



## Project principles

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## Introduction

This presentation introduces some of the principles relating to ‘competence’ that were used in ComProCom.

There is more detail in Part 1 of the methodological manual, available on the ComProCom web site, [www.comprocom.eu](http://www.comprocom.eu).

There is also a short video available in which I give a brief summary of the concepts.

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## Why develop competence standards?

The purpose of the standards or framework will influence the conceptual approach that is taken.

### **Organisational**

- support development, careers, performance
- specific to the organisation; can focus on job-specific detail or on more general attributes

### **Educational**

- sometimes to emphasise skills (v. knowledge)
- what a person can do at the end of an educational process

### **Professional**

- ability to work effectively (and independently?) in the profession or occupation

Narrow (function/role-based) and broad (profession/field-based) versions of competence

A framework geared to continuing development may follow different principles to a set of practising standards



## ComProCom framework aim

- ◆ Describe competent practice in a profession or occupational field.
- ◆ Can be used later to develop a curriculum or training programme, or for application in a particular organisation – but that's not the primary purpose of the project.



## What is 'competence'?

'the ability to do something successfully or efficiently'

*Oxford English Dictionary, 2015*

'the ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results'

*International Standards Organisation, 2012*

'involves integrating knowledge, methods, social and personal skills and abilities in the capacity to act'

*Kultusministerkonferenz, 2004*

- ◆ About the 'ability to act' – using knowledge, skills etc. to do something useful
- ◆ An 'external' view of competence – as activity or practice
- ◆ As opposed to an 'internal' view – skills, attributes, behaviours – sometimes called 'competency' (though the dictionary definition is synonymous with 'competence').

## ‘Competence’ as used in ComProCom

‘The **ability to do something** successfully or efficiently’

– ability, not  
performance  
over time

– actions, not  
attributes

**Professional/  
Occupational  
perspective**

Concerned with what is needed in a field of work, rather than with education/training or the needs of specific organisations

**External  
perspective**

Defines what it is that is to be done – as opposed to the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to do it

## Level of description

It is possible to describe competence at various conceptual levels, for instance:

- ◆ Globally – what is involved in being a competent professional?
- ◆ At the level of a whole profession or occupational field.
- ◆ For a particular occupational role – or a set of roles, e.g. via a ‘core and options’ structure.
- ◆ For a specific function or task.

The next diagram provides more detail on each of these levels. They should be thought of as a continuum, so some applications may have characteristics that have features of two columns.

Level of description	Generic	Field (Centre-outwards)	Role (Bounded-occupation)	Task
<b>Describes</b>	What does 'doing professional work' involve?	What is involved in working in field 'X'?	What is involved in role or function 'Y'?	What processes are necessary to perform task 'Z'?
<b>Applicability</b>	Professional work	Whole professions, occupational fields	Occupational roles & functions	Specific tasks
<b>Example</b>	Liberal professions	Law	Commercial conveyancer	Registering title
<b>Lifespan limited by</b>	Societal conceptions of professional work and ethics	Macro-organisation of field, conceptions of practice, technological paradigms	Practices, technologies, legislation, how roles are defined	Practices, techniques, procedures, applications, legislation
<b>Typical length</b>	2-5pp	5-12pp	50pp+ for an occupation	Varies depending on breadth of task and need for critical detail
<b>Interpret into context?</b>	Open	Open within overall field	Within limited range of contexts	Minimal
<b>Possible subsets</b>	Different levels	Different levels within the field	Different roles, contexts and levels	Different contexts

## More on levels of description

- ◆ Descriptions are applied directly – there is no need for (for instance) a field-level description to be supported by related role-level descriptions.
- ◆ Use the appropriate level – if you need to describe what a lawyer needs to be able to do, this means working at the field level, not creating standards for 101 possible roles that a lawyer could work in.
- ◆ Conversely, if you need to describe what a commercial conveyancer needs to be able to do, the role level is likely to be more relevant.

ComProCom started by assuming a field-level, ‘centre-outwards’ approach – but some applications indicated a need to incorporate aspects of role-based descriptions.



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