

Occupational and Functional Analysis

Occupational Analysis

Before you can begin to develop NOS, you must have a clear picture about who you are developing them for? This will ensure quality, fit-for-purpose outcomes from a NOS development or review exercise.

This approach is often called 'occupational analysis' or an 'occupational map'.

Occupational Analysis - Content

The following information will usually be covered in an occupation analysis:

- the size and profile of its sector/occupation, sub-sectors and geographical location of organisations and workers
- the types of occupations within the sector and anticipated changes in employment patterns
- the link between the sector/occupation and other sectors/occupations
- key trends, developments and drivers within the sector/occupation
- opportunities for progression and typical career routes;
- employers and other key stakeholders

Occupational Analysis - Development

An occupational analysis will involve gathering and reporting data and information from:

- existing sources of data and information (e.g. Labour Market Information, job descriptions)
- surveys of employers and key stakeholders
- desk research into existing NOS suites
- interviews with a representative sample of employers and key stakeholders
- workshops or focus groups with employers and key stakeholders

Note: An occupational analysis must be UK wide

Exercise One

This exercise is designed to give you an awareness and flavour of carrying out an occupational analysis. It does not reflect the requirements of a thorough occupational analysis. For this reason you are advised not to spend more than half an hour on this exercise.

For the purposes of this exercise you may want to choose your own organisation, or an organisation you are familiar with, and answer the questions on the next screen.

It should be noted that an occupational analysis would normally be carried out for an occupational area rather than an organisation, but the principles are the same and that is what this exercise is concerned with.

Exercise One – Occupational Analysis

In relation to your own, or another, organisation identify the:

- key stakeholders and customers of the organisation
- numbers of staff working for the organisation
- types of roles such staff have
- key trends and drivers that will influence the work of the organisation in the future

Tip: Try to use a variety of methods to access information on the above, including organisational information and discussions with relevant individuals.

I have tried the exercise myself and you can click here to see the result: [Exercise One](#)

Notes for an Occupational Analysis

Wilshaw Asphalt and Tarmac Co

Key stakeholders and customers of the company:

- Stakeholders: Family run business established by the Father who is now retired but still provides advice to his two sons who run the business
- Customers: Local authorities, Ministry of Defence, Sky TV, Bradford Hospital, Local college
- The company has three definitive sectors: domestic, commercial and utility

Numbers of staff working for the organisation

- 28 full time staff with additional hired help for larger projects

Types of roles such staff have

- Road workers, surfacing supervisor (x2), project managers (x2), plant operators, labourers, sales staff, trainer/supervisors and general manager

Key trends and drivers

- Government cut backs in spending on infra-structure will impact on business
- Possible cut backs in spending on training
- Banks unwilling to help with cash flow issues
- Potential growth areas abroad and exploring tie in with company in Middle East

How I found out this information:

- Visiting the company website
- Talking to one of the owners (particularly with regard to key trends and drivers)
- Reading the company brochure

Functional Analysis

Functional analysis is the main tool used to develop National Occupational Standards. It involves analysing areas of work and identifying the outcomes that people should achieve.

Functions mean the activities a person is expected to do as part of their job. They must have a clear purpose and outcome that are valuable to an employer.

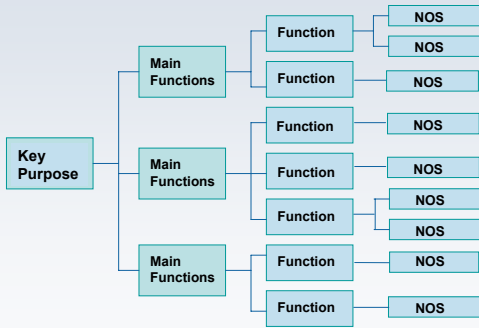
Note: A functional analysis must be UK wide

Three Stages of Functional Analysis

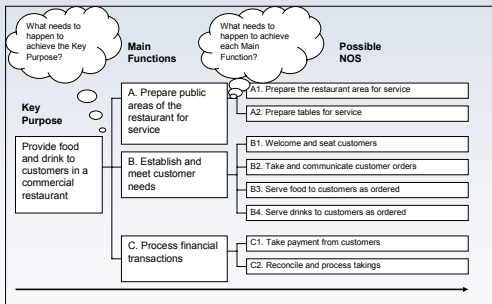
1. Begin with a Key Purpose that describes the overall purpose of the occupational area
2. Identify Main Functions by asking 'What needs to happen to achieve the Key Purpose?'
3. Identify possible NOS titles by asking 'What needs to happen to achieve each Main Function?'

Structure of a Functional Analysis

Hover the mouse over the diagram to get further information



Example for Restaurant Business



Functional Analysis - Language

Statements that appear in a functional analysis (including the key purposes) have to adhere to an approach suitable for the development of NOS:

- each statement should only be one brief sentence
- each statement should begin with a verb (an action or 'doing' word)
- each statement should also contain one or more objects for the verb (an object is a thing or person that receives the action of the verb)
- most statements (but not all) also contain a context or condition

Note: Some words are discouraged. These are mainly **qualifiers**. Usually adverbs – words which tell you how a verb (action word) is carried out. Examples are 'effectively', 'promptly', 'efficiently'.

Example for Restaurant Business

In the example for the Restaurant Business the following language is used to describe the functions involved.

The verb (action)	The object (thing or person)	The context or condition
Provide	Food and drink	To customers In a commercial restaurant
Prepare	Public areas of the restaurant	For service
Welcome and seat	Customers	
Process	Financial transactions	
Prepare	The Restaurant area	For service
Serve	Food	To customers As ordered

Exercise Two – Outcomes

Thinking about the outcomes of work activities, as well as the processes that go into achieving such outcomes, is a key principle of functional analysis. This isn't always a natural way to view the world as we often describe things in terms of processes. So this exercise is designed to help you think in terms of outcomes and to develop your awareness of functional analysis.

Carrying out a functional analysis often involves asking questions starting with 'why?' 'how?' and 'what for?' in order to gain an understanding of the outcomes of a particular work activity. The answers to the questions will help to shape and develop the functional analysis.

Exercise Two - Outcomes

Describe the outcomes for:

1. Making a cup of tea
2. Photocopying
3. Mowing a lawn
4. Planning a journey
5. Shopping for clothes

Tip: Think about 'why?' 'how?' and 'what?' the activity is being carried out for.

I have tried the exercise myself with some different activities and you can click here to see the result: [Exercise Two](#)

Outcomes

Activities (Process)	Outcome (Purpose)
Carry out an Electrocardiography (ECG)	Monitor and record cardiovascular activity
Change an ink cartridge	Maintain the service and use of a printer
Give a presentation	Present information to an audience
Give first aid	Provide emergency treatment and support to an individual appropriate to their condition
Answer the phone	Respond to calls from customers and other individuals
