

Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) Guide

Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) Overview



Purpose

- The PDQ is a tool for collecting meaningful job content information that can be used to evaluate a job against nine compensable factors of the established job evaluation system.
- The PDQ is designed so that employees can describe their job functions clearly and accurately.
- The **PDQ focuses on requirements of the job**, rather than employee performance or qualifications.

Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) Overview



Process for completing PDQ

	Complete PDQ and provide to Supervisor /Manager	Review PDQ, complete assigned section and sign-off	Meet to discuss PDQ	Sign-off that PDQ was reviewed with Supervisor /Manager	Review PDQ, add comments and sign-off	Email or mail PDQ to C&C (provide employee with copy)
Employee	✓		✓	✓		
Supervisor / Manager		✓	✓			
HR Unit					✓	✓
Permanent Head / Designate					✓	✓

Note: For further explanation, refer to pages 3-4 of the PDQ, *Process for PDQ Completion*.

Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) Overview



Key Points to remember

- The **PDQ gathers information on job content** (what you do) and not performance (how well you do it).
- No points are awarded (or taken away) for spelling and grammar. Point form is acceptable and easy to read or use full sentences. **Respond in the way that best allows you to provide a detailed and concise representation of your job.**
- A helpful method is to **read through the PDQ**, and over the next few days, consider how you will answer the questions.
- Assume that you are describing your work to someone who is not familiar with your environment. **Use language everyone will understand.**
- Boxes and examples – check boxes help you to think through the various types of answers; we ask you for **examples in order to provide more information** around why you selected a particular check box.
- **Supervisor comments:** the “Supervisor Comments” sections are not intended to be used as a critique, but to **clarify and/or fill in any gaps** in information provided. It is best for the **supervisor to meet with the employee** and discuss the issue(s) before providing any comments.
- **Employees and supervisors/managers should not change comments by the other individual.** If there is a disagreement after comments are discussed, this should be noted on the PDQ, Section 16.
- If completing by paper format:
 - **Use pen** only; no pencil.
 - **Do not use white out** - if you make a mistake, cross out and initial changes.

Completing the PDQ

Section 1: Position Identification

General Description

- Captures information regarding the position, the employee completing the PDQ, the supervisor/manager responsible for review, and the permanent head/designate who will sign-off on the PDQ.

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- Supervisor/manager is a management position, not a business unit supervisor.
- Permanent head is the DM for direct Government departments, or a CEO/Executive for outside boards/agencies.

Section 2: Overall Purpose of Your Position

General Description

- Summarizes the objective(s) of the position in three or four sentences – why it exists and how it fits within the organization.

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- How would you explain your position to someone you meet in an elevator, at a party, etc.
- This section is similar to the current job summary section of your current position description.
- Use your current up-to-date position description to help complete this section.

Completing the PDQ

Section 3: Key and Periodic Activities

General Description

- Describes the various activities that your position is responsible for, to a degree of detail that would allow someone who does not perform the activities to have a general understanding of what you do and how you do it.

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- This section is the **most time consuming and the most important**. Any one reading the PDQ will refer back to this section for examples and to clarify other information provided in the PDQ. Please be thoughtful when filling it out.
- Consider how **much time you spend on these activities**. We're looking for an approximation to get a sense of which activities represent the main focus of your job.
- The **timeframe for activities may vary** depending on the structure of your position or type of work performed within your position (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly, annually, seasonal).
- You have space for 10 key activities and 5 periodic activities; generally, we have found that for most jobs, **5-7 key activities** should adequately describe the work.
- Think in terms of **larger/broader categories of responsibility**.
- This section is similar to the duties and responsibilities section of your current position description.
- **Use your current position description to help** complete this section.
- In many cases, a critical part of your job may be done periodically – please be sure to note where this is the case.



To help estimate time percentages, time conversion guidelines are provided. The approximate percentage of all of your activities adds up to 100%.

Completing the PDQ

Section 4: Factor 1, Knowledge

General Description

- Captures information regarding the types of knowledge required to perform the activities described and how that knowledge is applied and adapted to complete the activities. Knowledge may be acquired in a number of ways (e.g., training, school, on the job).

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- Refer back to the *Key and Periodic Activities* you've just described – what kind of knowledge is required to perform those activities?
- **Think of knowledge as broadly as you can** – how do you learn to do the job that you do and what types of things do you need to know about? (e.g. on the job learning, technical tools and systems, processes, the environment, the industry and other stakeholders).
- Look at what **knowledge is required to do your job**; not your personal qualifications.
- It may be beneficial to sit down with your **supervisor/manager or HR representative to discuss** this section before you start.



Consider different types of knowledge such as:

- Computer-based technology
- Policies and procedures
- Regulations and legislation
- Instructional methods
- Technical and operational
- Mathematical
- Health and safety standards and procedures
- Administrative Procedures

Completing the PDQ

Section 5: Factor 2, Interpersonal Skills

General Description

- Captures information regarding the individuals and groups that your position interacts with, how frequently those interactions occur and the types of communication and interpersonal skills used in those interactions.

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- **Who do you interact with, and how/why?** Please provide examples of your position's regular interactions and the skills that you use when you interact and communicate with other people.
- Feel free to list any **"Other" contacts** that you interact with and provide examples.
- Try to focus on the **most critical situations and interactions** that are an on-going part of your job.
- In addition to the check lists, **open ended questions are available**. Use this space to try to capture anything that may have been missed (e.g. things you do infrequently) or specific situations.



Think of situations where you are required to interact or communicate with others. Consider how you might use some of the following communication or interpersonal skills:

- Effective listening
- Interviewing skills
- Presentation skills
- Collaboration
- Influencing/ persuading
- Conflict resolution skills
- Moderation/facilitation
- Listening skills
- Communicating factual, complex and/or technical information (verbally or in writing)
- Advocacy skills (speaking on behalf of someone else)

Completing the PDQ

Section 6: Factor 3, Physical Effort

<p>General Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains the degree to which physical effort is required to complete job activities.
<p>Thoughts and tips on completing this section</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical exertion and handling Manual dexterity (This includes both gross and fine motor skills. Gross skills include abilities required to control the large muscles of the body for walking, running, sitting, crawling and other activities. Fine motor skills include small movements of the hands, wrists, fingers, feet, and toes.) Body postures and movements Body control and reflex requirements while using mechanical and other aids to meet the physical demands of the work. Consider how often effort is required What effect does the effort have (e.g. physical injury) What do you do to manage the effects (e.g. take a break)



Types of Effort:

- Standing on your feet or sitting at a desk for long periods of time
- Working in confined spaces
- Working with mechanical tools
- Working with medical instruments
- Walking
- Lifting
- Pushing

Completing the PDQ

Section 7: Factor 4, Concentration

<p>General Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures information regarding the degree to which visual, auditory and/or concentration effort is required to complete job activities.
<p>Thoughts and tips on completing this section</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When providing examples for types of concentration effort relevant to your position, please indicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How frequently this type of effort is required – occasionally, regularly, constantly – The effect that exerting a particular effort has on you – stiff back/neck, headaches, physical or mental fatigue – The steps you take to manage those effects – take regular breaks, stand up and stretch, change focus to another activity



Types of Concentration Effort – Things to think about

Visual

- Staring at a computer screen
- Using multiple monitors
- Reviewing drawings or graphics (with many details)

Auditory

- Frequent and/or prolonged telephone use
- The requirement to wear and use a headset on a regular basis
- Skills needed to listen to direct/face-to-face interactions

Concentration

- Repetitive tasks and or tasks that require precision (e.g., entering/ verifying data)
- Completing multiple tasks within tight deadlines
- Attentiveness required and effects of interruptions

Completing the PDQ

Section 8: Factor 5, Complexity

General Description

- This section focuses on the amount and difficulty of analysis, problem solving, creativity and/or reasoning required to perform the job. This section measures the conceptual demands of the position as characterized by:
 - ✓ Breadth and depth of job scope
 - ✓ Mental challenge
 - ✓ Degree of position structure and planning requirements

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- When thinking of **problems and/or challenges**, think of those that you resolve and deal with on a regular, ongoing basis.
- Identify the types of **routine and non-routine issues and challenges** that the position is required to resolve. Think about, what kind of resources are available to resolve those issues and how many elements, related and unrelated, that must be considered when resolving issues and challenges.



Think of the mental effort required to address issues and challenges in terms of the:

- Pre-determined processes, procedures, systems and/or routines that may exist?
- Extent to which data and relevant information is known, readily available and/or easily accessible
- Degree of analysis, assessment and/or interpretation required for problem solving and solution definition
- Level of innovation and/or creativity in problem solving

Completing the PDQ

Section 9: Factor 6, Accountability and Decision-Making

General Description

- Captures information regarding the types of decisions that the position is responsible for making.
- This section measures the level of accountability and decision-making associated with your position.

Thoughts and tips on completing this section

- Please include examples from your regular, ongoing responsibilities, or that relate to the activities that you listed in the *Key and Periodic Activities* section. Please **use examples to illustrate the important impacts of your position.**
- What **decisions and actions can you take independently, and for what do you need approval from others?**
- Decision making authority is not always “black and white” – in a team environment, decisions may be a shared responsibility. **How do you assist the organization in making decisions?**
- Where does ultimate accountability lie? Do you offer support to the decision making process? Which decisions are you ultimately accountable for versus those that you offer advice and input into?

Characteristics to be considered include:

- Level of work review or supervision received
- Nature of delegated authorities and prescribed decisions, and processes
- Extent to which discretion and independence of action are required
- Overall accountability given the nature of the work

Completing the PDQ

Section 10: Factor 7, Impact

General Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captures information regarding the types of outcomes that result from the decisions and actions that your position is responsible and accountable for and the impact of those decisions and actions.
Thoughts and tips on completing this section	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please include examples from your regular, ongoing responsibilities, or that relate to the activities that you listed in the <i>Key and Periodic Activities</i> or <i>Factor 6: Accountability and Decision-Making</i> section. Please use examples to illustrate the important impacts of your position.• Remember to consider the policies and procedures that are in place to provide quality and safety checks and manage potential risks.• When providing examples, try to think of consequences that are the result of the informed, thoughtful choices that you make, not the result of negligence, inability and/or inexperience.• Where are the results typically felt? If you are part of a process, do your decisions impact other employees, programs and processes? If you have the “final say”, do your decisions have a direct impact on customers or stakeholders?



Given the decisions that you make and the accountabilities that you have, consider the impacts on:

- Technical information
- Material resources
- Customers / clients / patients
- The community
- Public safety
- Financial resources
- Employer’s public image

Completing the PDQ

Section 11: Factor 8, Development & Leadership of Others

General Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captures information regarding the activities and behaviours that your position is responsible for carrying out that contribute to the development and/or leadership of other employees.
Thoughts and tips on completing this section	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please include examples from your regular, ongoing responsibilities, or that relate to the activities that you listed in the <i>Key and Periodic Activities</i> section. Please use examples to illustrate the important impacts of your position.• What do you do to lead, help lead or develop people in your organization? There are many ways that you can provide leadership within your work group, function and/or department (e.g., providing advice and guidance, scheduling the work of others, providing orientation to new colleagues/peers, providing technical mentorship).• This section focuses on formal and informal development and leadership responsibilities that are a responsibility of your job.• If you supervise people, who do you supervise and what are the activities and responsibilities that you carry out in this regard?



Be sure to provide at least one example to illustrate the check boxes that you have selected. Examples are essential to providing a clear picture of how you contribute to leading and developing others.

Completing the PDQ

Section 12: Factor 9, Environmental Working Conditions

General Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captures information regarding the working environment in which the activities performed by your position must be completed.
Thoughts and tips on completing this section	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This factor recognizes the physical and psychological environment in which the work must be performed. Consider the environment in which you are required to work (e.g. warehouse, marine vessel , laboratory, outside, office cubicle).• How frequently and/or regularly do you encounter these types of conditions?• What kind of precautions do you have to take? Are there any inherent health and safety issues, whether frequently, occasionally or infrequently?• This factor also considers the requirement for work-related overnight travel (not commuting) and the requirements to be on the road overnight or for days at a time.• This factor is intended to measure working conditions that have a potential adverse effect on your position but are still essential to your position. It does not look at conditions that, if they were to be removed, you could still perform all of the activities required.



This factor considers the environmental working conditions that are “inherent to your job”, not those conditions that are the “result of the workplace”.

Completing the PDQ

Section 13: Your Comments

- This section provides space for you to make any additional comments regarding your position, the questionnaire, and/or the process of collecting job information.

Section 14: Supervisor/Manager Comments

- This section provides space for your Supervisor/Manager to make any additional comments regarding your position.
- This is the ONLY section to be completed by supervisor/managers.

Section 15: Employee, Supervisor/Manager, Human Resources and Permanent Head/Designate Discussion Notes

- This section is used to add any additional comments based on employee and Supervisor/Manager review and discussion of the PDQ.

Section 16: Employee, Supervisor / Manager, Human Resources Representative and Permanent Head / Designate Signatures

- Once the Supervisor/Manager and Employee have completed and reviewed each section, the final page of the PDQ must be signed by both and then provided to the Human Resources and Permanent Head/Designate to review and sign-off. Note: If completed electronically, names should be typed.
- This signature is to acknowledge each party has completed their section and reviewed the PDQ together. Signature does not mean agreement on content.

Questions During the Process

Contact Information

- As you complete your PDQ, if you have any questions or concerns regarding how to respond to a question or section, or questions on the process of completing and submitting the PDQ, you should reach out to your Supervisor/Manager, your HR Department, or the Classification and Compensation Division.
- For any other project related questions (i.e. questions not concerning the completion of your PDQ), also contact the Classification and Compensation Division at,

Email: JES@gov.nl.ca

Telephone: 709-729-6334 or 1-844-254-6334

Once all participants have signed in the appropriate sections, the completed PDQ document must be submitted to the Classification and Compensation Division by email (JES@gov.nl.ca) or mail:

**Classification and Compensation Division, Human Resource Secretariat
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6**

