

	<b>Columbia Gorge Community College</b>  <b>Human Resources Process</b>	<b>Proposed:</b>	<b>Revised:</b>
		<b>Determining Essential Job Functions</b>	

**OVERVIEW**

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, your first step in the hiring process will be to determine the essential job functions of the job position. The following guide will provide helpful information and guidance. You can also access the Essential Job Functions Worksheet for assistance.

In determining essential functions, consider first the purpose of the job and the importance of the actual job duties and responsibilities in achieving this purpose. For the purpose of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), major functions or duties that are designated as “essential functions” are those fundamental job duties that must be performed with or without reasonable accommodation. The term “reasonable accommodation” may include:

- making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities; and
- job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

**HOW TO IDENTIFY ESSENTIAL AND MARGINAL JOB FUNCTIONS**

Before creating a job description announcement and beginning the hiring process, you'll need to determine the essential job functions and marginal functions (non-essential functions) of the job position. The essential job functions must be included in the job description. This information will be important for determining if an applicant can perform the essential duties of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

Example: Receptionist Position

Essential job functions might include:

- Answering the telephone and assisting callers
- Recording messages for department personnel
- Greeting clients and customers

Marginal job functions might include:

- Serving refreshments to clients and customers
- Escorting clients to staff offices

### ***Essential functions***

For this receptionist position, an applicant would need to be able to perform the essential job functions (duties) of this position with or without reasonable accommodation.

The EEOC Guidelines on the ADA list the following types of evidence to determine whether or not the function in question is essential:

1. The employer's judgment as to which functions are essential
2. Written job descriptions prepared before advertising or interviewing applicants
3. The amount of time spent on the job performing the functions
4. The consequences of not requiring the incumbent to perform the function
5. The work experience of past incumbents in the job
6. The current work experience of incumbents in similar jobs
7. There are a limited number of other employees available to perform this function

Ask the following questions:

- Does the job exist to do this function?
- Would removing this function from the job fundamentally change the job?
- Would there be significant consequences if this function is not performed?
- Is special training or education required?
- Is a license required?
- Is this function highly specialized?

In other words, if the duty is viewed as important to CGCC's operation, is performed with frequency, and there isn't sufficient staff to reassign the marginal duty or it can't be redesigned or performed in another way, the duty would be considered an ***essential function*** of the position.

### ***Marginal functions***

The marginal or non-essential job functions are those that could be redesigned or reassigned to other employees, if necessary. To determine if a particular duty is ***marginal***, consider:

- The importance of the duty to your company's operation
- It's frequency
- If there's sufficient staff to reassign the marginal duty to other employees

- If the marginal duty can be redesigned or performed in another way

## **DESCRIBE THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL PERFORMING ELEMENTS**

When describing the essential function requirements of the position, you should also identify and describe the physical and mental performing elements that are a necessary and integral part of the position. Try to be as specific as possible.

For example:

Physical Elements might include:

- Lifting and carrying 40 - 60 pounds
- Frequent bending, kneeling, and reaching
- Standing for long periods of time
- Climbing ladders
- Handling and assembling small parts

Mental Performing Elements might include:

- Organizing and coordinating schedules
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Calibrating precise measurements
- Problem-solving
- Communicating with the public
- Creating written communication
- Completing written work orders

In addition to the physical and mental performing elements, equipment use and working conditions (and the frequency) should be identified as well.

For example:

Equipment Use

- Telephone - frequently
- Small hand tools - occasionally
- Forklift - rarely
- Copier - occasionally
- Van - rarely
- Computer - frequently

Working Conditions

- Indoor - frequently
- Outdoor - rarely

- Loud noise - occasionally
- Cool temperatures - frequently
- Exhaust fumes - occasionally