



## Changes To Competency

The DSA have indicated that the competency framework, originally produced following the consultation process, is to be re-formatted to be 'more user-friendly', and one that aligns itself with the National Occupational Standards (NOS). These standards form the basis of S/NVQ qualifications, and define the competencies that apply to job roles or occupations. They cover key activities undertaken within the occupational role under all of the circumstances, and can be used to describe good practice and set out a statement of competence that brings together the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to do the work. The DSA's decision to use NOS as the basis for CPD is a good move in my opinion. I say this because the original competency framework failed to provide recognition of the need to go through a learning needs analysis in order to produce a personal self-development plan and, therefore, the ADI may have found him / herself unaware of the need for improvement in particular areas that could actually provide the maximum positive impact for developing a successful career. The NOS are a more comprehensive set of competences that include a self-development unit and, most importantly, provide a more consistent standard on which to base and measure your development.

### So What Does This Mean?

Let's face it, modern life is highly competitive, and the business of driving instruction is no exception. Finding a unique selling point is becoming more and more difficult, and virtually as soon as one is determined, a competitor will come along and not only copy it, but improve upon it.



One of the many benefits that NOS bring is that they provide an excellent basis on which to develop the practice of benchmarking - rating your products, services and practices against those of the recognised front-runners in the industry. In other words, we can see how good we are compared to our colleagues or competitors, and how closely we are following best practice.

In previous articles I have raised the issue of recognising one's own strengths and weakness, and those of your business, but also assessing the threats and opportunities that may have an impact on your success. Basically, what will help or hinder. NOS can be used in any reflective analysis to identify these influencing factors by providing a convenient checklist of best practice (what you should know, understand or be able to do), and so helping you to measure yourself against your competitor's product whilst identifying a gap you can exploit.

Competitor analysis allows you to work out the weaknesses in the 'opposition' to help you gain that all-important advantage. However, you are onto a loser if you have no idea what best practice is in the first instance - you will not recognise the need for change.

As part of my CPD, I was recently involved with the

delivery and re-accreditation of a Fleet Trainer course (which, incidentally, covers all elements of the prescribed competency framework), part of which includes coaching ability. What has this to do with competitor analysis you may ask? Well, each time I learn something new, the pragmatist in me tries to test out how this can be applied to as many other existing performance areas as possible.

### Evaluation Of Your Business' Performance

One of the reference books used in the Fleet course is 'Coaching For Performance' by Sir John Whitmore, who writes about raising awareness and self-awareness. Awareness means knowing what is happening around you and self-awareness means knowing what you are experiencing (the technical term in the learning environment is Metacognition). But what is 'Metacognition'? - 'Metacognitive skills include taking conscious control of learning, planning and selecting strategies, monitoring the progress of learning, correcting errors, analysing the effectiveness of learning strategies, and changing learning behaviours and strategies when necessary.' (Ridley, D.S., Shultz, P.A., Glanz, R.S & Weinstein, C.E., 1992) Whitmore also uses the term

INPUT for awareness and goes on to establish that this fits into the system of INPUT - PROCESS - OUTPUT.

### Taking You Higher

A higher quality and quantity of input leads to higher quality output, but only if you process this information correctly and your psychomotor skills are at the appropriate standard. During a lesson you are constantly applying your core competency skills and, as you are aware, part of this is determining the cause of the fault. For example, your pupil may actually be aware of the situation around them and is gathering good quality and a good quantity of information, but they may not be able to process this information correctly because of weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding, or simply because of poor time-management. Therefore, even if they are physically capable, their performance (output) may not meet the standards required.

In addition to using these methods in making your teaching more 'learner centred' and allowing you to coach your pupils into being better drivers, Whitmore's techniques for the raising of awareness can quite easily be applied to make you a better businessperson.

If your input and processing skills are below standard, then your performance is likely to match these. So if you don't know what your competitors are doing, or why they are doing it, and you don't know what best practice is, then you are lacking both awareness and self-awareness. Hope is not a strategy that guarantees success!

**The full list of NOS can be sourced at [www.ukstandards.org](http://www.ukstandards.org) **edi****

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