

Completing the PAQ

Employee guide to the Position Analysis Questionnaire for Office, Professional, Technical, & Supervisory positions

What is not included? Prior to completing a Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ) form, you should be aware of what is and what is not considered in the job evaluation process.

1. **Individual Qualifications are not considered** – e.g., if you hold degrees or other formal or informal qualifications above those required to perform successfully in the position, those “higher” level qualifications are NOT taken into consideration. Only the minimum job qualifications or requirements are considered.
2. **Quality of work is not considered** – e.g., if you produce a higher work quality than others in similar jobs or those who held the job previously, that quality cannot be considered when evaluating the job.
3. **Work volume is not considered** – e.g., neither the volume of work you are capable of putting out, nor can an increase in work volume assigned be considered in evaluating a job. Job volume is resolved through assignment of overtime, an organization accepting that some work will not be completed on time, or an organization determining that additional staff is needed to maintain a function at a certain level.
4. **Temporary work/conditions** – e.g., if your office area is under remodel and you have fumes from fresh paint, that is not a regular, normal condition and would not be considered in a job evaluation. The same would be true for temporary work assignments; if you are asked to supervise for two weeks, that does not become part of your regular duties, as it is only temporary.

The above items are ***not*** considered is because job evaluation does not evaluate the *worker*, it evaluates the various elements of the *job*. The process narrowly reviews factors pertaining to the work required of the position under **normal** circumstances.

What is included? In completing a job evaluation, the following categories are reviewed:

1. **Knowledge** – the level of formal or informal education required to perform the job successfully (minimum qualifications upon hire).
2. **Experience** – the combination of required prior work experience – experience in related work or in a lesser position – and the “break-in” time or learning period on the job.
3. **Complexity** – both how complex are the key duties as well as the degree of independent action and original application, the degree of resourcefulness and planning required, devising new methods, analyzing/weighing options and the degree of independent decision making regarding those options, versus work that is largely governed by standard practices or guidelines.

4. **Supervision Received** – the degree/amount of supervision received, such as setting tasks, reviewing work, handling exceptions, etc.
5. **Errors** – the impact of, and responsibility for, errors in the job, whether the work is checked by others, potential impact of errors on the department, division, larger organization, general public, etc.
6. **Contact** – the frequency of contact as well as the type of contact with others. Does it require furnishing and receiving information versus influencing and gaining agreements? Does the job require locating and seeking out new contacts, etc.?
7. **Confidential Data** – what types of confidential data does the position have access to (personal is not necessarily the same as confidential)? Does the position use the information to perform the work and, if so, how?
8. **Manual Dexterity** – requirements in terms of mental and visual attention, coordination, lifting, and potential fatigue factors.
9. **Working Conditions** – the extent to which working conditions may be disagreeable or even hazardous.

If the Job is Supervisory (Supervision Exercised):

1. **Character** – the degree and type of supervisory responsibility involved, lead/delegation work compared to fully responsible for hiring decisions and corrective action, up to and including termination.
2. **Scope** – the size of the group supervised, as measured in full-time equivalent personnel.

How to fill out the forms: In completing the forms, please read the directions of each section very carefully and respond to each section of the question. Try to be clear and use plain language.

Example: If you are responsible for highlighting areas in a budget report that show whether your department is over or under budget, and then disseminating those reports, just say that. If you are responsible for creating the report, reviewing the details, and taking action or recommending action to solve problems, then say so.

It helps if you delineate what is expected of you in terms of problem solving and how far you are expected to go. If something unusual comes up, do you pass it on; make recommendations for solutions; or are you expected to determine what the solution options are, select and implement an option, and then brief your supervisor? These are three very different levels of responsibility, so please be clear about your specific role.

The Contacts section clearly states: “% of work time will **not** equal 100%,” so this total percent should be equal to the amount of time in your position which is spent contacting/interacting with others. For some jobs, this may be only 10% while some could be as high as 70%, but it would be an unusual job where it would be 100%. The same is true of Manual Dexterity and physical demands. These areas need to reflect a correct average percentage of time spent per day performing these duties. Again, it is a very rare position that spends 80% or more time using personal computers. An IT position might, but even IT positions have contact with clients, supervisors, reports to file, etc. Please consider these areas carefully when completing your PAQ form.

Remember that when unclear language is used, such as “facilitate” (a frequently used word with many meanings), the job reviewer may have to ask follow-up questions, which can delay the process. The position will be evaluated based upon the responsibilities which are assigned to it, not based upon particular words used in a PAQ form. The more clearly you can describe the duties of your position, the more quickly and accurately your job can be evaluated. Use the task section of the PAQ to lay out your duties, and then refer back to what you have written as you begin to answer questions about knowledge, experience, complexity, etc. These task descriptions are also used by evaluators first to provide an overarching view of your role and also when, or if, something is unclearly written in other sections, as a double check for the type and level of work being performed.

Once you have completed your PAQ, your supervisor will review it and, when the PAQ is as complete and accurate as possible, will sign it and forward it for review.

If you have questions about how to respond to a section, feel free to speak to someone in your Human Resource Department. Sometimes explaining what you do to them, can help you and HR better address a section of the form so your answer is both complete and clear to evaluators.