FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ)

Q1. **What is a PDQ?**

A Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) is a tool that offers a systematic way to describe the essential functions, responsibilities and requirements of each position within an organization. The data gathered via the PDQ process is used to support numerous essential human resources functions, such as strategic planning, HR reporting and analysis, recruiting, compensation management,, employee development, performance evaluations, and legal compliance.

Q2. **Who is considered a “PDQ author”?**

A “PDQ author” is anyone designated by a primary contact to complete a PDQ. This includes primary contacts (representatives from each unit/department who are responsible for interfacing with the HRORP Team), designated managers and others who are asked to complete a PDQ.

Q3. **Will the PDQ tool be added to the managers’ toolkit?**

Yes. Once training is completed, the PDQ tool and other project material will be available on the project website, which will be linked to the HR website. Initially, however, access to the tool will be limited to primary contacts in each area and their selected unit/department PDQ authors, to ensure quality control and monitoring of the initial PDQ writing process.

Q4. **Will there be an online training tool for managers?**

Yes. A self-learning tool (created via software called Camtasia) will be available on the project website for those who either are unable to attend a training session or would like a refresher on how to use the PDQ tool. The Camtasia presentation will be posted to the project Web site upon completion of the live training sessions. PDQ authors can use it at their convenience.

Q5. I have been designated as a primary contact. What does this role entail?

As a primary contact you will work with the HRORP Team as necessary to facilitate completion of PDQs for your area(s) of responsibility. Your responsibilities include:

- Designating PDQ authors and facilitating their access to the PDQ tool
- Reviewing your PDQ authors' PDQ drafts for completeness and accuracy
- Approving and submitting completed PDQs to HR for their and Sibson's review and analysis.

Q6. Who will write the PDQs?

That depends: some primary contacts may draft PDQs themselves and then review them with unit/department managers, while others will assign PDQ authors (see Q2, above) to use the PDQ tool to write position descriptions for the employees they manage. **Individual employees will not be writing their own position descriptions.**

Q7. Why are we switching to this on-line PDQ Tool?

The HRORP Team and Sibson worked together to develop a format to ensure that information captured could easily be transferred into the new SAP system. Our new PDQ tool does this while also meeting all of the following criteria:

- Relatively easy to complete by non-HR staff
- Does not rely on individual writing styles
- Collects the same type of information for all positions in a clear, consistent format
- Can be used on an ongoing basis.

Q8. How long will it take to fill out a PDQ?

That depends on a number of factors, such as whether a position description has been updated recently or whether the position is substantially similar to others. For example, it's likely that it will take far less time to complete a PDQ for a position whose description was last updated six months ago than it will for one last updated 16 years ago. Similarly, if a respondent has to complete PDQs for six custodial positions with similar tasks, it will take far less time to complete the second through sixth PDQs than it will for the first.

For all PDQ authors, completing a PDQ will be much faster and easier than it was in the past, thanks to the drop-down menus, preloaded text, cut-and-paste functionality and other features of our new PDQ tool. There will also be an *Essential Functions Worksheet* that respondents can use to help organize their thoughts and speed the PDQ completion process. In addition, the HRORP Team will provide primary contacts with CDs containing all position descriptions currently on file to help with transferring information. And throughout the entire PDQ process, the HRORP Team will be available to provide assistance and support.

Q9. **When must PDQs be completed?**

The HRORP Team strongly recommends that all PDQ authors complete the PDQs assigned to them by their primary contacts no later than Friday, May 7. Primary contacts will then have two weeks to review and, if necessary, revise their PDQs prior to the Friday, May 21 deadline for submitting completed PDQs to HR.

Q10. **Is there any flexibility in scheduling deadlines for completion of PDQs? There are so many initiatives already on departmental "To Do" lists.**

No. Unfortunately, HRORP is on an extremely aggressive timeline due to the SAP implementation, which relies heavily on the outcome of the HRORP.

Q11. **Will primary contacts be able to review PDQs before they are submitted to Sibson and HR?**

Yes. Primary contacts will have the opportunity to review PDQ drafts before they are submitted to HR. In fact, one of their critical responsibilities is to double-check their PDQ entries prior to submission to ensure that accurate data is captured. That's because PDQ data on position and job descriptions will serve as the foundation for many important processes: performance evaluations, career and workforce planning, salary structure re-design, etc.

The HRORP Team is prepared to work with unit/departments on PDQ review and submission. Also, a process is in place where the HRORP Team and Sibson

Consulting can red-flag any PDQs that appear to be inconsistent with typical market practices.

Q12. **Will the PDQ process be collaborative with unit/departments?**

Yes. The HRORP team will work directly with primary contacts in each unit/department. Primary contacts in turn will work collaboratively with their respective unit/departments on drafts of applicable PDQs prior to submission to HR. Primary contacts will be ultimately responsible for review, approval and submission of PDQs to HR.

Q13. **Will unit/department PDQ authors see position descriptions from other departments?**

No. For the purposes of the HRORP, PDQ authors will only be able to see PDQs for their respective units/departments.

Q14. **Will BU be collecting a new position description for everyone?**

No. The PDQ process applies to regular staff, non–faculty positions only.

Q15. **If I have multiple employees with the same job title, do I need to fill out a PDQ for each one individually?**

Yes, but please note that it should be fairly easy to do because the PDQ tool has the functionality to copy information from one PDQ to another. After the information is copied, the user will be able to edit the information as necessary to reflect the position they are working on.

Q16. **The title for a position does not appear in the dropdown box. Can I add a new one?**

To add a missing/new position, please notify the HRORP team by emailing HRinfra@bu.edu with the following information: unit/department numbers that this position is in, title, position number (for BUMC, in place of position number please include the position's mail code).

Q17. **We are thinking of changing a particular person's position in the future. Should we write the description based on what s/he is currently doing or what they may be doing soon?**

PDQ authors should complete all PDQs based on the position's current responsibilities. However, if senior leaders have already approved changes to the position's responsibilities when the PDQ is being completed, the PDQ should reflect the approved changes.

Q18. **If we have an open position that is currently in posting, but hasn't been filled yet, should we fill out a PDQ for it?**

Yes. A PDQ should be completed if the position has been approved, regardless of whether it is vacant or not.

Q19. **We are thinking of eliminating a particular position. Should I still complete a PDQ for it?**

No. If the elimination of a position has already been approved, a PDQ does not need to be completed for that position. If the position elimination has not been approved, a PDQ does need to be completed.

Q20. **Who should I contact if I have a question about the PDQ or if I need any assistance in writing the position description?**

Send all questions to the HRORP Team mailbox: **hrinfra@bu.edu**.

Q21. **Is there live online customer support for this online tool?**

No. Please send all questions to the HRORP Team mailbox: **hrinfra@bu.edu**.

Q22. **How do I find out which compensation analyst is my dedicated contact? How should I contact them? Is there someone dedicated to my area in HR?**

For now, please send your questions to the HRORP Team mailbox: **hrinfra@bu.edu**. Compensation analysts will be assigned to your unit/departments at a later stage; when assigned, they will contact you directly.

Q23. **Should the primary contact consult with their supervisor before submitting any descriptions to HR?**

Primary contacts should work with their supervisor(s) to discuss their managers' involvement with the project and internal procedures for review, approval and final submission of position description questionnaires (PDQs) based on their managers' desired level of involvement.

Q24. **Is there a confirmation I will receive to let me know that HR has approved my position description?**

Yes. Once the HRORP team approves a PDQ, the PDQ tool automatically sends the primary contact and PDQ author a confirmation via email.

Q25. **What if one of my positions does not appear when I receive my roster in the PDQ tool?**

To add a missing/new position, please notify the HRORP team by emailing HRinfra@bu.edu with the following information: unit/department numbers that this position is in, title, position number (for BUMC, in place of position number please include the position's mail code).

Q26. **Can I save the document as a draft before submitting?**

Yes. The PDQ tool allows the user to save the PDQ as a draft before submitting for approval.

Q27. **Will the BUMC position numbers (mail code-last 4 of UID) be used going forward?**

"Mail code-dash-last 4 digits of UID" will be used in place of position numbers for BUMC for the purposes of this project only. New position numbers, consistent with Charles River Campus position numbers, will be assigned to all BUMC positions later.

Q28. **I accidentally clicked the submit button and still need to work on the position description. How do I unlock the file?**

Please email your primary contact and have him/her click on the "Send Back to PDQ Author" on the first page of the PDQ. Once this is completed, you will receive an automatic email notifying you that you will be able to edit the PDQ again.

Q29. **If I'm a primary contact, can I pre-populate my PDQs with some data before I send them to the managers in my department for completion?**

Yes, Primary Contacts can pre-populate a PDQ with information before sending to managers for completion. This would be accomplished by having the Primary Contact initially assign the PDQ to him/herself and then begin drafting responses to the PDQ. Next, the Primary Contact would re-assign the PDQ to the appropriate PDQ Author. Once re-assigned, the PDQ Author will be able to access the PDQ. The PDQ will contain all of the information initially provided by the Primary Contact. After the PDQ Author completes the PDQ, the PDQ Author will submit the PDQ back to the Primary Contact for Approval.