

Executive Summary

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the community of professionals engaged in health information management, providing support to members and strengthening the industry and profession, commissioned the Registered Health Information Administrator (RHIA) Job Analysis from Thomson Prometric.

A job analysis is designed to obtain descriptive information about the tasks performed in a job and the knowledge needed to adequately perform those tasks. The purpose of the RHIA job analysis was to:

- develop and validate the listing of the tasks and knowledge related to work performed by RHIA's;
- develop test specifications for the RHIA Certification Examination;
- obtain useful information that can guide professional development initiatives for RHIA's; and,
- ensure that AHIMA has up-to-date information about expected changes in the RHIA job role over the next few years.

Conduct of the Job Analysis.

The job analysis consisted of several activities: survey development; survey dissemination; compilation of survey results; and, test specifications development. The successful outcome of the job analysis was dependent on the excellent information provided by RHIA professionals throughout the study.

Survey Development.

Survey research is an efficient and effective way to identify the tasks and knowledge that are important to the work performed by large numbers of RHIA's. The 195 tasks and 90 knowledge statements included on the survey covered the following domains:

Tasks:

1. Health Data Management
2. Health Statistics, Biomedical Research and Quality Management
3. Health Services Organization and Delivery
4. Information Technology and Systems
5. Organization and Management

Knowledge:

1. Biomedical Sciences
2. Health Data Management
3. Health Statistics, Biomedical Research and Quality Management
4. Health Services Organization and Delivery
5. Information Technology and Systems
6. Organization and Management

The development of the survey was based on information from a number of sources:

- Thomson Prometric reviewed the existing RHIA competency statements and developed a preliminary list of tasks and knowledge.
- A Task Force Committee comprised of RHIA's reviewed and revised 1) the preliminary list of tasks and knowledge and 2) the first draft of the RHIA survey.
- RHIA's reviewed a pilot version of the survey to ensure that the instrument was clearly written and comprehensive in content.

Survey Content.

The survey consisted of five sections: Background and General Information; Tasks; Knowledge; Recommendation for Test Content; and Comments.

Dissemination of the RHIA Survey.

Thomson Prometric staff produced a Web-based survey that AHIMA disseminated in September 2004 by e-mail to 9,807 RHIA's. Participants were offered two continuing education credits (CEU) for submitting a completed survey.

Results.

Survey Response Rate.

A total of 3,246 of the 9,807 RHIA's who received survey invitations, or 33.10%, participated in the survey. The response rate was very satisfactory. Based on the analysis of survey responses, a representative group of RHIA's completed the survey in sufficient numbers to well meet the requirements for statistical analysis of the results.

Profile of the Survey Respondents.

The majority of respondents are female (93.20%) and hold a bachelor's or master's degree (76.10% and 21.50%, respectively). Most respondents have earned the RHIA since 1980.

Survey Ratings.

Participants were asked to rate each task and knowledge in relation to its importance in their current position. Importance ratings were provided along a five-point continuum ranging from "of no importance" to "very important".

Content Coverage.

Evidence was provided in this job analysis on the comprehensiveness of the content coverage within the domains. If the tasks and knowledge within a domain are adequately defined, then it should be judged as being well covered. Respondents indicated that the content was well-covered, thus supporting the importance and comprehensiveness of the defined domains.

Write in Comments.

Survey respondents answered two open-ended questions about their professional development needs and expected changes in their work role as an RHIA.

Test Specifications Development.

In November 2004, a Test Specifications Committee was convened to review the job analysis findings and create the test content outline that will guide the development of future versions of the RHIA Certification Examination.

Summary.

In summary, this study took a multi-method approach to identifying the tasks and knowledge that are important to the competent performance of RHIA's. The job analysis process allowed for input from a representative group of RHIA's and was conducted within the guidelines of professionally sound practice.

The results of the job analysis can be used by AHIMA to develop new versions of the RHIA Certification Examination and guide professional development initiatives.