



General Office Occupations and Clerical Services CIP Code 52.0408

Introduction – Program of Study

General office clerks have responsibilities that often change daily with the needs of the specific job and the employer. Clerks may spend their days filing or keyboarding. Others enter data at a computer terminal. They also operate photocopiers, fax machines, and other office equipment; prepare mailings; proofread documents; and answer telephones and deliver messages.

The specific duties assigned to a clerk vary significantly, depending on the type of office in which he or she works. Clerks' duties also vary by level of experience. Whereas inexperienced employees make photocopies, stuff envelopes, or record inquiries, experienced clerks usually are given additional responsibilities. For example, they may maintain financial or other records, set up spreadsheets, verify statistical reports for accuracy and completeness, handle and adjust customer complaints, work with vendors, make travel arrangements, take inventory of equipment and supplies, answer questions on departmental services and functions, or help prepare invoices or budgetary requests. Senior office clerks may be expected to monitor and direct the work of lower level clerks.

For the most part, general office clerks work in comfortable office settings. Those on full time schedules usually work a standard 40 hour week; however, some work shifts or overtime during busy periods. Many clerks also work in temporary positions.

Although most office clerk jobs are entry level positions, employers may prefer or require previous office or business experience. Employers usually require a high school diploma or equivalent, and some require basic computer skills, including familiarity with word processing software, as well as other general office skills. Training for this occupation is available through business education programs offered in high schools, community and junior colleges, and postsecondary vocational schools. Courses in office practices, word processing, and other computer applications are particularly helpful. Because general office clerks usually work with other office staff, they should be cooperative and able to work as part of a team. In addition, applicants should have good communication skills, be detail oriented, and adaptable.

General office clerks who exhibit strong communication, interpersonal, and analytical skills may be promoted to supervisory positions. Others may move into senior administrative jobs, such as receptionist, secretary, or administrative assistant. After gaining some work experience or specialized skills, many workers transfer to jobs with higher pay or greater advancement potential.

Assumptions of this Program of Study

High quality programs should meet the following standards:

1. Promote positive working relationships.
2. Implement a curriculum that fosters all areas of skill development
3. Use appropriate and effective teaching approaches.
4. Provide ongoing assessments of student progress.
5. Employ and support qualified teaching staff.
6. Establish and maintain relationships and use resources of the community.
7. Provide a safe and healthy learning environment.
8. Implement strong program organization and supervision policies that result in high quality teaching and learning.
9. Integrate academic skills and aptitudes necessary for postsecondary education, gainful employment and a foundation of lifelong learning.

CIP Code

52.0408 General Office Occupations and Clerical Services

The general office occupations and clerical services program prepares students to provide basic administrative support under the supervision of office managers, administrative assistants, secretaries and other office personnel. Students learn to compose, key, format and process business correspondence and documents; operate computers, telephones and other office equipment; use word processing, spreadsheet, database, desktop publishing, presentation and communications software; proofread and correct copy; perform receptionist functions; receive and distribute incoming mail and prepare outgoing mail; prepare and ship materials and verify and receive shipments; file and retrieve materials; and maintain and update files. Students also receive instruction in business ethics, general business correspondence, office procedures, communications and public relations. Students are provided experiences and instruction needed to satisfy initial employment requirements in typing and general office occupations. Those completing the program may be employed as general office clerks, billing clerks, direct mail clerks, file clerks, inventory clerks, service order clerks, shipping and receiving clerks, stock clerks, records clerks, office machine operators, receptionists, telephone operators, typists, word processing operators or related office occupations.

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