

Occupational Analysis Frequently Asked Questions

What topics should be covered in an Occupational Analysis?

An Occupational Analysis of a licensed profession should include only content that is pertinent to the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. Content included should not pertain to a practitioner's business success. In addition, an Occupational Analysis must focus on what is necessary for minimally competent individuals within the practice of the profession, rather than on general business and recordkeeping skills or general communication skills. All activities in the analysis should be observable and have an impact on public health, safety and welfare (Chinn & Hertz, 2010).

Is an Occupational analysis conducted differently for occupational licensure or certification than for other purposes?

Yes. An Occupational analysis is designed to capture the tasks performed and competencies required at the time a person enters into the profession. This "entry level" perspective affects the decision of who to interview in terms of experience---for licensure and certification a goodly proportion of the interviewees should have been licensed five years or less. The tasks and knowledge identified, particularly those within licensed professions, should be those related to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Performance of the tasks and knowledge does not guarantee success on the job. Rather, an analysis conducted for licensing and certification purposes relates to minimum competence for the credential (Chinn & Hertz, 2010).

We have been told that our Occupational Analysis is obsolete and that we should have a new one performed for our examination program to be considered content valid. What kind of standards should we apply to evaluate the quality of an Occupational Analysis?

The basis for the construction of a content-valid examination is the Occupational Analysis. An Occupational Analysis is a comprehensive survey of job tasks and knowledge required to perform the tasks.

First, the lists of tasks and knowledge that are developed by conducting interviews and/or focus groups should be comprehensive. The development of the list should continue until no new or additional information can be obtained. Second, the level of specificity should be consistent for all tasks and knowledge. Furthermore, the statements should provide sufficient detail so that they are useful during the construction of examination questions (Chinn & Hertz, 2010).

Generally, Occupational Analyses must be updated every 5-7 years depending on the type and complexity of the occupation and the propensity for significant changes to the practice.

What is the role of educators in the Occupational Analysis process?

Educators may be included but their role should be minimized. Educators may promote inclusion of specific academic subject matter rather than subject matter appropriate for

licensing or certification purposes. However, in the context of a focus group of content experts, educators can provide valuable insights into the competencies (tasks and knowledge) necessary for practice (Chinn & Hertz, 2010).

What is the role of board members and professional associations?

An Occupational Analysis is not performed as a reaction to individual opinions, sentiments, or the whims of special interest groups. Therefore, the direct role of board members and professional associations should be minimized. An Occupational Analysis is an objective study of practice that should be free of influences from individuals or special interest groups. If an Occupational Analysis is done properly, the concerns of these groups should be addressed (Chinn & Hertz, 2010).

Who should be interviewed for the Occupational Analysis? How many people should be interviewed to make sure that all the information is covered?

Practitioners from a broad range of practice settings, geographic locations, and levels of experience can be interviewed. The purpose of the interviews is to provide the basis of the list of tasks and knowledge to be included on the survey questionnaire.

Interviewees should be assured that the information obtained from the interviews is not the sole source of data for the Occupational Analysis. Typically, data is obtained from a survey questionnaire and panels of subject matter experts who are representative of the profession. Even if the primary source of information is established by a focus group, a few practitioners should be interviewed to provide background information and insights into the profession.

The number of subject matter experts to be interviewed depends upon the complexity of the profession and the issues involved in practice. For technical-level professions, 10-15 interviews are usually sufficient. For those professions that require advanced degrees and supervised training programs, 20-30 interviews may be needed. The number of subspecialties or work settings may necessitate additional interviews (Chinn & Hertz, 2010).

I. References

Chinn, R. N., & Hertz, N. R. (2010). *Job analysis: A guide for credentialing organizations*. Lexington, KY: The Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation.