

What are National Occupational Standards?

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A National Occupational Standard (NOS) is a document that describes the knowledge, skills and understanding an individual needs to be competent at a job. They are statements of the standards of performance which individuals must achieve for effective performance in the workplace.

How are they created?

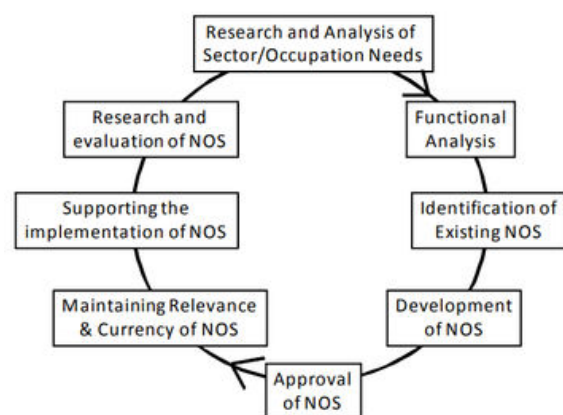
National Occupational Standards are developed by the industry, for the industry. They are produced in consultation with practitioners carrying out the roles described on a daily basis, and they avoid the need to 'reinvent the wheel'.

Every standard goes through a strict Governance and Approvals processes as defined and set out by the Standards and Frameworks Approval Panel. This is a UK-wide process, with the approval panel containing representatives from each of the four nations (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

Skills organisations, government agencies, and other organisations can update, or commission a third party to update, the standards at any time when they identify a need for it to be done and there is sufficient evidence of the need for change. This might be when a NOS no longer reflects current practice, there is a change in legislation or it becomes part of a wider



qualification review. Developing, implementing and reviewing NOS is a cyclical process.



Credit: [Guide to Developing National Occupational Standards](#), 2011

The standards were often first authored by Sector Skills Councils and these are regularly commissioned to update NOS suites.

The Workforce Development Trust is a collective of Sector Skills Councils, incorporating Skills for Justice, Skills for Health and People 1st International. We are the authors and custodians of over 4,000 published standards, and often work with sector organisations to maintain and update these.

The standards are written through collaborative expert working groups. These working groups often include representation from across government and private organisations, all regions across the UK, and third party provider or partner sectors.

For example, in the recent update of the Resilience and Emergencies suite of National Occupational Standards, there were representatives from the UK and Scottish governments, police, fire and rescue, healthcare, local authorities, energy, transport and voluntary sectors from across the UK.



How are National Occupational Standards used?

National Occupational Standards have a variety of important uses for both individuals and organisations, including:

- providing guidance for career changes and upskilling
- assisting in the development of person specifications and job descriptions
- helping build career pathways
- being used as a measure of workplace competence, and as part of an organisational workforce plans
- providing guidelines for certification and accreditation
- underpinning training design and delivery of apprenticeships, regulated qualifications and workplace learning and development.

Standards are designed so that a 'pick and mix' approach can be used – each user should select the appropriate combination of Performance and Knowledge and Understanding statements from across the NOS.

Employers use National Occupational Standards as a common language to support and facilitate consistency, standardisation, transferability and interoperability.

How are National Occupational Standards statements crafted?

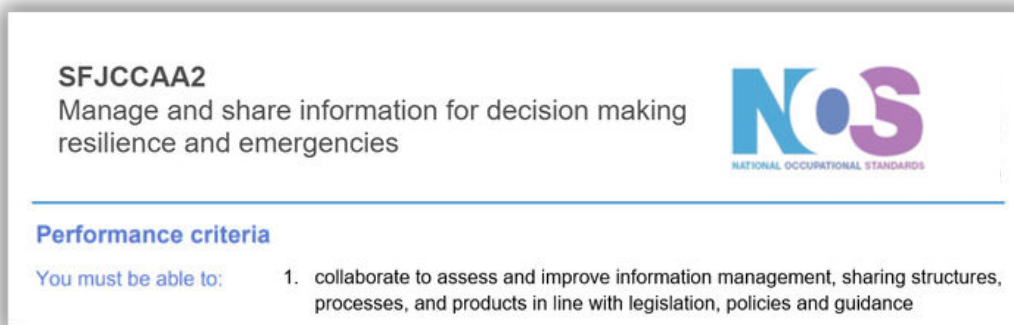
Each standard will contain two main sections.

Performance criteria

The first is on performance criteria – statements based around competence markers, often preceded by the wording ‘You must be able to’.

The performance criteria define the specific outcomes that an individual must be able to achieve in a given task or role. They serve as measurable benchmarks that assess whether the individual has successfully performed a task to the expected standard.

Statements included within a National Occupational Standard are purposefully kept clear and accessible. For example:



SFJCAA2
Manage and share information for decision making
resilience and emergencies

NOS
NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. collaborate to assess and improve information management, sharing structures, processes, and products in line with legislation, policies and guidance

Organisations can amplify National Occupational Standards (NOS) by contextualising them to align with their unique operational needs by adapting the standards to fit specific job roles, ensuring they are relevant and supportive of daily functions.


Knowledge and understanding

The second is on knowledge and understanding. The statements outline the specific knowledge and understanding that a person will need in order to meet the performance criteria, often preceded by the wording ‘You need to know’.

For example, the standard ‘SFJCAA2: Manage and share information for decision making in resilience and emergencies’, the performance statement ‘Collaborate to assess and improve information management, sharing structures, processes, and products in line with legislation, policies and guidance’, then translates into multiple knowledge and understanding statements.

For example 'internal and external partners and stakeholders, their information needs and preferences', 'how data, information, and intelligence are used to support rigorous decision-making and collaboration across the resilience cycle' and so on.

SFJCCAA2
Manage and share information for decision making
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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- 1 internal and external partners and stakeholders, their information needs and preferences
- 2 how data, information, and intelligence are used to support rigorous decision-making and collaboration across the resilience cycle
- 3 ethical and accountable approaches to information handling

There may be other sections in the standard related to glossary, scope of the standard, values, links to other NOS. These may provide extra context about where the standards apply, how it interfaces with an occupation or area of work and explain any core concepts or terminology in the standard.

For more information and to access the National Occupational Standards for Resilience & Emergencies visit: wdtrust.org.uk/nos-for-resilience-and-emergencies