

Competency Management System (CMS)

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Prepared by:	Port Skills and Safety	Approved by:	Debbie Cavaldoro	Date:	01.09.2023

COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

The Competency Management System has been produced by Port Skills and Safety (PSS) in conjunction with employers and stakeholders to provide industry agreed best practice.

Regulations in this document are referred to by title but not year, as they may have been amended post publication. The reader should always seek the current version.

Aim

The aim of a Competency Management System (CMS) is to provide a consistent, comprehensive, safe, and structured process, by which an individual's competence to carry out or impact "Safety Related Systems" and "Safety Critical Tasks" is assured. It also establishes a system of trust by demonstrating openness, communication, decision-making, and integrity to ensure competence at all levels is maintained.

Legislation

Compliance with this guidance should meet the relevant requirements of Health and Safety at Work Act and legislation, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) and the Health & Safety Executives key guidance "Managing Competence for Safety-Related Systems". It should be used in conjunction with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP), Safety in Ports (SiP) guidance suite and the L117 Rider Operated Lift Trucks.

Scope

The CMS is aimed at those responsible for managing and supervising people in all port operations, marine and engineering, and those who work on safety, environment and energy related systems within UK ports.

Safety critical systems

Although a 'competent person' is not defined in law, the ACOPs to PUWER and Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) broadly describe the attributes of a competent person for undertaking thorough examinations. It requires persons carrying out work on safety related systems to have been assessed as being competent and fit to carry out the work. Details can be found in the HSE managing competence for safety-related systems, key guidance and the International Standard ISO45001, ISO50001, ISO14001 for occupational health and safety management systems, requirements with guidance for use.

Developing and maintaining staff competence provides a structured, risk-based approach for developing competence standards and using these to develop and assess competence.

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Competence

Achieving competence and monitoring performance is the responsibility of everyone. The whole process is designed to be an open system of standards that are accessible and achievable. Competence is the ability to consistently perform activities to the standard expected. It includes practical and theoretical knowledge, experience and skills required to carry out safety critical or safety related work. A competency assessment is the process used to identify an employee’s suitability for a given role. It helps measure an employee’s Skills, Knowledge, Attitude, Training and Experience (SKATE) performance against pre-defined benchmarks and job requirements.

When people begin a new task or are progressing to a higher level, they may be unaware of what they can and cannot do. This is known as unconscious incompetence. Through training, mentoring and development, they will quickly move to knowing what they do not know, this is conscious incompetence. Once they have learnt the task and been assessed as competent, this then becomes conscious competence. Newly trained staff, when assessed as competent, are relatively inexperienced. A controlled development of their experience will help to ensure their increasing competence as they experience more of the infrequent events.

Fig. 1



For example, newly qualified people may be competent to operate or maintain a particular machine, vehicle, or piece of plant, but without experience, it does not necessarily mean they will be able to operate in different scenarios, diagnose or repair a fault. Therefore, the process may take months or longer to grasp, however, this is all achievable as the learner builds upon their experiences whilst being coached or mentored.

For more information, refer to your company mentoring policy.

Non-technical skills

Non-technical skills (NTS) is the term given to generic skills which underpin and enhance the performance of technical tasks, improving safety, effectiveness, and wider business efficiency. They assist people to anticipate, identify, and mitigate against errors. They include:

- Situational awareness
- Communication skills
- Decision making
- Team working

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Job description and person specification

A complete job description is required for all positions within each workplace. It is important that any physical requirement for the job role is included (see [SiP 017 – Guidance on Fitness for Work and Health Surveillance in Ports](#)).

There is a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. As part of our aim to deliver quality services, we are committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. For a safety critical worker's role, we ensure that we recruit employees that meet the essential requirements laid out in the job description for qualifications, knowledge skills and behaviours and to the person specification.

Training and assessment action plans

During induction, there must be a training needs analysis with the new employee. This will assess the requirements and evaluate what skills, qualifications, and relevant experience they have to meet the requirements that are desirable for the role. This will establish where areas of development are required (See [SiP 018 – Guidance on Safety Induction and Training in Ports](#)).

The responsible person shall ensure that training and assessment plans are produced, with consideration given to tasks identified as higher urgency and higher risk to individuals or the business. Where a competency gap is identified the line manager or supervisor must request or arrange training. The individual must not be allowed to perform these tasks until deemed competent or a competent person verifies the work and countersigns. Training, or mentoring requirements, shall be implemented to eliminate all competency gaps with urgency.

Specialist skills

There will be occasions when generic competency assessments will not be sufficient to cover specialist tasks that may be beyond normal job role requirements. In these circumstances, specialist training will be required for staff who have been identified for upskilling. It is then recommended that Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) or specialist accredited training providers are used.

It should be noted that PSS can assist in sourcing training through its training provider members and working group.

Competence of assessors

PSS recommends that assessors have the occupational expertise and knowledge in the assessment processes of the safety critical activity being performed. Ideally, assessors will hold an assessor qualification, for example, A1/A2, Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) 301/302, Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance (TAQA) Level 3, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) L&D9DI or an equivalent assessor qualification.

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The person responsible for controlling the assessment process will hold occupational and or professional competency. They will update the company on competence requirements in line with new or revised competence management standards as necessary. This process will ensure that all training instructors and assessors under their supervision are maintaining the required standards by internal verification.

Assessment process

Each candidate shall be assessed against the requirements of the relevant standard of competence for the safety critical activity concerned, using the individual company range of assessments. These will be produced in accordance with the manufacturer's maintenance recommendations, manuals, documentation, HSE, PUWER, as well as other regulated industry standards.

The assessment being carried out will consider and include all relevant safety criteria, including health and safety, welfare, and protection facilities. Methods of assessment will illustrate, by means of abbreviations and comments, to record the evidence of competency.

Re-Assessment process

In the event of the candidate answering a question or performing a task incorrectly, the assessor can re-evaluate the candidate using the re-evaluation sheet on the assessment documentation (see Fig. 3).

If a candidate demonstrates competency after being re-assessed, the assessor can consider the candidate to be competent. On completion of the assessment, the assessor will inform the candidate whether they are **Competent** or **Not Competent**. If the candidate disagrees with the decision, the appeals process will be followed.

The assessment process should include the following:

- Involvement of the candidate before and during the assessment
- A record of the candidate's evidence
- A reflection of all evidence collected
- Feedback to the candidate on their performance
- A clear result of whether the candidate is: **Competent** or **Not Competent**
- An improvement and training plan where the outcome is Not Competent

Abbreviations (Key)

- O = Observation:** The assessor observed the candidate performing the task
- Q = Question:** The candidate has been questioned on that element
- P = Professional discussion:** Evidence has been gathered through discussion
- S = Simulation procedure:** Assessment carried out in a protected environment
- R = Replication:** Indicates that the task was undertaken just for the assessment purposes

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Assessors' special safety considerations

Assessors shall be aware of the necessary site safety procedures before any assessment begins and must ensure a safe system of work has been set up. The assessor shall be cognisant of the fact that the safety of the candidate and themselves is paramount, particularly when undertaking assessments with individuals and not as part of a working group. It may be necessary to simulate certain tasks because of the increased risk when undertaking them as part of normal working practices. Under exceptional circumstances, the respective manager may, if professionally competent, carry out an assessment when company circumstances dictate.

Competency re-validation

Competency assessment validity dates shall be 3-5 years, in line with industry standards and approved codes of practice unless manufacturers' recommendations specify sooner. Where a validity expiry date has not been stated, a period will be set in accordance with industry best practice. Validity periods may be reviewed, extended, or reduced, depending on factors that will consider risk to an individual or the business.

Mitigating circumstances

Competency assessments should be revalidated/recertified prior to expiry. Due to unforeseen circumstances, there may be occasions when the expiry date is exceeded. This may be due to a lack of external training providers and/or availability, sickness, mental health issues, bereavement, or a pandemic. In these circumstances, the relevant training and competency manager, as the professional head, can authorise a period of extension. An extension will only be granted following a discussion with the candidate's line manager to review the Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) to ensure the individual has demonstrated previous satisfactory underpinning knowledge. In some cases, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment may be required.

Competency not achieved

A candidate who does not achieve the required level of competence is to be informed by the assessor in which area(s) they have not met the required standard. The assessor shall arrange, as soon as possible, a meeting with the candidate's line manager and the candidate to agree on the actions necessary for the required standard to be achieved. A pragmatic approach to the situation is necessary by the assessor, local manager and candidate when agreeing the actions. The corrective action may vary between simple clarification during the interview of certain elements of the activity, or undertaking partial, full, or initial training and re-assessment.

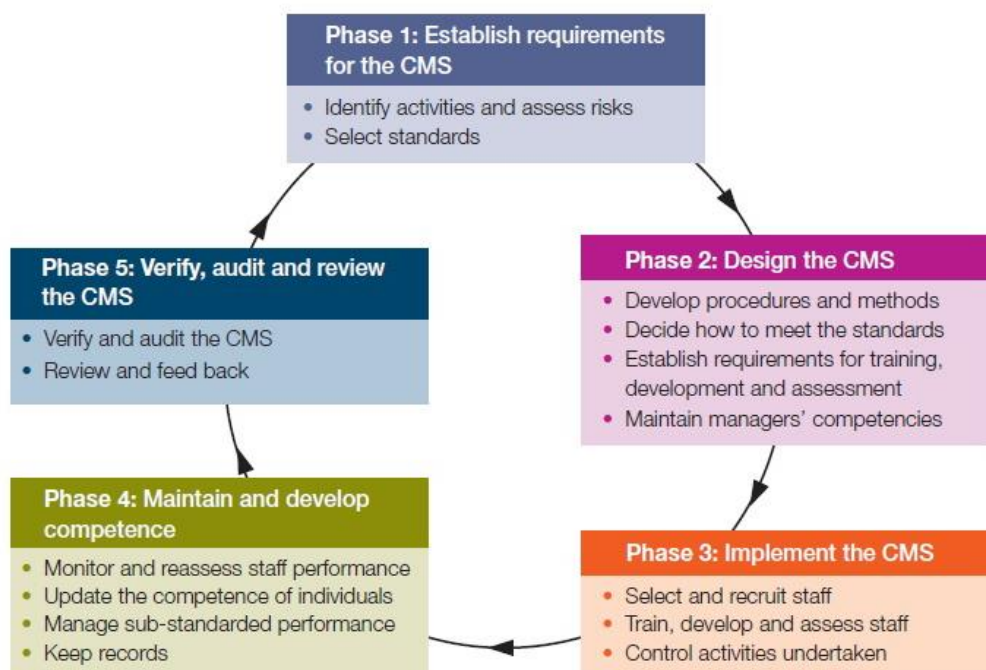
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Process control for competency management

The process control is set out below (Fig. 2) displaying the process used for the competency cycle.

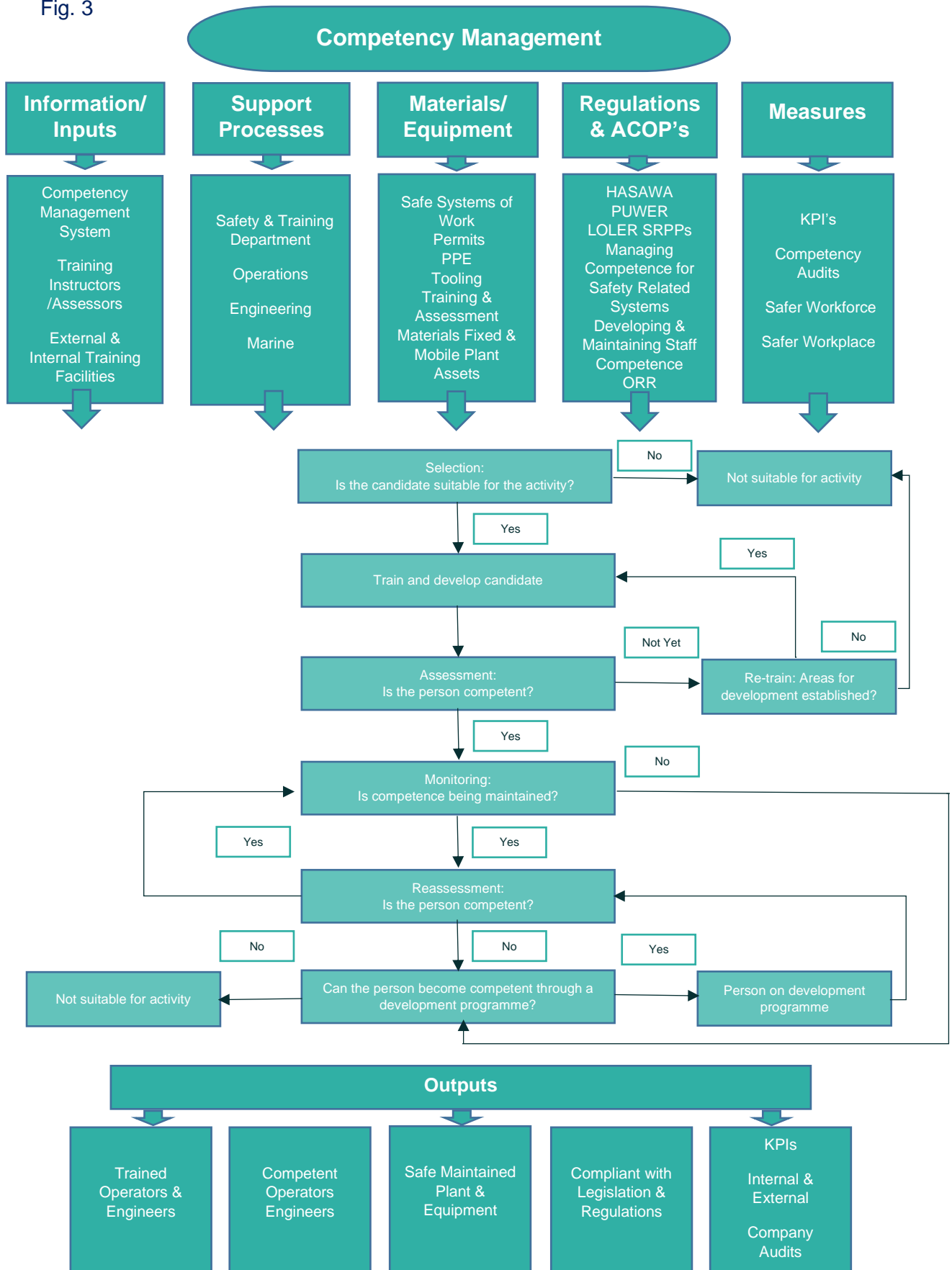
1. Establish the Competency Management System
2. Design the Competency Management System
3. Implement the Competency Management System
4. Maintain and develop competency
5. Verify, audit and review the Competency Management System

Fig. 2



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Fig. 3



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Records of competency

Records of the last three competency assessments shall be retained for at least a period of 6 years or until the employee leaves the organisation. All documentation must be made available if required for auditing, compliance, and insurance purposes.

All assessments shall be sent to the training department to electronically update the CMS, individual personal training, and competency records. Hard copies may be required dependent on the company requirements. Only authorised persons shall have access to these records and all information shall be stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws.

Records and revision status

Title	COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS) FOR [INSERT PORT]				
Issue	Date	Amendment	Content Owner	Authorised By	Review Period
					5 years (or change of industry standards)

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