

# **Guidelines for Evidencing Competency 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 assistance in collecting evidence that demonstrates competence.

The collection of evidence in order to demonstrate competence is common practise in UK industries and 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 your practise highlighting where it works well and identify ways in which your 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 you have 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 collect and present evidence and the types of evidence that are admissible.

## General Principals of Collecting and Presenting Evidence

1. 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.
2. At all times the identities of service users must be protected.
3. It is recommended that while you undertake the various tasks within your role, you should continually ask yourself “What do I need to show someone to convince them that I have the ability to undertake this task?” However, it is important to ensure that the evidence earns its’ place in the portfolio – ***Quality is more important than quantity.***
4. 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 that can be used within the portfolio.
5. A piece of evidence can be used to demonstrate competency in more than one individual standard. Where this occurs you will need to ensure that all your evidence is clearly labelled and cross referenced.
6. If the evidence in your portfolio is not either by you or about you then it is not admissible as a piece of evidence.
7. 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 different 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
- A signed statement from your manager following the successful completion of a 'question and answer' session to test knowledge where competency cannot be evidenced by any other means
- A signed testimony. Some 'Performance Criteria' will require you to make a declaration of knowledge ie. HSC 33's Performance Criteria 5 requires that you are able to, "identify the supervision and support systems available to you within and outside your organisation". In situations such as this you could create, sign and date a testimony of your knowledge. Your manager should also sign and date the statement.
- 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 you and your manager.

The collection of evidence can easily get out of hand and effort should be made to keep your collection 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 Preparing Evidence

Compiling evidence can be broken down into a number of stages which will overlap at different times.

### 1) Consult your role profile

Look to obtain evidence that supports the standards contained within your role profile. When doing so, make sure you consult the breakdown of the standard, in particular the 'Performance Criteria' and 'Knowledge and Understanding'; do not solely rely on the standard titles by way of explanation. It is important that you are able to evidence competency in the full breakdown of the standard and not just the standard's title.

### 2) Gather evidence

Referring to the 'Performance Criteria' and 'Knowledge and Understanding' of each standard in your role profile, seek to demonstrate your knowledge, skills and performance against these criteria. Where possible, select evidence covering as many of the 'Performance Criteria' as possible in order to ensure the evidence contained within the portfolio is highly relevant.

#### Tip

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.

### 3) Sort and reference the evidence

The evidence that you collect in Stage 2 can be used to create an 'Evidencing Competency Portfolio'. By creating a central portfolio, the evidence can be referred to in a coherent and consistent manner, either by you or by your manager.

The first items to be entered into your portfolio should be:

- I. Your role profile
- II. Copies of the full breakdowns of each standard in your role profile

The way that each piece of evidence in your portfolio relates to a standard must be made clear. The easiest way to do this is by compiling a record or log. You will find a template for an evidence log in the annexes to these Guidelines. You should complete a log for every standard in your role profile. If possible, keep an electronic record of this log as it is likely to change and be up-dated over time.

#### **4) Review portfolio**

There are certain occasions when it will be necessary and useful to review your portfolio. These include:

- Upon completion of your portfolio when you can review it to assess its quality and relevance, and to determine whether you would be better served by more recently available evidence, ie, evidence that has become available in the time between starting and completing your portfolio due to increased competence over this period of time.
- Prior to your performance appraisal/review with your manager, it will be informative and useful to review your portfolio to conduct a self-assessment of your competency. You can use the Centre's [DANOS Assessment Tool](#) to do this.
- When you are applying for a new job you can use your portfolio to demonstrate your suitability for the new role.

#### **5) Monitor and review evidence annually**

It is important that evidence is updated regularly. If you plan to use your portfolio to gain a nationally recognised qualification it will be necessary to ensure all evidence in your portfolio relates to your performance in the last three years. This is because evidence is generally not considered to be admissible after a period of three years.

It necessary to undertake an annual review of your evidence portfolio to ensure that any evidence you deem to be irrelevant or outdated is removed. An accurate picture of the competencies that you need to focus on evidencing will then emerge.

## **Responsibility for collecting evidence**

The stages described above should initially be carried out jointly in supervision by you and your manager. You should aim to prepare the evidence and compile your portfolio independently, using supervision/appraisal sessions as a feedback or discussion opportunity with your manager.

Your Evidencing Competency Portfolio belongs to you and you will be able to use it should you wish to develop in to new roles in the substance misuse field.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks go to the following organisations whose workforce development documents were referred to in compiling these Guidelines:

- Probation Service
- Portsmouth City Council
- Royal College Nursing
- Institute of Physics
- Federation of Drug & Alcohol Professionals
- The Centre for Recording Achievement
- The Quality Assurance Agency
- City & Guilds