

## WHAT, WHEN, WHY, AND HOW? A QUICK GUIDE TO JOB ANALYSIS

### What is job analysis?

Job analysis tells us 'what good looks like' for a given position. It is systematic, data-driven, and essential to successful recruitment outcomes. Job analysis has two principal outputs.

- Job responsibility statement: a list of the key outputs of the role.
- Job specification: the attributes required for success in the role (including knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics).

The analysis should look at both the technical and personality requirements of the role and should reflect the needs of the role today and in the future.

### When should I conduct a job analysis?

- Job analysis should be conducted before recruitment takes place, but you also need a feedback loop at the end of the selection process.
- Job analysis is not a one-off activity. You need to review and update it as circumstances alter – when there is significant organisation change, for example, or a deterioration in the predictive validity of the assessment process.

### Why should I do job analysis?

A rigorous job analysis will allow your organisation to:

- Identify the characteristics that distinguish the highest performers from average and poor performers, thus allowing you to focus assessment and selection accordingly.
- Understand which competencies are trainable and which you need to select for.
- Choose the right selection tests.
- Provide evidence to defend any accusations that selection methods are unfair to protected groups.
- Develop structured interviews, which are much more accurate than unstructured interviews.
- Increase diversity.

### How do I do job analysis?

A well-conducted job analysis ideally comprises all three of the following elements.

- **Quantitative data analysis.** Use statistical analysis to identify the elements necessary to perform the role and characteristics that distinguish high performers.

Your organisation is equipped to conduct quantitative data analysis if you can answer yes to all of the following questions:

- Do you have a large enough sample of similar roles to make statistically valid comparisons?
- Do you have good quality performance data that distinguishes between poor, average, and excellent performers?
- Do you have historical data going back over multiple years?
- Do you have data on the characteristics you want to analyse, or the hypotheses you want to test?

- **Scientific research on specific jobs or job families.** To supplement statistical analysis, you can tap into decades of research into the performance criteria for specific roles. Off-the-shelf solutions such as the U.S. Government's [Occupational Information Network](#) or job profiles produced by consultancies can be valuable. Off-the-shelf solutions will be an essential method of job analysis in cases where it is not feasible to do a complete statistical analysis.

- **Qualitative input from key stakeholders.** The most common approach companies take to analysing jobs is using interviews, questionnaires, and/or focus groups to ask key stakeholders what they think are the important criteria for success in the role. This strategy is valuable for helping to win the buy-in of key stakeholders, but it isn't necessarily scientifically valid.

To increase the validity of a qualitative analysis:

- Develop a pre-determined set of criteria or questions;
- Ask interviewees to rank these; and
- Check your conclusions against the scientific literature related to job performance.

Avoid beginning qualitative interviews with blank pieces of paper.