



A New Day for the Civil Service

Developing a Job Analysis



**Workshop Presented by the
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
June 2010**

Topics



- Overview
- Developing a Job Analysis
- Ratings
- Additional Resources

Overview



- What is a job analysis?
- When to conduct a job analysis?
- Why use a job analysis?
- Uses for a job analysis?

Hiring Reform



- In the Presidential Memorandum (Section 1: Directions to Agencies), the second item talks about assessing applicants using valid, reliable tools
- Job analysis is a key piece – a foundation for – identifying and/or developing good assessments
- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-memorandum-improving-federal-recruitment-and-hiring-process>

What is a Job Analysis?



- A systematic examination of the tasks performed in a job and the competencies required to perform them
- A study of what workers do on the job, what competencies must be employed to do it, what resources are used in doing it, and the conditions under which it is done
- A job analysis is NOT an evaluation of the person currently performing the job

What is a Job Analysis?



A job analysis consists of three general steps:

1. Tasks and competencies are collected
2. Subject Matter Experts rate the tasks and competencies
3. Any low-rated tasks and/or competencies are dropped

When to Conduct a Job Analysis?



It depends on the novelty of the position and the currency of the most recent job analysis for that occupation. However, if the requirements of the position are relatively static, then the position may only need to be reviewed as needed.

From the *Delegated Examining Operations Handbook*

When to Conduct a Job Analysis?



- The position you seek to fill is unlike any other position in your agency
- When the nature of the position is such that its requirements are likely to change with relative frequency (e.g., information technology positions), you should review the position at least annually to ensure that your selection tools are still valid

When to Conduct a Job Analysis?



- Every time you seek to fill a job
- Where job openings in the same occupation recur frequently, you can often rely on selection instruments that were developed from recent job analyses of that occupation

Why Use a Job Analysis?



- To establish and document the tasks and competencies required for the job
- To identify the *job-relatedness* of the tasks and competencies
- To form the basis of applicant assessment tools
- To help provide legal defensibility
- To enhance the validity and utility of human resource products

Why Use a Job Analysis?



Legal Requirements:

- Federal regulations provide that each employment practice of the Federal Government generally, and of individual agencies, shall be based on a job analysis to identify:
 - The basic duties and responsibilities;
 - The knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties and responsibilities; and
 - The factors that are important in evaluating candidates (5 CFR Part 300).

Why Use a Job Analysis?



Legal Requirements (continued):

In addition, the *Uniform Guidelines on Employment Selection Procedures* (1978), (29 CFR Part 1607) (www.uniformguidelines.com), provide a set of generally accepted principles on employee selection procedures, including when and how to conduct a job analysis that will meet the standard of the *Guidelines*.

Uses for a Job Analysis



Job analysis data can be used to determine:

- Job requirements
- Training needs
- Position classification and grade levels
- Other personnel actions, such as promotions and performance appraisals

Developing a Job Analysis



- Definitions
- Gathering Information
- Tasks
- Competencies

Definitions



- **Tasks:** Activities an employee performs on a regular basis in order to carry out the functions of the job
- **Competency:** A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully

Definitions



- **Subject Matter Expert (SME):** A person (first-level supervisor, superior incumbents, etc.) with bona fide expert knowledge about a particular job
- **Ratings/Cutoffs:** Computed (numerical) thresholds that determine which tasks and competencies are required to successfully perform the job

Gathering Information



- Critical incidents
- Desk audit
- Job announcements
- Position Descriptions (PD)
- Internet searches
- Others?

Tasks



Collect tasks through:

- Listing/Editing Tasks
- Writing Tasks
 - Activity

Tasks



You can collect tasks by pulling them from many sources, such as Position Descriptions (PD), job announcements, etc.:

- Original Text: *Management relies on these specialists and systems to help them apply merit system principles to attracting, developing, managing, and retaining a high quality and diverse workforce.*
- Resulting Task: Assists management in applying merit system principles in all aspects (e.g., attracting, managing) of retaining a high quality and diverse workforce.

Tasks



You can collect tasks by writing them from scratch:

The general formula for writing items is:

Perform *What?* + to *Whom?* or *What?* + to produce
What? or *Why?* *How?*

(ex, Sort + incoming mail +
into groups for distribution)

Tasks



When writing tasks, some common pitfalls (and how to avoid them) are listed below:

- **Unnecessary Words →**
Strip task to the bare elements; make it as concise and clear as possible
- **Double-barreled Item (includes multiple tasks or components) →**
Remove extra actions or break the item into two (or more) separate items

Tasks



Pitfalls and fixes continued:

- **Overly Specific Items →**
Replace specific wording (e.g., Use Excel to add, subtract, and divide subordinates' timecards to calculate time and leave) with more general actions (e.g., Use spreadsheets to track pay and leave)
- **Vague or Ambiguous Terms →**
Replace subjective adjectives and adverbs (e.g., excellent, adequate, best, all, timely, accurately) with more descriptive terms (e.g., verify, provide, create)

Tasks



Pitfalls and fixes continued:

- **Abbreviations →**

Avoid using abbreviations; spell out the term at all possible times to ensure all applicants understand the item

As a reminder:

The general formula for writing items is:

Perform *What?* + to *Whom?* or *What?* + to produce
What? or *Why?* *How?*

Tasks



Example of a poorly-written task:

- *Makes a conscientious effort to check time reports for persons under own supervision for errors in addition and hours claimed within the NFC system, uses daily work summary sheets as a resource if necessary, signs time reports and/or payroll sheets, and routes to payroll department before pay period deadline in order to authorize payment for time worked.*

Fixed:

- Audits employee time reports.

Tasks: Your Turn



Competencies



Collect competencies through:

- Listing/Editing competencies
- Writing competencies
 - Activity

Competencies



You can collect competencies by pulling them from many sources, such as Position Descriptions (PD), job announcements, etc.:

- Original Text: *Has basic understanding of the legislation, regulations, and guidance applicable to formulating, executing, and reporting on the use of Federal resources.*
- Resulting Competency: Knowledge of the legislation, regulations, and guidance applicable to formulating, executing, and reporting on the use of Federal resources.

Competencies



You can collect competencies by writing them from scratch. Some tips from the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook include:

- Define competencies simply and clearly
- Make sure that they embody a single, readily identifiable characteristic
- Avoid stating a competency in a way that would confuse it with a task
 - Frequently happens when competency statements begin with a statement such as "Ability to (perform a task)"

Competencies



Tips, continued:

- Make the competency definitions behaviorally based
 - This ensures the competency can be assessed through measurable behaviors. One way to do this is to incorporate action verbs into the competency definitions (except for definitions of knowledge areas).
- Remove unnecessary qualifiers such as "Thorough Knowledge", "Considerable Skill", or "Basic Understanding"
 - They do not provide meaningful information to distinguish examples of performance clearly

From the *Delegated Examining Operations Handbook*

Competencies: Your Turn





Ratings



- Handling the Data
- Rating Scales
 - Tasks
 - Competencies
 - Linkages
- Cut-off scores
- Consensus
- Documentation

Handling the Data



- Collect all of the tasks and competencies in one area
 - Excel (Preferred)
 - Word
- SMEs will provide ratings on all tasks and competencies
- Use Excel (or other data-processing software) to average ratings and apply cut-off scores

Rating Scales



Please refer to the handout to see the scales for:

- Tasks
- Competencies
- Linkage Table

Cut-off Scores



- Cut-offs are applied to the average task/competency ratings
- You can apply your own cut-offs if proficiency levels are supported
- See OPM's guidelines for cut-offs from the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook

Cut-off Scores



Tasks:

- Recommended cutoffs for both the ***Importance*** and ***Frequency*** scales is 3.0 or above. That is, tasks that, on average, were rated 3.0 or above on both importance and frequency are considered critical for the job.

Competencies:

- Recommended cutoffs for ***Importance*** scale is 3.0 or above and 2.0 or below for the ***Need at Entry*** scale. Competencies with average ratings that meet these cutoffs are considered critical for the job.

Consensus



Used throughout the Job Analysis Process:

- Finalization of tasks
- Finalization of competencies
- Linkages
- Dropped tasks/competencies

Documentation



Thoroughly document any job analysis (activities) you conduct. Date the results and keep them in a file that is maintained exclusively for the position(s) in question. This practice will help you to ensure that your selection methodologies are current and valid.

From the *Delegated Examining Operations Handbook*

Sources of Additional Information



- Delegated Examining Operations Handbook:
http://www.opm.gov/deu/Handbook_2007/DEO_Handbook.pdf
- Personnel Assessment and Selection Resource Center: <http://apps.opm.gov/ADT>
- Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing:
<http://www.apa.org/science/programs/testing/standards.aspx>

Sources of Additional Information



- Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures:
www.siop.org/_Principles/principles.pdf
- Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures:
www.uniformguidelines.com/uniformguidelines.html

Next Steps



- What now?
- Designing an Assessment Strategy
- Upcoming workshops:
 - Developing Occupational Questionnaires – June 7 - 11, 2010
 - Developing Structured Interviews – June 14 - 18, 2010

Contact Information



Classification and Assessment Policy

(202) 606-3600

competency@opm.gov