

5.7: What is Job Analysis?

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the purpose of job analysis
- Identify the steps in the job analysis process
- Identify sources of information for job analysis

OPM (United States Office of Personnel Management) describes job analysis as “a systematic procedure for gathering, documenting, and analyzing information about the content, context, and requirements of the job.”^[1]

Purpose of Job Analysis



The purpose of job analysis is to establish what a job entails, including the required knowledge, skills and abilities or KSA as well as job duties and responsibilities and the conditions of the job. Job analysis is essential documentation and a fundamental resource for human resources management actions including recruiting, compensation, training and assessment and performance evaluation. As OPM notes, “a job analysis is the foundation of human resources management. A valid job analysis provides data that should be used to develop effective recruitment, qualification and assessment, selection, performance management, and career development methodologies.”^[2]

Job analysis serves four primary purposes:

1. Establish and document job-related competencies
2. Identify the job-relatedness of essential tasks and competencies
3. Establish the legal basis for assessment and selection procedures/decisions
4. Establish the basis for determining relative worth

Practice Question

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Steps in Job Analysis

Fundamentals of Human Resource Management authors DeCenzo, et.al. identify the following job-specific steps in the job analysis process:^[3]

- **Establish the organizational relevance of the specific role.** Identify how the job relates to the organization’s strategy. Reality check: If there isn’t a clear connection, the job may not be necessary.
- **Benchmark positions, if necessary.** If it’s impractical to conduct an analysis of every role, jobs can be grouped into categories that have similar characteristics. This is analogous to grouping jobs into categories for compensation purposes, as discussed in Module 8: Compensation and Benefits.
- **Identify inputs.** Determine what data sources will be used and how information will be collected. Review data and information; clarify any questions.
- **Draft the job description.** Formats vary, but there are common and required elements, discussed in Job Descriptions.
- **Finalize the job description.** Review the draft job description with the job supervisor and make revisions as appropriate. The supervisor should approve the final job description.

? Summary: The Job Analysis Process

The job analysis process, including inputs and output, are listed below.^[4]

Inputs

- Sources of Data:
 - Organization Chart
 - Managers
 - Employees
- Methods of Collecting Data
 - Observations
 - Interviews
 - Questionnaires
 - Processes

Position Data / Information

- Purpose of Role
- Reporting Relationship
- Key Accountabilities
- Internal & External Communication
- Machines & Equipments
- Knowledge & Experience
- Skills

Output

- Job Description

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Sources of Information

As noted above, determining what a job consists of involves identifying sources of information and determining how data will be collected. Internal sources of information include published information including organizational charts, job announcements, position descriptions; direct or indirect (e.g., review of video) observation; input from management, employees and/or a relevant subject matter expert, obtained through interviews or via questionnaires. An additional option for collecting data is the diary method, where a job incumbent keeps a diary or log of daily activities.

Information obtained from internal sources can be supplemented with or compared with external data. A key source of information—relevant for career exploration and job analysis, as the site's welcome notes—is the [O*Net OnLine](#) database. O*Net's About states the site “is the nation's primary source of occupational information. O*Net's database is updated on a continual basis and “contains hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors on almost 1,000 occupations covering the entire U.S. economy.” The section of particular interest to job analysts and human resource management in general is the Content Module, which provides the “anatomy” or distinguishing characteristics of an occupation including knowledge, skills and abilities and other job dimensions.

O*Net data is organized in the following six major domains:

- **Worker Characteristics.** Enduring characteristics that may influence both performance and the capacity to acquire knowledge and skills required for effective work performance.
- **Worker Requirements.** Descriptors referring to work-related attributes acquired and/or developed through experience and education.
- **Experience Requirements.** Requirements related to previous work activities and explicitly linked to certain types of work activities.

- **Occupational Requirements.** A comprehensive set of variables or detailed elements that describe what various occupations require.
- **Workforce Characteristics.** Variables that define and describe the general characteristics of occupations that may influence occupational requirements.
- **Occupation-Specific Information.** Variables or other Content Model elements of selected or specific occupations.

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? Learn More

O*Net's [Content Model](#) page is interactive; data can be accessed by clicking on a particular section or domain. For example, clicking on Worker Requirements links to a page with four primary folders: Abilities, Occupational Interest, Work Values and Work Styles. Nested under Abilities, defined as “Enduring attributes of the individual that influence performance” are four folders: Cognitive Abilities, Psychomotor Abilities, Physical Abilities and Sensory Abilities.

Completing Job Analysis



As described by the OPM, a job analysis is “a study of what workers do on the job, what competencies are necessary to do it, what resources are used in doing it, and the conditions under which it is done.”^[5] Note that a job analysis is not a job evaluation; that is, the analysis is not an evaluation of the person currently performing the job.

Conducting a job analysis includes the following processes:

- **Collecting Data.** Gathering information from published sources, observation, interviews, online databases, such as O*Net or career sites.
- **Developing Tasks.** Developing a description of the “activities an employee performs on a regular basis in order to carry out the functions of the job.”^[6]
- **Developing Competencies.** Describing the knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics required for successful performance of the role or occupational function. For information on how to write competencies, refer to OPM's [Competencies Quick Tips](#) sheet.
- **Validating & Rating Tasks & Competencies.** Subject matter expert (SME) review and rating of tasks and competencies. A director supervisor or highly accomplished incumbent would be considered SMEs.
- **Finalizing Tasks & Competencies.** Finalization of tasks and competencies; those that are not rated by SMEs are required to successfully perform the job are dropped. The job analysis should be documented for validity and dated to provide a reference for updates.

To elaborate on the rating point, the OPM recommends that tasks that are rated as both frequent (every few days to weekly) and important (on a scale from Not Important to Extremely Important) be considered critical for the job. The OPM ranks competencies based on importance and when the skill is needed—for example, on entry or within 6 months, recommending that competencies be considered critical if considered at least Important and needed within the first 3 months.

? Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/18145>

1. U.S. Office of Personnel Management. "Frequently Asked Questions Assessment Policy." U.S. Office of Personnel Management. OPM. Accessed October 14, 2019. ↵
2. "Delegated Examining Operations Handbook: A Guide for Federal Agency Examining Offices." U.S. Office of Personnel Management. June 2019. Accessed September 10, 2019. ↵
3. DeCenzo, David A., Stephen P. Robbins, and Susan L Verhulst. 2016. *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons ↵
4. People Excellence Team. "What is Job Analysis." pesync. August 28, 2018. Accessed September 10, 2019. ↵
5. "Job Analysis." United States Office of Personnel Management. Accessed September 10, 2019. ↵
6. Ibid. ↵

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