

General Questions

Q What are competencies?

A Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to perform effectively in a given job, role or situation.

Q When was the NICS Competency Framework introduced?

A The Framework was introduced for the purposes of performance management from April 2014, and for recruitment and selection purposes from April 2015.

Q There are 10 competencies in the NICS Competency Framework. Do I have to demonstrate all 10?

A No. Not all of the competencies set out within the Framework will apply equally to every post. You will usually focus on around six, which have been agreed with your line manager as being most important to your role.

Q What else is the NICS Competency Framework used for?

A The Framework has been designed to support many HR / people processes. It supports Performance Management, and is intended to improve staff resourcing, leadership development, and Learning & Development.

Q Is the NICS Competency Framework used by all NI Departments?

A Yes.

Performance Management

Q How is the NICS Competency Framework used when agreeing my Personal Performance Agreement / Personal Development Plan (PPA / PDP)?

A When discussing and agreeing your personal performance objectives at the start of the reporting year, you and your line manager should also refer to the Framework and agree which of the competencies you are expected to demonstrate in your post. These should be reviewed regularly throughout the year and updated if necessary.

Q Does the NICS Competency Framework apply to staff who work in industrial grades?

A Yes. The Framework was introduced in April 2014 for all non-industrial grades from AA to Permanent Secretary for performance management purposes. In April 2018, this was extended to include the majority of industrial grades, with the exception of DfI Road Workers who will remain on the TransportNI Productivity Unit Bonus Scheme.

Q How does the NICS Competency Framework help me when considering my development needs?

A After drawing up your personal performance objectives and identifying the competencies that are essential to your post, you and your line manager should together examine each key area of your work along with the associated objectives and competencies, and discuss any areas that require development. Reading the indicators of effective behaviours for both your own and the next grade will help you to identify potential learning and development needs.

Q If I change jobs during the reporting year, do I need to agree new competencies?

A If you move to a different post during the reporting year, you and your new line manager must agree not only performance and development objectives for your new post, but also the competencies you are expected to demonstrate in that post. For any period of temporary promotion (TP), your new line manager will add your performance and development objectives for the TP grade to your current PPA / PDP. If you change jobs for any reason other than temporary promotion, you should create a completely new PPA / PDP for your new post.

Learning and Development

Q How is the NICS Competency Framework used when discussing my learning and development needs?

A Reading the indicators of effective behaviours at your own, and the next level, will help you and your line manager to identify any potential learning and development needs.

Q Why are examples of effective and ineffective behaviours being given for each competency?

A The Framework was designed to provide illustrative examples of both effective and ineffective behaviours to help managers and staff to be clear about what sort of behaviour is expected, and focus their discussion on how a job or task should be approached. The effective and ineffective behavioural descriptors are examples, and the lists are not intended to be exhaustive.

Q What is the NICS Competency Framework e-Learning Package and Toolkit?

A The NICS Competency Framework e-Learning Package and Toolkit are designed to support the use of the Framework. They will help you to:

- focus on your performance
- address any skills / learning gaps you may have
- develop your own career

Further information on the e-Learning package and toolkit is available within LInKS.

Professional and Technical Grades

Q If I work in a professional, technical or specialist grade, how does the NICS Competency Framework apply to me?

A This Framework is generic to everyone, regardless of the discipline they work in, in that all staff are required to demonstrate the high-level leadership behaviours: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results. Therefore, regardless of whether you work in professional, technical, specialist or in an administrative capacity the competencies within this framework will still apply to you.

Q Is there another Competency Framework or additional competencies that professional staff can use?

A No. This Framework is generic to everyone, regardless of the job they do. There are no additional professional competencies within the NICS. The indicators of behaviour are not designed to be comprehensive, but provide a clear sense of, and greater understanding and consistency about, what is expected from individuals in the NICS. Some professional groups may develop particular indicators of behaviour within a competency to suit their profession.

Q The NICS Competency Framework says that it is generic, and no other Framework applies. Can a Profession adapt it to meet their needs?

A Yes. Some Professions have expanded the behaviours to help them to support their professional aims and objectives. This may, for example, include the requirement to hold a specific professional qualification, or to have experience in a particular area.

Selection and Recruitment

Q If I am going for a promotion board, will I be measured against the NICS Competency Framework?

A Yes. The Framework is used for all recruitment / promotion competitions. The Candidate Information Booklet details the competencies that will be assessed at each stage of the competition.

Q Is the NICS Competency Framework used for the selection and recruitment of professional staff?

A Yes. The Framework is used for the recruitment and selection of all staff. As noted above, professional groups may expand upon the behaviours within the Framework to support their professional aims and objectives. Where this is the case, the Head of Profession must provide a copy of their revised Framework to HRConnect in advance of any selection / recruitment exercise.