

TOOLS OVERVIEW GUIDE

Welcome to the Competence Application Tools Overview Guide.

The aim of this guide is to provide you with an overview that will help you navigate around the competence application tools site, provide you with support and help you to select the most appropriate tools according to your needs and requirements.

Why do I need a guide?

Most tools come with some form of user instruction or guidance and the Competence Application Tools are no exception. When faced with a choice of tools, however, it is important to choose the most appropriate one to do the job that you need. The tools are constantly developing as a result of user feedback. One of the things that users said would be useful is an 'overarching' user guide that links the tools together and explains their use. That is why this guide has been developed.

How is the guide structured/arranged?

The guide uses a question and answer approach throughout. This will allow you to look for a specific question that you need answering, or enable you to browse the list of questions to gain an overview of how the tools can help you. This is not a static guide. It will grow and change as new tools and functions are developed and as users ask new questions.

How can I ask questions or give feedback?

Within each tool there is a feedback button giving you the opportunity to ask questions or to give us ideas for new tools development. Your **feedback is important** so please use it.

What tools are available?

There are a range of tools available that are grouped together according to what they are able to do for you.

4 tools are designed to help you **find competences** from our database:

1. The competence search tool
2. The NHS KSF mapping tool
3. The Health Functional Map
4. The Career Framework tool

Once you have found competences using these tools you will be able to:-

1. Create and save lists of competences
2. Add, copy, move or delete competences to and from your lists
3. Create folders for storing your lists
4. Move lists around your folders
5. Send lists and folders to other people
6. Create job descriptions from your lists
7. Print your lists
8. Export your lists to Word

“My Lists”

The “My Lists” environment has been designed to allow you to store your own unique collection of competences for any purpose. For example, competence lists could relate to role/team profiles or modules of learning etc.

“My Lists” replaces the “role profile, team profile and competence cluster” tools previously available on the Skills for Health website. This new environment has been designed to make it easier for you to access your work and also to improve flexibility and efficiency when working with competence lists.

2 tools enable you to perform assessments on your lists

1. The self assessment tool
2. The team assessment tool

In addition a list comparison tool is in the process of development. When this goes live instructions for its use will also be developed.

What does each tool do?

Each tool offers user guides and instructions. They also all have step by step instructions for their use. Please take a look at these for the detailed answer to this question. As an overview, however, each tool does the following:

The competence search tool enables you to search the database for specific competences. You can search by entering a key word that will search the competence titles, summaries and key words. You can select and browse the various suites/frameworks using a drop down menu or select and browse competences mapped to specific KSF dimensions/levels. From your search results you will be able store lists of competences.

The NHS KSF competence mapping tool enables you to use the KSF outline of a specific post to select and find competences in the database that are mapped to the post's dimensions/levels.

The Health Functional Map is another tool to help you find relevant competences. The tool is based upon the Skills for Health “Health Functional Map” and covers all of the functions that are needed to deliver effective health care services. It contains a breakdown of levels, starting with broad functions, drilling down to more detailed functions. The end point of the map is where National Workforce Competence (NWC) and National Occupational Standards (NOS) sit and from where you can add them to your profiles.

The self assessment tool enables you undertake an assessment of your own abilities against competences in lists/profiles. Results are shown graphically so you can easily see your where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

The team assessment tool enables you to undertake a skills mix analysis of your team. It can show you where the team has gaps in competence as well as showing which competences are met and by whom. It can also predict the impact of skills loss when a team member is leaving.

The Career Framework tool contains lists of competences that have been have been mapped by Skills for Health to actual job descriptions. They have not been externally validated, and they are not intended to be an exemplars of any kind, but simply example lists of competences which you may consider useful when working with similar jobs, or looking at care pathways. Further information about the Career Framework can be found on the Skills for Health website at: <http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/page/career-frameworks>

Which is the best tool for finding competences?

This can depend on the reason that you are looking for competences, how familiar you are with them, and what you want to use them for.

If you are **looking for a few specific competences**, and you are fairly familiar with competences, then using the key word /phrase facility in the search tool would probably meet your need. Do remember to follow the 'tips for successful searching' within the tool and look at the step by step instructions/overview guide to familiarise yourself with how it works.

If you are **looking for competences for a specific role/job** you could try browsing the Career Framework examples or you could use the KSF mapping tool. Remember that our competences are only 'indicatively' mapped to the KSF so you may not find all of the competences you require through this tool. You will also need to filter your search from the first page of results as the KSF draws quite generically from the database.

However, it does offer you a good start and you can fill any gaps by using the search tool. Again, you should look at the step by step instructions/overview guide to help you with the use of the tool.

If **you are looking for a large number of competences** or if you are not familiar with the competence database, the Health Functional Map will probably be the most helpful to you. This enables you to search by functional area in a systematic way. If you search in every domain of the map, drilling down as appropriate into the functions that are relevant to the purpose of your search then you should find all of the competences that you need. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the step by step instructions/overview guide.

How can I use the competence tools?

Competence tools can be used for a wide range of purposes including:

- Individual, team or service design or redesign
- Team and Organisational Development
- Appraisal and Personal Development assessment and planning
- Work based assessment of competence
- Performance management
- Recruitment and selection
- Induction planning
- Career planning and management
- Training and learning programmes
- Development of skills audits

Why create and save lists of competences?

Competences can be used for a wide range of workforce design and development purposes. Saving them into lists enables you to return to them time and time again. If you don't save lists you may find yourself spending excessive amounts of time using the search tools.

Once you have created lists you can perform functions with them that can also save you lots of time and effort. For example, if you needed to create 3 lists of competences that cover the roles of 3 similar staff members in your team/organisation you can create a list of core competences and copy it 3 times. You only then need to find the few specific competences that are relevant to each role. Also, because your lists work directly from the live competence database, they are kept up to date whenever the competences are reviewed and updated.

What types of competence lists can I create?

You can create lists in any category that makes sense to you. The tools already provide the popular categories of role profiles, team's profiles and competence clusters, but you may want to create lists relating to pathways or education programmes. The options are endless! You can also store your lists into folders to organise them. For example, you may be service manager over 3 different departments/hospital wards/community teams so within your Role Profile category you can create 3 separate folders that contain the role profiles/lists that relate to the staff members that work in each area.

What can I do with my competence lists?

You can do many things with your lists. This includes:
Adding, copying, moving or deleting competences to and from them

- Moving them around your folders
- Sending them to other people
- Creating job descriptions from them
- Printing them
- Exporting them to word

You can also:

Perform self assessment/s against competences
Perform a competence/skills mix analysis

Why and how do I do a competence self assessment?

As long as you have a competence list in your login area that reflects your role you can use the self assessment tool. The tool has user guides which you should read in advance. The tool allows you to rate yourself against the competences in your list and record evidence about your performance in relation to those competences. It will show the results of your assessment in a graphical format that easily enables you to see your areas of strength and areas for development. You can print off the graph and take it to development meetings with your manager. You can retake the assessment periodically and it will save up to four past results so you can see your progress in competence achievement over time.

How do I perform a skills/competence mix analysis?

As long as you have a team profile/list and individual team member role profiles/lists in your login area you can perform this activity using the team assessment tool. The tool has user guides which you should read in advance. The end result is that you can see in a matrix format or in a list format (depending on the size of the team) what competences are fulfilled by which team members thus providing you with a skills/competence mix analysis. It will tell you what competence gaps you have and show you competence duplication. You can print off the results of the assessment.

Which tools help me to do role design/redesign?

You can use a number of tools to help you find competences that can then be saved to your lists and used in role design/redesign. If you already have a job description, for example, you can use the competence search tool entering key word searches linked directly to the job description to find the relevant competences. If the role has a KSF outline you can design the role using the KSF mapping tool. Alternatively you can use the Health Functional Map to search for relevant competences by functional area.

If it is a completely new role and you do not have a job description or KSF outline you can develop a competence based role profile list by entering key word searches or using the Health Functional Map building up the competences according to specified criteria required of the role, perhaps guided by a Steering Group or Working party that has specialist knowledge

of what the role is to be. Once you have built up your role profile list you can then use your saved list to help you develop a KSF outline using the KSF mapping tool. You can also use your saved list to help build up a job description.

You can do the same if you are redesigning a current role by checking what it is that you want to change in the current role, specifying what exactly you want to add into the role and searching using these same search methods. You can then add the new specific competences into the role profile list and save it as an updated or new list.

How can the tools help me to do workforce planning?

The tools are not capable of supporting the full cycle of workforce 'planning' but they can help you to undertake workforce 'design' as a part of the workforce planning process. For example, you can use the Health Functional Map to put together a service profile/list from which you can then put together a number of role profiles/lists. The tools cannot tell you how many of the roles you need but at least you have a clear description of what the roles need to do.

You can develop and save lists for workforce planning in the same way you have developed and saved your role profile lists only this time you will search for the competences required linked to your workforce plan. For example, you may want to develop a list of core competences that all staff need to have and a specialised list of competences that are not required by all staff or on all occasions.

Once you know what competences you require you can match them against current lists of role profiles, if you have them, to check if you already have staff with the required competences, both common and specialised, and develop your staff resources against your workforce plan. This will enable you to plan in staff resources according to competences required, developing an appropriate skill mix into your teams according to the workforce plan.

Additionally it will enable you to identify any shortfalls in staff competences and plan training to bridge the gaps on an individual, team or service basis

If you do not already have role profiles lists you can develop them from your workforce plan competence lists. Alternatively you may want to retain as team profile lists without specifically linking to single role profile lists.

You will be able to use the self and/or team assessment tools to help you identify competence capability and training needs in line with your workforce planning.

Which tools help me to do competence based service design?

Competences can be used for a wide range of workforce design and development purposes ranging from individual role design to complete service design or redesign. The same principles apply as for all of your created lists. Service design just takes the same principles and uses the application tools on a larger scale developing and saving lists based on service competence requirements. Saving your lists enables you to return to them time and time again to develop them according to your requirements.

Remember that you can copy competences from any of your lists to save you time and effort.

Which tools can help with staff appraisal?

Once you have created competence lists/profiles for staff members, you can ask staff to use the list that is appropriate for their role to undertake a self assessment (using the self assessment tool) in their own login area. This enables them to rate their level of skills and knowledge against the competences that are relevant to them and the result of their assessment can be printed off and brought to the appraisal meeting to inform discussions.

The advantage of using the competences as the focus of the discussion is that any judgment of their performance is based on nationally agreed (and objective) criteria rather than an

appraiser using their own (subjective) standards or criteria. For those working in the NHS there is an added benefit that the competences are indicatively linked to the KSF so assessment against the competences doubles up as assessment/appraisal against their post's KSF outlines.

Which tools can help with recruitment and selection?

Once you have created competence lists/profiles for staff members, you can use them in the recruitment and selection process along with the job description and person specification by checking for evidence of attainment linked to specified role competences. This can be an additional tool available during the short listing phase of the recruitment process and is particularly useful if you have a lot of candidates to select from as it enables you to easily identify which candidates have the competence capability you are looking for in the role. Alternatively the competence lists can be used to help you structure interview questions offering interviewees an opportunity to provide evidence of competence capability.

Which tools can help with induction?

Again once you have created competence lists/profiles for staff members you know what competences you want specific role holders to have. You can identify key competences that are essential for the post and organise your induction programme to ensure new starters achieve competence capability in these essential competences. Some of these will be "must have" competences that all new starters must have before they commence in the role, for example, competences linked to safeguarding and child protection for newly appointed and/or newly qualified school nurses or health visitors or record keeping for all new starters.

By identifying the appropriate role competences you can record/log the required competences, assess the individual's competence capability and identify any gaps that need to be filled. This can be followed by training and reassessment facilitating the development of knowledge and skills that can be approved and signed off based on the provision of evidence for competency achievement. Logging and signing off against competence achievement serves as a record of attainment for both individual and organisational purposes.

Which tools can help with training and development?

Training and development can be facilitated by taking the same approach indicated for induction using competence lists and profiles to compile competence based training packages linked to specified competences. You can organise your lists specifically for training purpose making them as specific or general as you wish. Some training lists can, for example, be compiled of competences that are relevant for essential training for all of staff whereas others may be more role specific.

Competences are not levelled, that is, the person either achieves the competence or they do not. However you could group competences together to inform training at different levels for your staff, for example, a training list specifying competences expected to be achieved during first year in organisation, another for the second year and so on up to senior most experienced level.

Just as with induction you can create a competence based programme against which an individual can be assessed and signed off when fully trained and competent.

Which tools can help with continuing professional development (CPD)?

You can build up your personal profile linked to your induction and training and development competence achievement by maintaining an up to date and signed off competence achievement log that provides you with an ongoing record of all competences you have achieved to date along with evidence demonstrating that you have been signed off as having achieved each competence. You can also specify competence achievement planned for the

future and work towards obtaining evidence for competence capability sign off.

You can also use the self assessment tool to demonstrate how you have improved and developed by taking the assessment against your role profile list. This will highlight areas for development and when you take the self assessment again, at a later date, graphically demonstrate areas of improvement. The self assessment tool can be used up to four times against your profile so you can demonstrate development over several months or even years depending on how frequently you wish to reassess.

As competences are also indicatively linked to the NHS KSF you may wish to use the KSF mapping tool to select competences linked to specific KSF dimensions you wish to develop. This may also be helpful if your organisation focuses on developing all staff against specific KSF dimensions at a given time, for example, communication and health safety and security for the first year, personal and people development, and quality the second year and so on.