



About Cornell's Staffing Structure

Understanding this terminology and how Cornell's staffing is organized will help you get the most from our powerful Career Navigator Tool!

Staff Position Description (SPD)

The [staff position description](#), often shortened to SPD, is a document developed and individualized to each role on campus. It aligns the purpose, characteristics, and responsibilities of the position with the needs of the department.

Think of the SPD as an agreement between you, your supervisor, your department, and the university. Like any agreement, you should be aware of, and comfortable with, the details -- this is what success looks like for your position! So you and your supervisor should partner to make sure it stays up-to-date.

Keeping your staff position description current

A great place to begin is with the employee in the position -- take a fresh look at the SPD to identify updates and pose questions about potential revisions. The employee's supervisor should then review to ensure the updates capture what the department needs from the role. Work together to resolve any differences of opinion about the role by sharing more information. Finally, the supervisor should send the SPD over to HR for a review and classification.

Job Families & Generic Job Profiles

Each position also falls into a [family of jobs](#) based upon the type of work the individual completes -- for instance, Administration, Alumni Affairs and Development, or Facilities and Safety Services. These families are useful in many ways. They give an overview of the kinds of tasks and levels of work complexity involved in a certain position, and can provide a lens for career growth.

Families are broken down into generic profiles and job progressions, i.e. Major Gifts Officer I, Major Gifts Officer II, Major Gifts Officer III, and so on. Individually, the generic profile serves as the basis of your staff position description. And together, these resources can give you a general overview of how responsibilities and impact may increase as you advance in their career.

Competencies

Competencies are key abilities identified for each position that will provide you with a sense of the minimum expertise

needed to fulfill the role's responsibilities successfully and efficiently. Both technical and behavioral abilities (i.e., competencies) are deeply valued in our hiring and the development of our employees.

Compensation

Each generic profile has a salary range that is based upon the complexity of the work. It is one way that we may sure employees are being paid similarly for comparable work. But an individual's salary is based upon many factors, such as experience.
