

Step 4 - Identifying the Time Frame for Vacancies and developing Position Descriptions

In this step you want to assess to the best of your ability the expected vacancies along with the skills or knowledge required in the role and any training required. You may already have some knowledge of when people are planning to leave or you may need to find this out. Talk to members undertaking an active role in the organisation to find out their plans for the next 6 months to 2 years. You want to assess if a person is considering leaving the society or moving away. Your membership may be aging and facing ill health. Others may have been in the role too long and may be getting tired of the role.

Skills needed in the Role

Identify the skills needed in the role. Talking to people currently in the role helps you understand the requirements more fully. For instance: what are the skills required to carry out a particular role? How simple is it for a new person to learn these skills? How much time and commitment is required? What are the personality traits or social characteristics that are necessary in the role such as communication and people skills for welcoming visitors to the society?

Knowledge or training required

Here you identify what knowledge and training is required to bring people up to speed. People currently in the role may wish to diversify what they are doing or need assistance if the role has expanded. New technologies have changed the way that certain roles may be undertaken e.g. promotion of events via social media. How does this impact on the knowledge and skills required? Is additional knowledge required to fill the role? There may be a need to create a support role if the current person is not able to fulfil all the requirements of the role into the future. Is there a need for training people or seeking people with specific skills



4. Time Frame for Vacancy in Roles

Identify the urgency of the role and expected date of vacancy. Rank the roles as either 'immediate' (within three months), 'short term' (in the next 12 months to two years) or 'long term' (in two years' time and beyond). List what skills are needed in each role and whether any knowledge or training is required to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Time Frame	Roles and expected date of vacancy	Skills needed in role	Knowledge or training required
Immediate (within three months)	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Short Term (within 12 months – two years)	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Long Term (in two years time or beyond)	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

Create Position Descriptions

Now that you have a good understanding of the roles required to make your society a success it is helpful to create position descriptions for each role. The position description documents what skills and experience are required for key roles.

You may have existing position descriptions for some of the roles in your society. If not you may ask people in those positions what skills and knowledge is required in the role. Identify the following:

- Objectives of role and key experience required.
- Why this position is so important
- The three main objectives of this role
- Which skills are required to carry out this position?
- Any previous experience that would help to carry out this role
- What knowledge is required?
- Is there any other expertise/personal quality or characteristic that is helpful to carry out this role successfully?

Writing a position description is not a set and forget exercise. It is important to revisit these position descriptions regularly and make appropriate updates.

‘A good position description clarifies the responsibilities and support arrangements for a volunteer. It helps volunteers to be clear about what is expected of them and feel confident in their role. A position description also outlines how the role fits in with relation to the broader goals of the organisation’

Volunteering Australia - Volunteering Roles Toolkit.

Devising a position description for each critical role might seem like overkill. However, it fulfils the rights and obligations for volunteers (Volunteering Australia: National Standards for Volunteer Involvement) and acts as supporting documentation if either volunteers or management committee are unhappy about the expectations of the role.¹



Position Description

Outline the key skills, knowledge and personal qualities required to successfully carry out the key volunteer positions within your society as well as the key responsibilities and accountabilities for each position.

¹ Volunteering Australia, National Survey of Volunteering Issues, 2006, www.volunteeringaustralia.org. Volunteering Australia is the national peak body for volunteering, working to advance volunteering in the community

Duplicate the Position Description template for each role in the society.

Position Description Template

Position: *(insert name of position e.g. Museum Curator)*

Description of role:

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Main objective of the role:

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Key skills required for this role:

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Previous experience that would be beneficial:

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Other knowledge required:

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Personal qualities or characteristics, which are suitable for the position:

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Other considerations of the role:

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