



IMCA's guidance on Freelance personnel competence assurance and assessment has been developed to provide individuals with a framework on which to build their own competence portfolio.

### **Competence Management Systems**

Competence can be defined as, *“The combination of training, skills, experience, knowledge and behaviour that a person has and the ability to apply these to perform a task safely and efficiently to a defined standard.”*

A Competence Management System (CMS) provides an organisation the means to assess, record, track and manage the competence of its workforce. A competence portfolio allows an individual to demonstrate that they are competent in carrying out the tasks that they are required to perform to a given standard.

The need to demonstrate competence is increasingly common. Some clients demand it, QA systems may require it, and it can be a regulatory requirement. In general, workers want to know that those who work alongside them are competent too.

### **Guidance on using the IMCA Freelance Competence e-portfolio**

The IMCA Freelance Competence e-portfolio provides a platform for both competence assurance and assessment. It is recognised that for many freelance personnel the first step is to assure competence pertinent to their current role. To facilitate this, all roles now include a self-assessment process whereby the individual assesses their competence with or without supporting evidence using the relevant competence table. The self-assessment process is not designed to be used as formal proof of competence, it is intended to act as an informal tool for the individual to benchmark themselves against and identify areas for assessment.

Having completed the self-assessment process the individual can focus on compiling evidence to support their own assessment and close the competence gaps that they have identified by planning and seeking assessment.

The e-portfolio is intended to be a dynamic document used to record task competence pertinent to the role. However, to prevent the Workbook from becoming unmanageable supporting evidence should be stored separately. To facilitate this, four template documents have been created in Word format:

- ♦ Observation Record;
- ♦ Questioning Record;
- ♦ Witness Testimony;
- ♦ Candidate Testimony.

### **Evidence**

Persons making use of the e-portfolio should gather supporting documentary evidence in support of their competence assurance to substantiate their level of competence. This evidence can come from both direct and indirect methods of assessment but indirect methods such as witness statements and recognised prior learning should not be used in isolation. Each assessment made, and item of evidence provided should be collated to form a competence portfolio for the individual. The following defines the main documents which may be used to compile such a portfolio.

### **Competence Table**

The competence table (relevant to the role) is used to record an assessment of the individual's competence in a specific task.

The Assessor should define the assessment method and agree to an assessment plan prior to assessment. Once the assessment process is complete, the Assessor will sign and date the record electronically. On confirmation of the assessment outcome from the Verifier the candidate can electronically sign-off on behalf of the Verifier using the Verifiers name and date of verification.



### Observation Record

Observation records are an Assessor's summary of the task that they observed the candidate performing in the workplace. Observation records are often the most effective form of evidence from an Assessor's point of view because authenticity is guaranteed.

An Observation record can be completed and signed for electronically by both the Assessor and candidate.

### Questioning Record

A series of Assessor questions and the candidate's respective replies can be recorded as a record of questioning. This type of evidence can be used in a number of ways:

- ♦ To ensure the candidate has a sound understanding of the topic in question;
- ♦ To ensure the candidate knows how to do the task properly i.e. to the required standard;
- ♦ To ensure the candidate understands the importance and implications of the activity;
- ♦ To ensure the candidate understands what to do should something go wrong.

A Questioning Record can be completed and signed for electronically by both the Assessor and candidate.

### Candidate Testimony

Candidate testimony is used to demonstrate knowledge when observation is not possible, and the criteria is too wide-ranging for questioning. The testimony is completed by the candidate and should be forwarded to an Assessor, in turn the Assessor can if appropriate question the candidate to confirm competence.

A Candidate Testimony can be completed and signed for electronically by both the Assessor and candidate.

### Witness Testimony

Witness testimony is used when there is no Assessor in the workplace and therefore, the testimony can be signed by a witness typically a supervisor or manager with the necessary knowledge and experience to accredit the evidence. A witness testimony can be used to substantiate product evidence when such evidence cannot be submitted due to client confidentiality or it can provide a wide-ranging account of a candidate's ability to support competence assurance. A witness testimony differs from other forms of evidence in that it is not used to verify competence assessment, although it can be used as evidence to support a competence assessment.

For clarity, product evidence is an example of documented work completed by the candidate which can be one of the following:

End of Trip Report, Project Report, Mobilisation and Calibration Report, Risk Assessment, Work Instruction, Procedure document, Process document. In addition, a Field Appraisal completed on behalf of the candidate can also qualify as product evidence.

A Witness Testimony can be completed and signed for electronically by both the witness and candidate.



## **Assessors**

Assessors need to be satisfied that a candidate has demonstrated their competence on the job.

Assessors are typically a supervisor or manager with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and training to apply the defined assessment criteria in a fair, consistent and objective manner.

As part of their CMS every contracting company should identify its assessors and train them as required and in accordance with [Guidance on Assessor Training IMCA C007](#).

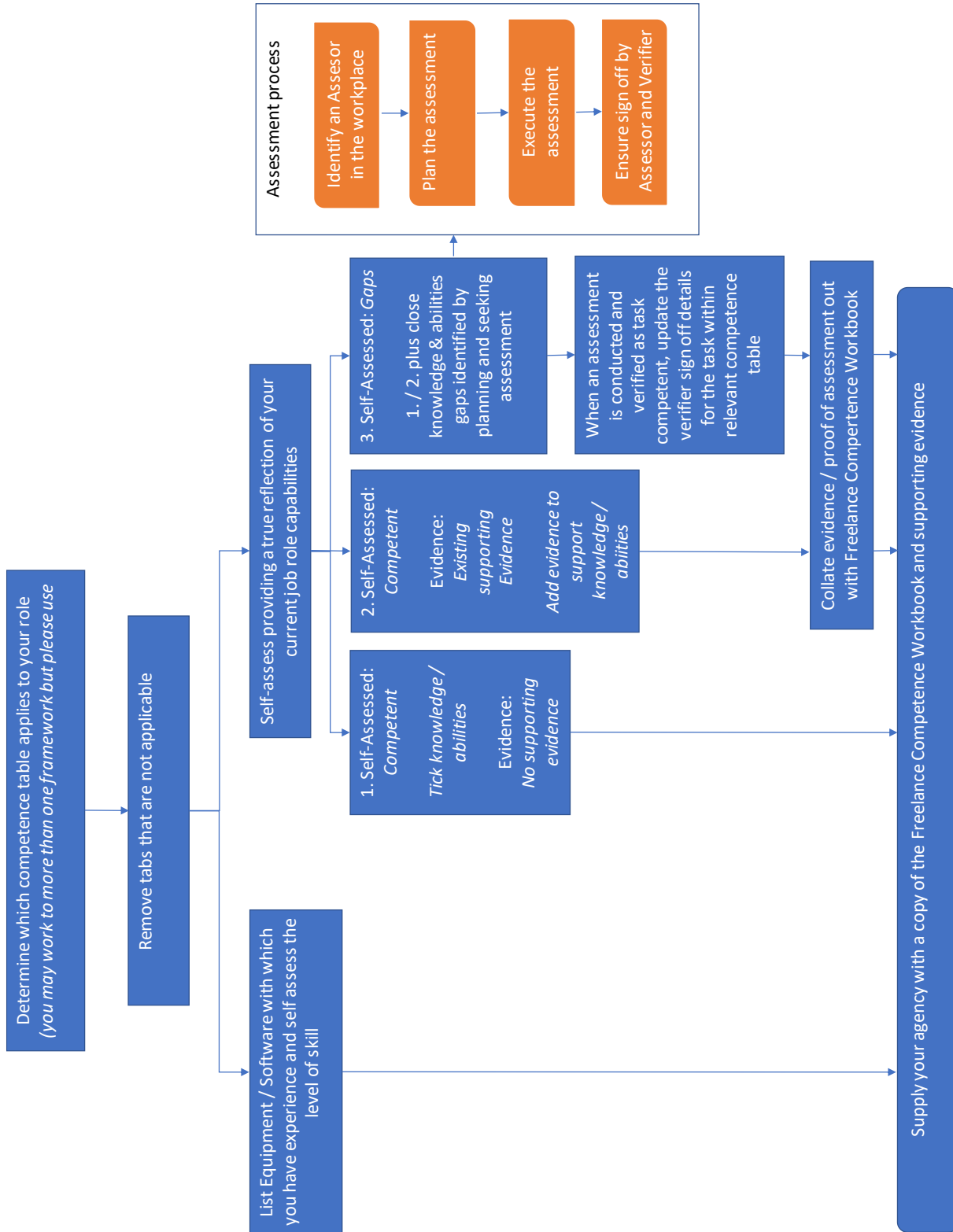
## **Verifiers**

Every competence assessment needs to be followed by verification of the assessment process. The role of the verifier is to check or verify completed assessments and may be an employee of the contracting company or a member of agency staff trained in accordance with [Guidance on Verifier Training IMCA C016](#).

It is important that the verifier must be a different person from the assessor on each occasion. Quality control is achieved by checking the assessment and ensuring compliance with the defined standard. Quality assurance is achieved by checking that the way the final assessment was conducted was itself authentic and correct.

As part of their CMS every contracting company should identify its verifiers and train them as required.

For Freelance personnel, it is intended that they will be able to access the assessment and verification resources that a contracting company has in place for its staff in full-time employment.



## **Glossary of Terms**

Competence – the ability to perform the tasks associated with a given role to a defined standard.

Competence Management System – an organisations formal and organised approach to ensuring that it has the human talent needed to meet its business goals – policy, process, guidance, recording medium and management.

Candidate – the person being assessed, in order to demonstrate their competence to a defined standard.

Assessor - the person responsible for collecting candidate competence evidence, judging it and recording the outcome.

Verifier – the person responsible for ensuring that all assessors comply with the system requirements and apply the standards uniformly and consistently.

Competence e-portfolio – documented evidence of competence used to map personal competencies to a defined competence profile.

Freelance – a person who is self-employed or employed by or through an agent.

Witness - a person who has the required knowledge and experience of the task who in this case can accredit product evidence.