

Evidencing Competency Guidelines for Managers 2008

**The All Wales Network and Collaborative Centre for the Promotion of
Excellence for Education, Training & Development in Substance Misuse**

Introduction

The All Wales Network and Collaborative Centre for the Promotion of Excellence for Education, Training & Development in Substance Misuse is committed to ensuring that all staff in the substance misuse field are competent to undertake the job for which they are employed. These guidelines are intended to provide practical advice for managers to help them in assessing the competence of their workforce.

The collection of evidence in order to demonstrate competence serves as a quality assurance system, and is common practise in UK industries. It is now being increasingly used in the substance misuse field in Wales and the UK. The process of collecting evidence often provides the opportunity to reflect on practise highlighting where it works well and identifying ways in which practise can develop further.

Evidence is a collection of materials that demonstrate practical abilities. Such materials will depict a range of skills and competencies required to meet the standards and outcomes expected of the job and the knowledge needed to underpin those skills. Once evidence is collated it can then be used to assess competency and to review achievements at an appraisal interview. This portfolio of evidence could also be used towards gaining a nationally recognised qualification such as an NVQ.

Collecting evidence will begin as soon as your workers are given a role profile that contains National Occupational Standards. A role profile will contain up to, but no more than, twelve National Occupational Standards, however in some circumstances it will be necessary for the role profile to contain less than 12 standards. Each standard would be supported by around six to eight pieces of evidence.

These guidelines outline the ways in which you can support your staff to collect and present evidence and the types of evidence that are admissible.

General Principals of Collecting and Presenting Evidence

1. A consistent approach to assessing and verifying competence is fundamental for without this, the system can seem unfair to workers. It will therefore be important that a case law of what does and does not constitute evidence of competent performance is established and agreed within the organisation.
2. Experience has shown that good evidence draws from information recorded at the time the work was done, not retrospectively, and that it is more likely to be sufficient in demonstrating competency if drawn from more than one experience.
3. At all times the identities of service users must be protected.
4. It is important to ensure that the evidence earns its' place in the portfolio – ***Quality is more important than quantity.***
5. Collecting evidence need not be the cause of additional work and can be done within existing daily tasks i.e. photocopying or printing additional copies to be used within the portfolio.
6. A piece of evidence can be used to demonstrate competency in more than one individual standard. Where this occurs workers will need to ensure that all evidence is clearly labelled and cross referenced.
7. If the evidence in your portfolio is not either by the worker or about the worker then it is not admissible as a piece of evidence.
8. There are many ways that an individual can create a portfolio of their evidence. Some people may prefer a paper based collection of evidence such as a folder that is clearly organised and marked so relevant evidence can be discussed in accordance with applicable DANOS standards. Alternatively, it is possible to store the information electronically using different files to record evidence for difference standards. Either way, the key thing for an individual is that they establish a system that works for them and which ensures that the evidence presented conveys an individual's knowledge, values and ability in the workplace.

Types of Evidence

There are many types of evidence that can be collected to evidence competency and it will vary according to the activity undertaken. Some forms of evidence could include:

- Completed documentation that demonstrate ability such as:
 - reports
 - formal documentation of experiences
 - case notes
 - emails & internal memos
 - minutes of meetings (highlighting contribution and action point areas)
 - commendations
 - care plans
 - risk assessments and other assessments
 - funding applications
 - dated referral documentation
 - staff/volunteer training plans
 - confidentiality agreements & client contracts
- A signed testimony (observed practice notes) by a manager, colleague or service user of work undertaken. Observations should assess workers against the 'Performance Criteria' contained within the standard's breakdowns (please see the annexes for an observation template)
- A signed testimony. Some 'Performance Criteria' will require workers to make a declaration of knowledge ie. HSC 33's Performance Criteria 5 requires that they are able to, "identify the supervision and support systems available to you within and outside your organisation". In situations such as this a worker could create, sign and date a testimony of their knowledge. Managers should also sign and date the statement
- A signed statement from a manager following the successful completion of a 'question and answer' session to test knowledge where competency cannot be evidenced by any other means. Questions should focus on the 'Performance Criteria' contained within the standard's breakdowns (please see the annexes for a template)

- A copy of supervision notes where specific achievements have been discussed
- A qualification or certificate of training undertaken or programmes of courses attended, supported by further evidence of how the knowledge acquired during this process has been put in to practise
- Reflective logs to capture informal learning (please see annexes for a template)
- Notes of any reading undertaken (a template Reading Log can be found in the annexes)

When collecting evidence it is of paramount importance that the confidentiality of information and its sources should be respected and not disclosed. Reference to service users, carers and colleagues should always remain anonymous. All evidence must be signed and dated by the worker and their manager.

The collection of evidence can easily get out of hand and effort should be made to keep collections of evidence portable. Evidence should be:

- Relevant to the current post or career progression discussed
- Current, although a historic picture will build up over time. Evidence should relate to activities currently undertaken in the job, and should be as recent as possible, but no more than 3 years old
- Of consistent intelligible high quality

Stages in Assessing Competence

1) Consult the role profile and assess competence

Look for evidence that supports the standards contained within the worker's role profile. Assess the individual using each of the standard's 'Performance Criteria', ensuring that the components of the standard's 'Knowledge and understanding' are being demonstrated; do not solely rely on the standard titles by way of explanation. It is important that the worker is able to evidence their competency in the full breakdown of the standard and not just the standard's title.

Tips

- Encourage workers to select evidence covering as many of the 'Performance Criteria' as possible in order to ensure the evidence contained within the portfolio is efficient as well as highly relevant.
- Many standards contain active verbs such as 'Assess' or 'Refer'. These verbs are indicative of the types of evidence you will need to evidence your competency in the specified standard.

It may not be possible for a worker to collect evidence to support their competency in every single performance criterion. Some situations may be difficult to evidence for example, how to react in an emergency, or elements within standard AB3 *Contribute to the prevention and management of abusive and aggressive behaviour*. In these situations it is recommended that competence is measured using either a question and answer style interview or a structured observation session drawing on the performance criteria of the standard. Please see the Annexes to these Guidelines for templates to record the outcomes of Q&A and observation sessions.

There may be other occasions where carrying out an observation may be the optimum way to measure competence. Please ensure that the full permission of clients is gained prior to carrying out any observations of client sessions and that workers are informed of when any observations will be happening. It will be necessary to share the criteria upon which the observation is to be based with the worker. Allow sufficient time for observations.

2) Provide feedback

Following the observation of a worker the following points must be taken into account:

- Feedback should be considered, planned and structured
- Be delivered in a timely way
- Invite the self evaluation of the worker first
- Feedback should be explicit informing the worker of where they met the criteria and how and where they failed to meet the criteria and why; always referring back to the standards and behaviour not the person
- Set in context – remind the worker of why it is important to do this and the organisational context of this process.

3) Agree development needs and plan for action

Should a worker not be able to demonstrate full competency in a standard, actions should be agreed so that full competency can be reached. These actions form the basis of a [Personal Development Plan](#). Where a development need has been identified:

- Workers should be given the opportunity to complete further learning / training
- Ensure that any opportunities for development are provided in response to worker's individual learning styles. The appropriateness of any proposed development opportunities should be considered.
- Clear targets for improvement should be set
- Once you and your worker are satisfied that the development need has been addressed and that any newly acquired knowledge and skills are being applied, the worker will be ready for a reassessment of their performance. The time between the identification of the development need, the worker undertaking a development activity and

reassessment of the workers competence will vary depending on the level of initial need identified.

- Sufficient time needs to be allowed for the worker to embed their newly developed skills within their daily practise.

Tip

Development needs do not always have to be addressed by sending workers on expensive training. Make the most of the various learning opportunities available in the work place including; internal training resources, shadowing colleagues, e-learning, reading, mentoring, action-learning, job rotations and secondments, setting project work, and attending conferences and seminars.

Where you seek externally provided training, ensure that all training is aligned to DANOS.

..... And remember that some of the best learning opportunities are afforded by being given time to reflect.

4) Review portfolio of evidence

It is important that Evidencing Competency Portfolios are reviewed continually by workers *and* managers as this process will ensure an accurate picture emerges of the competences that the worker needs to focus on evidencing.

Supervision sessions should be utilised to discuss how your workers are progressing with compiling their portfolios and whether they require any support. It may be the case that they are having difficulty evidencing one of the standards contained within their role profile so an observation session or question and answer session needs to be organised by you, their manager.

Workers who complete their portfolios should review them regularly for any evidence that may be outdated or irrelevant. It may be the case that newer evidence would better serve the worker due to increased skills and ability acquired over time.

Please note, if you plan to use worker's portfolios to assist them in gaining a nationally recognised qualification it will be necessary to ensure all evidence in the portfolio relates to their performance in the last three years. This is

because evidence is generally not considered admissible after a period of three years..

Tip

Prior to an appraisal or performance review with a worker, request that they carry out a self assessment of their competence using the Centre's [DANOS Assessment Tool](#). This will help them determine any development needs that they may have and allow the appraisal / performance review to be more focussed and effective.

For further practical information on compiling an Evidencing Competency Portfolio please see our Evidencing Competency Guidelines 2008 available on www.DAToracle.co.uk.

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