Focus Group Job Analysis Report

Scope:

A detailed report of the Focus Group Job Analysis process and development of examination content and test specifications for a certification body.

Policy Reference:

NCCA 2016 Standards:
Standard 14: Job Analysis
Standard 15: Examination Specifications

ANSI ISO/IEC 17024: 2012 Standards
Standard 8: Certification schemes

The International Ombudsman Association Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP®) Examination

Focus Group Job Analysis Report

May 4-5, 2016

Facilitated by:
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Clearwater, Florida 33763

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Introduction

The following report provides a comprehensive overview and documentation of the focus group Job Analysis Research Study performed on the role of the Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP®). The study was facilitated by psychometric staff from Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc., (SMT). This study was undertaken at the offices of SMT on May 4 and 5, 2016, with the support of a full complement of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). This study begins with an executive summary, moving to a full narrative of the processes undertaken and ends with an approved examination content outline (blueprint) to be used in the development of the CO-OP Examination used for the purpose of certifying organizational ombudsman practitioners.

Executive Summary

In the spring of 2016, the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Board of Certification for Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners (the Board) set out to conduct a scientific research study to profile professional practice relating to the competent performance of organizational ombudsmen practitioners. The mechanism for this study was a focus group Job Analysis research study. The results of the study provide support for the relevance, validity and legal defensibility of the CO-OP program by establishing a link between the knowledge, skills, and tasks requisite of a competent ombudsman practitioner, and successful certification examination performance (e.g., competent practitioners pass the examination). In support of these efforts, the Board contracted with SMT to facilitate a focus group Job Analysis (JA) workshop to examine the critical tasks required for competent, entry-level organizational ombudsman practice.

The Board appointed a Job Analysis Advisory Committee of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to provide content-area expertise. The Committee was comprised of 11 ombudsmen practitioners in good standing, representative of the diversity of practice, experience, location, education and ethnic backgrounds. To inaugurate the study, a comprehensive literature search was initiated by SMT psychometric staff with guidance from the Committee. Literature, job descriptions, performance evaluations, and training curriculum related to ombudsman practice were reviewed and compared to the current CO-OP content outline. The results of the literature search were used to develop an exhaustive list of the skills required of competent practitioners, building upon what was an already-comprehensive working content outline in use on the current CO-OP Examination. This revised exhaustive list was presented to the Advisory Committee for review and consideration prior to the workshop; complete refinements were made during the JA focus group workshop held May 4–5, 2016, at SMT headquarters. The Committee members were asked to consider any tasks that were inadvertently left off of the outline, and to eliminate any that were no longer relevant to practice. All of the SMEs indicated confidence that the list completely described the critical tasks performed by organizational ombudsman practitioners. This decision supports the confidence that the survey depth was reflective of practice across the globe, among various work settings and at an appropriate level of education and experience.

There were 158 tasks on the original exhaustive task listing. A large number of tasks were removed because they were not assessable, testing subjective behavioral concepts such as personal affect. Another significant group of tasks were removed based on Committee consensus that tasks were repeated among the main content areas. Review of the remaining 62 tasks confirmed that all were assessable, and appropriate for inclusion on the CO-OP Examination.

The final approved task listing was translated into an examination content outline, establishing the link between job performance of critical tasks and successful performance on the CO-OP Examination. Finally, the Advisory Committee was asked to consider the three main content areas, along with the nine sub-content areas represented in the final approved content outline. Data was collected, and discussion was held concerning the complexity and number of tasks included in each of these content/sub-content areas, the importance of the tasks within each respective content area, and time spent by organizational ombudsman practitioners performing the tasks. Through this exercise, the Committee established final content area weighting for the examination (see Appendix E). The Advisory Committee reached consensus on final content area distributions and weighting, as reflected in Appendix F.

Survey Overview: The Content Validation Model

The foundation of a valid, reliable, and legally defensible professional certification program is the performance of a well-constructed Job Analysis study. The Job Analysis establishes the link between test scores and competency, supporting the inference that the scores achieved on the certification examinations are content valid, and therefore pass and fail decisions correlate to competent performance. When evidence of validity, based on examination content, is presented for a specific professional role it is critical to consider the relative frequency, importance, and criticality of the elements. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education)* 2014, state:

> Standard 11.3
> When test content is a primary source of validity evidence in support of the interpretation for the use of a test for employment decisions or credentialing, a close link between test content and the job or professional/occupational requirements should be demonstrated.

> Standard 11.13
> The content domain to be covered by a credentialing test should be defined clearly and justified in terms of importance of the content for the credential-worthy performance in an occupation or profession. A rationale and evidence should be provided to support a claim that the knowledge or skills being assessed are required for credential-worthy performance in that occupation and are consistent with the purpose for which the credentialing program was instituted.

The Board is committed to the goal of maintaining a certification credential that meets these international standards, the foundation of which is the maintenance of job analysis research data, the focus group results of which are the subject of this report. To accomplish this goal, the Board enlisted the services of SMT psychometric staff, aided by an SME Advisory Committee to perform a literature search, establish an exhaustive task listing and to translate that listing into a content outline describing the tasks required for competent, entry-level Organizational Ombudsman practice.

As described above, in support of the Job Analysis, the Board identified a Committee of SMEs to act as a Job Analysis Focus Group Advisory Committee to the SMT Psychometric Staff. SMT is grateful to the 11 professionals who provided their expertise in the Job Analysis process: The names, practice locations and experience levels of the SMEs may be found in Appendix A. SME qualifications are documented in resumes/curricula vitae on file with the Board.

Focus Group Workshop Methodology

Preliminary Task List Assembly and Review

1. Pre-workshop Research
In support of the development of the task listing prior to the workshop, SMT psychometric staff solicited help from the Advisory Committee in assembling a comprehensive list of literature related to the Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner. With this help, SMT psychometric staff

performed a comprehensive job-related literature search including the following: review of approved publications and websites focusing on, or including, information concerning the Standards of Practice governing organizational ombudsman practice, the Board policies, By-Laws and professional Code of Ethics. This pre-workshop research was performed in order to build upon the content outline currently in place. Research performed by an outside party (e.g., not a practicing Organizational Ombudsman) often allows for outside-the-box thinking in terms of exhaustive task inclusion. The goal of the focus group workshop model is to encourage open consideration of any and all tasks, with the goal of producing a well-honed, focused content outline. See Appendix B for correspondence related to the pre-workshop activities.

Once assembled, as a preamble to analysis of the task listing in the workshop setting, the Committee members were provided with a copy of the exhaustive list, and asked to review the list based on the following considerations:

> *Are there tasks or KSAs that are:*
> - *Missing from the outline;*
> - *Unnecessary (not relevant to competent practice);*
> - *Redundant (appear in more than one place on the outline);*
> - *Too advanced or outside the scope of knowledge or practice for a CO-OP;*
> - *Too general - We avoid the use of "Understand" or "Knowledge of" because these are too vague and it is difficult to measure when "understanding" occurs;*
> - *Too specific (delineation or additional listing is too detailed);*
> - *Assigned incorrectly to a domain; and/or,*
> - *Not measurable via a multiple-choice test.*

The SMEs were asked to forward their opinions to the psychometric specialist, or be prepared to discuss them at the workshop. See Appendix B for a copy of the full correspondence.

Workshop Activities

> *1. Introductions*

The day of the workshop, after introductions, each SME was asked to sign an Affidavit of Non-disclosure and to complete a demographic questionnaire, supporting the Board's efforts to assemble a demographically diverse group of SMEs representing the full scope of geographic location, practice setting, age, experience, gender and ethnicity as represented in the profession. These documents are available in the case of a challenge, but are not included in this report based on the sensitive information they contain.

> *2. SME Training*

The SMEs were guided through extensive training concerning the role of the Job Analysis in the certification program cycle. Using overhead technology, the Committee was provided with an overview of the CO-OP Examination Program, and the tasks that make up the full cycle of research, development, application, examination, and psychometric review related to the credential. The Committee was provided with an overview on exactly how, why and where the conduct of a focus group Job Analysis fits into this cycle, and how a properly executed and applied Job Analysis supports program content-validity and legal defensibility.

3. The Conduct of a Focus Group Job Analysis

Next the Committee was instructed in the Advisory Committee's role in the conduct of the focus group Job Analysis, again using overhead technology. Instruction was followed by a question and answer session, ensuring the Committee members were well-versed and comfortable with the tasks to be undertaken. The full complement of tasks required for the workshop was outlined in the workshop agenda included in Appendix B.

4. Committee Security Requirements

To preserve the security of the CO-OP Program, the Advisory Committee members were provided with a security briefing, describing the need to keep all discussion, paperwork and electronic transmissions concerning the focus group Job Analysis workshop secure. SMEs were asked to avoid creating secure documents, either through writing or electronic production, and were made aware that while open discussion was encouraged, that communication outside of the workshop should be limited to exchanges with the Board or SMT psychometric staff. SMEs were reminded that while the results of the Job Analysis workshop would be shared with stakeholders—supporting the Board goal of transparency—that in an effort to afford all SMEs an open voice in the process, they were to refrain from discussing the internal conversations that were necessarily part of the workshop. As described, each SME completed an Affidavit of Non-disclosure agreeing to abide by all security requirements.

5. Entry-Level, Minimal Competency

In order to assess the meaningfulness of the task listing, and its inclusiveness of the tasks describing competent practice, the psychometric staff then went on to lead the Committee in the development of a conceptualization of the entry-level, minimally competent Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner. To accomplish this task the Committee reviewed the current eligibility requirements for CO-OP candidates, including the education and experience requirements (please see Appendix C). This exercise allowed the Committee to discuss the various pathways to the profession, the variety of education and experience options, and the meaningfulness of education and training that make up the candidate eligibility requirements for the typical competent CO-OP.

6. Demographic Representation

The Committee was then asked to consider the make-up of the Committee in terms of demographic representation. In a traditional JA research survey, the results of a demographic questionnaire would be compared to the demographic diversity of the general professional population. Using the focus group model, the SMEs were asked to consider whether they felt that the group represented the various demographic points (e.g., experience, gender, professional practice setting, age, ethnicity, geographic location). The SMEs confirmed that the demographic make-up of the Committee was representative of their understanding of the profession. The Board executive in attendance confirmed this opinion based upon knowledge of the diversity of practice among credential holders.

7. Task Listing Review and Task Exclusion Consideration

In order to assess the meaningfulness of the exhaustive task listing, the Committee was next asked to review the assembled listing, task-by-task. Significant discussion was held concerning the role of the Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner, the diversity among practice settings, changes to Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Board rules and regulations, innovations and the commonality of the core body of knowledges, skills and abilities across cultures, organization types and geographic settings. Considering both the differences and commonalities, the Advisory

Committee agreed that a list of tasks that would describe the common/core tasks relating to competent practice could be assembled.

Each task was weighted against the following criteria:

- Is the task important to competent practice?
- Is the task performed frequently by a reasonable portion of Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners?
- Would the entry-level Practitioner be expected to competently perform the task?
- Would the entry-level Practitioner have an opportunity to learn how to perform this task through the process of education and experience required of eligible candidates?

All tasks meeting the criteria above were included in the outline, having met requirements for importance, frequency, entry-level difficulty, minimal competency difficulty, and ability to learn. In other words, all included tasks met the Committee requirement that the content outline include only critical tasks that related directly to the practice of entry-level, minimally competent practitioners meeting Board eligibility requirements.

At the beginning of the process the content outline contained 156 tasks. The Board tasked the Advisory Committee to carefully review the content outline to ensure that all tasks could be assessed using a fair and valid multiple-choice question, and that content duplication be eliminated. Through the review a significant number of tasks were eliminated due to their subjective nature, and many more were eliminated based on duplication within the content outline. The identification of both types of tasks is crucial: candidates cannot fairly be assessed on "soft skills" that, while critical to career success, are subjective by their very nature: likewise inclusion of duplicate content within a content outline leads to multiple examination items testing identical or very similar content. This situation (called "double jeopardy") is considered unfair because it affords the knowledgeable candidate double credit and doubly penalizes the candidate who does not know the tasks/knowledge.

8. Content Outline Task Organization

The resulting list of tasks was evaluated for reasonableness and logical organization within the outline. After generation and approval of the task listing, the tasks were reviewed again to ensure that they were framed in terms of observable/measurable behaviors. Appendix D reflects the outline prior to the workshop; Appendix F reflects the final approved content outline which contains 61 tasks.

9. Survey Adequacy

To determine the completeness of the final content outline, the SMEs were asked to consider the following question:

> *Do you feel this survey covered the tasks performed by the effective and competent practice of the Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner, in terms of the standards and scope of practice, rules and ethics governing practice,* **completely**, **adequately** *or* **inadequately**?

The Committee was unanimous in its opinion that the content outline completely reflected the role of the competent Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner.

10. Importance and Frequency and Content Area Weighting

Once the outline was assembled and reviewed for logic, assessability, and relationships among tasks, the SMEs were tasked with considering the importance and frequency of the tasks comprising the three main content areas and the sub-content areas within the main domains. The point of this exercise was to establish a relationship between the relative importance of the main content areas and the importance weighting of the examination, where weighting translates into numbers of questions on the examination. Each SME was asked their opinion of what percentage of the examination should be allotted to each of the three main content areas; within those content areas the Committee was asked to distribute items among the main sub-content areas as well. This data is represented in Appendix E, and reflects significant discussion and the consensus of the Committee to adopt the final content area weightings. Appendix F reflects the final weighting of the newly approved outline.

11. Examination Specifications

To conclude the review of content outline, the Committee was asked to consider the general characteristics and purpose of the CO-OP credentialing program which, according to the Board of Certification By-Laws *"is to promote, examine and maintain standards for the advancement of organizational ombudsmanry by identifying to their peers and to the public those organizational ombudsmen who have voluntarily sought and obtained certification."* The Committee members agreed that the content outline of the examination supports this purpose.

Based upon continued discussion and instruction, the Committee recommended adoption of a computer administration of a linear 110 four-option multiple-choice, non-speeded examination. The examination will contain 100 scored items and 10 pretest items. The content of the 100 scored items on the examination will perfectly meet the examination content outline as adopted in this report: the pretest item content will be disbursed among the examination content domains as required. Pretest items will be placed on the examination for the collection of statistics and will not affect candidate scores. The timing of one minute per question was deemed adequate, with the feedback that candidates report being able to complete the examination in a comfortably-paced amount of time.

The Committee agreed that the inclusion of 10 pretest questions per examination was appropriate, with the caveat that candidates be provided with adequate time to answer the questions, and will be given information concerning the fact that pretest questions will be embedded and disbursed within the examination at undisclosed positions, and will not count against the examination score. The Committee recommended including the practice of allowing candidates to comment on specific test questions, as well as offering the opportunity for candidates to provide feedback on the general testing experience. The Committee recommended that a testing period of 120 minutes be adopted, with speededness testing to be performed to ensure candidates are receiving adequate time to complete the examination. These recommendations will be provided to the Board for consideration.

Conclusion

The final approved task listing was translated into the Examination Content Outline and CO-OP program test specifications, which will serve as the blueprint used to develop the CO-OP Examination. This information will be published and made available to educators, candidates, regulators and the general public, establishing the openness and transparency of the program. Adoption of this content outline with the recommended main content area weightings thereby established the link between job performance of critical tasks and successful examination performance.

Appendix A: Advisory Committee Subject Matter Experts

Table A-1. Subject Matter Expert Advisory Committee

Subject Matter Expert	Practice Location	Years of Experience
Jim Wohl	Storrs, Connecticut	9
Shreya Trivedi	Orlando, Florida	10
Beatriz B. Dale	Davie, Florida	20
Mary Beth Stevens	Los Alamos, New Mexico	17
David Rasch	Stanford, California	12
Melanie Lewis	Houston, Texas	4
Mollie Berg	Springfield, Virginia	3
Shawn Hutchens	Irvine, California	3
Wendy Friede	Minneapolis, Minnesota	20
Gordon Talbot	Washington, District of Columbia	9
Gennet Tripari	Ponce, Puerto Rico	7

Appendix B: Advisory Committee Communications and Workshop Agenda

MEMORANDUM

To:	Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners (CO-OP)
	2016 Job Analysis Advisory Committee
From:	Dana Anderson-Pancoe, SMT
Subject:	2016 Job Analysis Study
Date:	03/18/16

Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc. (SMT) is pleased to be working with the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) in conducting a job analysis (JA) study to define the role and practice of Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners (CO-OP). As a member of the CO-OP JA Advisory Committee, you have been recognized as an expert in the field and we look forward to working with you.

A JA is a methodical process of determining what knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are important and relevant to a profession. A JA establishes the critical link between a certifying examination and the job role to ensure that only important and job-relevant content is tested on the examination. This provides validity evidence and legal defensibility for the certification process.

Task 1: Preliminary Research
The first phase of the process requires you to submit to SMT information about the role of the CO-OP. This information will be used to develop an exhaustive list of KSAs that a CO-OP is expected to perform competently, apply to their job role, or simply understand. This KSA list will be used as a starting point for the face-to-face meeting (see Task 2) and will be further evaluated by relevant stakeholders via a web-based survey.

Examples of documents that help in the development of the KSA list are:
1. Performance appraisals
2. Job definitions/descriptions
3. Curriculum documents
4. Relevant work-related literature

The information and documentation you send should identify specific KSAs or competencies associated with current practice. Please note that this study is not concerned with future issues as these are not currently measurable and we are also not concerned with curriculum and activities that are not practiced with regularity. Because the CO-OP certification program has an existing content outline, we will integrate the information you send to SMT with the current examination specifications to build a list of KSAs for evaluation; additional research will also be conducted to ensure that the resulting list is comprehensive. SMT will collate the information to create a working outline for the first JA meeting scheduled for May 5 & 6, 2016, in Clearwater, FL.

SMT asks that you submit all requested information and documents no later than Friday, April 8, 2016. You can send this information to Dana via email (danderson@smttest.com)** or fax (727) 259-2006 (please reference "CO-OP JA").**

Task 2: JA Focus Group Meeting
Once the draft outline is assembled, SMT will meet with the CO-OP JA Advisory Committee for an in-person meeting on May 4 & 5, 2016. With the Committee's guidance and expertise, we will review and discuss the draft KSA list. While doing so, we will discuss practitioner definitions of a minimally competent CO-OP. The
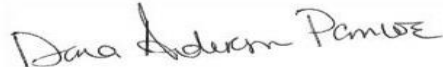
definition will outline the major characteristics of the typical or target candidate. During the course of the meeting, the KSA list will be finalized and adopted as the CO-OP Detailed Content Outline (DCO).

After finalizing the DCO, the Advisory Committee will determine how the KSAs will be distributed within the examination. The committee will assign percentages to each domain that will serve as the test blueprint for all future test forms. The committee will also determine the total test length for the examination.

On behalf of SMT, thank you for assisting the IOA in evaluating the roles and responsibilities of CO-OPs. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Best regards.

Dana Anderson-Pancoe
Assistant Director, Assessment & Psychometric Services
Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc.

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners (CO-OP)
              2016 Job Analysis Advisory Committee
From: Dana Anderson-Pancoe, SMT
Subject: 2016 Job Analysis Study – Review Draft KSA listing
Date: 04/30/2016

Dear IOA CO-OP Job Analysis (JA) Committee Members:

The CO-OP job analysis meeting is fast approaching (May 4-5, 2016 in Clearwater, FL). Many thanks to everyone who submitted documents related to the CO-OP role. The information was very helpful. Based on the information and documentation provided, I used the current CO-OP examination content outline as a starting point for creating the draft knowledge, skills, abilities, (KSAs) and task listing.

I reviewed the materials provided to see what is already covered by the current content outline. I did not find any elements or competencies listed in the documentation that were not covered in one way or another within the existing CO-OP content outline. I did reword and add behavioral verbs where I thought appropriate within domains and subheadings. Realizing that I am not a subject matter expert (SME), I did not feel comfortable removing high-level elements. However, it seems that there are several redundancies across domains that we should try to remove or differentiate. The attached is a modified KSA listing for your review before the May 4th meeting. **I apologize for the lateness of providing you with this draft.**

As a reminder, we want to identify elements of behavior and/or knowledge associated with **current** practice. Therefore, we are not overly concerned with future issues/trends as these are not currently measurable. We are also not concerned with elements that are not regularly practiced.

Please review the draft KSA listing, reflecting on the tasks performed by or knowledge required of a competent CO-OP. Furthermore, please consider the phrasing of each element. We want to clearly define the expected level of competency by using behavioral objective statements (I've included a behavioral verb list for your reference).
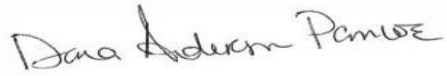
When reviewing the outline you should ask yourself "Are there tasks or KSAs that are:"
- Missing from the outline;
- Unnecessary (not relevant to competent practice);
- Redundant (appear in more than one place on the outline);
- Too advanced or outside the scope of knowledge or practice for a CO-OP;
- Too general - We avoid the use of "Understand" or "Knowledge of" because these are too vague and it is difficult to measure when "understanding" occurs;
- Too specific (delineation or additional listing is too detailed);
- Assigned incorrectly to a domain; and/or,
- Not measurable via multiple-choice test.

Please review the draft outline and come to the May 4th JA meeting prepared to discuss your feedback. You are welcome to forward comments to me in advance of the meeting and if you do so, please provide them to me by May 3, 2016.

In advance, The IOA and SMT appreciate your contribution to updating of the CO-OP certification examination. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Best regards,

Dana Anderson-Pancoe
Assistant Director, Assessment & Psychometric Services
Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc.

International Ombudsman Association (IOA)
Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP) Examination
Job Analysis (JA) Study Meeting – Focus Group Agenda

Wednesday, May 4 & Thursday, May 5, 2016
SMT Offices   Clearwater, Florida

The purpose of this meeting is to engage you, CO-OP subject matter experts (SMEs), to gather critical input and feedback on the current state of practice for CO-OPs.

We will develop knowledge, skill, ability (KSA) elements to be tested in the CO-OP examination. We will update and finalize a test blueprint including content outline, domain weights, and test length.

DAY 1: Wednesday, May 4, 2016 (8:45am – 5:00pm)
By the end of Day 1, we want to confirm high-level competencies for CO-OP exam and provide clear definition and delineation of KSAs.

8:45am: Participants arrive at SMT's offices (continental breakfast will be served)

9:00am: Meeting starts
- Discuss goals of meeting
- Individual introductions
- Discuss security and sign affidavits of nondisclosure

9:30am: JA Tasks
KSA Outline Review and Develop:
- Overview of job analysis process and slide show presentation
- Review the requirements for certification
- Discuss expectations of competencies
- Review and revise draft list of competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)
  - ✓ List reflects current practice
  - ✓ List reflects elements relevant to competency
  - ✓ List is comprehensive
  - ✓ List represents appropriate level of detail (e.g., not too vague, not too specific)
  - ✓ No redundancies
  - ✓ Elements are accurately categorized by domain
  - ✓ Elements are measureable

12:00pm – 1:00pm: Lunch break (catered lunch provided by SMT)

1:00pm – 4:45pm: Continue review and development of KSA Outline

4:45pm: Day 1 Wrap-up (Discuss progress and expectations for Day 2)

DAY 2: Thursday, May 5, 2016 (8:45am – 3:00pm)

8:45am – Participants arrive at SMT's offices (continental breakfast will be served)

9:00am: Meeting starts

8:45am – 12:00pm: JAS Tasks
Continue Review and Revision of KSA-Content

12:00pm – 1:00pm: Lunch break, may be a working lunch (catered lunch provided by SMT)

1:00pm – 2:30pm:
Finalize CO-OP Content Outline

2:30pm – 4:30pm:
Discuss and Confirm Other Test Specifications
- Total test length
    - Scored and pretest items
- Weighting Exercise
    - Domain weights

4:30pm: Day 2 Wrap-up (Discuss outcomes and next steps)

Appendix C: Candidate Eligibility Requirements

CO-OP Certification Eligibility Requirements

Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of the organizational ombudsman function by passing a written examination. Candidates must also demonstrate relevant education and experience. For a flowchart view of the eligibility and recertification process click **HERE**.

<u>**Requirements for Certification**</u>
Written Examination: A candidate must have passed the written certification examination within three years prior to the date of Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc. (SMT) receipt of the application for certification. There are no training, educational, or work experience requirements needed to register for and sit for the certification examination. The certification application requires a copy of the certification examination results statement documenting the date of passing the examination. Passing the exam is only once piece of the process to become certified. Once you pass the exam you will still not be considered certified until you are able to meet the experience, education and standards of practice requirements listed below.

Education: Certification requires a bachelor's degree or equivalent from an accredited institution of higher education. Those who do not hold a bachelor's degree may submit evidence of a comparable university degree. The Eligibility Committee may also consider relevant professional experience or academic work in place of a bachelor's degree. Candidates may submit proof of relevant professional experience to the Eligibility Committee for individual consideration.

Work Experience: Certification requires at least one year of full-time experience, or 2000 hours, in practice as an organizational ombudsman, (not including positions of mediator, ADR consultant, etc.) performing the full scope of Ombudsman duties and adhering to the IOA Code of Ethics (CoEs) and Standards of Practice (SoPs). Two years of 50% time experience, or four years of 25% time experience, in a qualifying organizational ombudsman role would also satisfy this eligibility requirement. This professional experience must be within the four-year period preceding the date of SMT's receipt of the application for certification. In order to demonstrate that the requirement of experience practicing as an organizational ombudsman with adherence to the IOA CoEs and SoPs has been met, the candidate should submit copies of an office charter and/or brochure, reference to an office website, job description and standards of practice, and verification of length of employment from the relevant employer(s) of record. A representative of the Eligibility Committee may contact an applicant if additional information or clarification of submitted information is required.

Application for Certification: Certification also requires completing the Application Form in full, and submitting it for review by the Board of Certification, with all requisite supporting documentation and payment of a non-refundable certification application administrative fee, and a signed copy of the Certification Agreement Form, in which the applicant agrees to comply with Board of Certification policies and procedures.

There are no training, educational, or work experience requirements needed to register for and sit for the certification examination. An individual who has passed the examination, but who does not meet the other eligibility requirements for certification, may not claim to hold certification status. Any individual who uses the certification designation before having been awarded certification by the Board of Certification may be ineligible for certification in the future.

Appendix D: Initial Exhaustive Task Listing

Task #	Domain/Tasks/Sub-tasks

Domain I: Conflict Management

	A.	Analyze the source of conflict
		1. Identify issues:
1		a. Issues that are presented
2		b. Underlying issues
		2. Identify the following:
3		a. Rights
4		b. Positions
5		c. Interests
6		d. Needs
7		3. Identify parties and stakeholders
	B.	Apply conflict management skills
8		1. Determine appropriate communication methods
9		2. Apply multi-cultural competence
10		3. Recognize conflict styles and dynamics
11		4. Identify sources of power
	C.	Recognize the conflict resolution process
12		1. Examine all possible resolution options
		2. Apply conflict resolution techniques
13		a. Facilitation
14		b. Shuttle diplomacy
15		c. Negotiation
16		d. Coaching
17		e. Mediation

Domain II: Communication

	A.	Practice active listening skills
18		1. Use active observation
19		2. Recognize non-verbal cues
20		3. Employ strategies to build trust
		4. Apply concepts of respectful and empathetic intention
21		a. Convey respect
22		b. Convey empathy
23		5. Reflecting
24		6. Recognize effectiveness of using silence
	B.	Use questions in communication
25		1. Select open-ended questions
26		2. Select probing and skillful questions
	C.	Apply effective expression (communicate by sending and receiving)
27		1. Demonstrate capacity to motivate individuals, groups and organizational systems to act/change in order to manage conflict
28		2. Use appropriate neutral response
29		3. Use information effectively
30		4. Interact at all levels
31		5. Demonstrate patience and flexibility in communication style

Task #	Domain/Tasks/Sub-tasks	
32		6. Demonstrate the ability to understand the emotional aspects of conflict
	D.	Communicate with individuals from various cultures
		1. Demonstrate ability to access cultural cues and expression
33		a. Recognize cultural cues - skillful questioning to uncover cultural differences
34		b. Recognize cultural expressions
35		2. Obtain education/information about differences/styles
		3. Gaining awareness of:
36		a. Stereotypes
37		b. Biases
38		c. Prejudices

Domain III: Addressing Issues

Task #		
39	A.	Identify and clarify issues and interest:
	B	Gather and analyze information:
		1. Gather information on the issue by:
40		a. Asking questions
41		b. Assessing relevancy
42		c. Identifying additional needs (to narrow the informational gap)
		2. Analyze information on the issue by:
43		a. Asking questions
44		b. Assessing relevancy
45		c. Identifying missing information needed (to narrow the informational gap)
	C.	Facilitate identification and assessment of options:
46		1. Explain the role of the ombudsman
		2. Educate visitor regarding options for resolution-demonstrate understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of:
47		a. Do nothing
48		b. Engage in direct communication (oral)
49		c. Write a letter
50		d. Utilize third party communication (by neutral, supervisor, advocate)
51		e. Utilize generic methods (e.g. training, or normal management, audit or
52		f. Complain through chain of command
53		g. Practice shuttle diplomacy
54		h. Use mediation/facilitation techniques
55		i. Negotiate
56		j. Apologize
57		k. Refer to appropriate resource
58		l. Understand that time may heal
		3. Apply coaching/training principles
59		a. Apply conflict resolution theory and research - interests vs. positions, resources:
60		b. Help balance of power for resolution - discuss and prepare for the effects of power imbalances
61		c. Motivate to resolve problem by discussion and/or action
	D.	Prioritize options:
62		1. Identify alternative perspectives
63		2. Conduct reality test

Task #	Domain/Tasks/Sub-tasks
64	3. Recognize visitor's awareness of time limits for some options
65	4. Recommend ways for the visitor to assess pros and cons of different options
66	E. Implement process to carry out closure and follow-up

Domain IV: Outreach and Education

	A. Practice the following skills when performing a presentation:
67	1. Be clear, simple, relevant
68	2. Understand the audience
69	3. Be well-organized
70	4. Maintain appropriate demeanor
	B. Practice the following when conducting training:
71	1. Identify and develop appropriate content
72	2. Use interactive activities effectively
73	3. Provide appropriate methodology
	C. Formulate relationships
74	1. Recognize respect for the appropriate authority of the hierarchy
75	2. Differentiate between types of organizational structures
	3. Formulate a strategic partnership through
76	a. Formal channels
77	b. Internal networking
78	4. Recognize boundaries
79	5. Identify appropriate external resources
	D. Employ strategies to market ombudsman office
80	1. Design and distribute appropriate materials (electronic and written)
81	2. Employ strategies to promote a consistent message regarding the role and functions of ombudsman
82	3. Identify ways to promote Ombudsman office as a safe environment

Domain V: Policies, Procedures, and Organizational Culture

	A. Apply knowledge of internal organization policies, procedures and resources:
83	1. Recognize explicit and unstated
84	2. Communicate policy information to visitors, as needed
	3. Identify and inform key interpreter and possible application appeal process
85	a. Identify the organization's key interpreters of each policy
86	b. Communicate with key interpreters about possible appeal process
87	4. Understand context of other policies, procedures, regulations, and laws
	B. Recognize organizational culture and practices:
88	1. Identify and articulate/communicate code and standards of conduct
89	2. Comprehend implicit (unwritten, unstated) practices
90	3. Comprehend and communicate practices related to the application of code of conduct

Domain VI: IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

	A. Identify and apply structure and principles of ombudsman function
	1. Recognize structure and principles in the ombudsman function
91	a. Know to whom the ombudsman reports

Task #	Domain/Tasks/Sub-tasks
92	b. Compose a charter
93	c. Define criteria to evaluate effectiveness
	2. Apply the structure and principles in the ombudsman function
94	a. Interpret the IOA code of ethics (professionalism and integrity)
B.	Recognize confidentiality process
95	1. Recognize limits to confidentiality
96	2. Recognize of the scope of (cannot be waived)
97	3. Identify how to manage information
98	4. Identify what constitutes "notice"
99	5. Identify privileged communication
C.	Employ strategies to remain impartial/neutral:
100	1. Recognize scope of impartiality/neutrality
	2. Recognize challenges to being impartial/neutral
101	a. Avoid conflicts of interest
102	b. Establish separation from collateral duties
	c. Establish boundaries
103	i. Set ombudsman role boundaries
104	ii. Maintain ombudsman role boundaries
105	d. Withhold judgment
106	3. Advocate for fair processes for all
D.	Maintain independence
	1. Recognize scope of independence
107	a. Create an independent office
	b. Authority/discretion
108	i. Maintain ombudsman authority as defined by the office charter
109	ii. Maintain discretion
	c. Stature/Reporting/Access
110	i. Maintain organizational structure independence
111	ii. Clarify that reporting structure does not compromise independence
112	iii. Provide access to ombudsman office without interference
113	d. Ombudsman has access to all information in the organization
114	e. Provide protections (free to act properly within role without fear of intimidation or limitation)
115	f. Maintain independence despite reporting relationship to the highest level
	2. Awareness of challenges to independence
116	a. Avoid unclear parameters or role definitions
117	b. Manage tensions with formal offices (e.g. HR, Legal, Provost, etc.)
118	d. Resist inappropriate legal pressure
119	e. Avoid overlapping of functions
120	f. Avoid oversights in establishing independence (e.g. lack of a Charter, inadequate understanding of role)
121	g. Avoid collateral duty in compliance functions
	3. Ombudsman access
122	a. Ombudsman has access to all information in the organization
123	b. Access to individuals
E.	Maintain informality:

Task #	Domain/Tasks/Sub-tasks
124	1. Clarify and require voluntary participation by visitors
125	2. Maintain separation of ombudsman practice from formal processes
126	3. Ombudsman does not make binding decisions
127	4. Promote awareness of scope/definitions of informality
128	5. Maintain awareness of challenges to informality
	6. Remain informal and provide off-the-records resources
129	a. Remain informal
130	b. Provide off the record resources
	7. Remain flexible - informal level - absence of power
131	a. Remain flexible
132	b. Be aware of the absence of direct power
	F. Practical considerations:
133	1. Determine suitable office location, consistent with independence
	2. Setting up an office
134	a. Find a practical location
135	b. Make sure the office has sound proofing
136	c. Maintain confidentiality in information protocols
137	d. Maintain security (locks, panic buttons)
138	e. Make staff aware of confidentiality
139	f. Clarify office policies
140	3. Clarify expectations of ombudsman role

Domain VII: Feedback to the Organizations

	A. Identify ways to assist with surfacing and early warning of potentially significant issues
141	1. Recognize ethical and legal ramifications
142	2. Identify appropriate channels of communication
143	3. Recognize "notice" issues
	B. Prepare annual report overview and considerations
144	1. Protect individual confidentiality
145	2. Determine appropriate data sharing
146	3. Determine appropriate dissemination
	C. Identify considerations for trend and pattern reporting
147	1. Protect of individual confidentiality
	2. Determine timing, level, and location
148	a. Judgment of timing (when to share information)
149	b. Judgment of level (with whom and at what level of the organization should information be shared)
150	c. Judgment of location (where should information be shared)
151	3. Determine appropriate data to collect
152	4. Identify new emerging issues
153	5. Identify problem areas
154	6. Recognize beneficial change
	D. Recommend system change:
	1. Identify mechanisms for achieving congruence with organizational codes and standards of conduct
155	a. Identify changes to improve organizational policies and processes

Task #	Domain/Tasks/Sub-tasks
156	b. Identify mechanisms for achieving congruence with standards of conduct
157	2. Identify changes to promote adherence to organizational standards of conduct
158	3. Facilitate processes for recommended system change

Appendix E. Content Area Weighting Exercise Data

Table E-1. Content Area Weighting Exercise Data

Domain/Sub Domain	Beatriz	David	Genete	Gordon	Jim	Mary Beth	Melanie	Mollie	Shawn	Shreya	Wendy	Average % Main	Average% Targets for Subs	# of items	Final % Main
I. Ethical Principles & Foundational Theories	**50**	**50**	**60**	**40**	**50**	**40**	**40**	**50**	**50**	**50**	**50**	**48.18**		**45**	**45%**
A. CoE & SoP	40	40	50	40	20	30	38	40	35	40	50		38.41	17*	
B. Communication	30	30	30	40	30	35	25	25	30	25	30		30.00	14	
C. Conflict Theory	10	20	15	10	30	20	25	25	25	25	15		20.00	9	
D. Operations	20	10	5	10	20	15	12	10	10	10	10		12.00	5	
II. Apply Ethics & Theories w/Individuals	**30**	**35**	**25**	**40**	**30**	**35**	**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**	**35**	**31.82**		**35**	**35%**
A. Case Mgmt.	65	55	60	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	60		53.64	19	
B. Ombds. Actions	35	45	40	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	40		46.36	16	
III. Apply Ethics & Theories w/Organizations	**20**	**15**	**15**	**20**	**20**	**25**	**30**	**20**	**20**	**20**	**15**	**20.00**		**20**	**20%**
	20	30	20	40	40	40	33	30	40	40	50		34.82	7	
	20	20	30	20	20	20	33	30	20	30	20		23.91	5	
	60	50	50	40	40	40	34	40	40	30	30		41.27	8	
Total % Main Content Areas	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**			**100 Scored items**	

Sub-content item counts are internal targets for item distribution among sub-content areas and are only for use in psychometric activities.

Appendix F: Final Content Outline with Weighting

	45%
I. RECOGNIZE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES	**45 items**

A. IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice	17 items

1. Recognize Ethical Principles
   a. Independence
      i. Define independence
      ii. Identify what promotes/fosters independence
      iii.Identify what prevents/hinders independence
   b. Neutrality and Impartiality
      i. Define neutrality and impartiality
      ii. Identify what promotes/fosters neutrality and impartiality
      iii.Identify what prevents/hinders neutrality and impartiality
   c. Confidentiality
      i. Define confidentiality
      ii. Identify what promotes/fosters confidentiality
      iii.Identify what prevents/hinders confidentiality
      iv.Identify exceptions to confidentiality
   d. Informality
      i. Define informality
      ii. Identify what promotes/fosters informality
      iii.Identify what prevents/hinders informality
2. Recognize limits of ombudsman practice

B. Interpersonal and Organizational Communication	14 items

1. Identify active listening techniques
2. Recognize skillful questioning
3. Recognize aspects of inclusion and diversity
4. Recognize techniques for communicating with influence
5. Identify concepts of emotional intelligence
6. Interpret nonverbal cues
7. Select effective presentation techniques
8. Recognize elements of group facilitation
9. Identify effective written communication
10. Identify appropriate use of written and verbal reporting
11. Define methods for fostering trust and building rapport
12. Identify effective marketing and program promotion
13. Identify strategies for relationship-building
14. Recognize potential for risk

C. Conflict Theory	9 items

1. Identify conflict styles
2. Identify features of interest-based negotiation
3. Identify conflict resolution techniques
4. Identify sources and elements of conflict
5. Identify power dynamics in conflict

D. Program Operations	5 items

    1. Identify elements of an effective ombudsman work-setting (e.g., physical space, technology)
    2. Define metrics for program evaluation

2. APPLY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES WHILE WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS — 35% / 35 items

A. Case management	19 items

    1. Determine elements for an opening statement
    2. Determine strategies to elicit individual narratives
    3. Analyze sources of conflict
    4. Detect the issues and interests
    5. Determine and evaluate options (i.e., pros and cons)
    6. Determine strategies for pursuing options
    7. Determine follow-up strategies

B. Ombudsman actions	16 items

    1. Identify when and how to gather information
    2. Identify when and how to raise a concern
    3. Apply shuttle diplomacy
    4. Apply coaching strategies
    5. Apply use of informal inquiries
    6. Apply use of referrals (internal or external)
    7. Apply mediation or facilitation techniques

3. APPLY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES WHILE WORKING WITH ORGANIZATIONS — 20% / 20 items

A. Know the organization	7 items

    1. Locate common sources of policies, procedures, and resources (i.e., stated and unstated)
    2. Recognize impact of organizational structure and decision-making processes
    3. Identify culture, values, and norms
    4. Identify vision, mission, and goals

B. Build organizational effectiveness	5 items

    1. Design and deliver education
    2. Develop methods for disseminating relevant information

C. Influence leadership	8 items

    1. Advocate for proper ombudsman program administration and office design
    2. Determine strategies to build stakeholder relationships
    3. Use data effectively
    4. Identify and share trends and patterns
    5. Detect and deliver early warnings
    6. Identify systemic issues
    7. Recommend improvement options