How to Draft Job Duty and Performance Criteria

Crafting clear and effective duty statements is essential for ensuring employees understand their responsibilities and can perform their roles effectively. This guide will walk through the process of writing job duties effectively, providing examples and guidelines to ensure each duty statement is concise, actionable, and aligned with organizational objectives. Additionally, it will explore how to develop performance criteria that define successful job performance, setting clear standards for evaluation and feedback.

How to Write Job Duties

A duty statement begins with an **action verb**, describes the **"what," "how,"** and **"why"** of the work activity. It should start with an action verb. For instance, the word "cook" alone is not quite descriptive enough to ensure the employee will understand what is being asked of them. A more useful statement may read as follows, *"Cooks lunch for residents each day following the menu provided by the dietitian to ensure a healthy diet is provided."*

Each duty should **start with an ACTION VERB**.
"**Cooks** lunch for residents each day following the menu provided by the dietitian to ensure a healthy diet is provided."

The duty should **say WHAT the employee does.** This should be action specific.
"**Cooks lunch for residents each day** following the menu provided by the dietitian to ensure a healthy diet is provided."

Detail **HOW the work is done.** Briefly describe the main methods, procedures, or equipment used to clearly define how the action is carried out.
"Cooks lunch for residents each day **following the menu provided by the dietitian** to ensure a healthy diet is provided."

Says **WHY work is done.** Each duty should have a short explanation as to why the action is being performed to define purpose.
"Cooks lunch for residents each day following the menu provided by the dietitian **to ensure a healthy diet is provided."**

Other examples:

- Codes forms from field offices using office coding guide to prepare forms for filing
- Assesses the qualifications of applicants for contracted positions by reviewing resumes, interviewing applicants, and asking questions related to the work to be performed so that qualified applicants are hired.

How to Write Performance Criteria

Performance Criteria outlines what successful performance looks like within each job duty. Typically, there are 2 – 4 criteria per job duty. Supervisors must ensure that performance criteria are provided for all job duties listed.

Think about each duty and what successful performance would look like. For instance, is the duty work product or work action related for the employee?

The **work product** could be described by:	The ***quality*** of the work being performed The ***amount*** of work being performed The ***timeframe*** in which the work is done The ***cost*** of the work
The **work actions** could be described by:	The way the employee ***works with others*** The ***procedures*** used to do the job

Performance criteria should be:

- Observable
- Clear and specific
- Realistic
- Easy to follow over the year
- Similar to that of other employees who are doing the same work (This will help the employees feel that they are being fairly treated and avoid later conflict.)

Examples of criteria:

A cook may have this job duty: *"Cooks lunch for residents each day following the menu provided by the dietitian."*

The criteria might be:

- The food tastes good **(quality)**
- Hot food is served hot, and cold food is served cold **(quality)**
- Enough food is prepared for all residents **(amount)**
- Meals are ready by the set mealtime **(timeframe)**
- Food is not wasted during preparation **(cost)**
- Complaints are addressed courteously **(works with others)**
- Directions from the dietitian are followed **(works with others)**
- All health regulations are followed **(procedures)**
- Food is cooked to the correct temperature **(procedures)**

Example of Job Duties and Performance Criteria

Duty 1: Types material from rough draft or straight copy according to standard agency format, making minor corrections in grammar/punctuation/spelling, in order to produce finished work in final form.

Performance Criteria:

a. Type copy is near, accurate, and in appropriate format
b. Minor corrections in grammar/punctuation/spelling are made
c. Typed copy is completed within prescribed deadlines

Duty 2: Covers telephone for Langley Office by transferring calls, taking messages, providing information, maintaining lists of calls to that each staff member promptly receives telephone calls/messages.

Performance Criteria:

a. Messages taken are accurate, clear, and referred to the appropriate person
b. Maner on telephone is courteous and helpful
c. Telephone is answered promptly at all times
d. Information provided is accurate and clear

Duty 3: Telephones information into central office/other field offices on a routing basis to provide daily/weekly updates on activities/assignments.

Performance Criteria:

a. Information is provided accurately
b. Information is telephoned promptly or on schedule

Duty 4: Process incoming mail, memoranda, packages, etc. By receiving/sorting/stamping/routing/distributing materials received to ensure prompt receipt by addressee.

Performance Criteria:

a. Mail is properly processed and distributed
b. Mail is processed and distributed within prescribed deadlines