

Guidance for NCCA Standard 14

Designing	Conferring
Developing	Accrediting
Implementing	Maintaining



Functional Manager	PMO
Component	Candidate

The NCCA standards were recently revised and will be in use starting January 2016. The purpose of this job aid is to provide general guidance and interpretation of Standard 14 of the 2016 NCCA standards. This job aid is for individuals supporting certification development functions and/or the application process for NCCA accreditation.

Standard 14: Job Analysis

The certification program must have a job analysis that defines and analyzes domains and tasks related to the purpose of the credential, and a summary of the study must be published.

Essential Elements:

- A. The job analysis must lead to clearly delineated domains and tasks that characterize proficient performance.
- B. A job analysis must be conducted in accordance with sound psychometric practice. If a validation survey is not conducted, sufficient justification for relying only on non-quantitative data must be provided.
- C. The report of the job analysis must describe the methods, results, and outcomes of the job analysis study, including supporting documentation for each element and sufficient information to justify the study's findings and conclusions.
- D. A job analysis must be conducted frequently enough to ensure that the content specifications accurately reflect current practice.

General Guidance¹

For Standard 14, NCCA expects that programs will submit documentation that indicates that the certification program is compliant with the standard and meets sound psychometric practice.

Observed Challenge(s)

Standard 14 presents some challenges if the job analysis does not follow sound psychometric practices. Challenges with the job analysis will raise concerns for documentation related to other standards, as the job analysis serves as the foundation for other elements of the certification program.

¹ For clarification or more specific guidance, please contact GSX (asiskind@skillsdmo.com).

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Further Guidance

Delineated Domains & Tasks Critical Considerations	Discussion
<p>Does the job analysis have definition of domains and tasks? Is it clear what domains and tasks fall within the job?</p> <p>Are products associated with the job analysis aligned with domains and tasks specified in the job analysis?</p> <p>Are the SMEs who participated in the job analysis representative of the target population?</p>	<p>Common practice is to use a number of qualitative research techniques to develop and verify content in the job analysis. These include, but are not limited to, SME panels/focus groups, interviews, and legacy document reviews. Regardless of which approach is used to develop the content, the program should always have a separate set of SMEs “verify” that the content is accurate. This step will ensure that the job analysis has the appropriate performance domains and tasks. The program should also ensure that whatever methodology is used during the development and verification phase is appropriately documented, including SME participation, decisions made, etc.</p>
Sound Psychometric Practice Critical Considerations	Discussion
<p>What methodologies were used during the job analysis to define domains, tasks, etc.?</p> <p>Does the program have appropriate and current documentation reflecting the most recent job analysis?</p> <p>How did the program conduct the validation phase of the job analysis?</p>	<p>After developing the job analysis content and having that content verified by a separate set of SMEs, the next step is to have that content validated by a separate set of SMEs. The NCCA standards indicate a strong preference for a validation survey. If it is possible, certification programs should try to conduct a large-scale survey that is consistent with sound psychometric practice. For already-existing certification programs, surveys can target the existing certification-holder population.</p>

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Job Analysis Report Critical Considerations	Discussion
<p>Does the job analysis report clearly identify three phases of analytical work (i.e., development, verification, validation)?</p> <p>Does the job analysis report clearly describe the methodologies used to conduct the analysis in each phase?</p> <p>Does the job analysis report (or other technical documentation) clearly describe the SMEs who participated in each phase of the job analysis?</p> <p>Does the job analysis report clearly describe how DoD conducts business, and how that process defines “representation” in terms of SME participation and choice of methodology?</p> <p>Does the job analysis report identify relevant psychometric consultants, as appropriate?</p> <p>Does the job analysis report include a copy of the survey, as appropriate?</p>	<p>The job analysis should include three phases: develop, verify, validate. The report should specify and document the methodologies used and SMEs engaged at each phase of the process.</p> <p>The job analysis report should also provide some introduction and context for NCCA reviewers who are likely unfamiliar with DoD. This means that the job analysis report should include an explanation of how DoD conducts business (e.g., policy & doctrine guide execution of capabilities, components may differ in execution of capabilities according to mission). The report should also indicate that these considerations drive the choice of methodologies (e.g., how legacy document review is a critical phase because the workforce requirements derive from DoD-wide policy).</p> <p>If not detailed elsewhere, the job analysis report should detail the qualifications of the psychometric consultants who participated in the job analysis.</p> <p>The job analysis report should include (likely as an appendix) a copy of the validation survey. In addition, the job analysis report will need to include the following information about the survey: the target population (and how you determined who to send it to), representativeness of the target population, response rate, and representativeness of the response rate.</p>

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Job Analysis Frequency Critical Considerations	Discussion
<p>Does the certification program have a policy in place that specifies how frequent the job analysis must be performed?</p> <p>Does the certification program depart from a five-year timeframe, and if so, what is the justification for doing so?</p> <p>Does the program have a mechanism in place for periodically reviewing and confirming relevance of content specifications?</p>	<p>Given that jobs can change frequently and that the job analysis serves as the foundation for the certification program, the program must have a policy that specifies (1) how frequent the job analysis should take place, and (2) how the program collects information to ensure that the job analysis remains valid. If the certification employs a timeframe that is different from the five-year timeframe noted in the NCCA standards, the program should provide some justification for doing so. Jobs that change more quickly should employ a faster timeframe, while jobs that change more slowly should employ a slower timeframe.</p> <p>Given the centrality of DoD policy to the job analysis and the certification programs, one approach to ensuring the ongoing relevance of content is to implement a mechanism for monitoring the landscape for relevant policy changes. As foundational policy documents change, so too may the knowledge and skills needed to successfully perform the job.</p>

Suggestion(s) for Addressing Observed Challenge(s)

We recommend the development of an Job Analysis Report (see below for a sample report structure) which provides more granular information about the process used to fulfill requirements associated with Standard 14. In particular, the Job Analysis Report should address content development, content review, content validation, and content quality assurance.

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Sample Report

JOB ANALYSIS REPORT – JAR (Standard 14: Job Analysis)

- a. An Introduction section that describes the skill standards development with special emphasis on: (1) how the stages of the skill standards development are aligned with sound psychometric practice, and (2) rationale for methods used in the three stages (i.e., develop content, verify content with SMEs, and organizational validation of codified content) of skill standards development process. This section must include a detailed description of how the Department conducts its business (i.e., how policies and doctrines guide execution of capabilities; how components may differ in specific procedures for executing those capabilities; and their implications on personnel requirements), and how these factors influence the definition of “representatives” (in terms of “participants”) and the choice of methods. It also must include information regarding the date range of the study, and a specified date for next review of the skill standards.
- b. A Content Development section that describes: (1) methods used to delineate domains and tasks (i.e., Thought Leader Interviews, Legacy Document Review), (2) rationale underlying the use of these methods, (3) description of the execution of these methods (with appropriate referencing to the SUR), and (4) results of the execution of these methods (with special emphasis on criteria used in the execution of the methods and quantifiable results).
- c. A Content Review section that describes: (1) method used to review domains and tasks (i.e., iterative SME focus groups), (2) rationale underlying the use of these method, (3) description of the execution of this method (with appropriate referencing to the SUR), and (4) results of the execution of this method (with special emphasis on criteria used in the execution of the method and quantifiable results).
- d. A Content Validation section that describes: (1) method used to validate domains and tasks (i.e., Organizational Review), (2) rationale underlying the use of this method, (3) description of the execution of these methods (with appropriate referencing to the SUR), and results of the execution of this method (with special emphasis on criteria used in the execution of the methods and quantifiable results). For “specialty certifications”, a survey should be used to collect information from SMEs (taking into account vision for the certification and organizational factors) regarding the importance of the identified domains (this step would reflect an expansion of the current data collection protocols used to establish the “relative criticality index” for each identified domain). For “core certifications,” the survey requirement can be fulfilled as part of the blueprint development process, and reported as part of the

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Examination Specification Report.

- e. A Content Quality Assurance section that describes, in greater detail, skill standards refresh procedures.
- a. An Enclosure section that: (1) identifies psychometric consultants used to conduct the job analysis study, and (2) a copy of the survey, when appropriate.