

Building Standards

Professional Competency Framework for Verifiers



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Table of Contents

| | | | |
|--|----------|---|-----------|
| Foreword | 3 | 4.0 Application and implementation | 9 |
| Acknowledgments | 5 | Outcomes | 9 |
| Use of this framework | 5 | Scope | 9 |
| Relevant legislation | 5 | Types of building work or buildings | 9 |
| Terminology | 5 | 5.0 Mapping against this framework | 10 |
| 1.0 Introduction | 6 | Validation and Revalidation | 10 |
| Why this Professional Competency Framework has been produced | 6 | Skills Gap Analysis | 11 |
| 2.0 Purpose of the framework | 7 | Careers and Qualifications Matrix | 12 |
| 3.0 Objectives | 8 | 6.0 Competence requirements | 16 |
| Background | 8 | Competency levels | 16 |
| Framework | 8 | 7.0 Job role descriptions | 17 |
| | | ANNEX A | 19 |

Foreword

The building standards profession in local authorities is responsible for delivering the verification service in Scotland. Verifiers carry out the important function of protecting the public interest by providing an independent check of applications for building warrants to construct or demolish buildings, to provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or building conversions.

In 2018, following high profile building failures at Edinburgh schools and in response to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, the Compliance and Enforcement Review Panel, chaired by Professor John Cole, identified the need to strengthen skills, training and competence of local authority verifiers. The subsequent public consultation confirmed that action was required to address these challenges in the short, medium and long-term.

Scottish Government has also recognised the need to develop the building standards workforce as highlighted by the **New housing and future construction skills: report** see <https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-housing-future-construction-skills-adapting-modernising-growth/>

In response, Scottish Government published the [Workforce Strategy for the Building Standards Verification Service](#) on 1 October 2020 with an endorsement from the Minister for

Local Government, Housing and Planning. The aim of the strategy is to strengthen the operational resilience of the building standards service to deliver a first class verification service by developing a workforce that has the competency and capability, skills and experience to carry out the verification role. The strategy sets out national and local level commitments for change, which are fully supported by Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) and professional bodies representing members across different construction-related disciplines.

Looking to the wider work ongoing in the UK following Dame Judith Hackitt's Report **Building a Safer Future May 2018**, competence in the built environment has been identified as a significant concern. The approach in England was to set up the Competence Steering Group for Building a Safer Future (also known as the competence steering group, CSG). The group set up thirteen separate working groups that report to the CSG. Working Group 6 (WG6) is dedicated to Building Standards.

It is our intention to consider the synergies and benefits between the Professional Framework and Competency Assessment System (CAS) in Scotland and the wider work in the UK proposed for building standards competence in England. Although the Scottish building standards system differs from that in the rest of the UK, there are benefits to be gained from taking a consistent approach for overall building safety.

Foreword

There are three key documents that seek to standardise the approach to competence in the construction sector and wider built environment.

- **Setting the bar – A new competence regime for building a safer future**, by CSG October 2020 sets out a new competence regime for all professionals in the construction industry and for a Competence Framework to be developed into a BSi (the BSi Flex), see <http://cic.org.uk/admin/resources/setting-the-bar-9-final-1.pdf>
- **BSi Flex 8670v 1.0 Built Environment – Overarching framework for building safety competency of individuals – Specification**. Currently in draft format the BSi Flex specifies requirements for sector-specific competence frameworks for individuals working in the built environment. The approach taken by the Building Standards Professional Competency Framework (Professional Framework) has synergies with the BSi Flex to achieve a consistency in approach so that professional bodies, who accredit building control professionals in both Scotland and England, do not have conflicting competence requirements, see [British Standards Institution - Project \(bsigroup.com\)](https://www.bsigroup.com/standards/BSi-Flex-8670v-1.0-Built-Environment-Overarching-framework-for-building-safety-competency-of-individuals-Specification)

- **Recommendation on the future regulation of the Building Control Sector and Profession in England** by the Future of Building Control Working Group. The report makes specific proposals for a Draft Building Control Competence Standard for further development. This is at an early but relatively detailed level of development, and the approach taken by the Professional Framework also has synergies with this standard, see <https://www.labc.co.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/EXT.Future-of-Building-Control-strategy-version-14-07-20-DF.v1.pdf>

In Scotland, our approach to taking this forward is to standardise how competency and capability are assessed at a national level by implementing the Professional Framework supported by the introduction of the Competency Assessment System. As work progresses UK wide on competence, with a focus on the development of the BSi Flex, this Professional Framework will be reviewed and updated.

Lasting and meaningful change can be achieved by ensuring there is a cohesive building standards profession across Scotland. The long-term outcome is a profession that has the required levels of professional competence and the capability to meet demands of the service.

Acknowledgments

The following organisations are acknowledged as having been involved in oversight and development of this Professional Competency Framework.

- Local Authority Building Standards Scotland
- Local Authority Building Control
- Chartered Association of Building Engineers
- Chartered Institute of Building
- Royal Incorporation of Chartered Surveyors

Use of this framework

It has been assumed that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to suitably qualified and experienced people who are themselves competent in its usage.

Relevant legislation

In reading this standard it is recommended that users pay particular attention to the provisions of the following legislation, regulation and guidance:

- Building (Scotland) Act 2003
- Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004

Terminology

- **Competence** is the ability to make informed decisions and carry out work to a standard as specified in the CAS.
- **Competencies** are the attributes of an individual, applied personally or collectively as part of a team.
- **Accreditation** is the process of officially recognising an individual as having a particular status or being qualified to perform a particular activity, and by which their attributes are assessed.
- **Continuous Professional Development** (CPD) is the process of tracking and documenting maintenance of the skills, knowledge and experience that an individual gains both formally and informally as they work, beyond any initial training. It's a record of what is experienced, learned and then applied. It might also be known as Lifelong Learning (LLL).
- **Validation** is the process by which individuals are assessed for competency, to verify building work by their line manager using the methodology set out in the CAS.

1.0 Introduction

Why this Professional Competency Framework has been produced

1.1 The Professional Framework standardises the job role descriptions across the whole building standards profession nationally, for the first time in Scotland. This provides a consistent national approach to the assessment of competency for individuals working in the profession across all 32 local authority verifiers in Scotland.

1.2 The Professional Framework aims to improve the profession by ensuring individuals operate within their level of competence, and have the skills and experience required whilst undertaking the verification role. The result is a sustainable verification service with professionals to meet the demands of the service.

1.3 The competency and capability required by individuals to carry out their job role is set out against the supporting CAS. The Professional Framework complements the CAS by providing a common language to improve communication and understanding of the building standards profession.

1.4 The CAS provides a coherent structure for all job roles, skills, qualifications and experience requirements for building standards professionals. It sets out a clearly defined career pathway, and identifies the skills and experience needed to progress into more senior roles. It will also aid those seeking a profession in building standards to understand how different job roles are used for career progression.

1.5 A full description of the competencies and skills required across a set of twelve job roles is provided in the CAS. The CAS enables individuals to identify their skill gaps and find learning and development opportunities using the CAS Toolkit to expand their competencies and achieve accredited qualifications for their career progression.

1.6 The Professional Framework is presented in an easy to use format to ensure it is user friendly and accessible to everyone.

2.0 Purpose of the framework

2.1 This Professional Framework should be used to establish the competence and capability of individuals including their validation and revalidation. Validation and revalidation are carried out annually by the line manager against the criteria set out in the CAS for different types of buildings.

2.2 The Building Standards Competence Knowledge Base is set out in the CAS and details the general and specialist building knowledge and understanding required to assess compliance of building work taking into account existing and emerging technology and industry practice.

2.3 **Section 6** sets out the level of competence expected against each job role descriptors in the matrix of the CAS.

2.4 **Section 7** sets out the job role descriptors to be used in the mapping application against the Professional Framework. The job roles are defined by:

- **Role level** – a descriptor to provide a way to differentiate between levels of responsibility and competence.
- **Role title** – main role description used to standardise all role titles in accordance with the CAS.
- **Work covered** – a summary of the typical type and complexity of duties undertaken by each job role.
- **Qualifications** – the expected level of SCQF accredited qualification for each job role to indicate an entry point into the profession.
- **Experience** – the experience necessary to gain an understanding of the building regulations and building standards system to carry out work competently.

3.0 Objectives

Background

3.1 The construction and built environment sector is understood to be one of a number of higher risk industries and sectors where regulatory oversight is deemed necessary. Building Standards is one such sector and delivery against this objective is achieved through the establishment of the building standards system in Scotland.

3.2 The building standards system in Scotland is established by the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 (the Act). The 32 local authorities in Scotland are appointed by Scottish Ministers as verifiers to administer the building standards system in their geographical areas. The appointment as a verifier is made on the condition that local authorities meet the requirements of the [Operating Framework](#) and [Performance Framework](#).

3.3 The primary function of verifiers is to protect the public interest by providing an independent check of applications for building warrant to construct or demolish buildings, to provide services, fittings or equipment in buildings, or to convert buildings. This includes checking the design before granting a building warrant and checking during construction before accepting a completion certificate.

Framework

3.4 This Professional Framework sets out the specification for the expected competence of individuals involved in assessing compliance with applicable building regulations and associated legislation.

3.5 The specific objectives of the Professional Framework are as follow:

- To provide a single framework for all building standards professionals
- To enable validation and revalidation of the competence of individuals using the framework
- To further support a professional culture of personal improvement and development within the building standards profession
- To further support effective career development pathways for all building standards professionals
- To enable differentiation of the level of competence of building standards professionals

4.0 Application and implementation

4.1 This Professional Framework is intended for use by verifiers who wish to set requirements for or validate competence of individuals working within their building standards verification service.

4.2 Over time this Professional Framework may be expanded to support assessment of competence for other specified types of building work.

4.3 More widely, the Professional Framework is intended to support:

- Validation and revalidation of individuals;
- Prescription, recognition and development of educational qualifications;
- Recognition and development of training;
- Competence maintenance and career progression including CPD;
- Public reassurance as to the competence of individuals; and
- Raised awareness of the role of building standards professionals.

Outcomes

4.4 Use of the Professional Framework will provide the following beneficial outcomes:

- Assurance that individuals are competent to act effectively in protecting public safety in relation to the building work they do; and
- Ensuring consistency in standards through a standardised approach to assessing the competence of individuals.

Scope

4.5 This Professional Framework sets out competence standards and procedures for the assessment of individuals working in the building standards profession. This includes all individuals working on the processing, administration or assessment of building standards applications.

Types of building work or buildings

4.6 This Professional Framework is relevant for individuals working within the building standards profession who advise on any type of building work as defined within The Building (Scotland) Act 2003 or The Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

5.0 Mapping against this framework

5.1 This section sets out how this Professional Framework should be applied in assessing the competence of individuals involved in undertaking building standards functions.

5.2 The Professional Framework provides a single and nationally consistent set of standardised job roles that comprise the building standards profession. Everyone working in the profession will be mapped to one of these job roles to indicate how their role in the profession is positioned on the Professional Framework.

5.3 As part of the initial validation of competence using the CAS, an individual's current role and responsibilities will be mapped and compared to a standard job role, which will ensure that their job role is recognised in the CAS. The mapping will be discussed and agreed between the manager and job holder.

5.4 The Professional Framework does not affect pay and grading. It indicates entry points, qualification requirements and career progression routes in a single and comprehensive structure.

5.5 The standardised job roles in the Professional Framework are consistent with the CAS to ensure there is a single approach to setting required levels of competence for individuals in the profession. Local job role titles can be maintained but the standardised job role should be used in recruitment campaigns and when carrying out a revalidation of competence using the CAS.

Validation and Revalidation

5.6 The outcome from completing the CAS validation assessment will show any skills gaps. This will assist in the identification of future training needs and training delivery for each individual in the profession. Once the initial CAS assessment is carried out, the findings will be used to develop competence as a building standards professional. The Operating Framework incorporates the CAS to ensure every verifier is developing the competence and resilience of their workforce.

5.7 **It is not expected that current members of the profession will have or be working towards the qualification levels specified.** However, the qualification levels provide an indication of requirements for entry to the profession and progression within it. Everyone should align their current job role to a standardised role as closely as possible, regardless of any qualifications held or not.

Skills Gap Analysis

5.8 The CAS validation assessment process provides a skills gap analysis for individuals to help with the identification of training required for their job role and for career progression.

5.9 Verifiers are required to provide a summary of the skills gap for their service to Scottish Government on an annual basis by 1 July each year, see annex A.

5.10 This information is used as evidence to support the development and ongoing maintenance of vocational and academic courses leading to accredited qualifications to ensure learning provision keeps pace with the needs of the profession.

Careers and Qualifications Matrix

Details of standardised job roles and the potential qualification routes needed to achieve that position.

| SCQF LEVEL | FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION | EDUCATIONAL AWARD | PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION | STANDARDISED JOB ROLE | COMPETENCY SERVICE LEVELS depending on "EXPERIENCE" |
|------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 12 | SVQ5 | Doctorate Degree | Business Management Experience | Building Standards Manager | Level 11 Competencies - surveyor with specialist and proven management and financial governance skills from a related or an unrelated degree course. |
| 11 | SVQ5 | Masters Degree | Chartered Status | Building Standards Manager | Level 10 Competencies - surveyor with specialist and proven management and financial governance skills from a related or an unrelated degree course. |
| 10 | SVQ5 | Honours Degree | Chartered Status | Building Standards Manager | Level 9 Competencies - surveyor with specialist and proven management and financial governance skills from a related or an unrelated degree course. |
| | SVQ5 | Honours Degree | Chartered Status / Continuing Professional Development | Building Standards Senior Surveyor | Level 8 Competencies - BS surveyor with added specialist skills to work unsupervised on such as safety at sports grounds, fire engineering, dangerous buildings etc. and with proven management skills. |

| SCQF LEVEL | FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION | EDUCATIONAL AWARD | PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION | STANDARDISED JOB ROLE | COMPETENCY SERVICE LEVELS depending on "EXPERIENCE" |
|------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 10 | SVQ5 | Honours Degree | Continuing Professional Development | Building Standards Surveyor | Level 7 Competencies - BS surveyor with added specialist skills to work unsupervised on such as safety at sports grounds, fire engineering, dangerous buildings etc. |
| | | | | | Level 6A Competencies - BS surveyor with added proven capability to work unsupervised on high risk complex buildings. |
| 9 | SVQ5 | Ordinary Degree Graduate Apprentice Entry Point | Continuing Professional Development | Building Standards Surveyor | Level 6 Competencies - BS surveyor with proven capability to working with supervision on high risk/complex buildings. |
| | | | | | Level 5A Competencies - BS surveyor with added proven capability to work without supervision on all domestic types (up to 18m) and on non-domestic low-medium risk buildings (alterations, extensions, conversions & new build). |
| 8 | SVQ4 | Higher National Diploma | Continuing Professional Development | Building Standards Surveyor | Level 5 Competencies - BS surveyor with proven capability to work with supervision on all domestic types (up to 18m) and on non-domestic low-medium risk buildings (alterations, extensions, conversions & new build). |

| SCQF LEVEL | FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION | EDUCATIONAL AWARD | PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION | STANDARDISED JOB ROLE | COMPETENCY SERVICE LEVELS depending on "EXPERIENCE" |
|------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 7 | SVQ4 | Certificate of Higher Education or Higher National Certificate | | Building Standards Inspector | Level 4A Competencies - BS surveyor working with added skills and working without supervision on domestic projects (low risk domestic - applications i.e. Single/two storey extensions, garage/attic conversions, larger conservatories. including flat alterations, demolitions & free standing walls. |
| | | | | Building Standards Assistant | Level 4 Competencies - BS surveyor working with supervision on domestic projects (low risk domestic - applications i.e. Single/two storey extensions, garage/attic conversions, larger conservatories, including flat alterations, demolitions & free standing walls. |

| SCQF LEVEL | FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION | EDUCATIONAL AWARD | PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION | STANDARDISED JOB ROLE | COMPETENCY SERVICE LEVELS depending on "EXPERIENCE" |
|------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|---|
| 6 | SVQ3 | Higher Award | | Building Standards Support surveyor - Technical | Level 3A Competencies - Trainee/assistant/apprentice surveyor working with added skills and working without supervision (low risk Domestic - applications i.e. patio doors, small conservatories, minor alterations). |
| | | Modern Apprenticeship SVQ Level 3 Modern Apprentice Entry Point | | | Level 3 Competencies - Trainee/assistant/apprentice surveyor with supervision (low risk Domestic - applications) i.e. patio doors, small conservatories, minor alterations. |
| 6 | SVQ3 | Higher Award | | Building Standards Support surveyor - Admin | Level 3A Competencies - admin technical support surveyor working without supervision. |
| | | Modern Apprenticeship SVQ Level 3 Modern Apprentice Entry Point | | | Level 3 Competencies - admin technical support surveyor working with supervision. |

6.0 Competence requirements

6.1 The competence requirements are set out within the CAS as noted below.

A - Core Knowledge and understanding - Legislation, procedures and technical handbooks [section 0-7]

B - Assessment of design and construction processes, buildings as systems, services and products

C - Compliance inspections - Assessment of risk levels - domestic and non-domestic

D - Enforcement - non-compliance, defective and dangerous buildings

Competency levels

6.2 The competency principles adopted for the purpose of the Professional Framework requires the following competencies to be assessed for each employee.

Competency is rated in four bands:

Level 1 - Awareness (A)

The individual has a basic knowledge of the subject and how it relates to their role.

Level 2 - Appreciation (Ap)

The individual has a general background knowledge of the subject but may require the specialist input of others to assess compliance.

Level 3 - Understanding (U)

The individual has sufficient knowledge of the principles of building design and construction in order to make independent decisions and assessments on the compliance of work meeting building regulations. This includes

a) Knowledge of building products and methods

b) Knowledge and skill in applying the powers in the Act and the Building Regulations

c) Ability to:

- i. process applications for building warrant
- ii. inspect building work
- iii. accept evidence to allow the acceptance of completion certificate

d) Ability to communicate with internal and external people

Level 4 - Comprehensive (C)

The individual has sufficiently detailed knowledge and skills to make decisions on complex issues relating to the design and construction of higher risk buildings and the ability to commission and interrogate specialist assistance where necessary.

7.0 Job role descriptions

7.1 The following seven job roles and function descriptors are intended to reflect core functions for the purpose of competence assessment.

| Standardised Job Role | Core Functions |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Building Standards Manager | Level 11 - specialist and proven management and financial governance skills. |
| | Level 10 - specialist and proven management and financial governance skills. |
| | Level 9 - specialist and proven management and financial governance skills. |
| Building Standards Senior Surveyor | Level 8 - surveyor with added specialist skills to work unsupervised on such as safety at sports grounds, fire engineering, dangerous buildings etc. and with proven management skills. |
| Building Standards Surveyor | Level 7 - surveyor with added specialist skills to work unsupervised on such as safety at sports grounds, fire engineering, dangerous buildings etc. |
| | Level 6A - surveyor with added proven capability to work unsupervised on high risk complex buildings. |
| | Level 6 - surveyor with proven capability to working with supervision on high risk/complex buildings. |
| | Level 5A - surveyor with added proven capability to work without supervision on all domestic types (up to 18m) and on non-domestic low-medium risk buildings (alterations, extensions, conversions & new build). |
| | Level 5 - surveyor with proven capability to work with supervision on all domestic types (up to 18m) and on non-domestic low-medium risk buildings (alterations, extensions, conversions & new build). |

| Standardised Job Role | Core Functions |
|---|---|
| Building Standards Inspector | Level 4 - working with added skills and working without supervision on domestic projects (low risk domestic - applications i.e. Single/two storey extensions, garage/attic conversions, larger conservatories, including flat alterations, demolitions & free standing walls. |
| Building Standards Assistant | Level 4 - working with supervision on domestic projects (low risk domestic - applications i.e. Single/two storey extensions, garage/attic conversions, larger conservatories, including flat alterations, demolitions & free standing walls. |
| Building Standards Support surveyor - Technical | Level 3A - Trainee/assistant/apprentice surveyor working with added skills and working without supervision (low risk Domestic - applications i.e. patio doors, small conservatories, minor alterations. |
| | Level 3 - Trainee/assistant/apprentice surveyor with supervision (low risk Domestic - applications) i.e. patio doors, small conservatories, minor alterations. |
| Building Standards Support surveyor - Admin | Level 3A Competencies - admin technical support surveyor working without supervision. |
| | Level 3 Competencies - admin technical support surveyor working with supervision. |

ANNEX A

RETURN TEMPLATE

Building Standards Division will issue a template for returns by verifiers on the skills gap for their service. The template will also seek feedback in the first year of operation on the user experience of working with the CAS to identify improvements.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2021

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80004-919-2 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, May 2021

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS856046 (05/21)

W W W . g o v . s c o t