

The Key to Bidding Success

**A Guide to Using National
Occupational Standards to Respond
to Tender Documents in the
Substance Misuse Field in Wales**

The contents of this document set out how National Occupational Standards (NOS) can be referred to in different sections of a tender document. The contents headings depict the general types of information required by Commissioners from tender documents, and the text that follows provides ideas of how your organisation can use NOS in that context.

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1. Recruitment and selection procedure

Example tender question: *Set out the procedure of how your organisations recruits & selects*

NOS can be used to effectively underpin a robust recruitment and selection process based on skill and competency levels. The straightforward 4-step process below outlines a good practice guide to recruiting and selecting the best candidate for a role. It is important to note however, that a candidate not yet competent in all NOS relevant to the role can still be successful in their application and that their competency levels should be addressed through training, supervision etc.

1. When a position is created or becomes vacant the NOS that are relevant to the position should be identified and a [role profile](#) created. This applies to the position of volunteer too.
2. The role profile should be used as a guide to evaluate the suitability of applicants to the position.
3. The standards or competences contained within the role profile should be used as the basis for the selection interview. Make use of each individual standard's 'Performance Criteria' to assist you in forming interview questions. The candidate should be asked to give examples of their competence in line with the standards contained in the role profile.
4. Upon appointing an individual to the position, ensure that the successful applicant is provided with a copy of the role profile so that the criteria for the role are clearly defined.

Tip

The standards contained within role profiles can be categorised into those that are 'core' and 'non-core' to the role. This will enable you to prioritise interview questions by focusing on core elements of the role.

2. Job descriptions

Example tender question: Provide example job descriptions

It is possible to ensure that job descriptions are aligned to NOS by having a DANOS role profile as an appendix to the job description. An example role profile for administrators, counsellors, managers, and substance misuse workers can be found on www.datoracle.co.uk. You can use our [Mapping Tool](#) to refine these example role profiles as you see fit.

The use of standards within job descriptions clearly outlines what will be expected of new employees, and outlines the minimum standard to which they are expected to perform. In this way, reviewing the job description / role profile can be an important part of the induction process.

3. Identification of skill requirements

Example tender question: Describe how your organisation identifies skill requirements

Skill requirements can be expressed in terms of NOS because they specify the knowledge, skills and aptitude that staff should possess if they are to perform competently in their job.

Identify the required NOS for particular jobs by using our [Mapping Tool](#). Be sure to involve the role holder and their line manager in this process to ensure accuracy and validity.

The use of portfolios which present evidence of a worker's competence enable managers and workers to identify the ways in which a worker is and is not able to demonstrate that they are competent in all NOS relevant to their job. Compiling a portfolio of evidence will determine those gaps in skills and knowledge that a worker has that may prevent them performing to their best ability. Please see our [Guidelines for Evidencing](#)

[Competency](#) for further information on how to evidence competency and build portfolios of evidence.

Evidence portfolios should be introduced to new recruits during the induction process. Evidence portfolios should be reviewed regularly in supervision and performance appraisal meetings to highlight any developmental needs and plan for how these needs may be met. Outcomes of these sessions will form the basis of a worker's [Personal Development Plan \(PDP\)](#). In this way, identified skills requirements of the organisation can be met.

4. **Demonstrating staff competency, skill and theoretical knowledge**

***Example tender question:** Describe how your organisation ensures that staff are skilled and competent, and possess theoretical knowledge*

Qualifications provide good evidence of theoretical knowledge but not necessarily evidence of experience-based skills. NOS allow your organisation to measure staff skills.

In the process of using NOS it is important to think about the evidence available to illustrate the competence levels of staff. Ideally staff will have portfolios of evidence that showcase evidence of competent performance in their job. Line managers may need to undertake observation or 'Question & Answer' sessions with workers in order to assess performance. For further information on materials that constitute evidence of competence, please refer to our [Guidelines for Evidencing Competency](#). Portfolios should be reviewed periodically, normally prior to an appraisal or performance review, to ensure that staff remain competent and that they are performing to national minimum standards.

Where it is identified that a worker does not meet required standards development activities should be planned for and agreed between the line manager and the worker.

In the event that a worker attends formal training courses, it is important to ensure that the training course is mapped to NOS, and covers the NOS in which the worker requires development.

5. Monitoring staff performance

Example tender question: *Set out how your organisation monitors performance*

Ideally, all staff will be regularly assessed against their role profile, which is aligned to NOS, normally during an appraisal or performance review. Workers should be given an opportunity to produce evidence for their portfolios to support their demonstration of competence. Observations and question and answer sessions drawing on 'Performance Criterion' of the standards contained within their role profiles provide further opportunities for workers to demonstrate they are performing to the national minimum standards.

This process identifies specific skills and/or knowledge gaps. These gaps are remedied through a development activity such as training, shadowing, supervision etc created specifically in response to the development needs of the worker. Re-assessment of competence is done regularly through performance appraisals or in supervision sessions.

Tip

The flowchart shown in Annex 1 illustrates the way in which staff performance should be approached at an organisational and individual level in order that the full potential of staff is realised. By carrying out these processes your organisation will ensure you have a highly skilled and competent workforce with the ability to deliver the best possible service.

6. Learning and development

Example tender question: Set out how your organisation designs, delivers and evaluates training

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NOS should be used to underpin a strategic and coherent approach to learning and development, whether your training is undertaken in-house or accessed via an external provider. NOS support all aspects of learning and development including on-the-job learning, training needs analysis, the design of courses and evaluation exercises.

A proactive approach to learning and development of staff can be adopted by undertaking a training needs analysis (TNA), which is essential to accurately identify the training needs of an individual or group. The TNA should reflect the objectives of the organisation and be supported by NOS to identify core strengths and areas for development.

If you provide in-house training, it is good practice for your courses to be mapped to DANOS. The most effective way to ascertain the relevant DANOS that should be aligned to a training course is to undertake a mapping exercise. This entails comparing the elements in each DANOS unit with the course content and recording all DANOS that are aligned with the course. It is essential that the trainers themselves are familiar with the application of NOS to learning and development, and assistance should be given to undertake this exercise. A good practice example can be found on www.datoracle.co.uk

If training is undertaken using an external provider, it is easier to identify relevant NOS in the course content if providers have already mapped their courses and list the relevant NOS units along with the other course details. If you are unable to find courses mapped to NOS, a request can be made to training providers to identify the relevant NOS in the course that they are providing.

Evaluation of training is essential for continuous improvement and undertaking an evaluation of each training session that your staff go on is core to delivering the highest standard of training and achieving the greatest outcome for both the individual and the organisations. An

example evaluation form and training impact questionnaire can be found on www.datoracle.co.uk

7. Staff induction programmes

Example tender question: Describe the induction programme that your organisation offers to new staff

New frontline workers should be trained in the Welsh Assembly Governments recommended core standards for the substance misuse field:

[HSC 35 Promote choice, wellbeing and the protection of all individuals](#)

[HSC 33 Reflect on and develop your practise](#)

[HSC 32 Promote, monitor and maintain health, safety and security in the working environment](#)

[HSC 31 Promote effective communication for and about individuals](#)

Any other standards central to their role, as determined by their role profile, should also form an integral part of a new employee's induction programme. These core standards should also be considered and reviewed for their relevance for any other roles which are not frontline.

NOS aligned role profiles set out clear performance criteria for each role so that workers are clear about the minimum standards of performance expected of them whilst working in their role. Using the NOS aligned role profile, development, learning and training needs should be identified. Learning and development opportunities can then be designed responding to the specific needs of the worker so that they can perform to maximum effectiveness in their role.

8. Working with volunteers

Example tender question: Describe your management practice of volunteers.

NNOS can be used to enhance an organisations strategy for working with volunteers, providing a nationally agreed framework of good practice upon which management practices can be developed.

Similarly to the management of paid staff, NOS should underpin an organisations volunteer policies and procedures and provide an integrated approach to managerial practices that include recruitment and selection, induction programmes, performance review, learning and development and retention.

9. Reward & remuneration schemes

Example tender question: What reward & remuneration schemes does your organisation run to incentivise staff?

NOS can both underpin the reward scheme of the organisation or indirectly act as a means of reward. NOS can be used to track an increase in an individual's performance. This serves as an objective rationale for enhanced remuneration and reward for that worker.

The process of using NOS can also be seen to be part of the organisations wider reward programme. Evidence portfolios can create a good opportunity to recognise the efforts of staff and appreciate where they are consistently achieving. The process of gathering evidence allows the identification of specific development needs, which are met through learning activities such as training, and will focus on up-skilling the worker throughout their time with the organisation.

Compiling evidence portfolios can also contribute towards achieving a nationally recognised qualification such as an NVQ. The cost of undertaking this qualification can be paid for, in part or in whole, by the organisation.

Evidence portfolios belong to the worker rather than the organisation, and this allows them to use their portfolio as a record of their skills for future career development.

10. Rewards packages

***Example tender question:** Explain how your organisation's rewards packages are determined*

NOS can be used to underpin and provide rationale for reward packages. It may be that your organisation formulates salary scales/grading systems by awarding salary increases in relation to the successful completion of all the targets on Personal Development Plan or an annual performance appraisal by a worker – both of which are aligned to NOS.

11. Staff retention

***Example tender question:** Explain the measures that your organisation takes to ensure staff retention*

Reward is a huge factor in motivating and retaining staff. A reward scheme of the organisation that is based on an objective assessment of performance, i.e. by using NOS, is more likely to be viewed as fair and valid by workers. Increases in reward and remuneration that are based on obvious and demonstrable increases in competence will act as a mechanism to retain staff.

Using NOS helps to recognise the individual achievements and competence of your staff. Also, by responding to and investing in the particular developmental needs of your staff, workers will believe that they are valued by the organisation and that their development is important to the organisation. This recognition and investment is motivating to employees and contributes to feelings of commitment to the organisation, minimising the risk that staff may leave post.

[Personal Development Plans](#) formalise development needs identified by managers and their workers and solidify action points arising from those development needs. Both worker and manager should agree actions

stemming from any development needs. Whilst managers should be actively involved in taking forward the action points identified in the [Personal Development Plan](#), staff need to be involved in their own personal development, i.e. where an action point involves further research or e-learning. This engages the worker in their professional development and incites important confidence in the worker that they are progressing and that their progression in the role will continue.

12. Staff turnover

***Example tender question:** Give details of how your organisation would address unacceptable levels of staff turnover*

Unacceptable levels of staff turnover often indicate issues and concerns of employees that are not satisfactorily addressed. Look to identify the reason for high levels of staff turnover. Review your workforce development policies within the organisation. Ask yourself whether your staff are clear about what their job entails? Using NOS will help clarify job roles. Do your workers receive recognition for the work that they do in regular supervision sessions? Are workers given sufficient support to develop their skills and where skills gaps have been identified? Can they progress within their role and in to other roles? A competence based approach to promotion and progression will make it clear how staff can progress their careers.

13. Succession planning

***Example tender question:** Specify how your organisation facilitates succession planning*

Compare the NOS aligned role profiles of the worker and of the position for which they wish to apply. Identify where there are corresponding skills and knowledge using the standard's 'Performance Criteria' and 'Knowledge and Understanding' and more importantly, identify where

there are skills and knowledge gaps. A tailored development programme can then be created to address the skills and knowledge gaps. In this way, suitable successors to key roles within the organisation can be found.

14. Change management

Example tender question: Specify how your organisation manages change

One of the key reasons for the failure of change initiatives is that staff are unsure what is being asked of them, possibly because they are uncertain about the current skills and competences they possess and what is required of them. NOS can be used as a benchmark for change, measuring where the competency levels of staff are now against where they need to be and highlighting key gaps that need to be addressed. A straightforward mapping exercise that is periodically reviewed to chart progress will achieve this.

An effective change management process, incorporating NOS and effective communication techniques, greatly enhances the likelihood of a successful change programme.

If you require further advice on how to utilise NOS within your organisation, please visit our website www.DAToracle.co.uk

Annex 1: Staff Development Flowchart

