Practice Analysis: What, Why, and How
Certification is NOT like other association products/services

- Higher level of risk to the association
- The market and/or regulators may use certification for high-stakes decisions
- Technical guidelines dictate “right practice” (vs. best practice)
- And …
Decisions should be based on what is in the best interest of the standard for the profession – NOT what will make members happy.
What is a practice analysis?

A systematic collection of data describing the knowledge, skills and/or competencies required to competently practice a profession.
Practice analysis is NOT a single methodology.

- Review of pertinent literature
- Observation of practice
- Collection of work activity diaries
- Expert panel & focus groups
- Surveys
- Structured interviews
- Critical incident techniques
We all know what we do.

Why is a practice analysis needed?
To confirm the **validity** of the examination content and the eligibility requirements

**Validity ...**

The extent to which an assessment method actually measures what it purports to measure
To conform to standards of the testing and certification industries

- The certification program must analyze, define, and publish performance domains and tasks related to the purpose of the credential, and the knowledge and/or skill associated with the performance domains and tasks, and use them to develop specifications for the assessment instruments (Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs, NCCA)

- Appropriate methodology and procedures (such as collecting and maintaining statistical data) shall be defined to reaffirm . . . the fairness, validity, reliability, and general performance of each exam (ISO/IEC 17024)

- 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. (The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, AERA, APA, & NCME)
To enhance the legal defensibility of the certification program
- Establishes a profile of the profession
- Tracks trends in professional practice
- Informs the development and refinement of professional development programs
- Promotes the certification program
- Builds credibility for the program
- Fosters transparency
- Provides an avenue for stakeholder involvement in the certification process
How do we conduct a practice analysis ... that is consistent with best practices?
- Participation of key stakeholders (e.g., professionals, employers)
- Representative sampling (generalizability)
- Captures current practice while anticipating future change
- Competency vs. knowledge-focused
- Confirmation of representativeness of content
- Replicable methodology
- Reliability of raters and data collection tools
- Collection of confirmatory quantitative data
- Timeliness
- Development of test specifications informed by both practice analysis data and subject matter expertise
What to consider when selecting practice analysis methodologies/procedures

- Is the methodology commonly used?
- How much time is required for implementation?
- What is the cost?
- Will the methodology yield high-quality results?
- What is the reliability of the method (i.e., consistency of results)?
- How might stakeholders view the methodology (e.g., pertinence, user-friendliness)?
- What is the potential value-added?

Overall cost-benefit?