

What is the Common-Metric Questionnaire (CMQ)?

The CMQ is a standardised job analysis tool that was developed by RJ Harvey in 1987 to address many of the limitations facing job analysis surveys and job 'card-sort' tools. The CMQ is unique, in that all rating scales and questions are behaviourally specific and focused on the measurement of observable, verifiable, and replicable job behaviours. The CMQ is based on the idea that the world of work can be measured along four general categories:

- Interpersonal,
- Decision-Making,
- Mechanical and Physical, and
- Work Context

The first category, **Interpersonal Activities**, is used to describe people-related work activities, such as supervising and directing employees, dealing with people internal and external to the organisation (including members of the public).

The second category, **Decision-Making Activities**, includes decision making about financial resources, human resources, operations, and equipment. In addition, this category covers the use of specialist knowledge, skills, languages and the five senses.

Physical activities, such as walking, running, lifting, and pushing, and mechanical activities, such as using computers, office equipment, stationary machines, tools, and vehicles, serve as the subject of the third category of work characteristics, **Mechanical and Physical Activities**.

Finally, the **Work Context** category covers the physical, social, and other environmental characteristics of jobs. Examples here include: working under adverse weather conditions or on unstable or slippery working surfaces; exposure to loud noises; working in personally demanding situations; working under time pressures; and the degree of control over work pace.

As shown in Table 1, these four categories are represented by a core group of 418 general work questions. These questions are supplemented with additional job-related items depending on the combination of previous questions that have been answered. In summary, the CMQ is capable of collecting 2,949 different pieces of work-related information about any job. In addition, the CMQ contains 41 general background questions, for a total of 2,990 data points.

Categories of Work	Number of Questions	Number of Data Points	Work Characteristics and Activities Covered
Interpersonal	64	912	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resource responsibility • Employee supervision • Internal contacts and relations • External contacts and relations • Functional level and impact of interpersonal decisions
Decision-Making	239	1457	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information processing • Knowledge acquisition and application • Financial and human resources • Operations and production • Long-term business planning • Functional level and impact of making decisions
Mechanical and Physical	68	439	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activities • Machine, equipment, tool, and vehicle operations • Functional level and impact of mechanical and physical activities
Work Context	47	141	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demanding work situations • Working conditions • Risks and hazards • Work autonomy • Tasks and skill variety • Feedback • Self-development • Working apparel • Work schedule • Reward system • Licensing or certification • Training, education, and experience
TOTALS:	418	2,949	

Features of the CMQ

Four features of the CMQ are intended to support the accuracy of data gathering:

- The design of questions are at a 12-year old reading level,
- A multi-choice rating format,
- Behaviourally-specific and verifiable questions and answers, and
- The option for on-line questionnaire completion

With the exception of highly specialised knowledge and skill items, CMQ questions are simply worded, behaviourally specific and exclude any complicated terminology. In addition, questions can be answered without having any knowledge of how one's job compares to other positions internal or external to the organisation.

The behavioural nature of questions and answers make it difficult for employees to claim an activity as part of the job when it doesn't exist, or to exaggerate their performance in a given activity. On-line questionnaire delivery also significantly reduces job inflation; since critical job questions are linked to each other and follow-on questions are omitted if the respondent answers incompletely.

Who to Involve?

Ideally, the best strategy is to collect information from as many people who are genuinely "expert" in the content of whatever role is under review.

While the option exists to survey every employee, it is equally appropriate to undertake a sampling exercise, to identify a smaller, representative group of participants. If a sample of staff is selected, OPRA can talk with you further about the makeup of the final group of respondents to ensure they are representative of the wider staff pool by gender, region, ethnicity, age and responsibilities.

Who should we not involve?






In all cases, job analysis participants should have direct, up-to-date experience with the job under review for a reasonable period of time, and be familiar with all job tasks. As a rule of thumb, a period of six months is the minimum amount of job tenure. Newly employed should therefore **not** be included in this job analysis. In addition, any disgruntled employees should be viewed as potentially unreliable sources of job analysis data.

CMQ Job Description Output

The CMQ system provides you with several reporting options with respect to job descriptions. These reports include:

- Basic narrative report showing item responses, and dimension score profiles for a job.
- Administrative and developmental performance-rating forms for the job.
- Work-similarity report comparing several different jobs.
- Ratings-quality report examining, for a given CMQ item, how different raters within a single job title produced different ratings.

At the most basic level, we can generate reports that show the 'scale score' (to what extent is this activity present in the role) and a 'percentile rank' (which shows the percentage of other jobs in the community which would be expected to score lower on this dimension)

Dimension	Scale Score	Percentile Rank
DATA: Decision-Making, Information Processing, Managerial Decisions	25 	75 
PEOPLE: Interpersonal Contacts, Info. Exchange	20 	71 
THINGS: Machines, Tools, Equipment, Physical Activities, Environment	10 	22 