Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ)

Filled-in example: **Payroll Specialist**, Northwind Components (fictional)

> **Describe the job, not the person.** Record what the position requires, not how well the current employee performs it. Estimate the share of time for each duty so the total equals 100%. Incumbent time: about 50 minutes. Supervisor review: about 25 minutes.

01 Position identification

HR / supervisor

Job title	Payroll Specialist
Job code	FIN-214
Department	Finance, Payroll
Location	Head office
FLSA status	Non-exempt
Reports to	Payroll Manager

02 Position purpose

Incumbent

Process accurate, on-time biweekly payroll for about 650 employees at two sites, and resolve employee pay questions.

03 Organizational setting

Incumbent

Reports to the Payroll Manager. Works alongside one other Payroll Specialist. No direct reports. Works closely with HR and Accounting.

04 Major duties and percent of time

Incumbent

Duty	% of time
Process biweekly payroll: import time data, review exceptions, run pre-check reports, submit for approval	40%
Audit and reconcile payroll registers, tax withholdings, and benefit deductions to the general ledger	20%
Answer employee pay questions and correct pay errors	15%
Enter new hires, terminations, and pay changes in the HR and payroll system	15%
Prepare quarterly and year-end payroll reports and support audits	10%
Total	**100%**

05 Education and experience

Incumbent

Minimum for a new hire: associate degree in accounting or business, or equivalent experience, plus 2 years of payroll processing experience.

06 Knowledge, skills, and abilities

Incumbent

Multi-state payroll tax withholding rules. FLSA overtime calculation. Payroll and HR system data entry and reporting. Spreadsheet skills (lookups, pivot tables). Handling confidential data.

07 Licenses and certifications

Incumbent

None required. Preferred: a recognized payroll certification.

08 Complexity and problem solving

Incumbent

Most work follows set procedures. Regular exceptions include retroactive pay, wage garnishments, and employees who work in more than one state. New or unusual issues go to the Payroll Manager.

09 Decision authority and independence

Incumbent

Decides alone	Corrects an employee's pay error up to $500 when policy is clear
Recommends	Off-cycle checks and fixes to recurring system errors
Escalates	Policy exceptions, garnishment disputes, and any correction over $500

Supervisor review note: Incumbent first listed the limit as $1,000. Corrected to $500, per the payroll policy. Rest of section confirmed.

10 Contacts

Incumbent

Who	Why	How often
Employees	Answer pay questions, explain deductions	Daily
HR business partners	Confirm hires, terminations, pay changes	Weekly
Payroll vendor and benefit carriers	Resolve file and deduction issues	Monthly
External auditors	Provide payroll records	Yearly

11 Supervision and leadership

Incumbent

No direct reports. Occasionally trains new payroll staff on procedures.

12 Resources and impact of error

Incumbent

Handles about $1.1 million in gross pay each payroll cycle. An error can underpay or overpay employees or trigger tax penalties. Pre-check reconciliation catches most errors before payment.

13 Working conditions and physical demands

Incumbent

Office setting. Computer work about 90% of the day. Deadline pressure on payroll close days. Occasional overtime at year-end. Lifting under 10 lb.

14 Certification and signatures

All three

Incumbent	J. Rivera · certifies answers are accurate
Supervisor	A. Chen, Payroll Manager · reviewed and approved with one correction (Section 9)
HR	K. Osei, HR · received for classification review

Fictional example created by PointFactors for illustration. Northwind Components and all names, figures, and ratings are invented. Companion to the article "PDQ vs PAQ: Which Job Analysis Questionnaire Is Right for You?" at pointfactors.com/posts/pdq-vs-paq.