

OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS



PURPOSE

An occupational analysis (OA) defines a profession in terms of the actual tasks that new licensees must be able to perform safely and competently at the time of licensure. To develop a licensing examination that is fair, job-related, and legally defensible, it must be based solidly upon what licensees actually do on the job. See OPES Policy 18-02. The Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA) Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) states that an OA should be conducted routinely every five to seven years to verify that it accurately describes current practice.

PROCESS

Typically, the process begins by selecting and interviewing a sample of licensees who represent the geographic, ethnic, gender, experience, and practice specialty mix of the profession. During the interview, they identify the tasks that they perform within major categories of their profession and the knowledge required to perform those tasks. A representative group of subject matter experts (SMEs) meets to finalize the task and knowledge statements, and to develop a questionnaire. The questionnaire is sent to all or a representative sample of licensed practitioners. The data are analyzed, and the results are used to update the description of practice and to develop an examination outline.

EXAMINATION OUTLINE

The examination outline specifies the tasks and knowledge that a newly licensed practitioner is expected to master by the time of licensure. It also identifies the relative weight of each major subject area to be assessed in an examination. The examination outline is used to develop valid questions for new examinations.

CONTENT VALIDATION STRATEGY

For a licensure examination to be valid, it must be empirically linked to a recent OA. OPES recommends that OAs be conducted or completed every five to seven years.

LEGAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Several statutes, standards, and professional guidelines set criteria for the licensing process in California. These include the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014), the Federal Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, California Government Code section 12944 of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, Business and Professions Code section 139, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

CONTACT

To learn more about these and other examination-related services, please contact OPES at (916) 575-7240.