

**Guide to Developing
National Occupational Standards**

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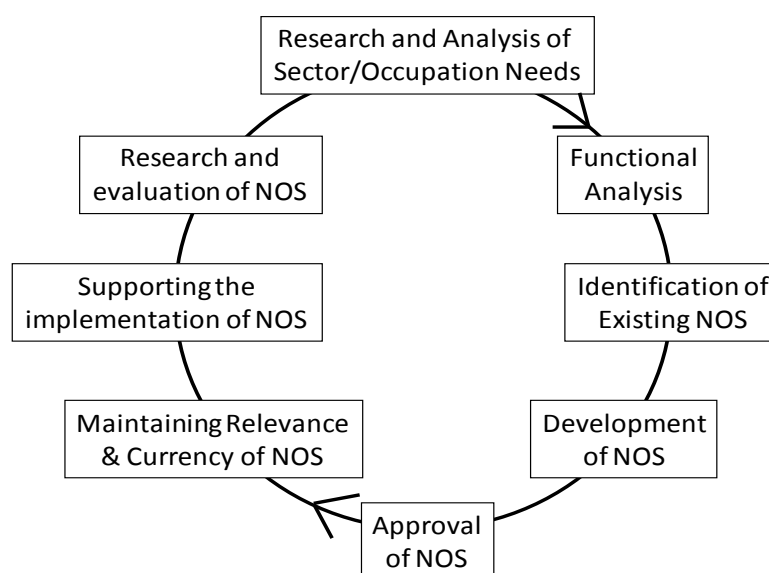
Introduction

Purpose of this Guide

This Guide complements and expands relevant sections of the 2011 version of the *National Occupational Standards Quality Criteria*. It provides practical guidance for those staff in Sector Skills Councils and other standards-setting organisations who are responsible for developing, maintaining and improving National Occupational Standards (NOS) for employers¹ and staff² in their footprints.

How to use this Guide

The process of developing and reviewing NOS is well established and follows the cycle below:



This current Guide only covers the first four stages of the cycle. It is expected that later guidance will cover those stages concerned with Maintenance, Implementation and Research/Evaluation.

- The rest of this **Introduction** explains some basic principles about NOS, their possible uses and outlines the development process.
- **Section 1** explains the Analysis of Sector/Occupational Needs – the starting point for NOS development. This sets the scene for the remaining chapters.

¹ In this Guide, "employer" means any individual or organisation which deploys human resources, whether under a contract of employment, a volunteer agreement or through a third-party supplier arrangement, to achieve its objectives. Employers may include sole-traders, freelancers or professionals working in partnership.

² "Staff" means individuals working for an employer, whether under a contract of employment, a volunteer agreement or through a third-party supplier arrangement.

- **Section 2** covers Functional Analysis – the main tool that Sector Skills Councils and others use to develop and update NOS.
- **Section 3** outlines the process of identifying, using or adapting existing NOS to ‘populate’ some or perhaps all areas of a Functional Analysis
- **Section 4** covers the main component parts of NOS and provides guidance on how NOS should be written.
- **Section 5** provides guidance on ensuring that NOS are responsive to industry needs.

What are National Occupational Standards?

National Occupational Standards (NOS) specify the standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the knowledge and understanding they need to meet that standard consistently. Essentially NOS are benchmarks of good practice.

Each NOS defines one key function in a job role. Each NOS must be a concise and readable document, usually consisting of no more than five or six pages (some are only one or two). In their essential form, NOS describe functions, standards of performance and knowledge/understanding.

Although NOS are often used to build qualifications and training programmes, sectors, organisations or individuals can use NOS as the platform for almost any other aspect of human resource management and development, for example:

- workforce planning
- performance appraisal and development systems
- job descriptions
- workplace coaching
- reflective practice

NOS need to be flexible. Because of this, they don’t contain unnecessary ‘clutter’, only the essential blocks from which employers and others can build valuable applications.

In explaining NOS, it may be helpful to look at each word that makes up the name.

National

NOS are national because they apply to the whole of the UK. NOS can only be developed by government-recognised Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) or other standards-setting organisations with representation across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. When SSCs research and write NOS, they must involve key stakeholders from all the ‘home nations’. There must be evidence of UK-wide support before NOS can be approved.

NOS are also national because they are not individual company standards. Individual organisations sometimes develop standards or competence frameworks. Some of these may look like NOS, but they are not. NOS can only be developed by involving

a representative sample of organisations in the occupation to which the NOS apply. This will include large, medium-sized small and 'micro' organisations and even the self-employed. Depending on the sector, the sample may include organisations that specialise in certain products and services and those that are more general. NOS, therefore, are genuinely representative of a sector as a whole and in all parts of the UK, not just one organisation.

NOS are also national because they must have UK-level approval. This approval process involves agencies acting on behalf of the relevant UK government department: the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly. NOS, therefore, have an official status within the UK.

Although NOS only have a UK remit, the general principles of NOS have been adopted in most of the English-speaking countries around the world, and there is also increasing interest in the NOS approach across the European Union and beyond.

Occupational

NOS are occupational because they define all the key functions someone should be able to carry out in an occupation – for example, farming, management, policing, or production engineering.

Because they describe occupational functions, we design NOS by analysing an area of work, mainly using the input of employers and others who have a close interest in the occupation – practitioners, professional bodies, trade associations and trade unions, where relevant. How we do this analysis is covered in *Sections 1 and 2*.

Standards

NOS are standards because they describe not just the essential things that people in an occupation must be able to do, but also cover the outcomes they must achieve.

NOS are also standards because they represent a consensus view amongst a variety of employers that they describe best practice. Because they need official approval, they are like the British Standard Kite Mark, except they are for people, rather than for products or processes. They cannot be varied until they have been through official review, updating and re-approval.

Like all standards, NOS must be kept up-to-date. Once they are developed and published, their use should be monitored by the SSC and incrementally changed over time.

A fuller description of the component parts that make up a NOS can be found in *Section 4*.

Occupational competence – a broad definition

Taken together, NOS describe occupational competence – what it means to be competent in a work role.

Occupational competence is not a narrow concept. To be fit for purpose, a set of NOS for an occupation must address the following:

- **Technical requirements** – these include the occupational skills and knowledge that the person needs, for example bricklaying, cleaning, developing organisational strategy, giving a presentation
- Requirements to do with **managing the work process** – for example identifying resource needs, planning work, monitoring quality, solving problems, reflective practice and finding better ways of doing things
- Requirements to do with **working relationships** – for example, relationships with customers, team members or colleagues
- Requirements to do with **managing the work environment** – for example ethical considerations and health and safety³

NOS cover the technical requirements, but they also embrace the wider dimensions that employers value in their staff – a repertoire of personal skills, such as teamwork, communication, customer service etc, plus the ability to organise their work, make judgements, solve problems, and improve work processes within given parameters.

Competence and skill

It is important not to confuse occupational competence and skill. They are not the same thing. People need skills to be competent, but competence is about applying skills (and knowledge) to achieve a work function. Welding is a skill. Repairing a broken plough (which involves welding) is a function valued by the farmer. Welding in itself has no purpose for an employer or customer. Repairing a plough does. Being able to add and subtract is a skill. Producing a profit and loss account is a work function. You need one to do the other, but they are not the same thing.

Knowledge and understanding

NOS include knowledge and understanding of facts, principles and methods which ensure that the person who measures up to the standard can be effective in other organisations, related job roles and work contexts and be better placed to deal with the unusual or unexpected. Someone who has measured up against NOS should 'tick all the boxes' in terms of employability and career progression.

1. Analysis of Sector/Occupation Needs

1.1 The starting point

Before you can begin to develop NOS, you must have a clear picture about who you are developing the NOS for, in other words what is the nature of the sector and what are the occupations that make it up? This may seem like a fairly obvious point, but it is essential for ensuring quality, fit-for-purpose outcomes from a NOS development or review exercise. If you think of the whole NOS cycle on page 5 as a project, this

³ Adapted from *The Job Competence Model*, Mansfield and Mathews, 1985

phase of work is similar to scoping. It defines the focus for what will come later and draws the boundaries for future research and development. Time spent on this scoping phase will not be wasted.

Developing this picture requires an analysis of sector or occupation needs. In the past, this process has been known as 'Occupational Mapping' and, as we shall see from later examples, many SSCs and other standards-setting organisations have developed thorough and robust occupational maps as the basis for later NOS development.

As well as providing a solid research base, this analysis will also help NOS developers to:

- develop an internal or external business case for NOS development and/or review
- identify a representative sample of employers to engage in NOS development and/or review
- identify other key stakeholders who could be helpful in the development and/or review process.

The following information will be particularly helpful in developing a sector/occupation analysis:

- the size and profile of its sector/occupation, sub-sectors and geographical location of organisations and workers
- the types of occupations within the sector and anticipated changes in employment patterns
- the link between the sector/occupation and other sectors/occupations
- key trends, developments and drivers within the sector/occupation
- opportunities for progression and typical career routes
- employers and other key stakeholders.

Each of these is covered in more detail, with real examples, in the following subsections.

It is important to note, however, that organisations developing NOS should not assume that this information needs to be collected from scratch. There are numerous sources of rich labour market intelligence that are regularly updated and available from employer and sector bodies.

1.2 The size and profile of its sector/occupation, sub-sectors and geographical location of organisations and workers

Understanding the size and profile of the sector is vital to NOS development. An analysis of this kind will reveal all the major sub-sectors and begin to provide a focus for later NOS work. It will also help to establish the boundaries and linkages with other sectors.

The example below from Improve, the Sector Skills Council for Food and Drink Manufacture, illustrates the general approach.

The footprint which **Improve** represents is large and diverse, and covers many sectors, which produce a wide variety of goods.

The industry can broadly be categorised into the following sectors:

- Bakery
- Convenience Foods
- Drinks (including soft drinks, wine, brewing and distilling)
- Dairy
- Fresh Produce
- Meat and Poultry
- Ingredients Production
- Seafood
- Sweet Confectionery
- Cereals and Milling

Activities across the industry range from the processing of food stuffs, and added value products, to manufacturing including employing craft skills to produce high value goods.

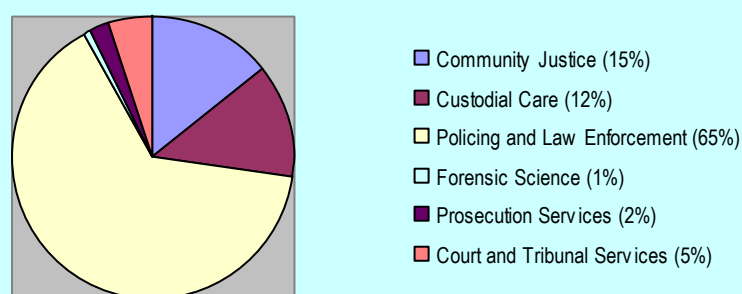
In the case of Skills for Justice, the SSC for the Justice Sector, the following summary was presented for 2006-7:

The justice sector is central to our social and political environment in the UK, and impacts on individuals' quality of life, freedom, and sense of well-being and security. In addition, the existence of a safe and low crime environment is critical to the UK economy. A wealth of diverse organisations in the sector, although operating to individual remits, work towards the same broad purpose - the creation and maintenance of a safe, just and stable society.

As of 2006-07, the justice sector workforce totalled approximately 498,000. The workforce comprises those in public, private and third sector organisations across the UK involved in:

- community justice
- custodial care
- policing and law enforcement
- forensic science
- prosecution services
- court and tribunal services

Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of organisations that make up the justice sector.



Breakdown of organisations in the Justice Sector 2006-07

Understanding the size of a sector and the occupations that make it up will be important from the point of view of building a business case for the development, maintenance and promotion of NOS. If the sector's volume is large that will help to establish priorities for development, maintenance and promotion.

In the case of the Justice Sector, Skills for Justice, was able to arrive at fairly accurate estimates of numbers employed:

Sector	NUMBERS EMPLOYED
Community Justice	72,467 (15%)
Custodial Care	62,994 (12%)
Policing and Law Enforcement	323,151 (65%)
Forensic Science	4,767 (1%)
Prosecution Services	10,686 (2%)
Court and Tribunal Services	25,306 (5%)
TOTAL	497,604

However, numbers never tell the whole story in terms of priorities and business cases. Although Forensic Science, for example, only employs 1% of the total workforce, other parts of the occupational map make clear its importance to the sector as a whole and at a later stage a set of 44 NOS were developed for this occupation. Research into the occupations that make up the sector should also explore their importance, even if numbers employed are relatively low.

SSCs and other standards-setting organisations working predominantly in the public sector usually have better access to accurate statistics than those in the private. However, it is still possible to arrive at reliable estimates in commercial sectors as well. The Marketing and Sales Standards Setting Body (MSSSB), for example, was able to estimate the following:

The Labour Market Statistics helpline - which reports on the Labour Force Survey and other related statistics, identified that in 2002, 21.7 million people were employed in the UK Services Sector. Of these, 833,000 were employed in the following marketing and related areas:

Marketing and sales managers	492, 000
Marketing associate professionals	128, 000
Graphic designers	91, 000
Advertising and public relations managers	48, 000
Public relations officers	37, 000
Market research interviewers	23, 000
Conference and exhibition managers	14, 000
Total	833, 000

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Conference and exhibition managers	14, 000
Total	833, 000

Given that NOS must apply to the whole of the UK, it is also important to have a picture of distribution across the four 'home nations'. Although an England-focused organisation, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) when developing its occupational map for one of its sectors, Supporting Teaching and Learning, was able to provide the following breakdown:

Country	NUMBERS EMPLOYED
England	153, 100
Wales	9, 399
Scotland	13, 942
Northern Ireland	4, 399
TOTAL	180, 840

Information of this kind helps to decide who to involve in the NOS process, for example in working groups, consultation samples and focus groups.

It will also be important to know the sizes of organisations that employ people in the sector or occupation for which NOS will be developed. There are two reasons for this:

- the size of organisation tends to impact on the degree of specialisation that occurs; in small and medium sized industries (SMEs), staff are often expected to have broader roles with a wider range of responsibilities – in very small operations they may be expected to be multi-skilled 'Jacks (or Jills) of all trades'; as the size of the organisation increases, staff are often expected to be more specialist and have narrower responsibilities; this will have an impact

on the way NOS are developed, particularly the breakdown into individual standards

- when the NOS are developed, maintained or promoted, it will be very important to involve a representative sample of employers; in putting together working groups, consultation samples or focus groups, SSCs and other standards-setting organisations will need to try to ensure a proportional representation of employers by organisational size.

The table on the next page is drawn from an occupational map for Management and Leadership which shows the distribution of managers by size of organisation.

No of managers per enterprise	Enterprise size (employment)								Total
	5-9	10-24	25-49	50-99	100-199	200-499	500-999	1000+	
None	53.9	35.4	6.8	2.4	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.1	100.0
1	58.6	35.0	4.9	1.3	0.2	0.0	0.0		100.0
2	47.2	44.3	6.4	1.9	0.2	0.0		0.0	100.0
3	27.4	56.0	12.0	3.9	0.6	0.1			100.0
4	12.9	57.4	20.6	7.8	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
5	10.3	42.9	28.6	14.5	2.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	100.0
6	7.2	35.7	30.6	21.2	4.1	1.1	0.1		100.0
7	3.4	30.2	33.6	26.5	5.3	0.9	0.1		100.0
8	2.1	22.4	30.9	33.5	9.0	2.0	0.1		100.0
9	1.4	29.8	26.9	31.9	8.2	1.8			100.0
10-14		8.5	21.3	40.4	20.9	8.4	0.4	0.1	100.0
15-24		2.1	10.2	33.0	31.9	21.3	1.2	0.2	100.0
25-49			3.3	12.7	32.9	42.8	7.2	1.0	100.0
50-99				7.2	14.2	52.3	21.6	4.7	100.0
100-249					8.0	37.7	30.5	23.8	100.0
250+						9.1	22.9	68.0	100.0
Total	33.1	41.4	12.4	7.6	2.9	2.0	0.4	0.2	100.0

Bosworth & Massini 2000

The table shows that by far the greatest percentage of managers is employed in organisations with between 10 – 24 employees. Within these organisations the average number of managers is only three. This may mean that general management competence is more widely applicable to the occupation as a whole, rather than narrow, specialist ones. Both of these pieces of information have implications for the way a NOS project should be organised and taken forward.

1.3 The types of occupations within the sector and anticipated changes in employment patterns

Having established an outline picture of the sector, it will be important to identify the occupations that make it up. This is sometimes called an occupational map. Even if you are looking at a single occupation, there are still likely to be different areas of specialisation within it, which in large organisations might result in different job titles or categories. For example, when the MSSSB developed its occupational map, it broke its industry down into four broad sectors and identified typical job titles within these:

Within agency management	
Chair	Managing Partner
Chief Executive	Strategy Director
Managing Director	
Within account planning and research	
Head of Planning/Planning Director	Research Manager
Senior Planner	Head of Information
Planner	Information Officer
Junior Planner	Information Assistant
Within client contact	
Head of Client Service	Account Director
Group Account Director	Account Manager
Board Account Director	Account Executive
Within creative	
Head of Creative/Executive Creative	Creative Team
Director	Visualiser
Creative Director	Typographer
Creative Group Head	Designer
Senior Copywriter/Art Director	Mac Operator
Copywriter/Art Director	DTP Operator
Junior Copywriter/Art Director	
Within creative services	
Head of Creative Services	Traffic/Production Executive
Head of Production	Traffic/Production Assistant
Head of Traffic	Print Buyer
Traffic/Production Director	Art Buyer
Traffic/Production Manager	

Deciding on these titles is often not easy because different organisations use a range of different job titles. However, by bringing representatives of the industry together and encouraging them to think about typical organisational structures and functions it is usually possible to develop a list of commonly agreed functional titles of the type shown above.

Once these titles are clear and agreed, it may be helpful to collect a range of illustrative job descriptions which will provide further background information for the Functional Analysis and NOS development. These are often referred to as job profiles.

The other advantage of having this type of information is that it becomes easier to identify where existing NOS from other SSCs or standards-setting organisations may be appropriate. The box above, for example, shows a number of posts with 'director' or 'manager' in the title that point immediately in the direction of the Management and Leadership NOS. This is discussed in greater detail in the next subsection.

1.4 The link between the sector/occupation and other sectors/occupations

Although SSCs and other standards setting bodies have defined footprints, we can see there are very few sub-sectors which do not employ or touch on occupations that fall within the footprints of others. There are three reasons why this information is important:

- most sectors will include occupations or functions that are ‘pan-sector’, in other words Management and Leadership, Business and Administration, Marketing and Sales, and Customer Service; NOS covering these occupations already exist and will need to be considered for importation and/or tailoring (*Section 3* below); this would almost certainly be the case with at least some of the executive and management occupations listed in the Marketing example above;
- many sectors will employ staff from other occupations that fit within the footprints of other SSCs; as in the case of ‘pan-sector’ functions, NOS from other suites will need to be taken into account, certainly in adopting and promoting the NOS to employers;

In the case of the TDA’s *Supporting Teaching and Learning NOS*, the research identified the following other sectors as being relevant to theirs:

- Children’s Care, Learning and Development
- Learning, Development and Support Services for children, young people and those who care for them
- Health and Social Care
- Information and Library Services
- Clinical Healthcare Support
- Youth Work
- Management and Leadership
- Managing Volunteers
- Learning and Development

In developing their own suite of NOS, TDA identified the opportunity to draw on these NOS from other organisations to enhance their own.

Some occupations do not neatly fit within the footprints of any one SSC or other standards-setting organisation. Fitness Instructors working on cardiac rehabilitation, for example, fall between SkillsActive which has responsibility for fitness industry and Skills for Health which leads on health related occupations. Once a link like this is established during a sector analysis, it provides the opportunity for SSCs or other standards-setting organisations to collaborate on the development, maintenance and promotion of relevant NOS.

1.5 Key trends, developments and drivers within the sector/occupation

When we talk about developing a picture of the sector, sub-sector or occupation, we do not mean a static snapshot. Most sectors are subject to ongoing change in the way they are organised, the skills they value and the technology and working

practices they use, so we are really looking for a 'moving picture' which can lead us towards the future.

NOS must not only be up-to-date, they also need to take account of likely changes in the near future. The impact of change on a sector needs to be taken account of both in the development and the review of NOS. In developing the 2004 occupational map for Management and Leadership, the standards-setting organisation identified the following key drivers for change in the occupation:

- Increasing pace of change
- Organisational de-layering and restructuring
- Increasing demand for leadership skills in organisations
- Increasing demand for knowledge management
- Greater requirement for speedy and effective communications within and between organisations
- Greater requirement for the development of people, often using more informal methods and particularly in response to change
- Heightened customer expectations
- Greater use of projects within organisations, particularly as vehicle for change and innovation
- Increasing use of Information and Communications Technology
- The spread of more flexible working arrangements – for example, home/tele-working and use of virtual teams
- Increasing burden of legislation and regulation
- Greater expectations for social responsibility and accountability and the need to manage stakeholder relationships
- Globalisation
- Increased diversity in the workforce and markets and the need to make better use of diversity
- Greater demands for innovation and creativity
- More outsourcing and emphasis on contract management
- More partnership working between organisations, sometimes across sectoral boundaries
- Increased demand for the efficient use of resources, particularly but not exclusively, in the public sector.
- Greater demand for a range of softer, 'people' skills, some of which could be categorised as Emotional Intelligence.

Eight or more years down the line we can see that most of these forecast changes are fairly commonplace now and any set of Management and Leadership standards that had failed to take account of these at the time would now be outdated.

In the case of Food and Drink Manufacture, the relevant SSC, Improve, identified the following:

Future Trends

From the consultation visits with employers a number of significant trends in the changes to job roles were identified. One of the most notable recent changes has involved the upskilling and multi-skilling of production staff.

Throughout the sectors, many companies believe that fewer workers with a broader range of skills will equal bigger profits and increased productivity.

This is especially true in the case of quality assurance (QA) roles. Production staff are now starting to take over basic testing roles, which were formally performed by QA staff. QA departments are now shrinking as a result, leaving only higher level (ie management) staff to carry out more complex testing and monitoring.

Production staff are also gradually taking on more responsibility within their area, including basic cleaning and machine maintenance.

There are also higher expectations being placed on these staff members to develop the skills to work in multiple departments within production.

Employers anticipate that the industry's reputation for having a predominantly unskilled workforce will be changing to that of an industry known for flexible highly skilled workers.

These findings reflect employment projections for the food and drink manufacturing industry, which forecast a transition to a more highly skilled workforce between 2007 and 2017-.

The loss of craft specialists due to retirement is also starting to affect the workforce. National statistics indicate that more than a third of the current food and drink manufacturing workforce could retire from the industry in the next 20 years.

Improve's Ageing Population Research (2006) consulted with stakeholders and identified the potential loss of skills from the bakery sector as a result of large scale retirements due to an ageing workforce.

Environmental and sustainability issues are also starting to become more pressing than they were in 2004/5. This is mainly due to the rising energy costs.

A majority of the companies interviewed placed environmental issues under the remit of their quality or technical managers. However, many companies have expressed a need to expand in this area in the future.

In terms of development and review, this piece of research was a rich source of information which influenced both the shape and content of the NOS for Food and Drink.

1.6 Opportunities for progression and typical career routes

Identifying opportunities for progression and typical career routes can be very helpful when developing or redeveloping NOS so that they are appropriate to different levels in an occupation or sector. They may also be helpful in showing how specialisation occurs as individuals move from one level to another.

In the case of the Justice Sector, the Skills for Justice produced a number of tables that illustrate this for each of the main occupations. Two of these are shown below.

	Entry Requirements	Initial Training and Development	Career Progression
PRISON OFFICER	<p>Candidates must be: at least 18 years old in England and Wales; between 20 and 57 years old in Scotland; between 18.5 and 57 in Northern Ireland. Candidates must pass a full medical examination.</p> <p>In England and Wales, entrants must pass a Prison Officer Selection Test (POST) and Recruitment Assessment Centre regardless of their academic qualifications. In Scotland they need five S grades (1-3) or three years' experience of managing people, and are required to attend an assessment day.</p> <p><i>Note that the Northern Ireland Prison Service has been reducing the number of staff in recent years and does not expect to be recruiting in the near future.</i></p>	<p>In England and Wales, training as a new prison officer will be eight weeks, some of which is at trainee's home establishment and some at a prison service college. Training will continue throughout the first year of service, during which trainees are mentored and monitored by experienced staff. Recruits are expected to achieve NVQ Level 2 and 3 in Custodial Care during their first 12 months.</p> <p>In Scotland, recruits will spend an induction week in a prison establishment, then six weeks at the Scottish Prison Service College. All new recruits are expected to gain the SVQ Level 3 in Custodial Care in their first two years.</p>	<p>With around two years' experience, Officers could progress to Senior Prison Officer, which is decided by application, examination and interview. They could then go on to gain promotion through the Principal Officer and Governor grades.</p> <p>In England and Wales the prison service operates an Intensive Development Scheme for graduates, which offers early progression to senior grades.</p>

	Entry Requirements	Initial Training and Development	Career Progression
POLICE OFFICER	<p>There are no academic requirements for entry into the police. Entrants must attend an assessment centre and pass a medical examination.</p> <p>In England and Wales applicants must be at least 18.</p> <p>Note that the High Potential Development Scheme is currently being revised by the National Policing Improvement Agency. The revised scheme will launch in April 2008.</p>	<p>All police officers undergo a two-year probationary training period.</p> <p>In England and Wales the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) includes supervised and independent patrolling. The probationary period in many forces includes working towards a Level 3 NVQ in Policing, and recruits are expected to achieve NVQ Level 4 in Policing either during or shortly after this period.</p>	<p>Following their probationary period Officers can specialise in a branch such as the traffic police, firearms units or underwater search units. Opportunities for promotion are also frequently available because all higher rank positions are filled from within the police service.</p> <p>Officers can apply for promotion to Sergeant or Inspector. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland they must successfully complete the two relevant OSPRE qualifications. In Scotland, the Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management (SCQF Level 8) replaces the Scottish promotion examinations (the Diploma and the promotion exams will run together until 2009 when the promotion exams will be phased out).</p> <p>[Note that there are workplace assessment trials currently underway in England and Wales in 7 forces for promotion other than through meeting the OSPRE Part 2 process.]</p>
	<p>In Scotland, applicants must be at least 18 years of age. The Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates (ASPSG) offers a fast-track for those who show particular flair and promise.</p>	<p>In Scotland, probationer training is delivered by the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan.</p>	
	<p>In Northern Ireland, applicants must be between 18 and 57. Following the Patten Report, the Consensia Partnership is responsible for police recruitment.</p>	<p>In Northern Ireland, new recruits undertake the 20-week Student Officer Training (SOT) Programme. If successful and formally attested into the PSNI, recruits undergo a 2-year probation period before being confirmed in the rank of Constable.</p>	

This section of the Justice occupational map also brings out distinct differences between expectations and practices in each of the 'home nations' where these are

significant. These differences will need to be taken into account when NOS are developed.

1.7 Employers and other key stakeholders

The work undertaken in *subsection 1.2* above should provide a clear picture of the types and sizes of employing organisations in the sector or occupational area and an indication of geographical distribution across the UK. This should give a NOS project the basis for identifying a representative sample of employers to form the core group to be involved in developing/reviewing/promoting the NOS. It will also help identify a wider sample to act as a consultation 'sounding board' for any new developments.

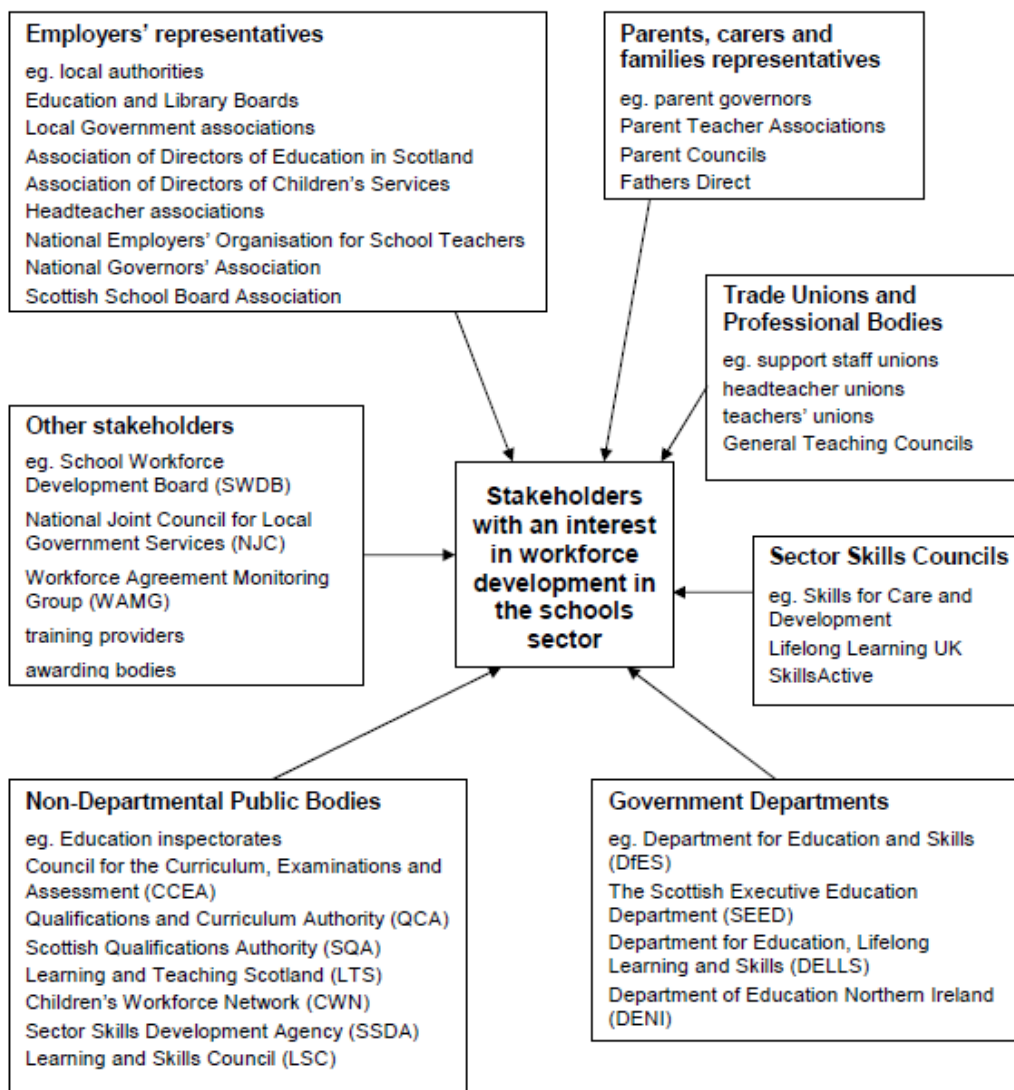
See Annex 2 for Guidance on the four UK nations' expectations regarding consultation in each nation.

However, in any NOS exercise there will be a range of other stakeholders who have a legitimate interest in the development of the NOS and the potential to make a real contribution. This will vary according to sector and occupation. However, the following should be considered:

- Bodies responsible for industry regulations
- Professional Bodies
- Trade Associations
- Employer/membership Associations
- Trade Unions and other employee associations
- Learning Providers
- Awarding Organisations/Bodies
- Research Organisations
- National governments.

Where there are clear overlaps (*subsection 1.4* above) with other SSC footprints, those SSCs should also be involved, at least through regular communication and consultation.

The following graphic shows the organisations that the TDA identified as relevant to its occupational map for *Supporting Teaching and Learning* during its research in 2007 (some of the organisations identified have subsequently changed their names). It demonstrates that conducting a thorough analysis of the occupational landscape is a vital initial stage of NOS development or review.



1.8 How do we gather the information we need for sector/occupational analysis?

All SSCs will have Sector Skills Agreements (SSA) and other standards-setting organisations will have Labour Market Information (LMI) which they are required to keep up-to-date. Therefore, quite a lot of the information required for all the subsections above may already be available. It will only need extracting and compiling in a different form.

However, in some cases the SSA and LMI information may not 'drill down' to an appropriate level of detail for some sub-sectors and new or minority occupations. Where information is not readily available, the following approaches should be considered:

- surveys of employers and other key stakeholders (such as Employer/Trade Associations or Professional Bodies)

- gathering and analysis of relevant job descriptions
- desk research into existing NOS suites
- interviews with a representative sample of employers and key stakeholders

1.9 Keeping the research up-to-date

The analysis of sector/occupation needs should be thought of as 'living document' that needs to be constantly monitored and regularly updated. If properly maintained, it will provide a constant backdrop to the SSC's activities on developing and maintaining its NOS, always ensuring they meet employers' needs.

Section 2 Functional Analysis

2.1 *What is Functional Analysis and what is it for?*

Functional analysis is the main tool we use to define the nature of an occupational sector and the functions performed within it. This is an essential process in defining occupational competence and in setting boundaries between different occupations. A detailed functional map allows us to establish the unique contribution of each occupational area - what makes it different from all others. In technical terms this is referred to as “delimiting the occupational domain”. This is essential to ensure that all primary (main) and secondary (sub-) functions are identified, that the relationship between them is clearly established and the direct contribution that they make to the global purpose of the sector is understood. Without a functional map we would not be able to say where one occupational area ends and another begins.

Functional mapping also allows us – after a suitably detailed process of teasing out the functions (known technically as “disaggregation”) – to get to a level of specific activity that allows us to define occupational competence through the creation of new or adoption of existing National Occupational Standards (NOS). NOS describe what employees⁴ in any occupation should be able to do, the standard they should achieve and the knowledge and understanding they need.

When we talk about ‘functions’, we mean the activities a person is expected to do as part of their job. Functions are not random activities. Functions must have a clear **purpose** and **outcome** that are valuable to an employer. Once we know the functions people are expected to perform, it becomes easier to identify the standard they should achieve and the knowledge they need. By using functional analysis we can take any area of work and break it down until we see the functions that individuals are expected to perform – in other words *what people need to be able to do*. Once we know what these functions are, we can work with employers to agree everything else that should go into the NOS.

2.2 *The process of Functional Analysis*

Let us take the example of the housing sector. If you were asked to define which functions are covered by the term, there would be a variety of answers both in terms of the breadth and scope of functions people associate with housing. In order to be clear what we mean by housing we must first establish the unique and defining contribution housing makes to people’s lives.

⁴ Throughout the guidance we use ‘staff members’ to cover anyone who carries out a work function. In most industries they will be paid employees, In others they may be unpaid volunteers

This is done by establishing a Key Purpose statement which captures this unique contribution. Once we know what the Key Purpose is, we can develop further detail by asking the simple question 'What needs to happen to achieve the Key Purpose?'

This will generally result in a number (often three or more statements) of primary functions (sometimes called functional areas) that cover fairly large components of work within that sector.

However, these are still quite large and generic statements so we have to identify what 'sub-functions' are performed in each one to get closer to what individuals do at work. This leads to the next level of analysis, achieved by using exactly the same analytical question 'What needs to happen...?' and applying that question to each of the main functional areas.

This process is repeated over several levels of sub-division (disaggregation) until we eventually get to statements of function that apply to individual employees which could form the basis of NOS. Once we know what the possible NOS are, we either find existing NOS that cover these functions, or we develop new NOS to meet their requirements.

That's essentially how functional analysis operates.

So now we can apply this process to the central question: How do we define the functional areas involved in housing?

We establish a Key Purpose statement (how we do this will be dealt with elsewhere) which in the case of housing is to:

“Provide quality housing, services and support to meet the current and future needs of customers and communities “

Notice the breadth and scope of the Key Purpose statement for housing (above) goes well beyond the mere supply of housing stock but involves the provision of related services and support as well as having a clear role in community development. Choosing the term “customer” instead of “tenant” is also a conscious statement which will affect how the rest of the map develops. Time spent in seeking a broad consensual statement of purpose will ensure that the fullness and richness of an occupational area is fully captured.

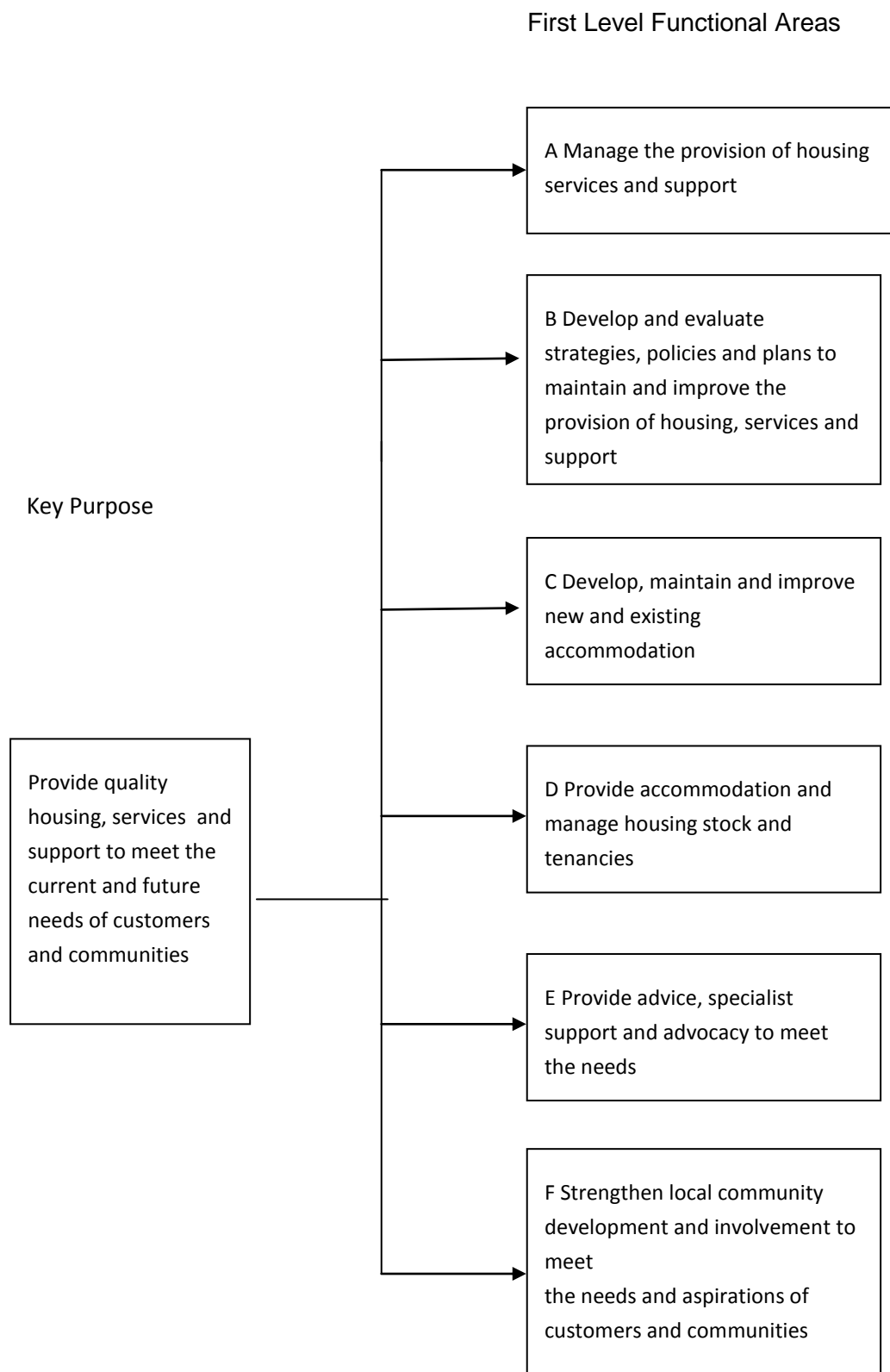
A key purpose statement can cover the whole of a 'footprint' or just a narrow part of it – for example, the following one for the Justice sector is very broad in scope:

“To protect and support individuals and communities by reducing crime, the fear of crime and the impact of crime, addressing offending and associated behaviour, maintaining law and order in the community and custody and bringing offences to justice fairly.” (Skills for Justice, 2009)

It covers the whole of the Justice Sector including: police, prisons, probation, forensic science, prosecution service and court and tribunal services.

Having got the Key Purpose statement we then ask our question: “What needs to happen to achieve the Key Purpose?” in order to arrive at a set of Functional Areas which deal with discrete components of activity essential to achieving the Key

Purpose. In the case of housing our question prompted the following Functional Areas:

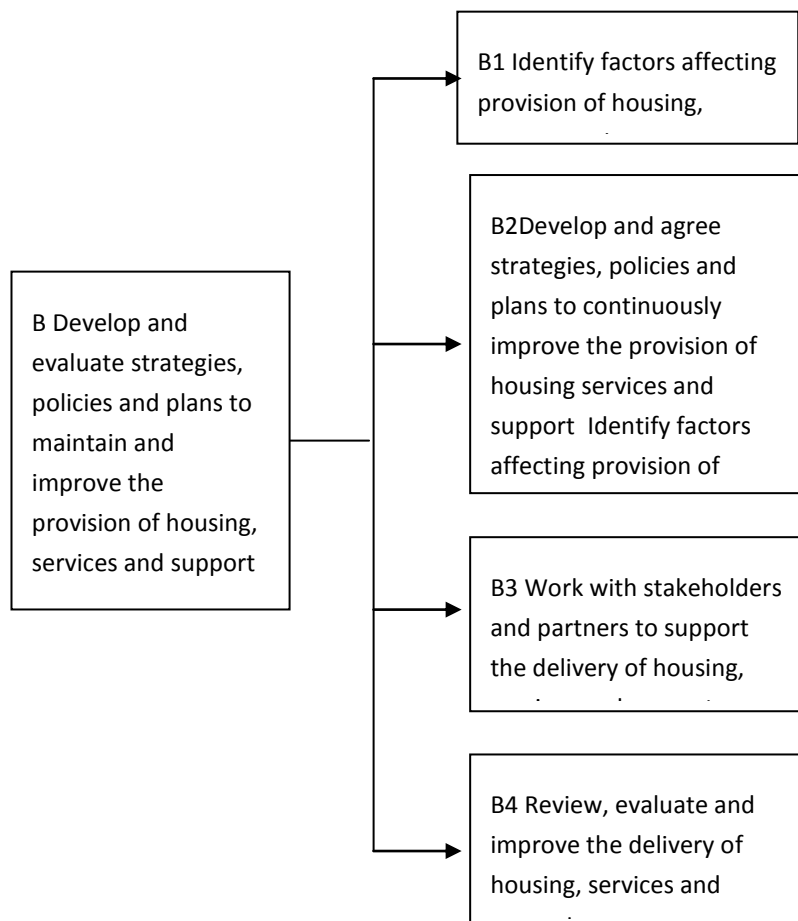


We have now begun to divide up the Key Purpose statement into primary functions and have begun to separate out functions that begin to look like recognisable aspects

of housing provision, we need to take each of these in turn and ask the same question of each: What needs to happen to achieve the Functional Area?

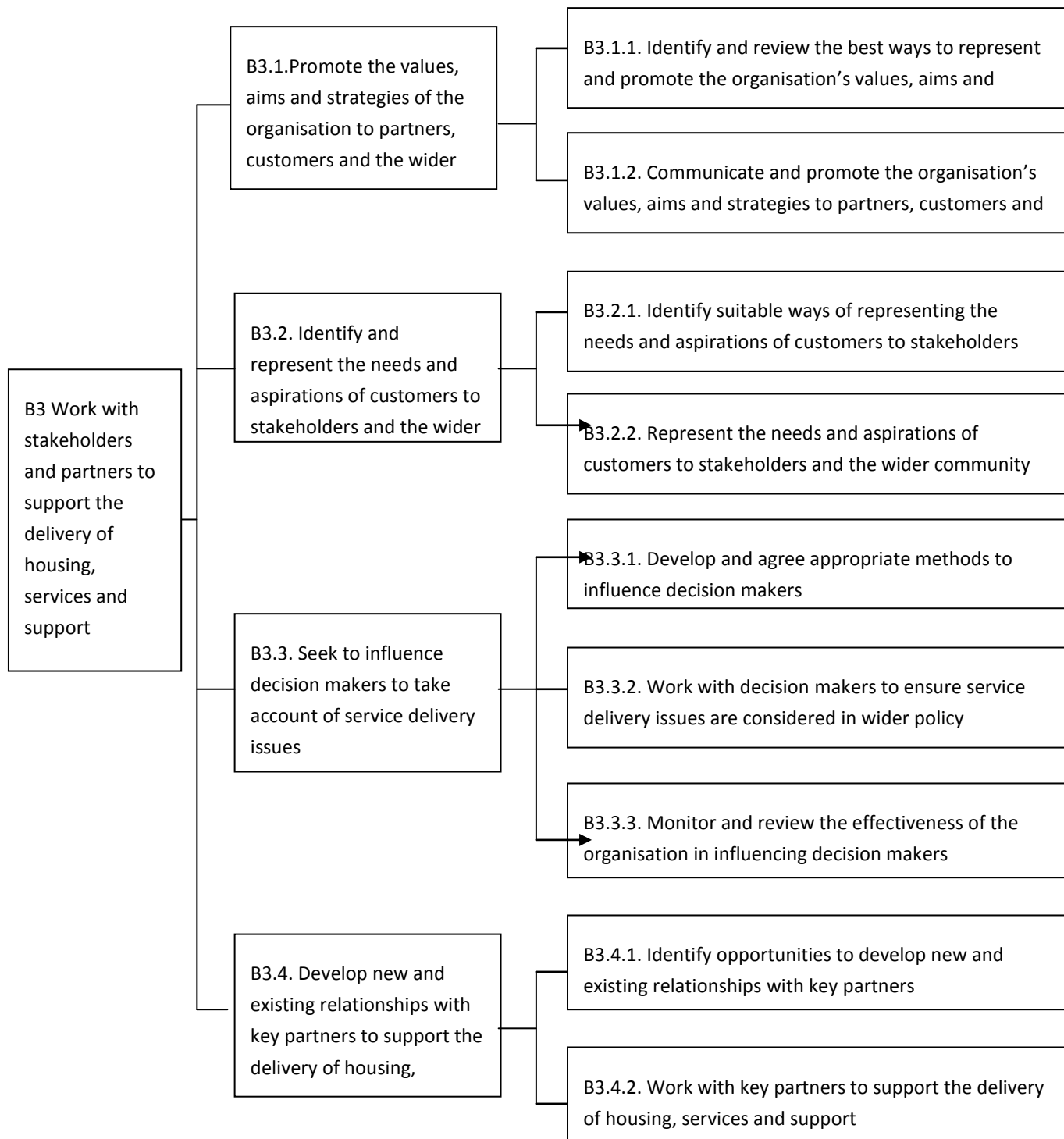
Taking the example of Functional Area B and ask the question we get the following secondary functions which equate to broad areas of competence:

Primary (First Level) Functional Area Secondary (Second Level) Functions



This process is repeated for first level Functional Areas to create secondary functions.

We then revisit each of these and ask of each subset: “What needs to happen to achieve the secondary functions?” For example, what is involved in B3 working with stakeholders and partners? Asking the now familiar question produces the following set of sub-functions and the next (third) functional level:



Third Level Functions

Fourth Level Functions

This process continues until we begin to identify discrete functions and, depending on the sector, activities that are performed by individuals and from which we can develop NOS or recognise where existing NOS cover the required function. In the example of housing, we can see that the level of detail permits NOS development to be undertaken as well as specifying the operational roles involved in housing.

The definition of discrete functions and activities that form the basis of NOS may also define the titles of the NOS, but this will depend in part on the sector and the extent to which existing NOS from other sectors can be used and contextualised.

2.3 Setting the scope of Functional Analysis

From the above example from the housing sector it is quite clear that considerable thought has been given to the **scope** of the analysis. The developers have decided it applies to a wide range of people engaged in providing diverse housing and support services to individuals and the larger community. The scope of the functional analysis should be finalised during the sector analysis phase discussed in Section 1.

Not all functional analyses are as wide ranging and detailed as this. A functional analysis can be limited to a narrow area of work and a limited number of occupations which lead quickly to the identification of relevant NOS. See the following example:

Alternatively, as in the housing example above it can go wider. It is also possible to carry out functional analyses of occupations that run across sectors, for example, Management, Customer Service and Administration.

Other functional analyses are even more all-encompassing to bring together a very wide range of discrete work functions across different sectors. In the example below the analysis defines the functions across a wide range of disciplines in the “built environment” covering planning, architecture, construction and asset management.

Built Environment Functional Map Analysis - Key Purpose/ Competence Areas/ Roles (Aug. 08)		
Key Purpose	Key Competence Area	Key Role
	A Review, develop and implement strategies,	A1 Monitor changes and needs and develop and test strategic planning and development options in the natural and built environment
		A2 Develop planning, development and

Plan, design, construct, manage and maintain the sustainable development and use of the natural and built environment and its infrastructure, balancing the requirements of all stakeholders	policies and legislative controls for the planning, development and sustainability of the natural and built environment	sustainable management policies, proposals and legislative controls in the natural and built environment
		A3 Develop and implement policy, regulatory and sustainability support and control systems in the natural and built environment
	B Establish stakeholder requirements and influencing factors and develop and design sustainable development projects	B1 Identify and evaluate investment options, project requirements, funding and procurement arrangements for sustainable development projects
		B2 Plan, coordinate and manage project development processes
		B3 Survey, map and test characteristics of the natural and built environment
		B4 Investigate contextual, resource, regulatory and legal factors affecting potential developments
		B5 Develop, prepare, cost and obtain approval for project design solutions
		B6 Organise and prepare project design information
	C Resource, construct,	C1 Provide temporary structures, services and access facilities
		C2 Obtain, control and move materials
		C3 Prepare, operate and maintain plant, equipment and machinery
		C4 Carry out ground modification, excavation and tunnelling operations
		C5 Manufacture, process and fabricate materials and components
		C6 Construct and finish structures, building fabric and landscaping and install building engineering services

	process, install, maintain and decommission structures, materials and building engineering services in the natural and built environment	C7 Maintain and repair structures, materials and building engineering services
		C8 Decommission, dismantle and demolish existing plant, structures and facilities
	D Procure, plan, implement, control and manage projects in the natural and built environment	D1 Plan, Implement procurement processes and secure contracts
		D2 Plan, resource and implement safe construction and installation operations
		D3 Control project work, accounts and completion
		D4 Resolve and adjudicate on disputes
		D5 Manage and respond to incidents and emergencies
	E Assess and manage the sustainability, use and maintenance of property and operation of utilities in the natural and built environment	E1 Value, survey and assess property
		E2 Assess and provide advice on the energy performance of buildings
		E3 Progress property transactions and agreements
		E4 Manage and implement the use, maintenance and cleaning of property, systems and services
		E5 Manage, operate and maintain utility systems
		E6 Manage and operate recycling services and processes
		E7 Manage and process the disposal of

		waste
	F Develop and manage organisational and individual performance within the natural and built environment	F1 Lead the development of organisations
		F2 Manage business plans, finances and organisational performance
		F3 Manage human resource recruitment, development and welfare
		F4 Manage organisational systems, services and research
		F5 Manage and develop sales and marketing
		F6 Lead organisations, manage teams, working relationships, personal development and activities
		F7 Develop learning and the assessment of people

2.4 Some examples of components of a Functional Analysis

Key Purpose Statements

“To plan, manage and provide comprehensive, coherent, integrated services that improve the lives of and outcomes for children and young people and support their families and carers.” (Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2009)

This Key Purpose embraces all workers, indeed at all levels, in organisations that provide services to children and young people. It is something that all workers in these services should see as their aim. Indeed it points to a clear outcome: that there are comprehensive, coherent, integrated services that improve the lives of children and young people etc.

“Enable volunteers to make their full contribution to the organisation’s goals whilst developing their own skills and interests.” (Voluntary Sector National Training Organisation, 2003)

This Key Purpose applies to all types of managers working in voluntary sector organisations. The outcome is that volunteers are enabled to make their full contribution to the organisation's goals etc.

“Keep the environment, clean, safe and well maintained to help people enjoy where they live, work or visit”. (Asset Skills, 2007)

This Key Purpose applies to employees – managers and operational staff – at all levels working in Local Environmental Management. Again there is a clear outcome: a clean, safe and well maintained environment which helps people to enjoy where they live, work or visit.

Just as the Key Purpose statement should be inclusive, sometimes it is necessary to write the Key Purpose in a way that clearly sets a boundary for who is included and, by implication, who is not. The statement below is an example of this.

“Assist the organisation to plan and organise quality leisure services through the effective leadership of people and the efficient deployment of financial and physical resources.”
(SkillsActive, 2005)

This Key Purpose applies only to managers in the active leisure industry. Had the statement read: ‘Assist the organisation to plan, organise and deliver...’ this would imply that it also applies to operational staff (pool lifeguards, leisure attendants etc.). In fact this Key Purpose is even more selective. It only applies to first line managers. The statement makes that clear by including the word ‘assist’ at the beginning. If the Key Purpose had applied to managers at all levels, the statement might have read ‘Plan and organise quality leisure services...’ without the word ‘assist’ and therefore indicating full responsibility.

At the opposite extreme, it is quite possible to develop a Key Purpose for the whole of a sector's footprint.

“To protect and support individuals and communities by reducing crime, the fear of crime and the impact of crime, addressing offending and associated behaviour, maintaining law and order in the community and custody and bringing offences to justice fairly.” (Skills for Justice, 2009)

The Key Purpose is fairly complex, but this reflects the fact that it covers the whole of the Justice Sector including: police, prisons, probation, forensic science, prosecution service and court and tribunal services.

For further examples of functional analysis and how the various components of Functional Analysis can be put together please see the Annex at the end of the document.

2.5 A word about language

There is a consistent way of writing all statements that appear in a Functional Analysis. Using the right language helps gets you to fit-for-purpose NOS.

First, since each statement should capture the primary or secondary function being described, we want statements that are short but descriptive of what the person is able to do. Above all, we need statements that an employer or employee can understand and relate to.

Second, each statement should begin with a **verb** (an action or 'doing' word). Sometimes the statement starts with more than one verb, for example 'Take and communicate', but there is always a verb at the beginning. We do this because we are interested in what people should be able to **do**.

Each statement should also contain one or more **objects** for the verb. An object is a thing or person that receives the action of the verb. It might be one word – 'information' – or it could be a phrase – 'specialist support" to meet the needs and aspirations of customers".

Most statements (but not all) also contain a **context or condition**. Like the object, this helps us to be more precise about what we want to say. So in the statement "provide information and advice **to meet the needs and aspirations of customers**" the emboldened part of the statement defines the context or condition.

Some words are discouraged in Functional Analysis. These are mainly **qualifiers**. Usually these are adverbs – words which tell you how a verb (action word) is carried out. Adverbs normally end in '-ly'. Examples are 'effectively', 'promptly', 'efficiently', appropriately.

We don't need these words in the Functional Analysis as they are implied if an individual is doing the job competently. If, for any reason, they are important, they can appear in the detail of the NOS which sets the standard that individuals should achieve.

2.6 Models of Functional Analysis

There is no right/wrong solution to identifying primary and secondary functions. Different industries and occupations will see things in different ways. However, identifying functions tends to follow one of the following models:

- a linear model that separates the various stages involved and shows them in sequence, for example, 'identify specifications', 'design', 'construct'
- a cyclical model which separates the stages involved but brings them back to the starting point, for example 'plan', 'do', 'review'
- a process model that separates out different types of processes involved, for example 'bake', 'boil', 'roast', 'fry', 'grill'
- a product model which separates out different types of products or materials, for example, 'bricks', 'cement', 'plaster', 'wood'

Models (1) and (2) are similar except that the cyclical model links the beginning and end of the sequence because the 'review' stage has an impact back on the 'plan' stage.

Simplified examples of the four models are shown below.

Example 1: The Sequential Model

Key Purpose: Organise administrative services

Primary functions:

- A Agree specifications for administrative services
- B Design administrative services to specifications
- C Implement administrative services

Example 2: The Cyclical Model

Key Purpose: Plan and provide personal training services to clients

Primary functions:

- A Plan personal training services with clients
- B Deliver personal training services to clients
- C Evaluate and improve personal training services with clients

Example 3: The Process Model

Key Purpose: Join metal surfaces

Primary functions:

- A Join metal surfaces by welding
- B Join metal surfaces by brazing
- C Join surfaces by soldering
- D Join metal surfaces by riveting

Example 4: The Product Model

Key Purpose: Prepare and cook food

Primary functions:

- A Prepare and cook meat
- B Prepare and cook fish
- C Prepare and cook vegetables
- D Prepare and cook grains

Deciding on which model to adopt for arriving at functional statements may depend on how the industry or occupation traditionally organises itself. For example, in many industries the 'plan', 'do', 'review' cycle is very well established as part of a quality approach. Employers in those industries will probably expect to see that model reflected in any functional analysis.

In other industries, some people may only carry out certain processes, for example they solder but don't weld so it makes sense to break down the primary functions in that way. In other sectors some people may only work with certain products or materials, for example they service cars but not motorcycles, trucks but not buses. Each of these will have an impact on how the primary and the secondary functions are identified. It's helpful if they 'chime' with the sector and build on how people usually see it.

Much of this information will come from employer representatives (see the later section on Who Should Be Involved?) Some may already be obvious from the work that's already been done on sector analysis.

However, it is important to remember that whatever model (or variation of a model) is adopted, it must follow the logic of functional analysis 'What Needs to Happen to Achieve the Key Purpose?' Developers should not blindly follow what industry tells them. The analysis needs to make sense to the industry, but it needs to make logical sense as well.

2.7 How many secondary functions should there be?

This is a difficult question to answer because it depends on the scope of the functional analysis. If the analysis is only looking at a relatively small occupational area, two or three secondary (sub-factions) functions are common. If the analysis is looking at a whole sector's footprint, there may be anything up to 10 or more secondary functions. In the case of a large functional analysis developers may introduce further layers of sub-functions over several levels of analysis before arriving at possible NOS.

The terminology varies for each level of analysis as you go down the level of detail: 'Key Areas', 'Key Roles', "Areas of Competence", Primary Functions" and "Secondary" or "Sub-functions" (or what we have also called second, third (etc) level functions). Using the word 'role', however, can be confusing because someone might think it means an individual's role, when this may not be the case. Sub-function is a less ambiguous term.

So, to recap, if sub-functions are required, they should be developed by using the same question, in this case: 'What needs to happen to achieve each secondary function?'

As we have seen, the number of levels needed to arrive at functional statements that permit the development or use of NOS also varies. In relatively contained areas of activity this may only involve two or three levels of disaggregation. In others, involving a complex set of functions the process may require four or even five levels of detail.

In some cases, where a primary function has been identified relating to management and leadership for example, it may be possible to identify the relevant generic NOS quite early in the development of the functional analysis. Where functions are exclusive to a sector it may take longer to get to a point of judgement about which NOS are needed. This is particularly so where functions involve capturing the value base of a sector which has to be translated into specific practice. The stakeholder engagement function in housing on page 25 is an illustration of how this needs to be teased out fully.

The golden rule is to avoid rushing too quickly into identifying NOS you think might fit until you have explored the function fully by means of analysis. To do so is to try and shoe horn functions into ready-made NOS which may not best reflect the needs of the sector. It takes as many levels of analysis as it needs to take to “capture” the unique functions being performed.

2.8 A broad concept of occupational competence

NOS, and the functional analysis process that leads to NOS, are closely linked to the concept of **occupational competence**. Employers are looking for competent employees, and NOS should provide a description of what that competence is. In analysing an occupational area we are really finding out and making public what it means to be competent in a job or profession.

However, we need to bear in mind that competence is a broad concept that includes several different ‘dimensions’. When carrying out functional analysis, we need to look for the following:

- Technical requirements – these include the occupational skills and knowledge such as bricklaying, cleaning, developing organisational strategy, giving a presentation
- Requirements to do with managing the work process – these include things such as identifying resource needs, planning work, monitoring quality, solving problems and suggesting improvements
- Requirements to do with working relationships – for example, relationships with customers, team members, colleagues
- Requirements to do with managing the work environment – this could include things such as ethical considerations – particularly important in the case of professional occupations but most importantly includes health and safety

Most employers will value employees who are broadly competent in this way. Most do not want employees who only meet the technical requirements. When analysing an area of work, the developers should try to ensure that, if any of the above are relevant, they should be covered in some way.

In some sectors, occupational competence is dependent on **behaviours**. Behaviours are the individual’s response to particular stimuli or inputs. Many see competence as being the result of a combination of knowledge, skill and behaviour.

As a result, for some sectors, understanding the behaviours will have an impact on the way in which the final NOS are drafted.

2.9 *Functional Analysis is an iterative process*

It is important to recognise that functional analysis is not a one-off process – and no-one gets it right the first time. Each time a new level of analysis is reached, usually something new comes up that causes the developers to go back and adjust the previous level. As the next level of analysis is reached, those who are developing the functional analysis should go back and make sure that the wording of the previous level is consistent. Sometimes this involves a rewording (as in the case of the Key Purpose in our example). Sometimes it may mean new secondary functions are introduced. There is nothing wrong with this. It is part of the development process. In fact it should be encouraged as a way of making sure the whole model adds up and makes sense.

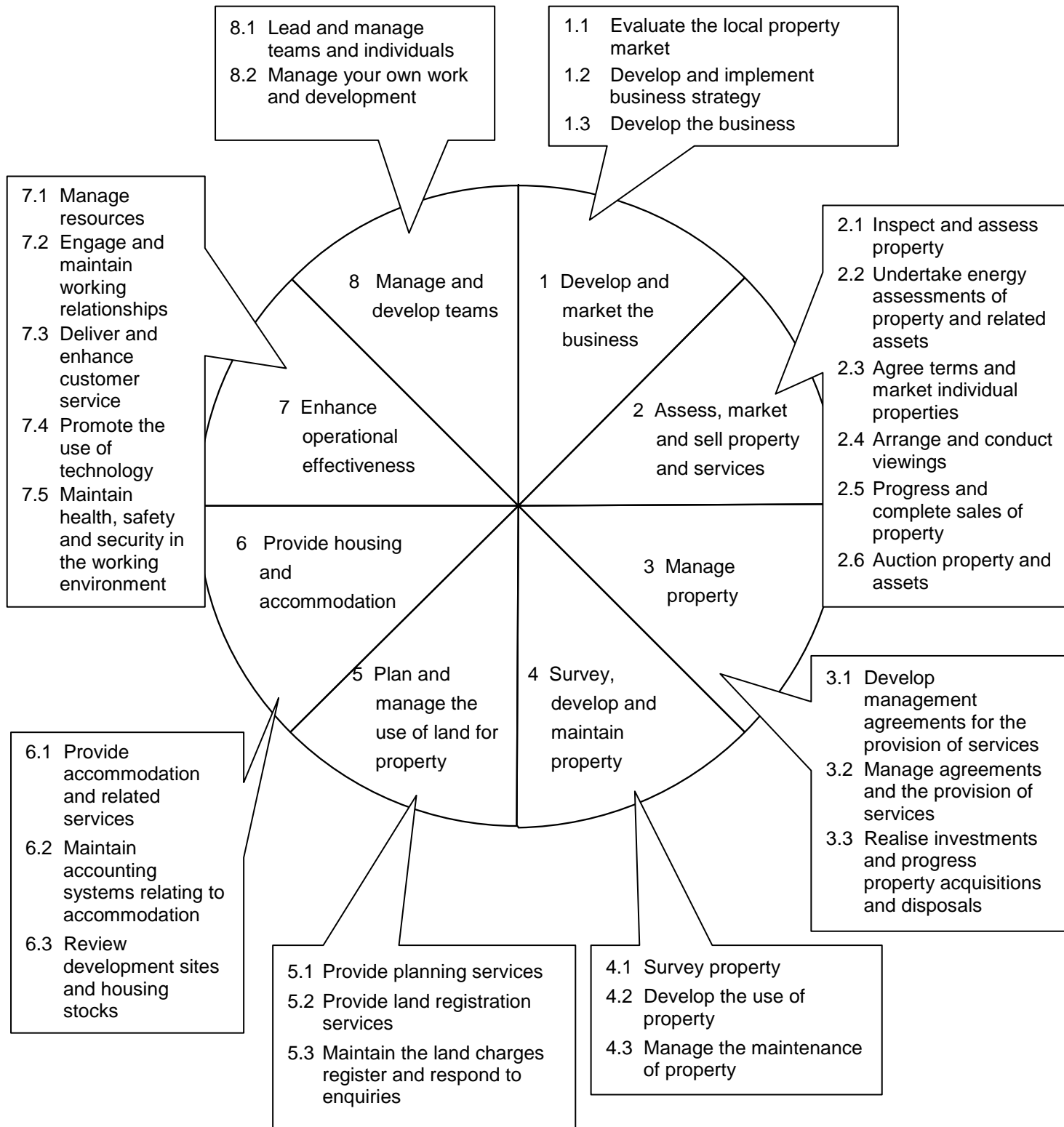
2.10 *How do we present Functional Analyses?*

There are no hard and fast rules about how to present functional analyses. Some are shown as a diagram with boxes and lines as in the housing example. This is often helpful because people like a graphical representation – a ‘picture’ of industry functions. However, particularly in large functional analyses – those that cover wide-ranging and complex occupations or even whole sectors – this can be technically difficult. There are also preferred visual models which break from the box and line approach. So, for example the final version of the housing map used as an example at the beginning of this section looks very different.

You have already seen several examples of how functional analyses can look. In the following pages there are some more examples of the different ways in which the functional analyses can be presented:

Residential Property

Key Purpose Statement: Provide services to acquire, maintain, and manage and to sell commercial and residential property and related assets and facilities, balancing the needs of clients, users and the community.





Key Purpose Statement for the Housing Sector:

Provide quality housing, services and support to meet the current and future needs of customers and communities

Key Functional Area A	Key Functional Area B	Key Functional Area C	Key Functional Area D	Key Functional Area E	Key Functional Area F
Manage the provision of housing, services and support	Develop and evaluate strategies, policies and plans to maintain and improve the provision of housing, services and support	Develop, maintain and improve new and existing accommodation and facilities	Provide accommodation and manage housing stock and tenancies	Provide advice, specialist support and advocacy to meet the needs and aspirations of customers	Strengthen local community development and involvement to meet the needs and aspirations of customers and communities

2.11 Who should be involved in Functional Analysis?

Clearly there needs to be someone to facilitate and record the process. That person does not have to be an expert in the area of work being analysed (sometimes it helps if they are not: someone with little knowledge is less likely to take things for granted and more likely to ask searching questions to bring out more clarity). However, the facilitator does need to understand the principles of Functional Analysis, as explained above. Functional Analysis is usually developed using groups of people, particularly employers, familiar with the industry. As a result there also needs to be a good facilitator, in particular with the ability to bring people to a consensus while still sticking to the principles, who may or may not be the same person as the one recording the functional analysis.

Since the Functional Analysis must reflect what employers expect from employees, employer representatives should make up the majority of those involved. These representatives may be managers in the areas being analysed, but if they represent a small company they might actually be the overall employer.

Other people who are valuable in Functional Analysis are representatives of the people who actually do the jobs and professional body or trade body representatives. In some sectors where there is significant regulation, it will be important to involve representatives of the regulatory body. Training providers with a good knowledge of the industry can be helpful at this stage, proving they look at the analysis from the point of view of what employers expect, not what training is required. As far as possible, the group involved in developing the Functional Analysis should be representative of the area of work as whole.

Much of the information needed to decide whether or not a group is representative should flow from the Sector Analysis described in Section 1.

In order to be assured that the Functional Analysis does represent a consensus in the industry, wider consultation may be conducted through web-based media, email or focus groups. Samples for these consultations should also try to be representative.

Finally, but of vital importance, there must be employer representation from all four home nations as functional analysis should also take geography into account. Some employers in certain sectors may display regional variations in the skills required to perform a function. In Wales, for example, we would expect functional analysis to address the need for the use of the Welsh language within specific occupations in areas such as customer contact. The way in which this is expressed in the final NOS must, however, be inclusive, to ensure that others outside Wales can achieve the required standard,

3. Identifying and Using Existing NOS

3.1 *Populating the Functional Analysis*

The Functional Analysis gives us a framework for the sector or occupation – we now know what employers expect people to be able to do. The next stage involves providing NOS that set an appropriate standard for staff members when they are doing these things and that also include the knowledge and understanding that people need.

This will involve either:

1. Finding existing NOS that are acceptable to the industry
2. Developing new NOS to meet these requirements, if no existing NOS are acceptable
3. A combination of (1) and (2)

This *Section* covers finding and testing existing NOS and, where necessary, making minor amendments ('tailoring'). *Section 4* covers developing new NOS.

3.2 *Finding existing NOS*

There are currently about 20,000 NOS available in the UK which can be found on the NOS Database – www.ukstandards.org.uk.

Developing NOS 'from scratch' takes a lot of time and effort by SSCs and by industry, so it makes sense not to 'reinvent the wheel' if it isn't necessary.

Another good reason for using an existing NOS – where it is appropriate – is that it helps people to 'carry' or transfer the competence they have shown from one organisation or sector to another. If, for example, an organisation or sector feels that a particular NOS in Customer Service is important, and someone has already demonstrated that they meet that standard – either through a qualification or by being appraised at work – the person can transfer that achievement to the new sector or organisation. They shouldn't need to be assessed or appraised again. This can also be very helpful for recruitment and selection of staff. If an employer can see that a person already meets the standard, it makes selection easier.

Before proceeding to develop new NOS, standards-setting organisations should look for appropriate NOS that already exist.

Bringing existing NOS into your own suite is known as 'importation'. We refer to these NOS as 'imported NOS'.

There are basically three types of existing NOS that might be valuable to your own NOS suite.

These are:

- Generic' NOS produced for all sectors
- Potentially generic NOS produced in individual sectors
- Sector specific NOS that could be used elsewhere

NB Imported NOS do not have to have the same titles as the 'Possible NOS' that were identified in the Functional Analysis, but they do need to cover the same function to the satisfaction of your sector or occupation. This is explored in greater detail in later Sections.

3.3 'Generic' NOS produced for all sectors

When looking for existing NOS that may be appropriate to an area of work, the obvious place to start is with those functions that are common to a number of sectors. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, 'pan-sector' standards-setting organisations have developed NOS which cover functions that occur in most, if not all, industries, such as:

- Business and Administration
- Customer Service
- Management and Leadership

There are also other organisations that have produced generic NOS that might be appropriate in many sectors. These are in the following areas:

- Accountancy
- Advice, Guidance and Counselling
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Enterprise
- Governance
- Health and Safety
- Information Technology
- Languages
- Learning and Development
- Marketing and Sales
- Personnel
- Purchasing and Supply
- Volunteering

The advantage of using the NOS listed above is that they have been written with all sectors in mind and may be a good fit for any occupational area. Also, since these organisations are the experts in their specialist field, their NOS should reflect best practice across the board.

When it comes to some functions such as Management and Leadership or Customer Service, there is a strong and well-established view that standards should be the same in all sectors and that adaptation to meet specific sector needs should not be necessary. Certainly many sectors have adopted generic Management and Leadership and Customer Service NOS with little or no change.

3.4 Potentially generic NOS produced in individual sectors

There are also some generic functions for which no one standards-setting organisation exists. Examples of these include functions such as Team Work, Continuing Professional Development and Health and Safety. Because of this gap, many sectors have developed NOS to cover functions like these.

One potential disadvantage of using these NOS is that they may not have been written in a way that will suit all sectors and therefore present problems when it comes to importation.

3.5 Sector-specific NOS that could be used elsewhere

In addition to these, many Sector Skills Councils also produce some NOS that could be useful in other sectors. Cleaning is good example of this. Cleaning of rooms, offices and other work or public areas is a function that takes place in many sectors. However, responsibility for developing NOS for Cleaning rests with the SSC, Asset Skills. They have a suite of four generic NOS to cover cleaning. They also have a number of NOS suites for specialist cleaning functions.

Retail is another example. Displaying and selling products to the public is a function that takes place in organisations in many sectors, for example hotels, health clubs and airports. Skillsmart Retail is responsible for these NOS and many will be appropriate to sectors outside of the traditional retail sector.

3.6 Finding existing generic NOS

The first stage in this process is to identify NOS that may be relevant. This can be done through the NOS Database.

In the case of the Marketing and Sales, for example, there are four suites of NOS listed:

- Marketing
- Marketing and Sales for Non-Specialists
- Sales
- Social Marketing

In order to understand more about what each one of these suites is about, you will need to look at the NOS in more detail. If you are looking for a NOS that covers marketing in a non-marketing sector, the most likely ones will be in the 'Marketing and Sales for Non-Specialists' suite. Looking at the NOS Titles in this list should point in the right direction. It will be clear from the Functional Analysis what function you

are looking to cover. Clicking on any one of the NOS Titles will then provide more information through an Overview of the NOS content.

For example, if you are looking for a NOS on selling, this may be appropriate:

'16 Sell products and services to customers'

By bringing up the Overview we can see:

“This unit is about the activities involved within the sales cycle in matching products/services to customers’ needs. It focuses upon face to face selling activity, and also applies to telephone contact. It includes generating sales leads, identifying customers’ buying needs, promoting the features and benefits of relevant products/services, addressing queries/ objections and closing sales with mutually beneficial terms and conditions.”

If you are not a specialist in the occupational area for which NOS are being developed, this may be sufficient to identify this NOS as being suitable for further scrutiny. The people you need to assist you in the process of deciding whether or not it is a good fit are industry experts – employers, managers, people who do the job you are developing NOS for.

3.7 Finding NOS written for specific sectors

If you are looking for sector units that may cover one of your possible NOS functions, it is helpful to know which organisations are responsible for which occupations. A list of current SSCs and standards setting organisations can be found at:

<http://www.ukstandards.co.uk/contact/Pages/contactList.aspx>

3.8 Checking existing NOS for fit in your sector

Having identified one or more NOS that might be appropriate to import, you will need to evaluate whether or not they meet the requirements of your sector. This will need detailed scrutiny of the NOS content and is best done with the support of employers from the industry.

There are at least four possible outcomes to this process:

1. The existing NOS is appropriate as it stands and can be imported without amendment
2. The existing NOS is appropriate if certain terms can be explained in a way that is acceptable to the sector into which it is being imported
3. The existing NOS is almost appropriate but needs some minor changes to make it acceptable; this known as ‘tailoring’ and is covered in *Section 3.14*
4. The existing NOS is partly appropriate but needs some significant changes; this will result in a new NOS and is covered in *Section 3.14*

Every NOS has four Mandatory Components that need to be checked when you are considering NOS for importation. These are:

- NOS Title

- Overview
- Performance Criteria
- Knowledge and Understanding

Sections 3.9 – 3.11 look at these components in more detail.

Some NOS have other components. *Section 4.11* looks at these in some detail.

3.9 Checking the NOS Title

The first component of the NOS to look at is the Title. The Title is important because that is the first thing users – employers and staff – will see. If there is anything in the Title that seems significantly inappropriate in their eyes, they may reject the NOS. This can happen even when the NOS content seems completely appropriate.

In the case of NOS developed for a sector, this may be obvious. For example, you may be looking for a NOS that covers working relationships. A search on the NOS Directory finds one called:

‘FCC03: Develop productive working relationships in a financial services environment’

In fact when you look at the content of the NOS, it looks entirely appropriate to many other sectors outside of Financial Services. However, your industry employers are likely to reject it simply on the grounds of the Title. People in their industry simply won’t identify with it. The chances are you will have to look again, and if nothing else is acceptable, you may have to develop a new one specifically for your sector. If you change the Title of a NOS, this automatically becomes a new NOS, even if you decide the main content of the NOS is acceptable.

There are some NOS Title issues that are more subtle than this one. Let’s go back to the Marketing NOS (*Section 3.6*) that we thought might be appropriate to use in another sector. The Title is: ‘16 Sell products and services to customers’

Once you take this NOS to your employers, they may raise at least two objections. Firstly, they might say ‘We only sell services. We don’t sell products’. Secondly, they might say ‘We don’t have customers. We have clients’.

One or both of these issues could cause them to reject the NOS. On the other hand they could see it as a matter of interpretation.

‘Products’, for example, no longer means simply solid objects made in a factory or workshop. Building Societies have financial products. A health club might have a membership package which they call a ‘product’. Your industry experts, therefore, might be prepared to agree that ‘products’ is acceptable in the Title.

Much the same could be said of the word ‘customer’. The word is being increasingly used in any situation where there is payment – even indirect payment – for a service (or even product!). On the railways and in the air, people who used to be ‘passengers’ are now ‘customers’. Even some local councils refer to their Council Tax payers as ‘customers’ because they are seen to be paying for a service, albeit indirectly. The rise of the customer care/customer service culture has also given the

word a wider acceptance. In fact some industries find the word helpful because it reminds staff that someone is paying and they have a right to a reasonable level of service in return. So you may find that 'customer' is acceptable, after some discussion and debate.

However, there are some sectors where the word 'client' is the only one that will be accepted, possibly because it suggests a more professional relationship which is governed by ethical considerations. Lawyers and psychologists, for example, will continue to have 'clients' and not 'customers' for some time to come.

The problem with NOS Titles is that they cannot be changed for importation. If you change the Title, it becomes a new NOS on the system. Therefore it is worthwhile exploring NOS Title interpretation with industry experts before making any changes.

3.10 Checking the Overview

Each NOS must have an Overview section. It supplements the NOS Title by providing a 'pen picture' of what the NOS is all about: its purpose, what it covers and sometimes explains some of the terminology used in the main body of the NOS. When NOS are imported, this section can be changed without creating a new one. Therefore, anything contained in the Overview section should not be seen as a barrier to importation. In fact, rewriting this section is an opportunity for the 'importing' sector to make the NOS more acceptable by putting it in the sector context, for example by explaining terms like 'customer' and 'product'.

This is an aspect of 'tailoring' which is covered more fully in 3.14.

3.11 Checking Performance Criteria

Every NOS must have Performance Criteria. Performance Criteria provide a way of deciding whether or not a staff member is doing what the NOS Title says to a standard that employers expect.

It's important to remember that people using a NOS must consistently demonstrate the Performance Criteria in practice in their workplace. In other words, they have to show they can do it. If you are importing a NOS, you need to be sure people in your sector will be able to demonstrate the Performance Criteria without significantly changing the way they work.

As in the case of the NOS Title, it is very important to consider the terminology used. It is very likely, for example, that similar issues will arise with terms like 'customer' and 'products'. But as we saw with the NOS Title, these can usually be dealt through explanations and examples. In fact, if the industry feels strongly about certain terms, it is possible to make minor changes to the wording of Performance Criteria, provided these changes do not alter the intended meaning of the NOS or alter the standard of performance required. It should be possible, for example, to change 'customers' to 'clients' in a Performance Criterion. The rules covering this are explored in *Section 3.14*.

In other cases you may find some terminology that causes misunderstanding. This is mainly because a term used in one sector can easily mean something else in

another. One example is the word 'coaching'. In the context of Management or Lifelong Learning, 'coaching' usually refers to the process of working with an individual to review and improve aspects of their work. However, in the Sport and Recreation sector, the word 'coaching' specifically refers to improving an athlete's performance in a particular sport. The two meanings of the word are obviously linked, but Performance Criteria developed for workplace coaching would not be acceptable to major employers in the Sport sector. Much the same could be said of 'training'. In one context it means teaching someone to do something. In another, it may involve a five mile run! In Finance, 'reconciliation' is to do with balancing the books. In Advice, Guidance and Counselling it's about re-establishing a personal or family relationship.

These are extreme examples, but language is full of potential pitfalls. When looking at Performance Criteria, you should be confident that your industry experts are interpreting different words in the same way, and that this interpretation meets your sector's needs.

The most important thing to look at in the Performance Criteria section is whether or not the standard of performance is reasonable for your sector. In doing this, you need to consider:

1. Do the Performance Criteria require **more** than people in your sector can reasonably achieve?
2. Do the Performance Criteria require **less** than people in your sector are expected to achieve?

The example on the following page is taken from the suite of generic Management and Leadership NOS.

D5. Allocate and check work in your team

Performance Criteria

You must be able to do the following:

1. Confirm the work required of the team with your manager and seek clarification, where necessary, on any outstanding points and issues.
2. Plan how the team will undertake its work, identifying any priorities or critical activities and making best use of the available resources.
3. Allocate work to team members on a fair basis taking account of their skills, knowledge and understanding, experience and workloads and the opportunity for development.
4. Brief team members on the work they have been allocated and the standard or level of expected performance.
5. Encourage team members to ask questions, make suggestions and seek clarification in relation to the work they have been allocated.
6. Check the progress and quality of the work of team members on a regular and fair basis against the standard or level of expected performance and provide prompt and constructive feedback.
7. Support team members in identifying and dealing with problems and unforeseen events.
8. Motivate team members to complete the work they have been allocated and provide, where requested and where possible, any additional support and/or resources to help completion.
9. Monitor the team for conflict, identifying the cause(s) when it occurs and dealing with it promptly and effectively.
10. Identify unacceptable or poor performance, discuss the cause(s) and agree ways of improving performance with team members.
11. Recognise successful completion of significant pieces of work or work activities by team members and the overall team and advise your manager.
12. Use information collected on the performance of team members in any formal appraisal of performance.

This NOS is aimed at 'junior' managers with limited responsibilities. Let's imagine you have identified this NOS as being potentially applicable to team leaders in your sector who oversee the work of small groups of manual workers. When your employers look at the NOS, they identify three possible problems.

Firstly, Performance Criterion (2) seems inappropriate to their team leaders. They say that the team leaders they have in mind don't plan the work of their team. This is done by a manager at a higher level.

Secondly, their team leaders wouldn't be expected to achieve the whole of Performance Criterion (10). They might '**identify** unacceptable or poor performance', but it wouldn't be their job to 'discuss causes and agree ways of improving performance'. Again, this would be for a manager at a higher level.

Thirdly Performance Criterion (12) also creates some difficulties. Few of their team leaders would be involved in formal appraisal sessions. This is usually done by HR managers.

The problem with Performance Criterion (12) could possibly be dealt through a slightly different interpretation. The team leader could use information on the performance of team members in any formal appraisals, not necessarily by taking part in appraisal sessions themselves but by passing information on to HR. Employers in your sector may be happy to accept this interpretation.

Performance Criteria (2) and (10) are different. The problems here cannot be dealt with through interpretation. There are three possible solutions:

1. Persuade your employers that (2) and (10) are good practice in Management at this level and they should change how their team leaders operate to bring them up to modern standards.
2. Look for another generic NOS, possibly at a different level, which may not include these Performance Criteria.
3. Remove or significantly reword Performance Criteria (2) and (10) – for example by keeping the first part of (10) but removing the rest.

The first solution is probably not going to work. The philosophy of NOS is that they should reflect industry's needs, not vice versa. Some employers might be persuaded, but it's unlikely that whole organisations will change their work practices to accommodate the requirements of a NOS.

The second proposed solution should be the next thing to try. Wherever possible we should try to use existing NOS. However, there is no generic Management and Leadership NOS at a different level without these Performance Criteria, so this will not work.

Option (3) is now probably the only way to go. However, once you remove Performance Criteria or significant parts of Performance Criteria, you are substantially altering the NOS and changing its demand – in other words someone will now have to demonstrate less than the original NOS requires. If you do this, it will no longer be the same generic Management and Leadership NOS. You are allowed to remove the Performance Criteria, but you will have to give the NOS a new name and it will no longer be seen as equivalent. The NOS will become your own and it will no longer be generic.

Much the same applies where an industry identifies that a potential 'import' does not describe a high enough standard. If there is no other, higher level, NOS available, you can add more Performance Criteria but if you do, you are creating a new NOS. The 'demand' becomes greater.

3.12 Checking Knowledge and Understanding

Each NOS must also have a section for Knowledge and Understanding. This covers the Knowledge and Understanding a staff member needs to achieve the standard. Unlike the Performance Criteria, they don't have to demonstrate the Knowledge and

Understanding statements, but they do have to show they have it usually through questions and answers, reflective accounts or professional discussions.

Most of the potential problems that can occur with Performance Criteria also apply to the Knowledge and Understanding. Terminology may need some explanation, and this can be overcome. Like the Performance Criteria, you can make minor changes to wording to make the NOS more appropriate to your sector. For example, a generic NOS might ask people to show they have Knowledge and Understanding of:

- 'the legal requirements relevant to your area of work'

Industry experts may decide they want to 'unpack' this further and spell out what they feel is important to their industry, therefore they may wish to reword this to:

- 'the legal requirements that are relevant to your work covering: health and safety, equal opportunities, freedom of information and data protection'

However, there may be some Knowledge and Understanding statements that your employers feel are not necessary for their people. This may not be as serious as the potential problems we saw with Performance Criteria. In the case of Performance Criteria, staff must show that they have actually done those things. As we saw with the Management and Leadership example above, this could actually change the way organisations work, and they may not wish to.

However, in the case of Knowledge and Understanding, they only have to show that they know and understand what is covered. This does not affect the way work is organised and carried out. Your employers may decide there is 'no harm' in people knowing those things. However, they may equally decide that the NOS will lose credibility if too much unnecessary Knowledge and Understanding is included. Or they may feel that there is an unrealistic amount of training and assessment required to get people to that standard of Knowledge and Understanding.

For both reasons a potential 'import' NOS may be rejected because Knowledge and Understanding is seen as being too demanding. The Knowledge and Understanding statements which are seen as unnecessary can be removed or substantially edited but if they are, once again you are creating a new NOS.

The same would apply if you decide that the Knowledge and Understanding needs to be increased. This would increase the level of demand and create a new NOS.

3.13 Checking other NOS components

So far we have looked at the mandatory NOS components that need to be checked when NOS need to be imported:

- NOS Title
- Overview
- Performance Criteria
- Knowledge and Understanding

All NOS must contain these components.

Some NOS contain additional components, such as Scope/Range, Values, Behaviours, Skills, glossary etc. The same principles apply to these as to Performance Criteria and Knowledge and Understanding and you should check that these are all acceptable to employers in your sector. If they are, you may import the NOS; if not, you may amend these components, with the permission of the originating SSC or standards-setting body, in your 'tailored' version of the NOS.

3.14 Rules for 'tailoring' imported NOS

Making minor changes to NOS is known as 'tailoring'. The individual NOS Title remains the same and the NOS is accepted as being equivalent, but there are some clear rules that need to be followed:

1. You can put the content of imported NOS into a layout and format that is used in your sector. In doing so, you should import the total NOS content – taking account of the other rules listed below.
2. You can change the overview section of the NOS, if this helps to put the NOS into the context of your sector.
3. You can 'unpack' generic statements to make them clearer for the sector. For example, if an imported NOS refers to 'relevant legal requirements' in the Knowledge and Understanding, you can expand this statement to highlight the legislation that is most relevant to your sector – for example 'legislation covering health and safety, anti-discrimination, data protection and freedom of information'
4. You can change certain terms in the Performance Criteria and Knowledge and Understanding sections to make them more acceptable to your sector. For example, 'customers' can be changed to 'clients', but only in these sections (and the Overview), not in the NOS Title. Change the NOS Title and you create a new NOS.
5. Any changes that you make should not alter the demand of the NOS. The Management and Leadership example we looked at in 3.11 and 3.12 probably needed several Performance Criteria removing and possibly Knowledge and Understanding statements as well. This is changing the 'demand' of the NOS and is not tailoring.
6. You can only tailor an original NOS, not one that has already been tailored by your own or another organisation.
7. You must obtain permission from the originating SSC or standards-setting organisation to tailor the NOS and their agreement in writing that the tailoring has not changed the demands of the NOS.

3.15 Rules for formally importing NOS

At this stage you may have identified some existing NOS you want to import unchanged and some you wish to tailor.

When you want to import an existing NOS, either unchanged or with minor 'tailoring', there are certain procedures you need to follow. You will need to:

1. Formally contact the originating SSC or standards-setting organisation that originally developed the NOS to inform them that you intend to import it. It is helpful to do this at a fairly early stage, since later you will need their permission to 'import' the NOS. They can verify that the version you intend to use is the most up-to-date one. They can also tell you if they intend to revise the NOS now or in the near future.
2. Provide the originating SSC or standards-setting organisation with information about how you intend to use the NOS and for which occupations. They may be able to advise you on its appropriateness from their point of view. It will also be helpful for them to know who is using their NOS when it comes to updating them in the future.
3. Give the originating SSC or standards-setting organisation full information about any 'tailoring' you have made to the NOS. They will need to approve these changes if the NOS is going to be recognised as the same standard as the original.
4. Obtain written permission for importation or tailoring from the originating SSC or standards-setting organisation.
5. Respond to any future consultation on the imported NOS. NOS are updated as and when necessary. If the originating SSC or standards-setting organisation is consulting on new versions you can contribute to this consultation to make sure future versions also meet the needs of your sector.
6. When you publish the imported or tailored NOS as part of your own suite, always reference the original source in the NOS. This should include the NOS Title and the version number or date the imported NOS was approved and the organisation that originally developed it.

3.16 'Signposting' to NOS in other sectors

Many standard setting organisations, rather than bringing in NOS from other sectors are now 'signposting' to them. This means that the same process for checking the relevance of the NOS is adopted as for generic or other sector specific NOS (see sections 3.3-3.5), but they are not incorporated into the suite of NOS as such. The advantage is that a suite of NOS will concentrate on the key functions that differentiate the industry from others, but at the same time recognise the transferable competence demonstrated by employees in the industry. A good example of this is the recently revised Libraries, Archives, Records and Information Services

Management suite, where the previous almost 100 NOS were distilled to less than 20 NOS.

4. Specification of National Occupational Standards – developing original NOS

4.1 *Filling the gaps in the Functional Analysis*

Section 2 explored how to carry out a Functional Analysis of a sector or occupation. *Section 3* looked at how to identify, 'import' and, if necessary, 'tailor' existing NOS to populate part of the Functional Analysis. Probably this process will not cover all the Possible NOS Titles identified during analysis. Therefore, it will be necessary to develop new NOS 'from scratch'. This *Section* covers what a NOS should contain and how NOS should be written.

4.2 *Mandatory NOS components*

Every NOS must have the following:

1. Unique Reference Number
2. Title
3. Overview
4. Performance Criteria
5. Knowledge and Understanding
6. Technical Data

Each of these is explained in the *subsections 4.6* onwards.

4.3 *Optional NOS components*

Some SSCs and other standards-setting organisations may add some other components which are considered important by employers in their sector. These will vary according to sector, but may include:

1. Elements
2. Scope/Range
3. Behaviours
4. Values
5. Skills
6. Glossary
7. Links to Other NOS
8. External Links

Some of these, mainly Elements, Scope/Range and Behaviours, form part of the performance standard. Others, such as the Glossary, are there to provide additional information to help the user to make better use of the NOS.

Each of these is also explained later in this *Section*.

4.4 The language of NOS

In *Section 2*, we emphasised the importance of language when creating a Functional Analysis. Language is even more important when writing NOS. The Functional Analysis is just a development tool. The NOS are the real products that employers and staff will use.

When writing NOS it is important to remember that the final product must be readable and unambiguous. We want the users – employers, practitioners, awarding organisations, or training providers – to understand the NOS. If they can't understand them they are unlikely to make much use of them.

At every stage of NOS development, it is important to check with employers that the language is clear, appropriate and, as far as possible, unambiguous. This doesn't mean 'dumbing down', but it does mean keeping your audience in mind and choosing words and sentence construction that they will find easy to follow.

The Oxford Dictionary defines plain English as:

'The writing and setting out of essential information in a way that gives a co-operative, motivated person a good chance of understanding the document at first reading, and in the same sense that the writer meant it to be understood.'

It offers the following tips which apply just as well to NOS writing:⁵

- Over the whole document, make the average sentence length 15 – 20 words.
In other words try to avoid long sentences and especially sentences with several clauses (parts).
- Use words your readers are likely to understand.
Bear in mind the likely reading ability of your readers. 'Make clear' might be preferable to 'clarify'. However, it's okay to use technical language – for example 'extrusion' – that someone in the occupation should know and understand.
- Use only as many words as you really need.
Look at each word and consider if it is absolutely necessary. Does each word add valuable meaning?
- Use the active voice unless there's a good reason for using the passive.
It's better to say, for example, 'prepare the ingredients according to the recipe' rather than 'the ingredients are prepared according to the recipe'. Readers tend to find the passive voice more difficult to follow than the active.
- Reduce cross references to a minimum.
The reader shouldn't have to keep flicking from one part of the NOS to another in order to follow the meaning

⁵ www.askoxford.com/betterwriting/plainenglish/?view=uk

- Use vertical lists to break up complicated text.
This particularly applies to long lists. It's better to say:
'ensure the following meet health and safety requirements:

- equipment
- materials
- working environment
- working methods'

than: 'ensure equipment, materials, working environment and working methods meet health and safety requirements'.

Bullet points are allowed and can be very helpful.

In addition to these general tips on plain English, for NOS we would also add:

- Be consistent in the words you use.

Don't worry about using the same word over again in NOS. When we are taught English composition in school, teachers often encourage us to use several words with the same meaning (synonyms) to make the text more interesting. They tell us not to repeat the same word. That's fine for writing essays or letters, but not NOS. Someone coming into a hotel lobby could be called a 'guest', 'customer' or 'visitor'. Decide which word your industry prefers and then stick to it. If you use 'guest' in one place, 'customer' in another and 'visitor' in yet another, the reader might assume you are talking about three different people when in fact you mean one. Synonyms can lead to confusion.

- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.

It's tempting to use short forms of words or expressions. However, you can't assume every reader will understand them or understand them in the same way. 'BOGOF' in the Retail industry is a quick way of saying 'Buy one, get one free'. You might be wiser to use for 'special offers' in a NOS!

- Don't refer to specific legislation or regulations

NOS have lifespan that might go beyond existing legislation and regulations. Legislation might change before the NOS is updated. It's better to refer to 'current legislation covering health and safety at work' rather than 'Health and Safety at Work Act 1974'. 'Current legislation covering data protection' is better than 'Data Protection Act 1998'.

- Address the person who is performing the function

NOS work better if they are written for the person who is carrying out the work. NOS use the word 'you' (second person singular in grammatical terms) quite a lot. The Performance Criteria all begin with a 'lead-in' statement that says 'You must be able to:'. The Knowledge and Understanding section begins with 'You must know and understand'. Using the second person singular ('you') makes the NOS more personal to the staff member and helps them to see how it applies to their own work rather than someone else's.

- Using everyday language is fine but sometimes we have to use general terms. Engineers, for example, use a number of tools to tighten a joint. They might use spanners, screwdrivers, Allen keys etc. You may feel you want to specify these in a NOS. However, you might not know what kind of joint it is. It would be better to say: 'Use tools appropriate to the type of joint' rather than 'Use a screwdriver'. This makes it too specific and excludes the use of the other types of tool.

4.5 Equality and diversity

NOS are public documents that define standards of performance. It is important that they meet all relevant legal requirements, in particular those that relate to Equality and Diversity. There should be nothing in the NOS that unfairly discriminates against possible users. Choice of language is therefore vital. Is it necessary, for example, to use terms such as 'see' or 'hear' if this might discriminate unnecessarily against someone who has sensory impairments?

Whatever the occupation is, don't make assumptions about the sex of the people who work in it. It is better to refer to 'fire fighters' and 'police officers' than 'firemen' and 'policemen'. Use the pronouns 'they' or 'she/he' instead of 'he'.

When in doubt, check the terminology that is acceptable to best practice in the sector. For example, many people prefer to be referred to as 'disabled' rather than 'people with disabilities'.

4.6 Unique Reference Number (URN)

Since each NOS is unique, it must have a Unique Reference Number which can identify it in the system. The reference number will consist of a three-letter code that identifies the standards setting organisation that produced the NOS and is responsible for maintaining it, and a combination of letters and numbers that shows where it fits into the standards setting organisation's own classification system.

An example of a unique reference would be MSC M&L F1.

In this case the letters 'MSC' identify the Management Standards Centre as the standards-setting organisation that produced the NOS. 'M&L' show that the NOS is part of the MSC's Management and Leadership suite. 'F1' is the code the MSC has given the NOS within its Management and Leadership suite. The way the standards setting organisation assigns its own code is a matter of choice. M&L F1 in this case shows that the NOS is the first one in Main Function F within the MSC's Functional Analysis for Management and Leadership (see *Section 2* for more information on Functional Analysis).

Other standards setting organisations may use different systems to code their NOS. However, no two NOS should have the same reference number, and it is the responsibility of the standards setting organisation to ensure its own system doesn't cause confusion.

4.7 NOS Title

The NOS Title should also follow certain guidelines.

Firstly, the Title should describe a work function. If you use the Functional Analysis method described in *Section 2*, this will happen naturally. The NOS Title should describe an activity in the workplace that leads to an outcome that is useful to the employer.

For example, a carpenter should be able to: 'Cut wood to specified lengths'. However, that is not a work function. It is of no value to the employer (unless the employer wants pile of wood). 'Fit work surfaces in a kitchen', on the other hand, is a work function with an outcome an employer would value. Cutting wood to the right length is an important skill that contributes to that outcome but it's not a function in itself. Since it isn't a work function, it shouldn't be a NOS Title.

Secondly, the NOS Title should be one sentence only. Remember that the NOS Titles will be read by employers and employees in the 'real world'. They will not want to read something that is long and complex. If you want to add other information to give a better understanding of what the NOS is about, you can do this in the Overview (*Subsection 4.7*).

Thirdly, the NOS Title should be an accurate description of the NOS content. An employer or staff member reading the Title should be able to get a pretty good idea what it covers. Using straightforward language is helpful but this doesn't mean you need to simplify the language to the extent that the average 'person on the street' can understand it. Remember you are writing for people who are already in the sector and the occupation, and they should be able to understand their own technical language. However, it should not be so technical that other employers cannot understand it, especially where the NOS may have relevance to other occupations or industries.

The following is a NOS title:

'Apply Intumescent Coatings'.

It is found in the NOS suite: Associated Industrial Services Occupations (Construction)

The average person probably has no idea what an intumescent coating is. However, someone working in that specialist branch of the Construction industry certainly should.

Since NOS are essentially about what we expect people to be able to do, each NOS title must contain an active verb (action word) and an object⁶. Here are some examples:

- Clean floors
- Rectify systems faults
- Manage projects
- Maintain effective working relationships

It may help to imagine that the NOS Title is preceded by an invisible statement that says 'This person is able to'. You can then see how each one of the Titles above flow naturally from that statement.

In some cases the noun and verb is enough. In other cases you may want to add a context or condition to the Title to make it more descriptive or precise.

'Load radioactive materials onto conveyances,' is an example (the underlining shows the context/condition). The NOS writers could have simply said 'Load radioactive materials'. However, this would not have told us so much about the context. The verb and noun alone would have left us guessing. Is it about loading radioactive materials into containers? Is it about loading them on to shelves in a storage area? Now we know.

Other examples of context or condition being added include:

- 'Originate ideas for the content and treatment of news stories'
- 'Care for a newly born baby when the mother is unable to'
- 'Apply taping and strapping following injury to limit specific movement in a sport/activity context'.

In some cases, it may be important to indicate in the Title that the person is not wholly responsible for the outcome. Using terms such as 'Contribute to...' or 'Assist in...' are perfectly acceptable and help the reader understand immediately from the NOS Title what the level of responsibility is.

4.8 Overview

The Overview section provides the reader with more information about the NOS. It does not form part of the standard. We do not use the Overview to assess or appraise a person's performance or knowledge. It simply provides an introduction. Overviews should be concise, consisting of no more than two or three paragraphs. The Overview should contain the following:

- a summary of what the NOS covers
- an indication as to which occupation the NOS might be appropriate.

⁶ For more information on language conventions and parts of speech, please see *Section 2*.

The following example is adapted from a Hospitality NOS:

'2R2/04 Deal with the arrival of customers'

Overview

This NOS is about dealing with the arrival of customers, processing their registration documents and promoting the products and services of the organisation.

This NOS is for staff who provide a reception service in a hotel.

The typical day-to-day activities you might carry out include:

- meeting and greeting guests
- processing customer details
- dealing with customer problems
- giving customers information about the services on offer.

The next Overview is taken adapted from a NOS from the Management and Leadership suite

'MLD14 Initiate and follow disciplinary procedures'

Overview

What is the NOS About?

This unit is about initiating and following your organisation's disciplinary procedure in response to misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of a member of your team.

All employing organisations are required to have disciplinary and grievance procedures. As a minimum, these must meet the requirements laid down in relevant employment legislation. However, many organisations have developed more detailed and extensive disciplinary procedures and associated rules to reflect their specific contexts and requirements.

This unit describes the minimum standard of performance expected of managers when they are implementing disciplinary procedures in line with legal and organisational requirements. To meet this standard, managers need both sound technical knowledge of the procedures and well-developed cognitive and interpersonal skills.

Who is the NOS For?

The unit is for line managers who have to deal with misconduct or unsatisfactory performance of members of their team. It is not designed for human resources specialists who are required to develop disciplinary procedures and provide specialist support to line managers who are implementing them.

In the case of this Overview, we can see not only who the NOS is for but also who it is **not** for, ie it is aimed at a general manager and not an HR specialist – separate NOS exist for them.

4.9 Performance Criteria

The NOS Title tells us what the person should be able to do, but how can we tell if they are doing it to a standard that employers expect? This is what the Performance Criteria are for. They set the standard of performance.

In crude terms, the Performance Criteria should give someone who knows about the occupation a way of deciding whether the person's performance is 'good enough' or 'not yet good enough'.

The following is an example of a set of Performance Criteria:

'2R2/04 Deal with the arrival of customers'

Performance Criteria

You must be able to:

1. Assist the customer to feel welcome in the hotel
2. Identify the customer's requirements
3. Ensure customer details are correct on the booking system
4. Offer alternatives for any services that are not available
5. Make sure the registration document is completed as required
6. Give accurate information to the customer about their room and its location
7. Promote the services and facilities of your organisation

We can develop Performance Criteria of this kind by continuing the Functional Analysis process (*Section 2*). When we know what the NOS Title is, we can ask: 'What needs to happen to achieve the NOS Title?' If we use the same logic, structure of statements (verb, noun and possibly context/condition) and discipline (is everything necessary?) Taken together, are the Performance Criteria sufficient to describe the standard? We will end up with statements that will allow someone to make a decision as to whether the receptionist is 'good enough' or 'not yet good enough'.

Each of the Performance Criteria 1-7 highlights an essential characteristic of the receptionist's performance. Each one points to an **outcome** that the receptionist must achieve when dealing with guests' arrival. Each of these outcomes is observable and measurable. Someone watching the receptionist at work would be able to see these outcomes and make a decision as whether or not the receptionist meets the standard:

- Does the customer feel welcome in the hotel as a result of meeting the receptionist?
- Do we have the correct details for the customer?
- Do we know what the customer's requirements are?
- Is the registration document completed correctly?

- etc.

All of these outcomes can easily be judged, especially by someone who is competent themselves in reception work.

The Performance Criteria should not be a list of tasks. It might be tempting to write something like:

1. Greet the customer
2. Smile and be polite and courteous
3. Ask them what they want
4. Ask them their name
5. Go to the appropriate screen on the booking system and look up their details
6. Read out the details to them and go through the booking information with them
7. Change entries on the booking system if necessary
8. If you do not have the type of room they want, offer them something else
9. Give them the registration document and point out the bits they need to fill in and sign
10. Read the registration document and check they have done it correctly
11. Find out if they want a paper or a wake-up call in the morning
12. Tell them about the facilities in the room
13. Tell them where the room is and how to get there
14. Tell them about the restaurant, bar and health club

In doing this, four things have happened:

1. We've doubled the number of Performance Criteria. By focusing on the essential outcomes, we kept the number to seven instead of 14. NOS should be concise.
2. We've now written an instruction set for the receptionist. It's not the job of the NOS to do that, that's the job of the manager or trainer.
3. We've made it much harder to judge the standard of performance. Okay, they have smiled and said 'hello'. Does that mean the customer feels welcome? Not necessarily, especially if they have been kept waiting for 10 minutes and no-one acknowledged them or apologised for the delay. 'Assist the customer to feel welcome in the hotel' covers all of those eventualities and gives us an outcome we can judge. In the same way they may have changed the entry on the booking system, but does that Performance Criterion draw out whether the entry is now accurate?

4. We've introduced a lot of detail that may not apply to different hotels. In some small establishments they may not have a computerised booking system. Not every hotel provides newspapers and wake-up calls.

The Performance Criteria are about what the staff member does, there should be nothing about what they know and understand. This is dealt with in the Knowledge and Understanding section of the NOS.

Two further points need to be noted.

Firstly, the focus on outcomes means the Performance Criteria do not prescribe **how** the function should be carried out. For example, Performance Criterion (1) could go into much more detail about how the receptionist should greet the customer and could include: tone of voice, using appropriate words, maintaining eye contact and welcoming body language, and much else besides. We don't need to do this for two reasons:

1. We are mainly interested in what people achieve, not how they go about it. There are many diverse ways of achieving outcomes and we don't want to write detailed instruction sets for robots. NOS are not for robots, they are for people, and people are individuals. It's helpful if we allow our staff some room for creativity in their work. A particular receptionist may have a unique way of helping guests to feel welcome. Would we want to say that he or she is not competent in their work simply because they don't follow a prescribed method?
2. NOS are national, not organisational. They must represent a consensus amongst employers and other industry experts. If we brought a group of hotel employers together, each one would agree that the receptionist needs to make the customer feel welcome, but if there were 10 employers in the group, there would probably be 10 different methods advocated. Achieving consensus would probably be impossible or take an unrealistic period of time to achieve.

Secondly, the Performance Criteria only focus on what is **essential** to meeting the standard. Again, this is mainly because the NOS are national. They must represent what most, if not all, employers will agree with. Usually this happens naturally through discussion and debate between stakeholders. It will also be confirmed by wider consultation within the industry.

The hotel receptionist example is relatively straightforward. The function is not complex and can probably be performed in a few minutes. Is it possible to write Performance Criteria for a more complex function which might be performed over a longer period?

The example below shows the Performance Criteria from the Management and Leadership NOS on disciplinary procedures.

MLD14 Initiate and follow disciplinary procedures

You must be able to:

1. Keep individuals fully informed about the standards of conduct and performance expected of them and your organisation's current procedure for dealing with misconduct or unsatisfactory performance.
2. Seek support from colleagues or human resources or legal specialists on any aspects of implementing disciplinary procedures about which you are unsure.
3. Carry out necessary investigations promptly to establish the facts relating to any misconduct or unsatisfactory performance.
4. Take preventative measures to resolve issues and deal with cases of minor misconduct or unsatisfactory performance informally, where you consider that an informal approach is likely to resolve the situation effectively.
5. Follow your organisation's formal disciplinary procedure in serious cases of misconduct or unsatisfactory performance.
6. Keep full and accurate records throughout the disciplinary process and store these confidentially as long as, but no longer as, necessary.

The Performance Criteria are longer and more complex, but this is appropriate to the level and complexity of the function. However, the same principles apply. Each Performance Criterion points to one or more tangible outcomes. Each of those outcomes could easily be assessed. Observation in this case would probably not be an appropriate way of measuring the manager against the Performance Criteria. However, there will be tangible evidence of what they have done, mainly through emails or other forms of correspondence between the manager and the team member or between the manager and other colleagues in the organisation.

4.10 Using evaluative words

Sometimes it is enough to specify the outcome that the person should achieve – for example, the guest feels welcome. Sometimes industry experts will want to enhance the standard by requiring something about the way it has been done.

For example, 'Identify and respond to emergencies' might be enough for a fire fighter.

However, the industry might say it has to be done in a certain timeframe: they can't delay if lives and property are at risk.

It might be tempting instead to say:

'Identify and respond to emergencies promptly'.

'Promptly' is what we call an evaluative word. The problem with this is that different people might interpret 'promptly' in different ways. For one person it might be okay to finish their break before donning the helmet. For others it might mean 'straight down the slippery pole as soon as the call comes through'.

In some cases we can't avoid evaluative words, but it's often helpful to look for an alternative. For example, Fire and Rescue Services might have their requirements for how quickly a call is dealt with. If that is the case, we could say:

'Identify and respond to emergencies within set timescales'.

That would give us a more accurate way of judging whether they met the standard.

This is better but it only covers the speed of response. Have they actually responded to the emergency in the right way?

Tempting again to use an evaluative word:

'Identify and respond to emergencies correctly and within set timescales'.

This now introduces a new problem. Strictly speaking, 'correctly' means there are only two ways of doing something – the right way and wrong way. There is nothing in between, it's a binary situation. Perhaps there is only one acceptable way of dealing with a particular type of emergency, in which case 'correct' is fine. However, if there is more than one, 'correct' won't do.

In this situation, NOS writers sometimes fall back on 'appropriately':

'Identify and respond to emergencies appropriately within set timescales'.

This could be better because it allows for more than one option, but like 'promptly' it's open to interpretation. Again you may wish to give a bit more information:

'Identify and respond to emergencies within set timescales and in a way appropriate to the type of emergency'.

This is closer to what is needed and might lead to a more uniform judgement as to whether the fire fighter met the standard. However, it involves more words and becomes more complicated as a result. NOS writers need to consult their industry experts on issues such as these. If everyone knows what 'promptly' and 'appropriately' mean, then there's no need to expand. If there is doubt, you may wish to explore the wording further and expand the Performance Criteria accordingly. Producing more words might be a disadvantage you have to put up with. Ultimately it's a balancing act.

Some other evaluative words that crop up frequently in NOS and need careful consideration and consultation are, for example:

- 'relevant'
- 'effective' and 'effectively'
- 'efficient' and 'efficiently'
- 'polite' and 'politely'
- 'clear' and 'clearly'

Each of these is either an adjective ('clear'), ie it qualifies a noun (person or thing) or an adverb ('clearly') which qualifies a verb (doing word). Just about any adjective or adverb would fall into this category. Will everyone interpret them in the same way? Is there a less subjective form of words?

4.11 Sub sections

Sometimes NOS are divided into two or more sub sections, formerly known as elements, representing 'sub-functions' within the function described by the NOS. In the suite developed by the Justice SSC for the police, for example, the NOS covering 'Carry out systematic searches of vehicles, premises and open areas' has two elements:

- Prepare to carry out systematic searches of vehicles, premises and open areas
- Conduct systematic searches of vehicles, premises and open areas.

These elements represent two important and discrete phases in the search process.

The Customer Service NOS 'Maintain a positive and customer-friendly attitude' also has two elements:

- Show the right attitude for customer service
- Show appropriate and positive behaviours to customers.

These elements are two complementary facets which contribute to successful customer service.

Elements can provide structure to a complex function and break up long lists of Performance Criteria by presenting them in logical sections. Elements are particularly useful if the NOS describes a process which an individual needs to carry out or which follow a 'plan-do-review' cycle, like the NOS 'Develop and maintain partnership working to support your volunteering strategy' from the NOS for Managing Volunteers, which has four Elements:

- Identify and evaluate individuals and organisations that can support your volunteering strategy
- Agree mutual expectations and protocols for working with individuals and organisations
- Work in partnership with individuals and organisations that can support your volunteering strategy
- Review relationships with individuals and organisations.

There is no hard-and-fast rule when to use Elements within NOS. Some SSCs have decided that they will not use Elements at all; each of their NOS has a single list of Performance Criteria without any breaks. Other standards-setting organisations use Elements if this helps the structure and understanding, but are equally happy to have a 'Single Element NOS, when appropriate.

It is important, however, not to use Elements to 'bundle-up' two or more different functions within a single NOS. Each NOS should describe a discrete function, identified through the Functional Analysis, that can be performed by an individual.

4.12 Knowledge and Understanding

When NOS were first introduced in the mid 1980s, Knowledge and Understanding were not included. The argument behind this was simple: NOS are only about performance, it's enough to see someone perform the function and you can make a judgement against the Performance Criteria to decide whether they met the standard. Rather quickly NOS writers realised this argument was flawed.

There were three main reasons for this.

Firstly, the NOS are national, not organisational. In their organisation, the staff member may only have the opportunity to show they can deal with certain situations. In one company an Engineer, for example, might only deal with a limited number of types of equipment, materials and tools. They may then move to another company where different technologies are used. How do we know that they could perform to the same standard where there are different types of equipment, materials and tools?

Secondly, the period of time during which the staff member is assessed or appraised can't be infinite. Even if the opportunities to deal with something unusual might arise at some point, will we wait for what could be a very long time before we get the chance to see if they can deal with these eventualities? For example, during the time we are assessing our hotel receptionist, we might find that every customer is very amenable and co-operative, and doesn't present any kinds of problems or special requirements. Therefore we will have no way of knowing whether the receptionist can deal with guests who are rude, demanding, upset or need special types of assistance.

Third, if people are to perform consistently over a period of time, they really need to know the reasons why certain things need to be done in a particular way. It's fine if a cook can show that they consistently store cooked and uncooked meat separately in a refrigerator. It's even better if they know the reason for that – to prevent cross contamination – and the potentially fatal consequences of cross contamination. If they know and understand those things, they are more likely to store them separately every time and avoid possible cross-contamination in other things they do.

This problem became known as the 'assessment gap'. Unless we can address this assessment gap, NOS will only ever deliver 'narrow' competence based on limited performance, not the type of broad competence employers expect.

It was quickly realised that NOS had to contain Knowledge and Understanding if the competence they described was going to have the breadth employers' demand.

Knowledge and Understanding within NOS usually covers three main areas:

- **Facts**

For example, different types of equipment, health and safety requirements, different types of customer needs

- **Principles/Rationale**

For example, the reasons why cooked and uncooked meat must be stored separately; why customers should be made to feel welcome in the hotel; why the registration card needs to be completed correctly

- **Methods**

For example, how to avoid cross contamination, how to meet the needs of a customer in a wheel chair, how design a fitness programme for someone with a history of heart disease

We can summarise these very easily as:

- the 'whats'
- the 'whys'
- the 'hows'

Most Knowledge and Understanding in NOS should fall into one of these three categories.

Like the Performance Criteria, we are only looking for what is **essential**. The Knowledge and Understanding must be relevant to the rest of the NOS – the Unit Title and the Performance Criteria. There must be nothing which is irrelevant. The Knowledge and Understanding should be developed on the basis of 'need to know' and not 'nice to know'.

Unlike Performance Criteria, Knowledge and Understanding statements are not written with active verbs. They are preceded by a 'lead-in' statement which says

'You must know and understand:'

If qualifications are developed from NOS, it is necessary to insert certain verbs such as 'explain', 'describe', 'list' etc., but this is not required for NOS itself.

To illustrate this approach lets go back to the example of the hotel receptionist.

The NOS Title and Performance Criteria are:

'2R2/04 Deal with the arrival of customers'

Performance Criteria

You must be able to:

1. Assist the customer to feel welcome in the hotel
2. Identify the customer's requirements

3. Ensure customer details are correct on the booking system
4. Offer alternatives for any services that are not available
5. Make sure the registration document is completed as required
6. Give accurate information to the customer about their room and its location
7. Promote the services and facilities of your organisation

The Knowledge and Understanding might read:

'2R2/04 Deal with the arrival of customers'

Knowledge and Understanding

You must know and understand:

1. Expectations which customers may have when visiting the hotel, including standards of service
2. Why customers should be made to feel welcome in the hotel and the effect this has on their attitude to the business and the likelihood of repeat business and recommendations
3. Different techniques to help the customer feel welcome in the hotel and how to do this in different situations, for example when there are delays at reception or when there is a failure of equipment or services
4. The types of general requirements that customers visiting the hotel are likely to have and how to meet each of these
5. The types of special requirements that customers visiting the hotel are likely to have and how to meet each of these
6. The types of difficult behaviour that customers may demonstrate and how to respond to these
7. Legal requirements for registering customers at a hotel, including requirements for data protection
8. Why it is important for the hotel to have accurate information about its customers
9. The layout of the hotel and the location of guest rooms and facilities
10. The services and facilities which are available for visitor use, any costs or requirements relevant to these and how the visitor can access them
11. Health and safety requirements when operating computer equipment

It should be clear that by including this Knowledge and Understanding we have considerably expanded the breadth of competence that the staff member has. They should be better prepared to cope with a range of situations that may not occur in the organisation in which they work, or during the period they are being assessed or appraised.

They should also have a greater appreciation as to why certain things need to be done. Therefore there is a greater likelihood that they will repeat this performance or use this knowledge in other related situations.

The last key point about Knowledge and Understanding is that, especially when it comes to the 'hows', it is possible to infer certain areas of knowledge and understanding from observing the person meeting Performance Criteria, in which case there is no point in including it in the Knowledge and Understanding section.

For example, we have not included a knowledge statement which says 'How to complete a registration card'. The reason for this is that these are fairly standard documents. Through observing them carry out the relevant Performance Criterion, we have seen them do this and can reasonably infer that they could do it again. Wherever they go they are never going to encounter a significantly different registration card. Basically if they can do one, they can do them all.

This assumption, however, can only be confirmed by consultation with industry experts. Some NOS do include a lot of 'how to' statements which, strictly speaking, could be inferred from observing performance. This provides extra security that they do have the knowledge. It also provides a good basis to use the NOS as a platform for other products – for example, a training programme or a 'knowledge only' qualification where you wouldn't see any performance.

4.13 Technical Data

Each NOS must also have the following technical data, essential for searching on the NOS Database:

1. The name of the standards-setting organisation which has developed the NOS
2. The version number which will show how many times the NOS has been reviewed and updated
3. The date the current version of the NOS was approved
4. The date by which it is anticipated the NOS will be reviewed – this will only be a target date; circumstances may change and the NOS may be reviewed at an earlier or later date
5. The validity of the NOS, ie "current" – a NOS currently in use and *not* in the process of being revised; "legacy" – a NOS which has been superseded, but which is still used within qualifications, for example Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)
6. The status of the NOS, ie "original" – a new NOS; "tailored" – a NOS imported from another organisation's suite with minor amendments to make it relevant to the new context but without changing the demands of the NOS (see *Section 3*)
7. The name of the originating organisation and the Unique Reference Number of the original NOS

8. The occupations to which the NOS applies
9. Key words, to enable the user to search for relevant NOS on the NOS database

4.14 Some NOS have Optional Components

Some SSCs and standards-setting organisations have included other 'optional' components in their NOS. *Sections 4.15* onwards look at each of these, but not in any great depth because there is no standard way in which they are developed. If your organisation uses these Optional Components, you should seek guidance from your own internal NOS expert.

4.15 Scope or Range

'Scope' or 'Range', was used extensively in early versions of NOS and still has a valuable role to play in many industries. Sometimes it goes under other titles such as 'What you must cover'. Essentially it plays a similar function to some aspects of Knowledge and Understanding. It takes account of the fact that the real world contains many variables and the NOS should cover these. In doing so, it helps to broaden the individual's competence.

In the hotel example we looked at earlier, a receptionist may encounter many different types of customer. Different hotels may provide different facilities. If the NOS is to describe broad competence, shouldn't the NOS reflect these variables? Rather than deal with different types of customer in the Knowledge and Understanding, Scope would identify different types of customer and facility and then organise these into categories. The amended example below shows how this would work.

'2R2/04 Deal with the arrival of customers'

Performance Criteria

You must be able to:

1. Assist the **customer** to feel welcome in the hotel
2. Identify the **customer's** requirements
3. Ensure **customer** details are correct on the booking system
4. Offer alternatives for any services that are not available
5. Make sure the registration document is completed as required
6. Give accurate information to the **customer** about their room and its location
7. Promote the services and **facilities** of your organisation

Scope

- a) **Customers:** co-operative; 'difficult'; with special requirements
- b) **Facilities:** restaurant; leisure; business

In this example, we have highlighted the words for which Scope is provided in bold. Readers often find this a helpful way of linking back to the Performance Criteria. Some SSCs follow the same convention.

4.16 Values

Some suites of NOS – particularly those relating to caring occupations or the social justice field – are explicit about the Values which underpin performance. The Community Development NOS, for example, provide very detailed descriptions of 'The Key Values that Underpin All Community Development Practice':

Equality and Anti-discrimination

Community Development practice challenges structural inequalities and discriminatory practices. Community Development recognises that people are not the same, but they are all of equal worth and importance and therefore entitled to the same degree of respect and acknowledgement.

Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to challenge the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- Acknowledges where there is inequality and discrimination, and rejects and challenges any form of it
- Supports and develops anti-oppressive policies and practices
- Respects, values, supports and promotes the value of difference and diversity
- Promotes and supports diverse communities to agree on their common concerns and interests
- Acknowledges the diverse nature of society and seeks to understand and support others to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to marginalised communities and minorities.

Social Justice

The aim of increasing social justice is an essential element of Community Development practice. It involves identifying and seeking to alleviate structural disadvantage and advocating strategies for overcoming exclusion, discrimination and inequality.

Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations to achieve change and the long-term goal of a more equal, non-sectarian society. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- Recognises that social justice incorporates environmental, political, cultural and economic justice
- Recognises and challenges inequalities and power differences
- Values diversity of experience
- Promotes human and civil rights and responsibilities
- Promotes a sustainable environment
- Challenges the underlying causes, and effects, of structural power imbalances
- Makes the link between local, societal and global contexts.

Collective Action

Community Development practice is essentially about working with and supporting groups of people, to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence so they can develop an analysis and identify issues which can be addressed through collective action.

Community Development practitioners will work with communities to organise, influence and take action. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- Promotes the active participation of people within communities
- Supports the rights of communities to organise, access support and take action
- Respects the rights of others when planning collective action
- Empowers communities to recognise and acknowledge their existing skills, knowledge and expertise and how these may be used to achieve their goals
- Uses the power of the collective voice and of collective action
- Recognises the wealth of creative and positive resources present within communities.

Community Empowerment

Community Development practice aims to empower individuals and communities, through using the strengths of the community to bring about desired changes. It involves supporting people to become critical, creative, liberated and active participants, enabling them to take more control over their lives, their communities and their environment. This process is based on mutual respect and equal and genuine partnerships between all those involved.

Community Development practitioners will work with communities and organisations and encourage them to work together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- Promotes the rights of communities to define themselves, their priorities and agendas for action
- Encourages an understanding and commitment to the long term nature of Community Development practice
- Promotes the rights of communities to be consulted, involved in, and to influence decision making that affects their lives
- Promotes accountability and transparency
- Promotes co-operation as a means of connecting and strengthening communities
- Uses research to support communities in determining needs as a basis for influencing.

Working and Learning Together

Community Development practice promotes a collective process which enables participants to learn from reflecting on their experiences: for example, evaluating how well they had identified the needs, to what extent particular activities helped them to achieve their aims, and what they could have done differently. Community Development learning is based on participatory and experiential processes with the aim of improving future Community Development practice. Community Development

learning and Community Development practice are inseparable. The practice informs the learning in an ongoing cycle.

Community Development practitioners will support individuals and communities working and learning together. This will be undertaken in a way which:

- Recognises, shares and values skills, knowledge and experience
- Promotes empowerment through building on existing knowledge and skills
- Creates opportunities for collective learning through shared reflection on action
- Encourages reflection on own practice, values and beliefs
- Uses analysis and evaluation to inform future action
- Promotes learning from the experiences of communities locally, nationally and globally.

Other suites of NOS make reference to underpinning values which can be found in other documents. The Health and Social Care NOS, for example, have 'Values underpinning the whole of the unit':

The values underpinning this unit have been derived from the key purpose statement*, the statement of expectations from carers and people accessing services, relevant service standards and codes of practice for health, social or care in the four UK countries. They are embedded in this unit and should be applied in your practice and through your knowledge demonstrated in any other standard you are working towards.

* The key purpose identified for those working in health, social or care settings is 'to provide an integrated, ethical and inclusive service, which meets agreed needs and outcomes of people requiring health and/or social care'.

There is no requirement to refer to Values in NOS. They are an Optional Component and how they are expressed is up to the SSC or other standards-setting organisation to decide in consultation with employers and other stakeholders.

4.17 Behaviours

Behaviours try to address the fact that NOS mainly concentrate on outcomes. In some industries, outcomes alone are not seen as sufficient. Employers also feel it is important to describe the general ways in which individuals go about achieving the outcomes.

The inclusion of Behaviours in NOS began in the Management and Leadership NOS. These NOS also contain the Mandatory Components but also include statements such as those below:

Behaviours which underpin effective performance

1. You give people opportunities to provide feedback and you respond appropriately
2. You clearly agree what is expected of others and hold them to account
3. You articulate a vision that generates excitement, enthusiasm and commitment

4. You inspire others, championing work to achieve common goals
5. You show sensitivity to stakeholders' needs and interests and manage these effectively
6. You use a range of leadership styles appropriate to different people and situations
7. You identify the implications or consequences of a situation
8. You take and implement difficult and/or unpopular decisions, if necessary

4.18 Skills

In earlier *Sections* we have discussed the contribution that both Knowledge and Skills make to occupational competence and therefore NOS. Some SSCs and standards-setting organisations feel that Skills should be mentioned separately within NOS.

Below is a set of Skills from a Business and Administration NOS.

You will demonstrate the following skills and attributes:

Critical Analysis	Influencing others
Effective Engagement	Motivating others
Empowering others	Resource Management
Excellent Communication	Sensitivity to others
Intuition	Sound Judgement

4.19 Other Optional Components

NOS may have other Optional Components:

- **Glossary**, or list of key words and phrases, with explanations of the particular meaning of these words and phrases as they are used within the NOS
- **Links to Other NOS**, showing how this NOS interfaces with other NOS in the same suite and/or other suites
- **External Links**, for example links to codes of practice, professional standards or regulatory frameworks.

SSCs and other standards-setting organisations will decide whether to include these Optional Components in consultation with employers and other stakeholders. Whenever Optional Components are included, they are *additional* to the Mandatory Components, not replacements for them.

5. Guidance on ensuring that NOS are responsive to industry needs

Ensuring responsiveness of NOS to industry needs is vital to ensure they remain fit for purpose for the development of relevant qualifications and Apprenticeship Frameworks that clearly reflect and meet employer demands. In addition, the more closely aligned the NOS are to industry practices and requirements, the better suited they will be to support with upskilling, enhancing working processes and improving productivity.

5.1 Sector research and functional/occupational mapping

Inevitably initial research carried out into sectors, functions and occupations is a crucial part of ensuring responsiveness of NOS to employer needs. Research carried out with SSCs and SSOs as well as other key stakeholders involved in the development process highlights that the following should be adhered to, to ensure that this process remains fit for purpose:

- The process should seek detailed and comprehensive input from a representative sample of employers spanning all sub-sectors and UK nations
- The sample of employers should include small, medium and large size organisations and should also include freelancers where relevant in determining the sector needs and functions
- The same pool of employers should not be relied on every time research is updated – SSCs and SSOs should seek to broaden their network on an on-going basis
- Employers should be offered the opportunity to input via virtual methods such as online blogging, surveys or discussions via commonly used media such as LinkedIn
- To capture feedback from employers that have historically been difficult to engage, other networks should be harnessed to tap into contacts held by the likes of Professional Bodies, Trade Unions and Trade Associations
- Additionally opportunities for attendance at relevant industry events or conferences should be used, where possible, to gather feedback from key sector stakeholders
- Insights should also be gathered from other industry experts, not just employers – for example analysts – to provide a more holistic overview of the current and future needs of the sector. This should include feedback from overseas experts where relevant to the sector
- Sector research should be updated on an on-going basis, particularly in sub-sectors that are subject to rapid transitions, for example because of technological advancement and development, and where legislation/policy is introduced or updated on a regular basis

- SSCs and SSOs should maintain on-going dialogue across the network to identify emerging trends that may impact on more than one sector footprint

5.2 Development of NOS

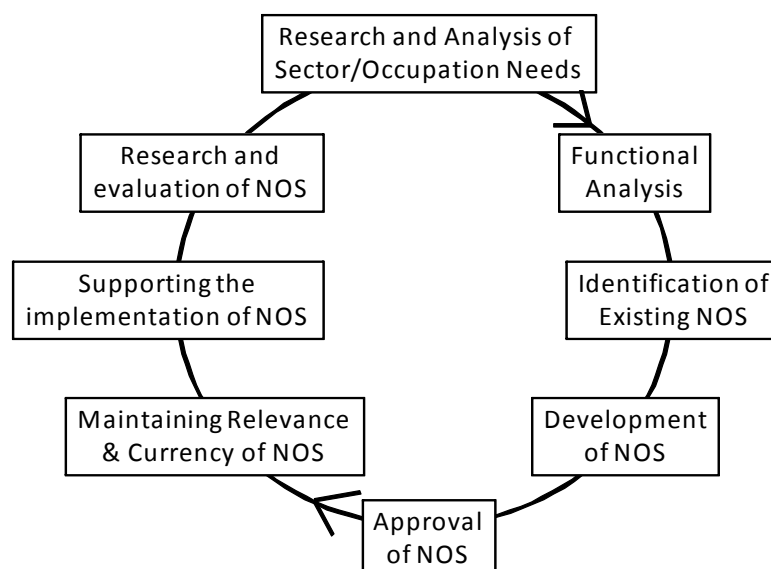
- Awarding Organisations that lead on qualifications development should be involved in the consultation process at the earliest possible stage. To support this they should be kept informed of timescales for development to facilitate their own planning and ensure they can attend events or input via other means as appropriate
- The development process should be streamlined so that NOS are produced quickly enough so they remain up-to-date and relevant to industry needs

5.3 Presentation of NOS

- Employers are seeking NOS presented in a consistent format that are user friendly and easy to access. Providing access to NOS in this way is essential to ensure they are meeting industry needs.
- NOS should be written using plain English, avoiding use of jargon or phrases that are highly technical or academic in style
- NOS suites should be available in other languages as relevant for the sector – for example Welsh and Polish
- NOS should signpost to guidance, toolkits and other forms of support that have been developed to explain the purpose and functions of NOS, and help employers use them to best effect

Concluding remarks

We explained in the introduction that developing, implementing and reviewing NOS is a cyclical process.



In this Guide, we have focused on the right-hand side of the circle above, particularly: analysis of sector/occupation needs; Functional Analysis; identification, importation and tailoring of existing NOS; development of new NOS in line with the NOS Quality Criteria. We have also made some reference to how NOS can be maintained as current and relevant to each sector or occupation.

The Guide does not cover the approvals process, which is being reviewed by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills with the Qualifications Regulators in the four nations during 2010-11. Neither does it cover the very important activities SSCs and other standards-setting organisations are required to carry out of:

- supporting the implementation of NOS
- research and evaluation of the effectiveness of NOS

The evaluation of NOS is also subject to further work during 2011-12.

Whilst there is a lot of experience and good practice amongst SSCs and other standards-setting organisations in these areas, further research and analysis – and possibly some prototyping activity – will need to take place during 2010-11 before authoritative guidance can be produced.

This Guide itself is a prototype. It will be used as the basis for capability and capacity building programmes and by all NOS developers and project managers in SSCs and standards-setting organisations during 2010-11. Feedback is welcome at any time and the UK Commission will be carrying out a full evaluation of the Guide, as part of a wider review of the NOS Strategy, in the period January – March 2011. This feedback and evaluation will inform a review of the Guide in 2011, which will have further Sections covering the NOS approvals process and effective practice in implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of NOS.

Annex 1

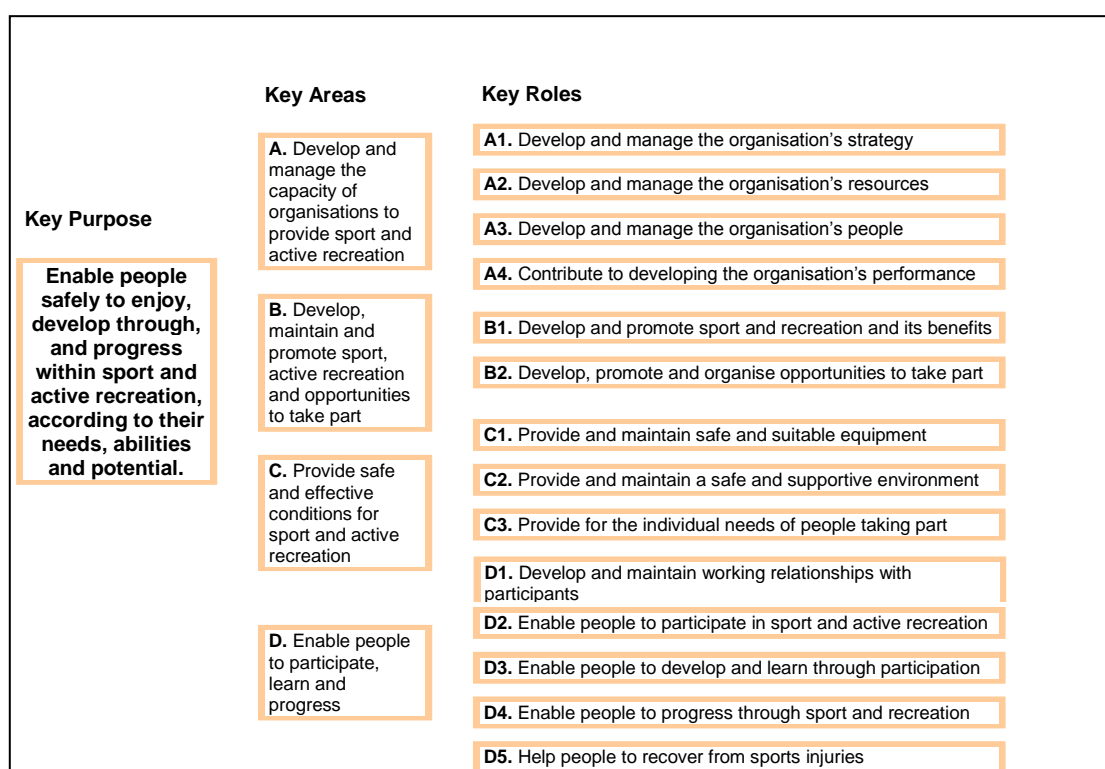
Further examples of components of functional analysis

This annex provides further examples of the components of functional analysis, as articulated in Section 2.4 of the document.

Example 1

Skills Active

This example is used to demonstrate how Skills Active dealt with functional analysis based on key areas and key roles at the first and second level of disaggregation.

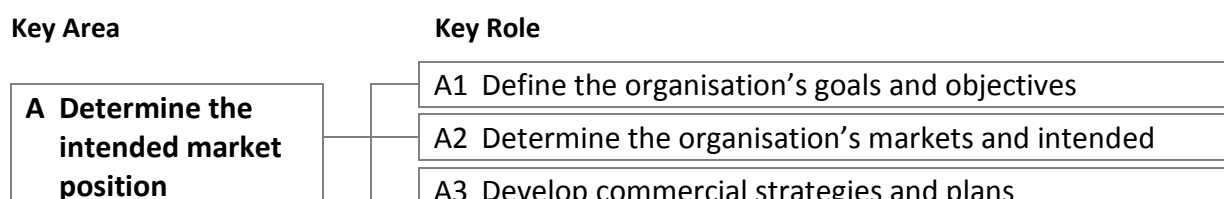


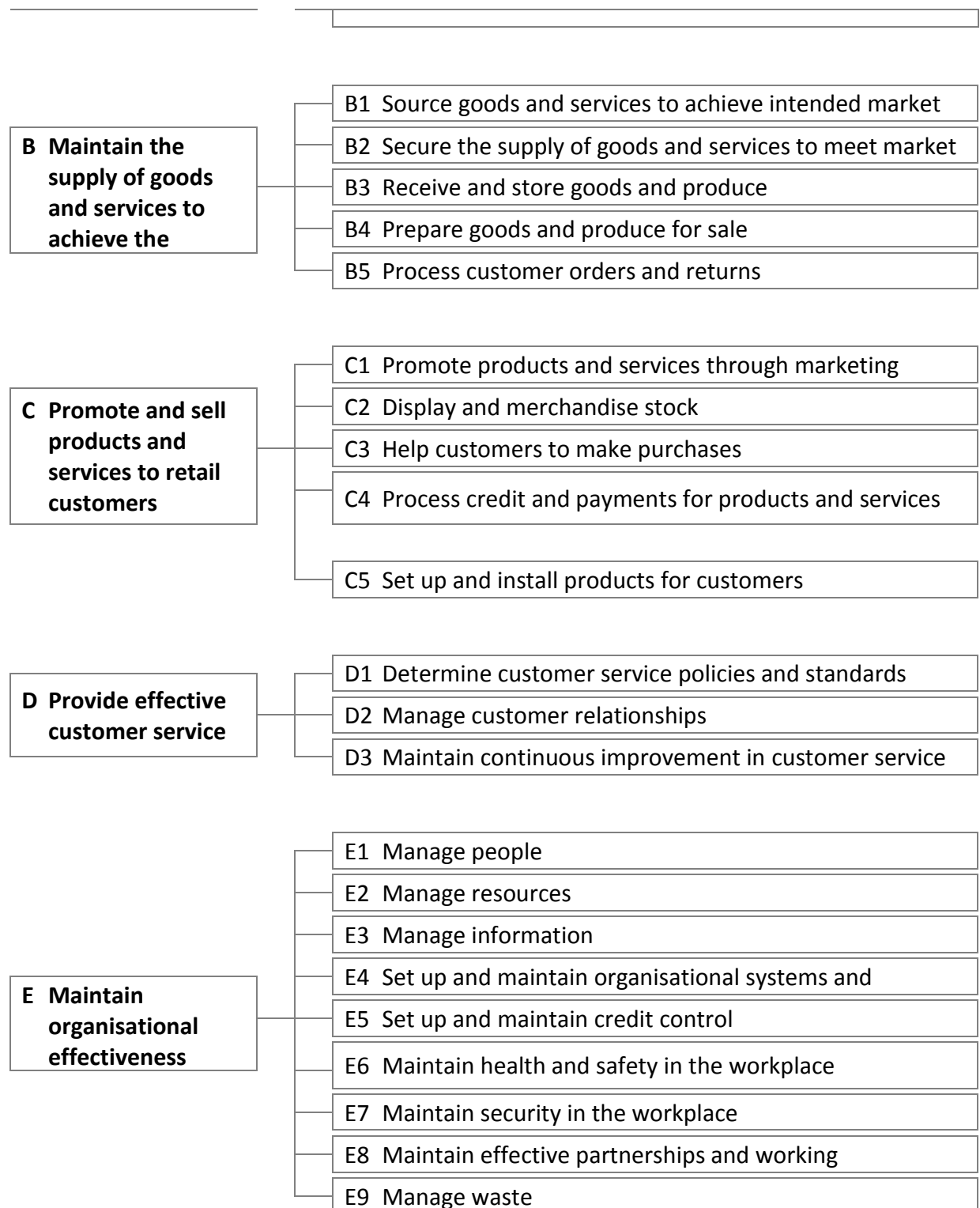
Example 2

Skillsmart Retail has defined the key purpose of the Retail sector as being:

To secure intended market position by promoting and delivering goods and services to valued retail customers through efficient, cost-effective processes and mechanisms.

At the first and second level of disaggregation the following key roles are identified





Some of the above statements have been truncated. Technically it's okay but might be better in an Annex?

Taking the second level Key Roles above here are selected components of the retail map at third and fourth levels of disaggregation.

Key Area B **Maintain the supply of goods and services to achieve the organisation's intended market position**

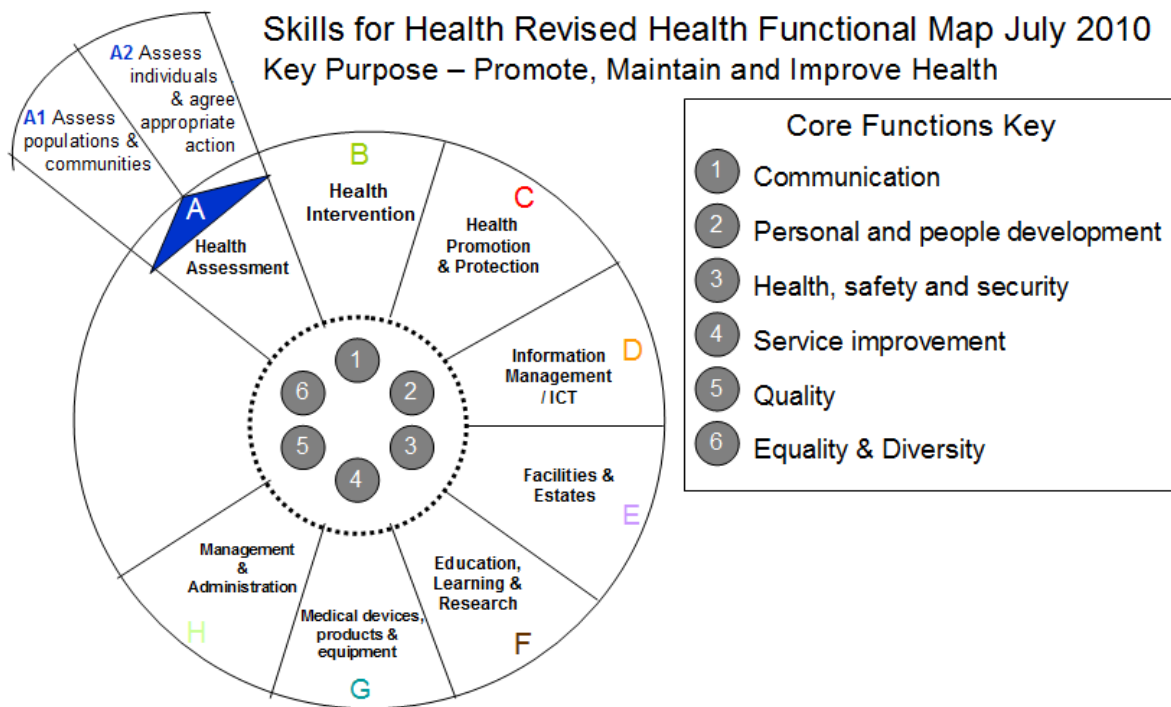


Again, some of the above statements have been truncated.

Example 3

Fourth level disaggregation

The health sector provides an example where the functional analysis has been taken to the fourth level of disaggregation as shown in this expanded section of the map devoted to section C “



Skills for Health - Health Functional Map Structure - July 2010

Key Purpose - Promote, maintain and improve health

Functions displayed in italics denote the level at which NOS are mapped against

C. HEALTH PROMOTION & PROTECTION

C1 Manage health promotion and protection at a strategic level

C1.1 Plan and develop strategies to promote health and well being

C1.1.1 Agree priorities and targets for improving public health

C1.1.2 Agree priorities and targets for improving individuals' health and wellbeing

C1.1.3 Develop strategies for improving public health

C1.1.4 Develop strategies for improving individuals' health and wellbeing

C1.1.5 Develop policies to support the health improvement strategy

C1.1.6 Plan and develop health protection programmes

C1.1.7 Develop marketing / promotional materials

C1.1.8 Evaluate and select media for delivering information, advice and guidance

C1.2 Implement strategies to promote health and well being

C1.2.1 Implement strategies to promote public health

C1.2.2 Implement strategies to promote individuals' health and wellbeing

C1.2.3 Implement health protection programmes

C1.2.4 Implement a marketing / promotional campaign

C1.3 Monitor and review strategies for achieving health and wellbeing improvements

C1.3.1 Monitor strategies for improving public health

C1.3.2 Review strategies for improving individuals' health and wellbeing

C1.3.3 Monitor health protection programmes

C1.3.4 Review health protection programmes

C1.3.5 Monitor trends and developments for their impact on health and wellbeing

C2 Work in partnership with others to promote health

C2.1 Encourage behavioural change in people and agencies to promote health and wellbeing

C2.2 Provide information to individuals, groups and communities about promoting health

C2.3 Facilitate the development of community groups / networks

C2.4 Enable people to address issues relating to their health and wellbeing

C2.5 Respond to, and manage challenging behaviour

C2.6 Act on behalf of an individual, family or community (advocacy)

Annex 2

Guidance for the completion of the NOS Employer/Stakeholder Engagement forms (Parts A and B)

In the main NOS are a publicly funded resource, with annual Grant in Aid contributions made by each of the Governments in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. **All** NOS, regardless of the source of funding, must comply with the NOS Quality Criteria and be quality assured in the same way. Only NOS that fully meet the NOS Quality Criteria and have achieved formal sign off, can be approved as NOS.

Devolved Administration representatives, working in the area of NOS, require detail on all NOS employer/stakeholder engagement activity in order to be able to submit comprehensive reports to their respective Ministers detailing Nation activity that has occurred, and provide a rationale for continued contributions for Grant in Aid Funding.

The Devolved Administrations currently only have the capacity to contribute to part of the NOS quality assurance procedure - that involving the process of employer engagement relating to NOS review and development. It is only appropriate that SSC/Os should take sole responsibility for the quality assurance of the technical content of their NOS, as they possess the technical expertise for their own sectors.

As part of the NOS Quality Criteria, a NOS employer/stakeholder engagement form has been drawn up. SSC/Os are asked to submit this form via the SQS Action Plan Database, to the UK NOS Panel members representing the Devolved Administrations during the NOS review/development phase, detailing the level of employer engagement planned, and then following consultation, providing detail on what has occurred, in what format and with whom.

The Devolved Administrations will view these consultation records for all (100%) NOS submissions. This process enables the Devolved Administrations to engage in possible further discussion with individual SSC/Os in relation to Nation specific issues arising from employer engagement and allow them to manage the Nation specific Action Plans more effectively.

What information is required in the NOS Employer/Stakeholder Engagement forms (Parts A and B)?

A separate form needs to be completed for each nation. Where appropriate, information that is generic across the nations can be copied and pasted. The UK NOS Panel would expect the majority of the information to be specific to the consultation/engagement activities for each nation. With separate forms it is easier for the UK NOS Panel members to track trends and identify information more specific to their individual nations.

At the planning stage (Part A Intended Activity):

- Providing a rationale for the NOS activity if not already in the UKCES SQS action plan database, which may include demand identified by employers, colleges or Awarding Organisations/Bodies
- The rationale should include information that the SSC/O has checked (via the NOS /Database) to ensure that no current NOS already exist that would address the demand. The SSC/O should also provide information that they are planning to work with other SSC/Os who have an interest in the NOS or where the NOS will be common with other SSC/O's areas.
- Outlining the type of engagement activity and the rationale for its choice.
- Engagement activities may consist of online surveys, focus groups advisory panels, working groups or other methods appropriate in any given sector – one approach will not be suitable or practical in all sectors
- Outline of the target audience for this activity. It would be useful to provide data on the nature/size of the sector footprint within each Nation, to demonstrate what constitutes a “representative sample”
- Details of the employers/organisations to be approached with particular regard to their size (small, medium or large) and geographical location – this could be in the form of a database, list of organisations, representative panel or other appropriate forum
- Dates/timescale for events connected to this engagement activity
- How the SSC/O's own regional/national manager or local representative in the individual nation will be involved in this activity
- How the Devolved Administration representative will be involved in this activity. Please note that for Scotland, the Devolved Administration representative will be the SQA Accreditation Manager.

At the reporting stage (Part B Actual Activity):

- A brief summary of findings/outcomes specifically highlighting the feedback from employers and stakeholders from each of the Nations.
- Details of those who participated in engagement activities. This should identify the individual organisations involved from a Nation perspective.
- Explaining how the findings in each Nation informed the development of the NOS and, where appropriate, how they have been reflected in the final NOS.
- Where appropriate or relevant, highlighting any specific issues raised by those consulted in relation to:
 - Basic/Functional/Essential Skills (for England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
 - Specific Nation qualification requirements
 - Specific Nation policy requirements

This feedback will provide opportunities for Stakeholders to initiate or influence Policy development discussions

Some Nation Specific Issues:

As mentioned in the Functional Analysis Section of this Guide, consultation activities for NOS capture vital employer intelligence across the whole of the UK. The employer footprint in the four nations varies in terms of spread, depth and size of business, which should be reflected in the NOS employer engagement activity. The NOS development process should address the needs of smaller and rural enterprises as well as the larger employers.

Each Nation may also have specific needs in relation to the review and development of Occupational Standards.

England:

English legislative, regulatory, or other specific nation requirements may influence the design and development of National Occupational Standards. This degree of influence will vary from sector to sector but must be considered and taken into account by each sector on an individual basis.

Scotland:

In Scotland, NOS are used as the basis for development of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and other competence based qualifications. As such Scottish legislation, regulatory or other specific nation requirements will need to be reflected in the final NOS.

SVQs must replicate the NOS, so SSC/Os must ensure that the NOS do not create any assessment barriers for SVQs. For example, include behaviours which cannot be assessed.

SSC/Os are also asked to consider the impact of revised/updated NOS on SVQ structures or the alternative competence based qualification structure replacing the SVQ. Any changes made to the NOS must be reflected in the SVQ structure due to the requirement for the SVQ to replicate the NOS.

SQA Accreditation approves SVQ structures and other competence based qualification structures which are replacing SVQs in Scotland, as such it is important that the relevant SQA Accreditation Manager is provided with the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of the NOS development and review activities for Scotland.

Northern Ireland:

Northern Ireland legislative, regulatory, or other specific nation requirements may influence the design and development of National Occupational Standards. This degree of influence will vary from sector to sector but must be considered and taken into account by each sector on an individual basis.

Wales:

In Wales, the Welsh Language Act places a responsibility on some public sector employers and Sector Skills Councils to provide a Welsh language scheme. The

Welsh Medium Education Strategy also places an onus on standard setting organisations to work with the Welsh Assembly Government to respond to learner and sector needs, including the translation of NOS where the demand has been identified.

The Welsh Assembly Government has developed guidance for Standard Setting Organisations on how to measure the demand for Welsh language NOS and vocational qualifications and provides examples of good practice.

“Good practice guide for sector and standard setting bodies January 2010”

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/welshmediumskills/jsessionid=VWJhMTWcjRL13x1fTcM6DfKc2X0K9fv3gfTbRL2kSxQICFJw50Zn!518600754?lang=en>

As part of the Employer Engagement form, SSC/SSOs will be prompted to outline how they measured employer demand for Welsh translations of the NOS. In addition, all Welsh translations of NOS must be sent to DCELLS for quality assurance sampling prior to sign off.