

Assessing Skills, Knowledge and Competencies



This section is to help you to assess your current skills, knowledge and competence. The outcome of your assessment will form the basis for your PDP. If you have longer term career aspirations then this section will also help you to identify which areas you will need to develop to help you to move into other roles.

There are two skills frameworks included in this section; the KSF and the Finance Technical Competencies. Both are explained in further detail overleaf.



Background to the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and to the Finance Technical Competencies



There are two frameworks, which you should use to help you to identify your current skills and knowledge and your training and development needs; the KSF and the Finance Technical Competencies.

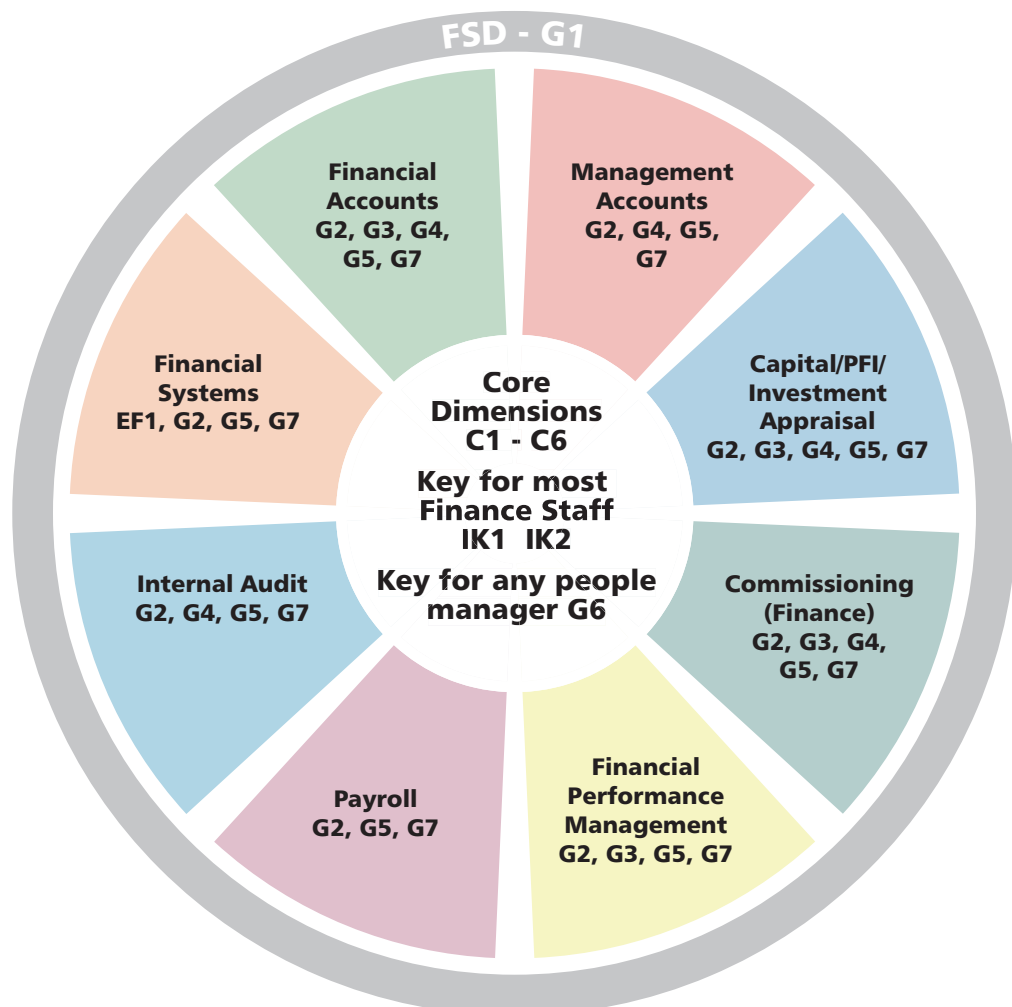
1 The Knowledge and Skills Framework (the KSF)

The KSF is a national framework of skills, which defines and describes the knowledge and skills which you need in order to deliver a quality service in your role. It provides a single, consistent, comprehensive framework on which to review your performance and your development needs.

The KSF is made up of thirty dimensions. These identify broad functions that are required by the NHS and your finance department in order to deliver a quality service. Each of the dimensions have four levels and attached to each level are indicators. These describe how knowledge and skills need to be applied at that level. For an individual to meet a defined level they have to be able to show they can apply knowledge and skills to meet all of the indicators in that level.

Alongside each level and indicators are examples of application. Examples are given but these need to be tailored to the specific job and written into the KSF Outline produced for each role.

Your job should have a KSF outline already, which is specific to your role. If you need help in putting together your KSF outline then there are some comprehensive Finance Support Materials on the FSD website, www.fsdnetwork.com. These contain many examples of application, which may be applicable to finance staff, together with a relevance wheel, which indicates which dimensions are *likely to be* relevant to people in the Finance Function (see diagram below).



Background to the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and to the Finance Technical Competencies



The KSF dimensions shown in the relevance wheel on the previous page are as follows:

Core Dimensions	General Dimensions
C1 Communication C2 Personal and people development C3 Health, safety and security C4 Service improvement C5 Quality C6 Equality and diversity	G1 Learning and development G2 Development and innovation G3 Procurement and commissioning G4 Financial management G5 Services and project management G6 People management G7 Capacity and capability
Information and Knowledge	Estates and Facilities
IK1 Information processing IK2 Information collection and analysis	EF1 Systems, vehicles and equipment

Further details of each of the KSF dimensions can be found in the National KSF Document on the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk

National guidance suggests that each KSF Outline could have up to ten dimensions (including the six core ones). However it is more important to ensure that the outline reflects your post than it is to stick rigidly to this number.

NB: For senior finance people who are at level four in all of the KSF dimensions, the Leadership Qualities Framework should be used in addition to/as an alternative to the KSF – see the website: www.nhsleadershipqualities.nhs.uk

2 The Finance Technical Competencies

The Finance Technical Competencies produced in March 2004, updated in July 2005 and again in March 2008, were used to help us to draft the KSF Finance Support Materials. There is overlap between the KSF and the Finance Technical Competencies. However the two frameworks are presented in a very different way. Many finance organisations have asked to continue using the Finance Technical Competencies (as well as the KSF) as they present the knowledge and skills required within each area of finance as a “skills escalator” for that area. It is very easy therefore for people to see what they need to do to progress within their particular field. With the KSF this is less immediately obvious as it is a generic framework and not one designed specifically for finance staff.

It is therefore recommended that you continue to use the Finance Technical Competencies alongside the KSF as they will provide you with a different and important perspective of development across and within each functional area.

The Finance Technical Competencies are as follows:

Core for all finance staff:

- Governance and Risk Management
- Customer Focussed Business Advice
- Using IT

Specific to certain groups of staff

- Financial Accounting
- Management Accounting
- Capital/PFI/Investment Appraisal
- Commissioning (Finance)
- Financial Performance Management
- Payroll
- Internal Audit
- Financial Systems

Detail of the competencies can be found on the FSD website www.fsdnetwork.com

Background to the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and to the Finance Technical Competencies



In the Finance Technical Competencies, the levels are cumulative so that competence at level 3, assumes competence at levels 1 and 2.

As with the KSF, you will find that you have more levels of jobs than there are levels of competence. This is to be expected, as the purpose of the competencies is to create an ordered list of all the skills, knowledge and tasks that people need to be able to perform; the purpose is not to create a set of job descriptions or person specifications for every job. In smaller organisations in particular, you may find that jobs straddle the levels, as one person needs to cover a wide range of activities.

It is important to note that with the Finance Technical Competencies, you need to look for which level “fits” best - unlike in the KSF where every example of behaviour has to be met in order for the job to be at that level.

Both the KSF and the Finance Technical Competencies can be accessed on-line using the e-ksf tool.

Guidance on how to use the KSF and the Finance Technical Competencies



The steps for assessing skills and competencies using both the KSF and the Finance Technical Competencies are shown below. If you wish you can use the form on page 5 to help you with this.

1. Assess your job

Work with your manager to identify which of the Finance Competencies applies to your job and at which level. The first three Finance Competencies apply to all finance staff. They are Governance and Risk Management, Customer Focussed Business Advice and Using IT. You will need to decide which of the other eight competencies apply to your role.

Your KSF Outline will give you the same information for the KSF. Remember that with the KSF you may be working towards your Foundation Level Outline or your Full Outline level, depending on how new you are to your role.

When you have completed this stage you can complete columns one and two on the preparation form.

2. Assess yourself

Now work on your own to identify which level of the KSF Dimensions and of the Finance Technical Competencies applies to you. Try to think of examples or "evidence" to explain why you come to your conclusions.

You can enter your thoughts into columns three and four of the preparation form.

3. Review your development priorities

You should now decide which areas you need to develop further in order to feel fully competent to do your current job. You need to consider which areas are the highest priority for you. You might also want to think about any areas you could develop which will help with your long-term career development.

Enter your thoughts into column five of the preparation form.

4. Agree your priorities with your manager

Now you can go back to your manager and discuss your thoughts. Your manager may have a different perspective to you. Together you need to agree your strengths and your development needs.

You can use the completed sections of the preparation form for the discussion with your manager.

Agreement on the priority areas will lead you into the final stage of your discussion.

5. Find a learning solution

Finally, a learning solution needs to be found for each learning need. In many cases this will be on the job learning through coaching, job rotation, project work etc. In other cases, it might mean attending a workshop or a conference or studying for a qualification. Section Three of the Portfolio will help you to find appropriate ways of developing new skills and competencies. Ideas for developing some of the KSF dimensions are included in this section. Your local finance team and your HR department will have other suggestions.

Once agreed, you can complete column six of your preparation form. This will provide you with the information you need to complete your Personal Development Plan or PDP.

Identifying your Training and Development Needs

- Preparation form to help with completing your PDP



Skill Knowledge Competence	Level required by job	Your current level	Evidence	Priority *	Action required	
KSF Dimension						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
C1 Communication						
C2 Personal and people development						
C3 Health, safety and security						
C4 Service improvement						
C5 Quality						
C6 Equality and diversity						

Finance Technical Competence					
Governance and Risk Management					
Customer Focussed Business Advice					
Using IT					

* 1 ▾ Desirable for you - 2 ▾ Mandatory - 3 ▾ Essential for your role - 4 ▾ Desirable for your organisation



Knowledge and Skills Levers for Finance Career Development

A4C Band		Communication Skills	Planning and Organising Skills	HR/ Management Skills	IT Skills	Policy Development Skills	Freedom to Act	
PROFESSIONAL GROUP	FDS							
	Finance Technicians							
	Foundation Professionals							
	Emerging Leaders							
	LEVEL 4							
	LEVEL 3							
	LEVEL 2							
	LEVEL 1							
	9	Highly complex and developed persuasive skills	Long term strategic planning	Wide management responsibilities	Complete responsibility for IT	Responsibility for policy development across the organisation	Establish goals and individual standards	
	8b-d				Designs / Develops major systems across the organisation	Responsibility for policy development in a whole directorate (or equivalent)	Individual interprets occupational guidelines	
8a		Planning broad range of programmes with a broad impact	Increasing management responsibilities for larger departments and involved in most HR activities related to own staff	Adapts and designs systems for others	Responsibility for policy development in more than 1 area			
7						Individual guided by principles and broad occupational policies		
6	Persuasive / motivational / negotiating / empathy skills	Planning complex activities which change			Propose policy changes which impact beyond own area			
5			Manages staff and/or significant responsibility for training others in finance	Regular requirement to create reports and documents		Work is managed rather than supervised		
4					Proposes policy changes in own area			
3	Tact / persuasive skills / communicating complex information	Planning work for others / work which impacts on others	Supervises staff / trains others in basic finance skills					
2	Communicating with wider groups / basic communications skills	Personal organisation / time management	Helps / advises new / less experienced staff in own area	Standard or advanced keyboard skills	Follows policies created by others and may comment on them	Required to use initiative		
1						Work tightly managed		



Knowledge and Skills Levers for Finance Career Development

A4C Band		Knowledge/Qualifications	Finance Experience
FDS PROFESSIONAL GROUP Finance Technicians Foundation Professionals Experienced Professionals Emerging Leaders LEVEL 4 LEVEL 3 LEVEL 2 LEVEL 1	9		Holds or sets budget for the Organisation
	8b-d	Strategic Management Experience and CPD	Holds or sets budget for several services
	8a		Budget holder / responsibility for Budget setting
	7	CCAB Qualified	
	6	CCAB Diploma Level	
	5	NVQ 5 Equivalent AAT Member / CCAB Certificate Level	Helps to draw up / monitor budgets and act as authorised signatory
	4	NVQ 4 Equivalent AAT Technician Level	
	3	NVQ 3 Equivalent AAT Intermediate Level	
	2	NVQ 2 Equivalent AAT Foundation Level	Handles cash / cheques Authorised signatory for small payments
	1	Basic Induction Knowledge	Careful use of resources

Follow these directions:

- 1 Take your current band
- 2 Examine each area of knowledge or skill (the columns in the diagram) and see what your band requires you to know or to do
- 3 Now look at the requirements for the band above
- 4 This will give you some clues for the focus of your personal/career development

Knowledge and Skills Levers for Finance Career Development



The diagram on the previous two pages provides a different way of looking at your longer-term career development. It is based on the Agenda for Change National Finance Profiles.

We have taken the National Finance Profile(s) for each of the Agenda for Change bands and identified the “levers” for movement up to the next band. The National Profiles are broadly representative of many (though not all) finance roles. Hence by looking at the diagram you will be able to identify which skills, knowledge and experience “levers” need to be developed in order to move up from one band to another.

Having identified what you need to do to progress within finance, you can build the right activities into your personal development plan and make sure that your PDP is truly focussed on the long term as well as the short term.

NB: It is important to note that not all jobs match with the National Finance Profiles and for these roles, you will need to study each one separately in order to determine the key development “levers”.