



## Essential Duties and Physical Demands

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**Purpose:** Distribute this tool to the Supervisor of a position to define the **Essential Duties and Physical Demands**. This information from this tool will impact the sections within the **Job Duties** and **Working Conditions** listed on a position description within People Admin 7.

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### What are Essential and Non-Essential Functions?

Essential functions are the basic job duties that an employee must be able to perform, **with or without reasonable accommodation**. In order to comply with the nondiscrimination in employment requirements of the ADA (Title 1), it is necessary to identify the essential duties of all jobs and to identify the physical demands associated with performing the essential functions.

Non-essential functions are important to the position; however, could be redesigned or reassigned to other employees, if necessary. A supervisor should carefully examine each position to determine which functions or tasks are essential to performance or non-essential.

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### Questions to Ask in Determining Essential Duties and Physical Demands

For each duty and each physical demand the Supervisor should ask the following questions of him or herself to determine if the duty or physical demand is essential.

1. Why was this position created?
  - a. Each position is approved to perform a specific function that was a need within the department. It is that specific function that will be essential to the position.
2. Is the duty and/or physical demand specific to the reason why the position was created and not a general duty added to this position?
  - a. Each essential duty and/or physical demand will correlate to the specific reason the position was created.
  - b. Other general duties assigned such as being a “backup” for another employee, provide general assistance for various staffing projects and events and/or other duties as assigned may not be essential.
3. Could the duty/physical demand be performed by another employee without changing the scope and/or classification of either position?
  - a. If the duty and/or physical demand can be reassigned without changing the responsibility level, percentage of duty, and/or classification then it may not be essential.
4. If no, then could the duties be performed with a reasonable accommodation?
  - a. For questions about reasonable accommodations, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance, [titlevii@uark.edu](mailto:titlevii@uark.edu), (479) 575-4019

### Uses of the Essential Functions

A supervisor's judgment as to which functions are essential and the written job description will be considered in matters involving the following:

- workplace accommodation process,
  - workers' compensation,
  - Family Medical Leave Act,
  - performance management,
  - organizing work units, and in
  - internal investigations and investigations by third parties as it relates to litigation and/or claims of discrimination.
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For vacant and newly established positions, compliance requires that an up-to-date job description including information determining physical demands, physical activities, visual acuity, and working conditions be approved prior to recruiting/advertising to fill the position.

Essential Duties and Physical Demands should be reviewed periodically to determine if they have changed or evolved over time. If you have questions on disability issues please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance, (479) 575-4019 or the completion of the job description, please contact HR at (479) 575-5351.

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## Determining Essential Duties – Classified/Non-Classified

1. When adding the **Job Duties** to the Position Description, the Supervisor should review the duties necessary to successfully perform the requirements of the position.
2. Once it is determined what duties will be assigned to this position, the Supervisor should determine whether those duties are specific to the position, meaning those duties could not be assigned to another individual because they would effect the ability of the unit to run efficiently.

Job Duties	
<small>On this screen, please list in order of importance, and in detail, the job function and duties assigned to this position and estimate the percentage of total time given to each function. To begin entering each individual duty, click the Add Job Duties Entry button. Enter each percent of total time and responsibility/duty, click the Save button. Percentages must add up to 100%. You may copy and paste from another document. Do not include duties which constitute less than 10%. A minimum of ONE entry is required to proceed.</small>	
Percent of Total Time	100% Currently: blank
Is this Duty Essential?	Yes Currently: blank
Responsibility/Duty	Data Entry Currently: blank
Standards and Methods of Measurement	Accuracy Currently: blank

Example:

1. An HEI Program Coordinator is expected to
  - a. Oversee the scholarship renewal program, which requires recipients to earn points to qualify for renewal
  - b. Annually develop events and programs and collaborate with staff to provide involvement opportunities for scholars
  - c. Regularly solicit scholar stories to feature in communications
  - d. Provide special reports/assignments
  - e. Provide general assistance for various staffing projects and events
  - f. Assists in preparation and the promotion of departmental achievements
  - g. Perform other duties as assigned by supervisor
  
2. This position was specifically created to assist with scholars in all aspects. As such, the duties outlined in a,b, c and d all correlate specifically to the overall duties of the position and therefore should be essential. Whereas, e, f, and g may be asked of the employee in this position, but these duties could be assigned to another employee and not affect the classifications of either position nor the ability to perform the overall specific duties of the position.



## Determining Essential Functions – Physical Demands – Classified/Non-Classified

- When determining physical demands, a Supervisor must do so with regards to if the employee would be able to perform the duties **with or without reasonable accommodation** or if the duties could be assigned to another employee.

Essential Functions - Physical Demands	
<small>Essential functions are fundamental duties performed in a position. They do not include marginal functions that are extra or incidental. A function may be considered essential because, among other reasons, the position exists to perform that function; there are a limited number of employees available to perform that function; and/or the function is highly specialized. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.</small>	
<small>Please identify the physical demands that are representative of those that must be met to successfully perform the essential functions of this position by answering the questions below:</small>	
Bending	
If YES, state frequency of bending	
Driving	
Eyesight	
If YES, state why	
Exposure	
Hearing	
If YES, state why	
Lifting	
If YES, state the weight of the load	
Pushing	
If YES, state the weight of the heaviest object pushed	
Repetitious Movement	
If YES, explain	
Sharps	
Sitting	
Standing	
Walking	
Other Physical Activities	

Example:

- An Administrative Specialist 1 is expected to be the first line of communication to all walk-ins, answer phone calls, ensure written communications are delivered to other departments on campus, and stock department workroom.
  - In determining the physical demands of this position, a Supervisor should not make the determination in regards to their own abilities or conventional ideals of how the requirements would be performed.
  - Although the Administrative Specialist 1 would have a desk in area of which this employee would work, it is not required for this individual to sit to be able to answer questions or welcome walk-ins. This employee would be able to successfully perform these duties while standing or with the reasonable accommodation of a standing desk. Therefore, sitting nor standing should be listed as a essential physical demand on this position.
  - In delivering communications to other department on campus, this could be accomplished through walking, but it could also be completed by use of wheel chair, intercampus mail and other forms of delivery. As such, walking would not be an essential physical demand of this position.
  - To ensure that the workroom is stocked, the Administrative Specilist 1 will be required to have paper delivered for the copier and/or printer. Although this individual would be responsible for ordering the paper, does this individual necessarily have to be the one to lift the reems of paper to be placed into the copier and/or printer? Duties such as replacing the paper could easily be performed by anyone within the unit without affecting the classification of either position. Therefore, lifting would not be an essential physical demand of this position.

## Determining Essential Duties & Physical Demands - Faculty

Example:

- An Assistant Professor is expected to perform the following duties and responsibilities:
    - Teach graduate and undergraduate level courses on the Fayetteville campus and online courses in the state of Arkansas;
    - Participate in student advisement and mentoring, including service on graduate student advisory and dissertation committees;
    - Conduct research projects both individually and in collaboration with other faculty;
    - Publish the results of scholarship in refereed venues;
    - Obtain external funding to support research and curriculum development endeavors; and
    - Provide service to the department, college, university, community, and profession.
1. Essential Duties
    - a. For this example, all of the duties listed are essential to the position. In a general context, if the duties are required for tenure and promotion they may be considered essential to the position. This will vary depending on the type of faculty position being advertised.
  2. Essential Physical Demands
    - a. Physical demands will have to be determined based on the requirements within each discipline. In a general context, there will be very few essential physical demands of faculty positions.