

Executive Summary

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), a community of professionals engaged in health information management, providing support to members and strengthening the industry and profession, commissioned the Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT) 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 RHIT job analysis was to:

- develop and validate the listing of the tasks and knowledge related to work performed by RHITs;
- develop test specifications for the RHIT Certification Examination;
- obtain useful information that can guide professional development initiatives for RHITs; and,
- ensure that AHIMA has up-to-date information about expected changes in the RHIT 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 RHITs 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 RHITs. The 103 task and 100 knowledge statements included on the survey covered the following domains:

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

5. Organizational Resources

6. General (Knowledge only)

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

- AHIMA served as the primary resource for developing a preliminary listing of competency statements.
- A Task Force Committee comprised of RHITs reviewed and revised: 1) the preliminary list of competencies and 2) the first draft of the RHIT survey.
- RHITs 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; Section 4, Recommendations for Test Content; and Section 5, Comments.

Dissemination of the RHIT Survey.

Thomson Prometric staff produced an online survey that AHIMA disseminated in May 2005 by e-mail to 15,981 RHITs. Participants were offered two continuing education credits (CEU) for submitting a completed survey.

Results.

Survey Response Rate.

A total of 2,386 RHITs or 14.93% of the RHITs who received invitations participated in the survey. Based on the analysis of survey responses, a representative group of RHITs 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 (97.10%) and have completed an Associate's Degree Program (75.30%) or hold a Bachelor's Degree (13.70%). From 1990 to 1999, 43% of the participants received the RHIT certification.

Survey Ratings.

Participants were asked to rate the tasks and knowledges in relation to their importance for competent performance 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 comprehensiveness of the defined domains.

Write in Comments.

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

Test Specifications Development.

In August 2005, 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 RHIT 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 RHITs. The job analysis process allowed for input from a representative group of RHITs 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 RHIT Certification Examination and guide professional development initiatives.