

**JOB ANALYSIS FOR THE
CERTIFIED CODING SPECIALIST—
PHYSICIAN-BASED (CCS-P)**

CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF

**AMERICAN HEALTH INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (AHIMA)**



by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
METHOD.....	3
RESULTS.....	8
SURVEY RESPONSE RATE	8
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS	8
TASK AND KNOWLEDGE RATINGS BY OVERALL GROUP OF RESPONDENTS	9
CONTENT COVERAGE RATINGS	11
CCS-P EXAMINATION CONTENT	12
WRITE-IN COMMENTS	12
DEVELOPMENT OF TEST SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE CCS-P EXAMINATION.....	13
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	19

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Response Rates for the CCS-P Job Analysis Survey	8
Table 2. Task Statements by the Pass, Borderline and Fail Categories.....	9
Table 3. Knowledge/Skill Statements by the Pass, Borderline, and Fail Categories	10
Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of Task Content Coverage	11
Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations of Knowledge/Skills Content Coverage	11
Table 6. Survey Respondents' Test Content Recommendations by Mean Percentages and Standard Deviations	12
Table 7. CCS-P Test Content Weights Recommended by the CCS-P Test Specifications Committee	13
Table 8. CCS-P Exam Cognitive Levels	14
Table 9. Approved Tasks for the CCS-P Test Specifications.....	14
Table 10. Approved Knowledge/Skills for the CCS-P Test Specifications	16

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A. Job Analysis Participants
- Appendix B. Job Analysis Survey, Invitation, and Reminder Letters
- Appendix C. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents Who Completed the CCS-P Job Analysis Survey
- Appendix D. Task Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Distributions
- Appendix E. Knowledge Means, Standard Deviations, and Frequency Distributions
- Appendix F. Index of Agreement for Tasks and Knowledges
- Appendix G. Content Coverage Comments
- Appendix G1. Tasks
- Appendix G2. Knowledges
- Appendix H. Write-In Comments
- Appendix H1. Professional Development
- Appendix H2. Change in Work Role
- Appendix I. Linkages of Tasks and Knowledges

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) commissioned the Certified Coding Specialist—Physician-based (CCS-P) Job Analysis from 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 CCS-P job analysis was to:

- develop and validate the listing of the tasks and knowledge/skills related to work performed by CCS-Ps;
- develop test specifications for the CCS-P Examination;
- obtain useful information that can guide professional development initiatives for CCS-Ps; and,
- ensure that AHIMA has up-to-date information about expected changes in the CCS-P 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 CCS-Ps throughout the study.

Survey Development

Survey research is an efficient and effective way to identify the tasks and knowledge/skills that are important to the work performed by large numbers of CCS-Ps. The 44 tasks and 64 knowledge/skills statements included on the survey covered the following domains:

1. Health Information Documentation
2. ICD-9-CM Diagnosis Coding
3. CPT and HCPCS II Coding
4. Reimbursement
5. Data Quality and Analysis
6. Information and Communication Technologies
7. Compliance and Regulatory Issues

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

- The previous CCS-P job analysis served as the primary resource for developing a preliminary listing of task and knowledge/skill statements.
- A Task Force Committee comprised of CCS-Ps reviewed and revised: 1) the preliminary list of tasks and knowledge/skills and 2) the first draft of the CCS-P survey.
- CCS-Ps 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: Section 1, Background and General Information; Section 2, Tasks; Section 3, Knowledge/Skills; Section 4, Recommendations for Test Content; and Section 5, Comments.

Dissemination of the CCS-P Survey

Prometric staff produced and disseminated an online survey on May 31, 2007 by e-mail to 3,580 CCS-Ps.

Two survey completion reminders were emailed prior to the close of the survey on July 2.

Results

Survey Response Rate

A total of 1,279 or 35.73% of the CCS-Ps who received invitations participated in the survey. Based on the analysis of survey responses, a representative group of CCS-Ps completed the survey in sufficient numbers to meet the requirements for statistical analysis of the results.

Profile of the Survey Respondents

The majority of respondents are female (96.39%). By education, 28.15% have completed an Associate's Degree and 25.25% hold a Bachelor's Degree. Less than half, 42%, of participants have held the CCS-P credential for more than 5 years. Nearly 64% of the respondents spend more than 50 % of their time coding.

Survey Ratings

Participants were asked to rate the tasks and knowledge/skills using the following rating scales:

Tasks:

Importance: How important is competent performance of the task in your current position?

Response choices: 0=Of no importance, 1=Of little importance, 2=Of moderate importance, 3=Important, 4=Very important

Performance: Indicate whether you perform or supervise the work.

Response choices: 0=Neither perform or supervise the work, 1=Perform the work, 2= Supervise the work, 3= Both perform and supervise the work

Knowledge/Skills:

Importance: How important is the knowledge/skill for competent performance in your current position?

Response choices: 0=Of no importance, 1=Of little importance, 2=Of moderate importance, 3=Important, 4=Very important

A majority of tasks and knowledge/skills statements were rated as "very important" For performance ratings, a majority of the tasks statements were either "performed" or "both performed and supervised."

Content Coverage

Evidence was provided in this job analysis on the comprehensiveness of the content coverage within the domains. If the tasks and knowledge/skills 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 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 a CCS-P.

Test Specifications Development

On August 6 and 7, 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 CCS-P Examination.

Summary

In summary, this study took a multi-method approach to identifying the tasks and knowledge/ skills that are important to the competent performance of CCS-Ps. The job analysis process allowed for input from a representative group of CCS-Ps 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 CCS-P Examination and guide professional development initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the premier association of health information management (HIM) professionals. AHIMA's 50,000 members are dedicated to the effective management of personal health information needed to deliver quality healthcare to the public. Founded in 1928 to improve the quality of medical records, AHIMA is committed to advancing the HIM profession in an increasingly electronic and global environment through leadership in advocacy, education, certification, and lifelong learning.¹

About the CCS-P Program

Certified Coding Specialists—Physician-based are professionals skilled in classifying medical data from patient records, generally in the physician-based settings, such as physician offices, group practices, multi-specialty clinics, or specialty centers. These coding practitioners review patients' records and assign numeric codes for each diagnosis and procedure. To perform this task, they must possess expertise in the ICD-9-CM coding system and the CPT coding system. In addition, the CCS-P is knowledgeable of medical terminology, disease processes, and pharmacology. Hospitals or medical providers report coded data to insurance companies or the government, in the case of Medicare and Medicaid recipients, for reimbursement of their expenses. Researchers and public health officials also use coded medical data to monitor patterns and explore new interventions. Coding accuracy is thus highly important to healthcare organizations because of its impact on revenues and describing health outcomes. Accordingly, the CCS-P credential demonstrates tested data quality and integrity skills in a coding practitioner. The CCS-P exam assesses mastery or proficiency in coding rather than entry-level skills.²

About the CCS-P Job Analysis

The major purpose of the job analysis was to identify the tasks and knowledge/skills that are important for competent performance by CCS-Ps. The development of content-valid CCS-P Examinations is based on validated tasks and knowledge/skills identified through the job analysis process. Another purpose of the job analysis was to identify important professional development needs and future trends in the profession.

This report describes the job analysis including the:

- rationale for conducting the job analysis;
- methods used to define job-related tasks and knowledge/skills; and,
- types of data analysis conducted and their results.

Job Analysis and Adherence to Professional Standards

Job analysis refers to procedures designed to obtain descriptive information about the tasks performed on a job and/or the knowledge, skills, or abilities thought necessary to adequately perform those tasks. The specific type of job information collected for a job analysis is determined by the purpose for which the information will be used.

¹ AHIMA Web site, www.ahima.org

² AHIMA Web site, www.ahima.org

For purposes of developing credentialing examinations, a job analysis should identify important activities, knowledge, skills, and/or abilities.

The use of a job analysis (also known as practice analysis, role delineation, role and function study) to define the content domain is a critical component in establishing the content validity of licensure and certification examinations. Content validity refers to the extent to which the content covered by an examination overlaps with the important components of a job (tasks, knowledge, skills, or abilities).

A well-designed job analysis should include the participation of a representative group of subject-matter experts who reflect the diversity within the job. Diversity refers to regional or job context factors and to subject-matter expert factors such as experience, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Demonstration of content validity is accomplished through the judgments of subject-matter experts. The process is enhanced by the inclusion of large numbers of subject-matter experts who represent the diversity of the relevant areas of expertise.

*The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*³ (1999) (*The Standards*) is a comprehensive technical guide that provides criteria for the evaluation of tests, testing practices, and the effects of test use. It was developed jointly by the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). The guidelines presented in *The Standards*, by professional consensus, have come to define the necessary components of quality testing. As a consequence, a testing program that adheres to *The Standards* is more likely to be judged to be valid and defensible than one that does not.

As stated in Standard 14.14,

“The content domain to be covered by a credentialing test should be defined clearly and justified in terms of the importance of the content for credential-worthy performance in an occupation or profession. A rationale should be provided to support a claim that the knowledge or skills being assessed are required for credential-worthy performance in an occupation and are consistent with the purpose for which the licensing or certification program was instituted...Some form of job or job analysis provides the primary basis for defining the content domain... (p.161)

The CCS-P Job Analysis was designed to follow the guidelines presented in *The Standards* and to adhere to accepted professional practice.

³ American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education. (1999). *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.