

Example of Planning Competency Matrix

This paper provides a worked example of a competence matrix for Planners. Different organisations (and individuals) currently use different descriptions for the same Grade of Planner – one may be called an associate, a trainee, an apprentice or a Junior (though HR depts. now frown on the latter). This example makes no allowance for this, it simply forms a guide which can be reworked for a particular set of circumstances.

The grading system was designed to match one already in place at the host company

0 – no knowledge

1 – some understanding

2 – strong practical application

3 – expert

Again, this should be viewed within the context of the a given business, and altered accordingly.

Finally, a capability matrix forms the level two wbs of this example. Again, this was in place at the host organisation. To have both capability & competence matrices is not uncommon; often the former is set at a Group or Global level, the latter tends to have a more local element to it.

In an attempt to provide some structure outwith the host organisation, the competence matrix shows two sets of definitions – the local one as defined at the host, and one based on the GPC Practice Standards. Firstly, it must be pointed out that this is the view of the author only, not the GPC, and secondly that it is the author's fervent hope that the GPC will drive for a degree of standardisation within the competences of the profession in order to make such work as this more repeatable across businesses & industries.

Practical Usage of the Matrix

Each level of learning is underpinned with both “classroom” & experiential learnings. These need to be defined with the Training & Development (or HR) Function to ensure affordability & repeatability. Once set, the Planning Manager has a powerful tool to use in appraisal, both in terms of development needs, and individual perception of current level of ability. Further, it drives a Continuous Professional Development need into a Planning Organisation. This in turns allows for more individualised training & development paths, which strengthens the planner's ties to that employer.

The tool is therefore a combination of subjective & data-driven, which is surely the correct approach – no-one should become a senior planner just because they have had Planner in their job title for ten years!

As GPC qualifications become the industry standard, this matrix should be reworked by the Guild to become a defining pathway. For example, the form associate grades match a training program the author has built & used based on Guild Standards.

Until that time, this version will hopefully point Planners in the correct direction to maximise their professional development.