



# Competency Frameworks

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## INTRODUCTION

- Two key programmes that underpin the National Service Framework (NSF) are workforce planning and education and training. These are critical in order to ensure that patients receive a high quality health service. With the progression of the NSF for Renal Services, there is a need for the development of National Core Competencies for all Renal Healthcare Professionals, as the quality agenda in the NHS requires professionals to appraise their own roles and ensure their competence.
- Many renal units throughout the UK are presently completing or have completed competencies for renal nurses of all grades. There is a need to standardize and share the good work and develop a National Competency for renal nurses.
- This should also be an area that all disciplines strive towards achieving within the NHS.

## PROBLEMS WITH CURRENT SYSTEM

- Currently nurses rely on a self-regulation process. This is an ineffective and unreliable system based on a small sample of the workforce. The current audit process of nurses competence is inadequate.
- The use of Nursing Professional Profiles are only as good as the person completing them. Many profiles contain only certificates and lack any evidence that the nurse has updated their knowledge and skills.

## REASONS FOR COMPETENCE

- Recruitment - with the increased use of staff from overseas
- Promoting retention of staff
- Facilitate staff development
- Providing effective leadership within the workforce
- Meet standards and provide quality care in line with the NHS reforms

## WHAT ARE COMPETENCIES?

- There are two main themes of competencies and defined as either task-based (descriptive of a task or skill) or behavioural (identify certain characteristics). However, within clinical practice, competencies tend to share both themes. A competency framework is a collection of competencies that are believed to be essential for effective job performance (Whiddett et al, 1999).
- Competency frameworks can be used for:
  - Training and development - identify learning needs
  - Aid to recruitment
  - Performance review
    - Manage poor performance
    - Motivate staff and reward good performance
  - Reinforce organisational values and cultures
  - Audit - to identify at an organisational level the training and development needs
  - Ensure a quality service underpinned by evidence-based competent practice

## KEY PRINCIPLES

- Local NHS employers have a responsibility to develop competency frameworks to enable career and pay progression (DOH, 1999).
- Education and training needs of staff should be a priority within the workforce, to ensure best practice.
- Pre and post qualifying nurse education and training should provide the competencies required to deliver the NSF.
- Life-long learning and continuing professional development should be actively promoted, providing staff with the necessary supervision and support to enable them to ensure their continuing fitness for practice.

### Example of Peritoneal Dialysis Competency

Performance Criteria	Formative			Summative			
	Level	SR	AR	SR	AR	SR	AR
Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the principles of peritoneal dialysis.	I						

#### Underpinning knowledge

Has a good knowledge of the principles of peritoneal dialysis, discusses the concepts of osmosis, diffusion and solute drag. Has a basic understanding of ultrafiltration failure and the associated causes.

Performance Criteria	Formative			Summative			
	Level	SR	AR	SR	AR	SR	AR
Demonstrates knowledge of the different types of PD and types of catheters used.	I						

#### Underpinning knowledge

Discusses with the assessor the difference between automated PD and CAPD. Has an understanding of how the choice is made with patients and can relate the transporter status of the patient to the type of PD used e.g. high transporter moves solutes very quickly and may achieve better solute clearance on APD. Discusses with the assessor other reasons for choice of system e.g. working, hernia repair, sight problems etc.

SR = self rating AR = assessor rating

Level = level of expertise and independence that the practitioner should achieve

The performance criteria identifies what the practitioner needs to achieve and the underpinning knowledge base required. The practitioner is assessed on both knowledge and observation of skills. The level of competence to achieve is provided in the guidelines of the document.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- To identify all current renal competencies used by NHS hospitals.
- The development of a standardized competency framework for renal nurses within the NHS.
- Facilitate the development of competency frameworks for all healthcare professionals.

## REFERENCES

- Whiddett, S., Hollyforde, S. (1999). The Competencies Handbook. London: Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Department of Health (2000). The NHS Plan: A plan for investment, A plan for reform