

How Are Work Keys Occupational Profiles Conducted?

Briefly, profiling an occupation involves the following four steps:

1. Developing a list of the most critical tasks to the occupation;
2. Identifying the tasks associated with each Work Keys skill;
3. Identifying on-the-job behaviors associated with each skill as it is used on the job; and
4. Determining the Work Keys skills levels of the occupation.

As the initial step, subject matter experts (SMEs), consisting of employees identified by the participating organization as having firsthand knowledge of the requirements of the occupation, review a task list taken from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* for relevance and comprehensiveness.

They delete any tasks they consider unimportant, revise some task statements, and add tasks that they consider important to the occupation. The SMEs rate each task on both IMPORTANCE (i.e., the significance of the task to overall job performance) and RELATIVE TIME SPENT (i.e., the amount of time spent performing this task compared with that spent on other tasks).

The CRITICALITY of each task to the occupation (the multiplication of IMPORTANCE and RELATIVE TIME SPENT) is then calculated. The SMEs review the list of tasks and their CRITICALITY ratings and revise the list so that only the most critical tasks remain.

Using this list of the most critical tasks, the SMEs discuss how the Work Keys skills (i.e., Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, etc.) are required for performance of each task, and then identify the tasks associated with each skill (tasks could be associated with more than one skill). Guided by these new lists, the SMEs identify on-the-job behaviors and activities that required a particular skill, such as reading manuals, calculating the sum of a list of numbers, etc.

Finally, the SMEs review the descriptions of the Work Keys skills to determine the levels of Reading for Information, Locating Information, Listening, Writing, Applied Mathematics, Applied Technology, Teamwork, and/or Observation needed to perform the tasks of the occupation.

The resulting occupational profile as determined by the SMEs is presented in table format. A list of the most critical tasks and a description of the Work Keys skills levels comprise the remainder of a Work Keys Occupational Profile.

Occupational profile sessions generally take between 6 and 8 hours. They generally begin at 9AM and last until completed – usually between 3 and 5PM. There is also a short company visit (about 1 hour) that is conducted, by the profiler, a week ahead of the occupational profile session. This gives the profiler an opportunity to see the work being performed, ask questions, and gather additional information that will be helpful during the occupational profile session.

For more information, call the Bay Area Industry Education Council at 510/795-6488 X6171 or visit the BAIEC web site at: www.baiec.org.