

# Short Guide to Developing a Competency Framework

Competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person possesses and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely in their role.

As an employer, determining competency levels and then identifying, maintaining and monitoring the knowledge and skills is crucial. A competency framework will simplify this process as it provides the structure that sets out and defines each individual competency and helps you track their performance.

Building a competency framework for your organisation can also help you do the following:

- Recruit and select new staff more effectively.
- Evaluate performance more effectively.
- Identify skill and competency gaps more efficiently.
- Effectively manage health and safety risks.

Here's our guide to developing a competency framework to ensure your workers are meeting competency levels and overall, help improve the health and safety culture in your organisation.

## 1. Identify roles and competencies

Each role in your organisation will have its own set of competencies needed to perform the job correctly and safely. However, before you identify the required competencies, have a clear understanding of what the roles and functions are in your organisation and how they interrelate. In other words, you need to identify what the main responsibilities of the roles are.

Gathering information on your roles can be achieved by:

- Role descriptions
- Job Safety Analysis
- Observing workers
- Talking to workers

Once you have developed an in-depth understanding of your roles, you can begin to determine the competency levels required for each of them. Think about the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to carry out the work in a healthy and safe way – this includes considering both physical and mental risks related to the job. For example, the role of a Forklift Operator requires a worker to be competent in Hazard Identification and be a trained forklift operator. If the forklift drives onto a road, the operator must also have an 'F' endorsement drivers license.

Make sure the required competencies are detailed. If they are too generic, they risk becoming meaningless and arguably unmeasurable.

## 2. Develop a training matrix

You will want to develop a comprehensive training matrix. A training matrix will help you identify the learning opportunities, specific training and qualifications a worker needs in order for them to meet the competency requirements. Complete a matrix for each role in your organisation.

Figure 1 is an example of what your training matrix might look like or include. Managers will be able to instantly spot any gaps in training or weaknesses in skills. They will know who has the required skill sets to carry out certain roles or tasks within the business too.

Training Matrix – Forklift Operator						
Name	Induction	First Aid	Driver Training	Hazard Identification	SOP – Crane Course	Manual Handling

Figure 1: Example of training matrix

## 3. Identify the measurements

Identify the measurements that will be used to assess competence on the job. Ask yourself, how do you actually measure the competencies in a way that is objective and evidence based?

Refer to Figure 2 shows various methods for measuring competencies. These measurements can be used to assess the competency level of prospective or current employees.

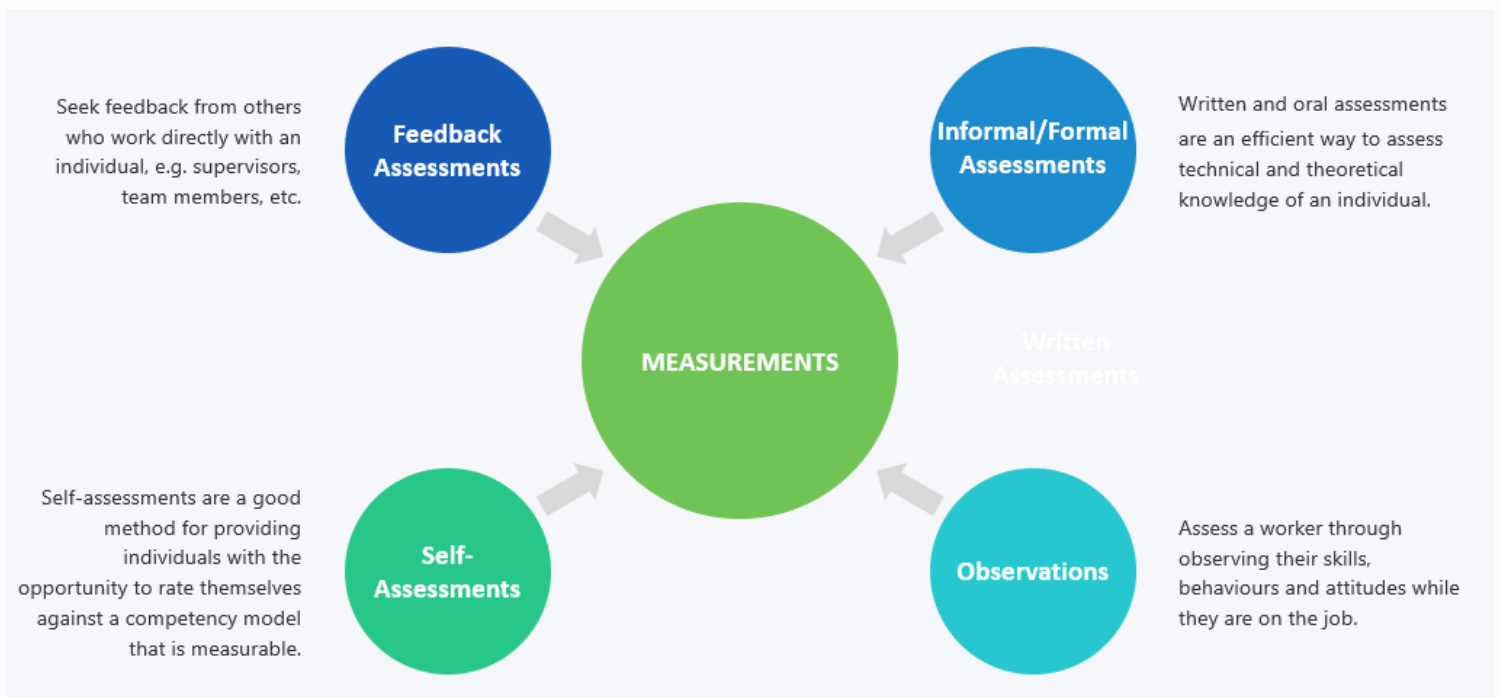


Figure 2: Methods for measuring competency

## 4. Assess the individual

Once you have established your competency framework, you can now implement it into your organisation. Whether you are hiring a new worker or conducting a performance review on a current worker you need to ensure they hold up-to-date qualifications and can demonstrate the correct skills and knowledge to fit their role.

A skills gap analysis is a useful tool to assess the gap between the skills a worker currently has and the skills required by the employer. While conducting a skills gap analysis, you can benchmark against the competency framework to identify and remedy any shortfalls between the current level of competency possessed by the workers, the required level of competency and what learning and development will be necessary to bridge the gap.

Use the measurements in Figure 2 to help you determine a worker's current skill level and then identify training needs by completing a training matrix as presented in Figure 3.

## 5. Deliver informal / formal training

Based on the results of the analysis, work alongside the worker to develop a personal training programme outlining the training objectives, type of training required (informal or formal), training materials, and how you will evaluate the training.

There are various methods of training available - it is up to the employer to determine what form of training will be most effective in allowing the worker to successfully acquire the right skills and knowledge.

Figure 3 outlines possible formal and informal training methods. You can also take a blended learning approach.



Figure 3: Formal and Informal training methods

## 6. Evaluate, Measure and Monitor

Upon the completion of training, it is crucial to evaluate whether it was effective or not. Were the training objectives met? Did the worker find the training useful? Can they apply what they learnt to their job? Again, you can measure the overall effectiveness of training by utilising the methods in Figure 2. Observations and Feedback Assessments are particularly useful for the evaluation stage as you can understand how well they have applied their learnings on the job.

It doesn't end here! You must continue to monitor and review employee competence regularly. Refresher training may be required to keep qualifications, skills and knowledge fresh and current. You must also consider changes in the marketplace, regulations and legislation which may affect the competency requirements of a particular role.

Remember, make sure to document and keep records on anything that relates to training and competence compliance. This includes staff recruitment, training, competence assessment and details of appropriate qualifications for any activity.



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please contact us on 04 499 0710 or  
[info@workingwise.nz](mailto:info@workingwise.nz).

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