running meetings throughout the year. (Executive Officer)

To exercise initiative and expertise to determine the most appropriate course of action for each applicant enquiry in relation to immigration policy, tuition fee deposits and relevant scholarships. (Senior Admissions Officer)

To develop and implement a marketing plan to increase the number of applications to the School of Economics and Finance from well-qualified prospective taught postgraduate students, both from the EU and overseas. (Marketing Manager)

To provide exemplary practical technical support to students in laboratory classes and during non-teaching time to enable them to complete their practical work efficiently and safely. (Laboratories Manager)

To monitor spend and create reports on annual internal school’s consumables and capital expenditure budgets of over £3M and to assist with the monitoring and spend of departmental research grants of over £4M per year. (School Finance Manager)

To line manage three Programme Administrators, establishing clear objectives and standards, ensuring ongoing appraisal and development and applying QMUL people policies appropriately to engage and motivate them in support of departmental objectives. (PG Programme Manager)

To continuously review research performance against best practice in other centres, identifying and recommending areas for improvement in the structures, practices, policies and technologies of the Centre for Diabetes (Senior Research Manager)

To draft responses to consultations issued by HEFCE and other organisations for consideration by Queen Mary Senior Executive. (Deputy Director of Strategic Planning)

**Organisation Chart**

5.17 As a part of establishing a context for the role, please supply an organisation chart alongside the job profile. This should be submitted as a separate document and should at least show the role in question and the roles surrounding it (i.e. immediate manager and subordinates and peers). This is important in order for HR to gain a full understanding of the role and context. **However, unless specifically requested, the organisation chart will not be advertised.** This is due to the challenges associated with consistently formatting organisation charts to ensure they are of presentable quality to an external audience.

6. Writing the Job Profile: the Person Specification

6.1 In writing the person specification, you should decide whether each criterion is essential (without which, the job could not be done), or desirable (which would enable the job holder to do the job well).

6.2 You should also consider the stage at which you will assess each criterion (e.g. candidate application, interview, work based exercise, presentation etc.) and indicate this accordingly in the provided column. If you cannot decide how a criterion will be measured or assessed, it is likely that it needs to be reworded or removed.

6.3 QMUL person specifications are in two parts:

**Qualifications**

6.4 In this section, you should include any formal qualifications that are essential or desirable for the role. For example:

* GCSE English and Maths (grades A\* – C) or equivalents
* BA/BSc in …….. or equivalent experience
* PhD in ……… or a related field
* Chartered accountancy qualification (ACCA or CIMA preferred)

**Knowledge, Skills and Experience**

6.5 In this section, you should describe the knowledge skills and experience that are essential or desirable. For example:

* Administrative experience working in a busy office environment.
* Experience working in Higher Education or a similar broad public service.
* Knowledge and understanding of the key issues influencing the UK Higher Education environment.
* Detailed knowledge of current practices, processes, standards and legislation relevant to the role.
* Experience of reviewing and developing systems, procedure and policy.
* Experience of leading projects and delivering to deadlines.
* Experience of contributing to strategy and developing innovative solutions to improve service delivery.
* Experience of developing and implementing strategic plans for a large residential estate.
* Experience of producing analytical reports for governance committees and senior staff.
* Good problem solving and analytical skills, with the ability to identify potential problems and opportunities to manage and resolve them effectively, independently where appropriate.
* Strong customer focus and a passion for providing exceptional customer service.
* Computer literate with a good knowledge of Microsoft Office software (including Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint).
* Excellent oral and written communication skills.
* Highly numerate, and confident with data and its analysis and interpretation for audiences of varying knowledge and understanding.
* Excellent attention to detail and a systematic approach to work.
* Able to plan and prioritise own workload to meet deadlines.
* Able to plan, manage and monitor a variety of commitments, balancing conflicting workloads of team members to meet service demands.
* A commitment to working collaboratively and flexibly as part of a team.
* Able to work independently without continuous reference to others.
* Demonstrable high quality influencing and persuasion skills with internal and external stakeholders at senior levels.
* Evidence of continuing professional development.
* Experience of line managing a small / large team.
* Experience of managing and monitoring budgets of at least £\*\*,\*\*\*.

7. Resources and support

[Job profile template](http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/workqm/paygradingrewards/grading/index.html)

[Advert template](http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/procedures/recruit/forms/index.html)

7.2 If, after reading this guidance, you require further assistance or have specific questions, please contact your Assistant HR Partner / HR Partner who will be happy to assist. Contact details can be found [here](http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/contact/whoswho/index.html)