Institute for Apprenticeships
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ComProCom:
Communicating Professional Competence

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ComProCom

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Aim “to improve the way that professional competence is described and represented, particularly in relation to complex work in higher-level occupations where outcome-based conceptions of competence have proved most challenging”.

Informed by research with UK professions – Lester 2008, 2009, 2014a,b,c.

www.comprocom.eu
devmts.org.uk/comprocom.htm
Partners

Die Berater – Austria
*Business management for start-ups*

Agency for Local Gov’t and Communities – Greece
*Social entrepreneurship; management of the project*

Institute for Sustainable Technologies – Poland
*Innovation management; comparative research*

Institute of Training and Development – Ireland
*Training and development; developer course*

SBG-Dresden – Germany
*Chemical engineering (Meister level)*

Stan Lester Developments – UK
*Methodology, academic output*

Only chemical engineering is an ‘initial career’ field.
Comparative research

**Occupational competence standards**
- Former comprehensive mandatory system
- Aim to be mandatory and comprehensive
- Advisory and partial

**Integrated in VET standards**
- Programme-based
- Qualification-based

**Independent professional standards**
- UK
- GREECE
- POLAND
- GERMANY
- AUSTRIA
- IRELAND

Report: Religa & Lester 2016
Article: Lester & Religa 2017, *Education + Training*
Comments

- Separate OS do not imply greater industry involvement in VET – all countries involve industry, social and professional partners.

  They can lead to greater distance between specifiers and users – and increase the scope for problems of quality and relevance.

  From a VET perspective, there is an issue of inappropriate policy-borrowing between different labour-market contexts.

- The most effective use of separate competence standards appears to be for specific applications such as licensing and granting qualified status...

  ...but descriptions of effective practice are still an important base for informing VET curricula.

- Occupational classifications (e.g. SOC) can be blunt and clumsy when compared with real jobs and careers...

  ...while systems based on training standards and established professions can be slow in meeting the needs of emerging occupations and (arguably) labour market flexibility.
‘Competence’

‘The ability to do something successfully or efficiently’ (OED)

External (what need to do)

Internal (capacities needed to do it)

Knowledge
Techniques
Skills
Transversal abilities
Management abilities
Values and virtues

after Winch (2014), from German Berufsbild

Occupational Capacity (or capability)

‘berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit’

has

Performatve & Ethical/Societal dimensions

Professional judgement

How bridge between …

Simplified ‘representational’ logic of competence descriptions

Rich, messy and sometimes contradictory logic of practice

after Carroll et al (2008)

Competence involves using knowledge, skills, capacities etc. effectively – not just having them
Levels of description of competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task level</th>
<th>Role level</th>
<th>Field level</th>
<th>Global</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work tasks</td>
<td>Work roles and functions</td>
<td>Whole professions and occupational fields</td>
<td>Professional work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Registering title’</td>
<td>‘Commercial conveyancer’</td>
<td>‘Law’</td>
<td>‘Liberal professions’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*More detail in table 1.5 of methodological guide*

- Each level of description is complete in itself and can be interpreted directly into the relevant contexts.
Role-based and field-based perspectives

Site Agent

Quantity Surveyor

Common standards in area of overlap

Hard role boundaries

Layers of core capability

Different perspectives on areas of overlap

Bounded-occupation

Architect

Surveyor

Engineer

Centre-outwards

Horizons
Field-based, ‘centre-outwards’ description

- Single standard
- Interpret into roles, contexts, specialisms
- Concise (c. 5-12pp)
- Clear and precise
- Possible subsets for different levels
- Threshold or progression scale if needed
- Resilient (10-15 year lifespan?)

Level of work
- e.g. Chartered
- Associate
- Technician

Threshold?

Level of proficiency
- ★ Progression
- ★ Assessed grades?
Cyclic model for describing a professional field

**Assess**

- Assessment
  - investigation, assessment, analysis, diagnosis

**Decide**

- Decision-making
  - problem-solving, planning, design, negotiating courses of action

**Do**

- Implementation
  - implementing plans and taking action

**Review**

- Evaluation
  - monitoring, reviewing and evaluating actions and their effects

**Transversal activities**

- Managing work and processes
- Managing relationships
- Ongoing development
  - (self, others, field)

**Ethics, professionalism and judgement**
Detail and language

• 3 levels of depth enough
  – Main headings
  – Key activities
  – Critical points/explanations
• 3rd level can be indicative (‘this can involve…’) or explanatory
• No long lists of criteria
• Clear, active language
• Address reader directly (as if ‘you should be able to…’)
• Precise but not restrictive

2. Plan to develop the enterprise

2.1. Develop a business plan and associated policies, plans and strategies.

Policies, plans and strategies may include, according to the nature and context of the enterprise, a human resource policy and plan; a quality and internal evaluation system; a health and safety policy; a communication strategy; and a marketing strategy, among other things. You will probably need to draw on other people with relevant expertise to develop the detail of the plans.

This area includes:
• Developing a business plan for the enterprise that defines activities, resources, economic objectives and social objectives
• Developing associated policies, plans and strategies that support the business plan and provide a sustainable framework for the management and development of the enterprise.
• Developing proposals for employment and deployment that meet the needs of the enterprise, make effective use of people’s capacities, and provide opportunities for unemployed members.
• Ensuring that policies and plans are mutually supportive and complementary to each other.
Knowledge?

• Not directly part of an ‘external’ framework – not sufficient just to tag knowledge on to key activities.

• Fields have a ‘knowledge structure’ that includes underlying principles, epistemological positions and theories-in-use at the level of the whole field...

• ... as well as propositional and process knowledge relating to key activities and specific areas of practice.

• Practitioners’ knowledge-in-use is partly transdisciplinary and situational.
Development process

RESOURCING
SCOPING
RESEARCH
STRUCTURE
DETAIL
CONSULTATION
TRIALLING
... and periodic review

Expert input
Field research
Editing
Steering
Project management
Key project documents available from www.comprocom.eu and devmts.org.uk/comprocom.htm

Project reports and resources

*Models and uses of ‘competence’ in six countries’ VET systems: cross-partner report on the reviews of the current situation*. February 2016.


*Developing professional competence standards: final report of the project ComProCom*. June 2017. Will be at http://www.comprocom.eu/products/120-reports

Academic papers

http://devmts.org.uk/occstds.pdf


Final paper (Lester, Koniotaki and Religa) in development will discuss the potential impact of the frameworks, focusing on social enterprise and innovation management.
Some additional references


