

Sample payroll manager job description and interview questions

Payroll Managers play an incredibly important role in organizations. After all, paying your employees on time is the key to employee satisfaction (and legal compliance!). If you're looking to hire a Payroll Manager for your business, keep reading to find a helpful Payroll Manager job description example and some sample interview questions.

What is a Payroll Manager?

Payroll Managers oversee payroll operations for the business. They process payroll while ensuring that the correct payroll taxes and benefits deductions are withheld. Payroll Managers also review payroll records, complete payroll audits, and disperse end-of-year tax forms. They also handle a variety of other payroll functions such as updating employee payroll information, reviewing payroll reports, and performing compensation analysis or salary benchmarking.

Depending on the size of the business, Payroll Managers may supervise several employees in the payroll department. In small companies, they may be the sole payroll employee and may also have additional human resources or accounting duties.

Payroll Manager job description template

Overview

The Payroll Manager oversees all functions of the Payroll department involved in the preparation and distribution of wages and salaries to company employees. The employee will also be responsible for creating and updating company payroll policies and staying up to date on applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding employee hours and compensation. The ideal candidate is detailed-oriented and possesses strong communication skills.

Responsibilities

- Ensures accurate preparation and balancing of weekly and special payrolls.
- Drafts payroll policy and recommends procedural changes for the Payroll department.
- Acts as liaison with outside computer payroll processing company for problem resolution and error correction.
- Enter new hires into the payroll system.

- Process terminations in the payroll system and prepare final paychecks.
- Handles various payroll adjustments, including shortages, garnishments, vacation pay, bonuses, etc.
- Prepares periodic payroll-related analyses, statements, and projections.
- Assists all managers in defining exempt and non-exempt employees and monitoring overtime charges.
- Keep up-to-date and comply with federal, state, and local legal and regulatory requirements and advise management when necessary.
- Manages payroll staff.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Business Administration, or a related field
- 2-3 years of experience as a Payroll Clerk, Payroll Administrator, Payroll Specialist, or in a related role.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office suite including Excel.
- Experience with payroll processing software such as ADP or Paychex.
- Excellent communication and organizational skills.

Payroll Manager interview questions

Here are some helpful questions to ask when interviewing candidates for an Accountant role.

What is your experience with computerized payroll systems? Which payroll systems have you worked with?

Payroll Managers need to have strong computer skills and ideally a familiarity with payroll software. Some employers prefer to hire Payroll Managers with experience using the payroll software program that the company currently uses. However, if the candidate is experienced in other payroll systems, the learning curve with a new one is often fairly small. If the candidate indicates that they do not have experience with payroll software or with the desired payroll program, you can ask how they go about learning a new program.

How do you keep your skills and knowledge updated?



Payroll laws are constantly changing, so it is important for payroll professionals to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. There are a number of ways to stay up to date with these laws. For example, many payroll and human resources professionals attend continuing education courses or webinars each year to learn about new employment and payroll laws. The candidate should be able to confidently explain how they keep their knowledge current through continuing education classes, professional groups, industry publications, or another reasonable avenue.

How do you manage your time to meet payroll deadlines?

Payroll Managers have a number of important duties, but arguably the most important is getting employees paid on time. This is one of those roles where everyone in the company will know when a deadline has been missed. As such, you want to hire a candidate with excellent time management skills and who knows how to meet deadlines every time. You can also ask how they balance urgent payroll needs and deadlines with their standard job duties.

Please share an example of how you developed and implemented procedural changes for the Payroll department in a prior role.

This question helps you dig into the candidate's past experience as well as their approach to payroll policy development. Implementing policies and adjusting procedures requires a mix of strong problem-solving skills, analytical thinking, and excellent communication skills. The candidate should be able to explain how they identified the need for a procedural change, how they went about restructuring or creating a policy or procedure to address that need, and how they communicated that change to the relevant parties. If the candidate is unable to provide an example from past experience, ask them how they would go about changing a procedure and communicating that change to staff.

What would you do if you discovered a pay gap or inequity within the company?

Since Payroll Managers spend the most time reviewing employee pay and payroll reports, they are often the ones to spot possible pay inequities within a department. With so many businesses prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) and working towards providing more fair compensation, it is important to understand how the candidate would react if they noticed a possible pay gap somewhere in the company. An ideal Payroll Manager will critically analyze the data while reconciling payroll records or reports and bring any possible inequities to the attention of company leadership.