

be slowed, however, by productivity gains stemming from office automation and the consolidation of clerical jobs. Nonetheless, job opportunities for file clerks should be plentiful because a large number of workers will be needed to replace workers who leave the occupation each year. Job turnover among file clerks reflects the lack of formal training requirements, limited advancement potential, and relatively low pay.

Job seekers who have typing and other secretarial skills and are familiar with a wide range of office machines, especially personal computers, should have the best job opportunities. File clerks should find many opportunities for temporary or part-time work, especially during peak business periods.

(See the introductory statement on information and record clerks for information on working conditions, training requirements, and earnings.)

Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks

(O*NET 43-4081.00)

Nature of the Work

Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks perform a variety of services for guests of hotels, motels, and other lodging establishments. Regardless of the type of accommodation, most desk clerks have similar responsibilities. Primarily, they register arriving guests, assign rooms, and check out guests at the end of their stay. They also keep records of room assignments and other registration information on computers. When guests check out, they prepare and explain the charges, as well as process payments.

Front desk clerks always are in the public eye and, through their attitude and behavior, greatly influence the public's impressions of the establishment. When answering questions about services, check-out times, the local community, or other matters of public interest, clerks must be courteous and helpful. Should guests report problems with their rooms, clerks contact members of the housekeeping or maintenance staff to correct them.

In some smaller hotels and motels, clerks may have a variety of additional responsibilities usually performed by specialized employees in larger establishments. In these places, the desk clerk often is responsible for all front office operations, information, and services. These clerks, for example, may perform the work of a bookkeeper, advance reservation agent, cashier, laundry attendant, and telephone switchboard operator.



Hotel and motel clerks register arriving guests.

Employment

Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks held about 177,000 jobs in 2000. This occupation is well-suited to flexible work schedules, as about 3 in 10 hotel clerks works part time. Because hotels and motels need to be staffed 24 hours a day, evening and weekend work is common.

Job Outlook

Employment of hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2010, as more hotels, motels, and other lodging establishments are built and occupancy rates rise. Job opportunities for hotel and motel desk clerks also will result from a need to replace workers, as thousands of workers transfer to other occupations that offer better pay and advancement opportunities or simply leave the work force altogether. Opportunities for part-time work should continue to be plentiful, as front desks often are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Employment of hotel and motel desk clerks should be affected by an increase in business and leisure travel. Shifts in travel preference away from long vacations and toward long weekends and other, more frequent, shorter trips also should increase demand as this trend increases the total number of nights spent in hotels. The expansion of budget and extended-stay hotels relative to larger, luxury establishments reflects a change in the composition of the hotel and motel industry. As employment shifts from luxury hotels to these extended-stay establishments offering larger rooms with kitchenettes and laundry services, the proportion of hotel desk clerks should increase in relation to staff such as waiters and waitresses and recreation workers. Desk clerks are able to handle more of the guest's needs in these establishments, answering the main switchboard, providing business services, and coordinating services like dry cleaning or grocery shopping.

New technologies automating check-in and check-out procedures now allow some guests to bypass the front desk in many larger establishments, reducing staffing needs. As some of the more traditional duties are automated, however, many desk clerks are assuming a wider range of responsibilities.

Employment of desk clerks is sensitive to cyclical swings in the economy. During recessions, vacation and business travel declines, and hotels and motels need fewer clerks. Similarly, desk clerk employment is affected by seasonal fluctuations in travel during high and low tourist seasons.

Sources of Additional Information

Information on careers in the lodging industry, as well as information about professional development and training programs, may be obtained from:

- Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, 800 N. Magnolia Ave., Suite 1800, Orlando, FL 32803. Internet: <http://www.ei-ahma.org>

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Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping

(O*NET 43-4161.00)

Nature of the Work

Human resources assistants maintain the personnel records of an organization's employees. These records include information such as name, address, job title, and earnings, benefits such as health



Human resources assistants maintain the personnel records of employees.

and life insurance, and tax withholding. On a daily basis, these assistants record and answer questions about employee absences and supervisory reports on job performance. When an employee receives a promotion or switches health insurance plans, the human resources assistant updates the appropriate form. Human resources assistants also may prepare reports for managers elsewhere within the organization. For example, they might compile a list of employees eligible for an award.

In smaller organizations, some human resources assistants perform a variety of other clerical duties. They answer telephone or letter inquiries from the public, send out announcements of job openings or job examinations, and issue application forms. When credit bureaus and finance companies request confirmation of a person's employment, the human resources assistant provides authorized information from the employee's personnel records. Payroll departments and insurance companies also may be contacted to verify changes to records.

Some human resources assistants also are involved in hiring. They screen job applicants to obtain information such as education and work experience; administer aptitude, personality, and interest tests; explain the organization's employment policies and refer qualified applicants to the employing official; and request references from present or past employers. Also, human resources assistants inform job applicants, by telephone or letter, of their acceptance or rejection for employment.

In some job settings, human resources assistants have specific job titles. For example, *assignment clerks* notify a firm's existing employees of position vacancies and identify and assign qualified applicants. They keep track of vacancies throughout the organization and complete and distribute vacancy advertisement forms. These clerks review applications in response to advertisements and verify information, using personnel records. After a selection is made, they notify all the applicants of their acceptance or rejection.

For another example, *identification clerks* are responsible for security matters at defense installations. They compile and record personal data about vendors, contractors, and civilian and military personnel and their dependents. Job duties include interviewing applicants; corresponding with law enforcement authorities; and preparing badges, passes, and identification cards.

Employment

Human resources assistants held about 177,000 jobs in 2000. Although these workers are found in most industries, about 1 in every

6 works for a government agency. Colleges and universities, hospitals, department stores, and banks also employ large numbers of human resources assistants.

Job Outlook

Employment of human resources assistants is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2010, as assistants continue to take on more responsibilities. For example, workers conduct Internet research to locate resumes, must be able to scan resumes of job candidates quickly and efficiently, and must be increasingly sensitive to confidential information such as salaries and social security numbers. In a favorable job market, more emphasis is placed on human resources departments, thus increasing the demand for human resources assistants. However, even in economic downturns, there will be continuing demand for human resources assistants as human resources departments in all industries try to make their organizations more efficient by determining what type of employees to hire and strategically filling job openings. Human resources assistants may play an instrumental role in their organization's human resources policies. For example, they may talk to staffing firms and consulting firms and conduct other research, and then offer their ideas on issues such as whether to hire temporary contract workers or full-time staff.

Similar to other office and administrative support occupations, the growing use of computers in human resources departments means that a lot of data entry done by human resources assistants can be eliminated, as employees themselves enter the data and send it to the human resources office. This is most feasible in large organizations with multiple human resources offices and, to some extent, could limit job growth among human resources assistants.

In addition to job growth, replacement needs will account for many job openings for human resources assistants as they advance within the human resources department, take jobs unrelated to human resources administration, or leave the labor force.

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Interviewers

(O*NET 43-4061.01, 43-4061.02, 43-4111.00, 43-4131.00)

Nature of the Work

Interviewers obtain information from individuals and business representatives who are opening bank accounts, trying to obtain loans, seeking admission to medical facilities, participating in consumer surveys, applying to receive aid from government programs, and providing data for various other purposes. By mail, telephone, or in person, these workers solicit and verify information, create files, and perform a number of other related tasks.

The specific duties and job titles of *interviewers*, *except eligibility and loan* depend upon the type of employer. In doctors' offices and other healthcare facilities, for example, *interviewing clerks* also are known as *admitting interviewers* or *patient representatives*. These workers obtain all preliminary information required for a patient's record or for his or her admission to a hospital, such as the patient's name, address, age, medical history, present medications, previous hospitalizations, religion, persons to notify in case of emergency, attending physician, and the party responsible for payment. In some cases, interviewing clerks may be required to verify that an individual is eligible for health benefits or to work out financing options for those who might need them.