



COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



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CAWST (the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology) is a nonprofit organization that provides training and consulting to organizations working directly with people in developing countries who lack access to clean water and basic sanitation. One of CAWST's core strategies is to make water knowledge common knowledge. This is achieved, in part, by developing and freely distributing education materials to make information available to those who need it most.

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Glossary

Candidate: A person using the competency framework for professional development.

Capability: The extent of someone's ability.

Capacity development: A process of growth and development through which individuals, organizations, and societies are able to obtain, strengthen, and retain their skills and knowledge.

Competence: The quality or state of being capable.

Competency: An ability or skill.

Coach: A person that helps another achieve their potential. A coach does not need to be a subject-matter expert.

Coaching: A process that aims to improve personal performance through objective assessment and observation that fosters enhanced self-awareness and awareness of others. It involves listening carefully, encouraging action, setting accountability, and following through.

Debrief: A meeting after training or work activities where team members reflect on their experience, discuss what went well, and identify opportunities for improvement. Debriefs can build understanding of challenges and priorities among staff.

Framework: The essential and supportive structures of a system. CAWST's competency framework defines competencies at three levels, and shows how to support users to assess and develop them.

Learning progression: The intentional sequencing of learning expectations across different stages of mastery. Learning progressions are the pathways learners travel as they improve their knowledge and skills.

Mentor: An advisor who works closely in partnership with someone to guide his or her learning and development. A mentor is generally a subject matter expert.

Mentoring: A process of guiding from one's own experience, or the sharing of experience in a specific area of industry or career development. Used to support the personal and professional development of an individual.

Professional development: Informal or formal learning for current workplace needs and future goals.

Rubric: A scoring tool used in education that communicates expectations to learners and outlines criteria for assessment.

Validate: To check and confirm that an individual has a specific competency.

WASH: An acronym for water, sanitation, and hygiene.

WET Centre: An acronym for Water Expertise and Training Centre. These are organizations that CAWST has worked closely with, long-term, to build their ability to provide training, technical consulting, educational resources, and networking services to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, and local government agencies in their respective regions.

Introduction

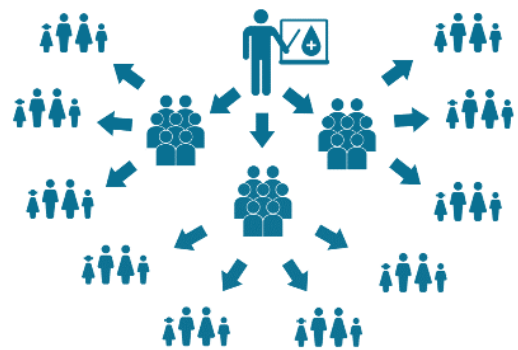
CAWST's competency framework has been designed to meet the specific professional development needs of our partners and Water Expertise and Training (WET) Centres. It also serves as a reference for individuals and organizations that would like to know more about how CAWST supports the growth of WASH professionals.

Since 2008, we have used competencies to build the skills of our staff and many other professionals working at our WET Centres. The process has been extremely successful in motivating people to pursue professional growth because it provides individuals with clear targets and a structured process for achieving them.

CAWST's competency framework has evolved over time as our understanding of how to support and track the professional development of individuals has grown. We started by creating a process to assess the skills of biosand filter technicians and track how they progressed with our support. Recognizing this as an effective process, we created similar profiles for water quality testing technicians, trainers, consultants, and community WASH promoters.

As the process grew in success and popularity, more organizations learned about our work and became interested in how they could transfer or adapt it to their context. We also became interested in understanding how we could transfer the assessment of competencies to our WET Centres. We realized that to scale up the process we needed to:

- Describe the process more clearly
- Develop more objective assessment tools
- Provide stronger guidance on how people could build skills and knowledge in each of the competencies



As a result, we created this competency framework. Our assessment tools are now structured as rubrics to allow validators and candidates to more objectively assess competencies. This new format more accurately reflects the different levels of mastery that a candidate may demonstrate for distinct competencies. In addition, the framework now includes competency development activities for each role, to provide clear guidance to candidates on how they can improve their knowledge and skills. We hope that these tools will reflect the purpose of the framework: the continual professional development of individuals, rather than the periodic validation of competency.

If you are a candidate participating in the competency process, we encourage you to use this guide to learn more about the process. If you are an individual or organization that wants to find out more about the way CAWST builds the skills of professionals, we encourage you to use and adapt the process and associated forms to suit your needs.

What are competencies?

Competency is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently. Competencies are the abilities required to perform specific tasks and express specific knowledge. Competencies can be general and transferrable, for example, “participate in feedback sessions with colleagues.” Competencies can also be technical and linked to a specific context, for example, “describe how to fix cracks, leaks and spots of poor concrete.”

Why use competencies?

People experience different moments of learning throughout their lives. This learning can take place in formal settings, such as schools and universities, but just as often, learning occurs in workplaces, homes, and in everyday activities. As this ongoing learning takes place, people develop, think, and behave in different ways. For an organization trying to fulfill its mission and vision, fostering the learning journey and capacity development of its people—management, staff, and volunteers—can be critical to achieving desired long-term impact.

Individuals and organizations can use competencies in two main ways:

1. Assess job performance and compare it against defined standards
2. Identify potential areas for professional development to improve overall performance

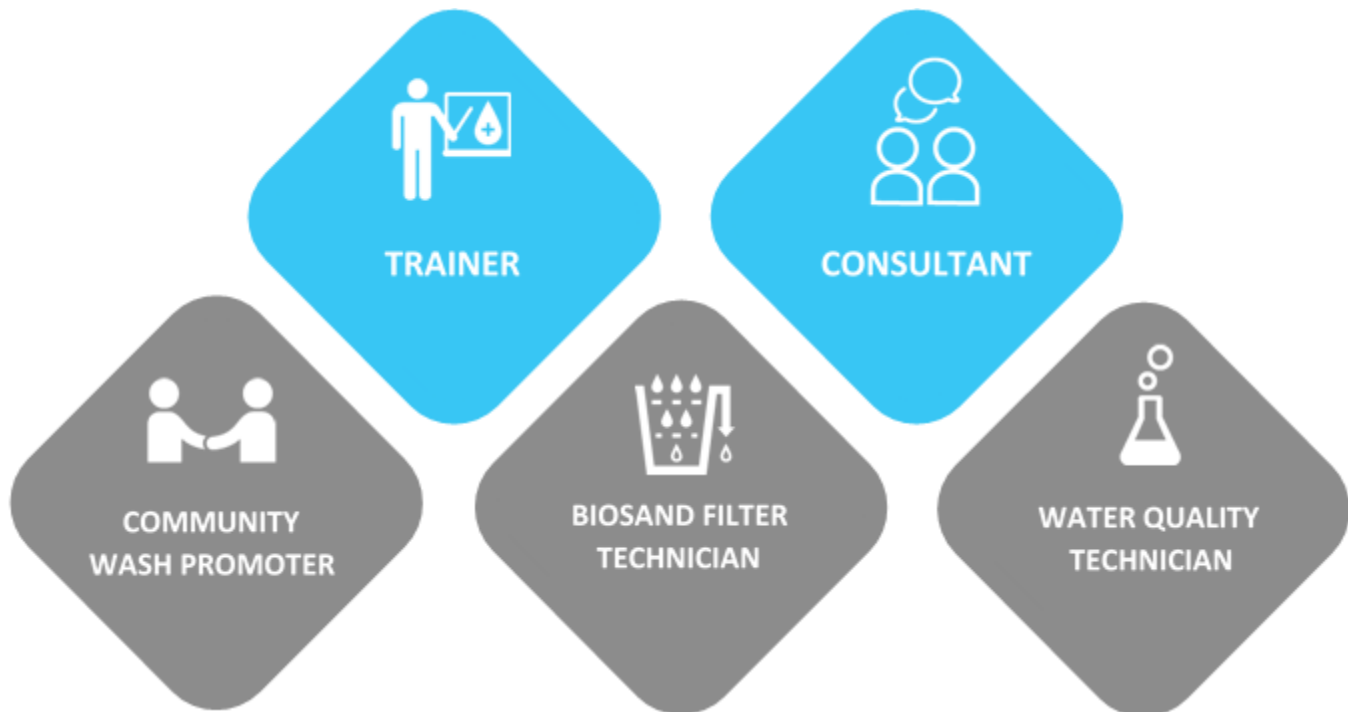
Often, these two functions complement one another; however, some organizations may prioritize one over the other. The focus of a particular competency framework will influence the components required within it, as well as the human resources needed to facilitate its use. A significant benefit of using competency frameworks is that they give users control over the pace of their learning and development. When a person is able to demonstrate that they possess a specific competency, a mentor or supervisor can validate it. Similarly, if a person already possesses specific competencies, they are able to have these immediately recognized and can focus on other areas to develop.

CAWST’s framework uses behavioural or task-based competencies in combination with knowledge components. CAWST believes that, for meaningful learning, knowledge and practice should be contextual and integrated. This combination of knowledge and practice is designed to support context-specific technical skills, as well as enabling skills such as critical thinking, reflection, communication, knowledge sharing, and leadership.

A competency framework that treats learners holistically contributes to their personal, social, and professional goals. This can help people achieve capability within their current roles, while fostering skills that are transferrable to other areas of their careers and lives.

CAWST Competency Framework

CAWST's framework contains multiple roles that people may choose to pursue. Each role has its own set of competencies and competency levels, which outline expected knowledge and behaviour for effective performance. The diagram below illustrates the roles within CAWST's competency framework. Details of these five roles are given in the Competency Roles section at the end of this framework document.



Roles in blue: CAWST will work to develop these directly with partners and WET Centers. We provide one-on-one coaching and mentoring to trainers and consultants in WET Centres and partner organizations. This is often a multi-year process of professional development.

Roles in grey: CAWST supports trainers and consultants to develop subject matter expertise in these areas. CAWST does not provide long-term coaching and mentoring to technicians and WASH promoters in these roles; however, we do encourage organizations to use our framework to support professional development for people in these roles.

For each of the roles within the competency framework, we have provided

- Knowledge and behaviours expected at each competency level
- Progressions from one competency level to the next
- Suggested activities for each competency, to support continued professional development

The organization of the competencies does not represent the order in which they should be completed. A person can work on them in any order, and can work on different competencies across all levels simultaneously. Individuals may choose which competencies to work on based on self-assessment of current skill level, or work priorities. While CAWST's

process identifies specific competencies, our vision is to build the total capability of individuals to perform, grow, and contribute toward lasting change in their communities.

The next section of this document (The Competency Process) provides detail about CAWST's four-stage competency process. This is important for candidates and validators because it describes the tools to use and the steps to follow.

The final section of this document (Competency Roles) is organized by specific role, such as trainer or consultant. It provides information about what is included in the competency groups for each role.

The Competency Process

CAWST's 4-step competency process supports the growth of individuals in their learning progression. As people increase their confidence and expand their abilities, they will begin to master new competencies. The competency process is circular, to represent this ongoing professional development. This section of the document details the specific forms to use at each stage of the competency process.

1. Begin competency process

- Receive competency framework package and tools.
- Discuss questions with a mentor or supervisor.

4. Validate progress and achievement

- Meet with a mentor or supervisor to discuss validation at a given level.
- Arrange for a mentor or supervisor to confirm competencies through observation of behavior.
- Complete required *Knowledge Questions* for the desired level with a mentor or supervisor.
- Receive validation and receive a certificate. If you are not validated, you will receive constructive feedback to continue your learning.
- Update *Learning Plan* with new goals.

2. Assess current competencies

- Complete self-assessment using the *Assessment Tool* forms.
- Identify priority competencies for continued improvement.

3. Set goals and begin development

- Set goals for professional development based on identified priority competencies.
- Complete a *Learning Plan*.
- Regularly complete *Experience Reflection* forms and *Peer Review Forms* for continual growth.


1. Begin the competency process

The first stage of the competency process is for candidates to read the framework, ask a competency mentor or supervisor any questions they have, and agree to participate in the process.

2. Assess current competencies

After agreeing to participate in the process, candidates can begin the second stage by assessing their competencies. The *Competency Assessment* tool (Form I) supports people in completing this step. The assessment forms use a rubric to structure the different competency levels (see sample rubric below). A rubric is a scoring guide often used in education to communicate expectations to learners, and to help provide the basis for assessment, reflection, and goal setting. The table below details typical components found within a competency assessment rubric. Exact styles may vary depending on the role you are working on, such as trainer or consultant.

Sample Rubric for Competency Assessment

This section will list a specific competency group		
Foundation This section describes a basic level of competency.	Intermediate This section describes a intermediate level of competency	Advanced This section describes a high level of competency
Competencies verified through observation are unmarked.		
Competencies verified through knowledge questions are marked with the following book symbol. 		

There are different ways candidates can demonstrate they possess various competencies. They can provide evidence of competency through:

- **Observation:** while performing competencies on the job, using recorded video of the competencies being performed, or during an exercise or simulation with colleagues.
- **Knowledge questions:** in-person discussions where the candidate explains specific content and the validator assesses relevant knowledge.
- **Self-reflection forms:** regular completion of experience records, peer review forms, or learning plans.

As candidates read each competency, they should think of the skills and knowledge they can demonstrate. They can evaluate their current ability against the described competency and decide if their skill in that area meets the described criteria. If they feel satisfied, and if they can verify competency either by demonstration or by answering knowledge questions, they should mark the competency as complete. A mentor or supervisor will help review and validate the

competencies. Once candidates have completed all competencies listed under one of the three levels, they can receive certification at that level to recognize their achievement.

3. Set goals and begin development

The third stage of the competency process begins with setting learning goals for development. Based on their assessment results, candidates will have identified strengths and areas for improvement. The *Learning Plan* and *Competency Development Activities* forms will help guide them in establishing goals and continuing the learning journey within a selected competency role.

Learning Plans (Form II)

In their *Learning Plans*, candidates will:

- Identify learning goals based on a competency assessment
- Identify experiences needed to develop those learning goals
- Describe any support they need

To help candidates choose experiences and support for their *Learning Plans*, the *Competency Development Activities* form provides suggested actions.

Competency Development Activities (Form III)

As candidates fill out their *Learning Plans*, they can refer to the relevant *Competency Development Activities* for the role they are working on. These will help candidates select activities for professional development. The lists are a mix of practical and academic suggestions. They are not exhaustive, and candidates are encouraged to add other activities to the lists and to their *Learning Plans*.

Using the *Competency Development Activities* forms, candidates will:

- Review the suggested activities based on competency development needs and priorities
- Select specific activities to help develop priority competency areas
- Include selected activities within their *Learning Plans*

Peer Feedback Forms (Form IV)

Peer Feedback Forms support candidates in both giving and receiving feedback. They also promote a culture where people learn from each other. The form details a role's specific competency areas, and is a quick and informal assessment tool. Forms can be used by individuals or in a group.

Name:
Date:

Form III: Learning Plan

This learning plan will help you to plan and guide your professional development of specific competencies. Refer to the "Developing Your Competencies" forms for suggested development activities to include here, and update your learning plan regularly as you achieve your goals.

What competency do I want to improve?	What activities will I do to improve this competency?	What support is required?
Goal 1		
Goal 2		
Goal 3		

Notes:

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Form II: Developing Your Competencies

This tool describes ways in which you can work to improve specific competencies. The suggested activities are a starting place for trainers looking to improve their competencies, and are not exhaustive. You should seek out additional resources and opportunities to continue your own professional development. Some suggested activities are more practical, while others are more academic. You may wish to check off the different development activities you have tried as a way of tracking your progress, and add others to expand the list over time.

Professional Practice

1 Accuracy of Information

Suggested development activities:

- Before presenting, make a list of questions which might arise and think of answers to them
- Report information as accurately as you are able
- Practice slowing down. Sometimes people make mistakes when they are rushed
- Admit when you do not know something
- Read the participant and trainer manuals to ensure understanding of training topics
- Read references from Trainer Essentials to increase your depth of knowledge on specific content areas
- Seek out books, papers, and journal articles on related content and spend time reviewing them
- Subscribe to emails from the WASH, health, and education sectors and stay up-to-date on new developments and trends
- Other:

2 Relationship building

Suggested development activities:

- Attend conferences, workshops hosted by other organizations, and look for opportunities to network
- Reach out to participants during breaks and at lunch
- Make a point to ask participants about their goals and challenges on their projects or programs
- Find shared interests or objectives with participants
- Maintain on-going dialogue with previous workshop participants and clients
- Find a mentor and ask them to help you with your professional development goals
- Other:

CAWST

Candidates can ask a peer, a group of peers, or a supervisor to observe them in their chosen role, and provide feedback. *Peer Feedback Forms* give the peer(s) or supervisor an overview of required competency areas, and a way to take quick notes for discussion afterwards.



Name of Trainer: Reviewer	Session(s): Date: ___/___/___	Professional Development Scale		Reviewer Comments
		1 = Requires further education and practice; 3 = Action is a consistent part of training; (1,2,3,4,5A)	2 = Requires further coaching and practice; 4 = Action is a natural part of training; (1,2,3,4,5A)	
		Self	Reviewer	
Preparation and organization Prepares materials and logistics in advance. Creates/prepares effective group sets. Adapts to meet space and content demands.				
Lesson plan and timing Follows lesson plans. Good time management, able to adapt to most participant needs.				
Learning environment Creates a safe, comfortable learning space. Encourages participant interactions and team building.				
Building relationships and motivation Motivating, energetic, enthusiastic.				
Participatory and relevant learning Inclusive and engaging for all, encourages sharing of experience and knowledge, engages different learning styles.				
Effective questioning and think time Appropriate and effective questions to check understanding. Sufficient think time (3 seconds).				
Active listening Appropriate eye contact, clarifying questions, summarizing.				
Verbal presentation skills Tone, speed, articulation, pronunciation				
Non-verbal presentation skills Gestures, body language, posture				
Clear instructions Gives instructions in order, not too much information at once.				
Responding to participants Responds appropriately to wrong/long answers, maintain topic questions, etc. recognizes the learning needs of the participant.				
Accuracy of information Able to respond accurately to technical and academic questions regarding the training subject. Acknowledges knowledge limits.				
Barriers to participation and inclusivity Identifies & addresses individual systemic barriers to participation Gender, language, literacy, culture, identity.				
Trainer feedback and support Feedback is specific, with clear instructions (context, behaviour, impact, next steps, support).				

In the *Peer Feedback Forms*, the candidate's peer(s) or supervisor will:

- Record observed competency areas and rank them according to a development scale
- Make comments with specific feedback for the candidate
- Share feedback and discuss recommendations with the candidate

Feedback from these forms can be incorporated into debriefs or as part of an ongoing professional development practice. Candidates should receive feedback open-mindedly rather than defensively, and incorporate key recommendations into their *Learning Plans*.

Experience Records (Form V)



Training Experience Record

Name:

Workshop Date(s):

Workshop Title:

Participant Description:

Lessons I facilitated:

What I did well:

What I didn't do well and how I will improve it:

Improvements I made since the last time I trained:

Other comments (something new I tried, something I want to try next time, something I want to remember about the workshop, personal reflection, etc.):

Experience Records are self-reflection and tracking forms that vary by role. Candidates will use them to record information or reflections on activities they undertake. Using *Experience Records* regularly can help people improve their practice, track data, and monitor their progress.

While specific *Experience Records* will vary, candidates will use them to:

- List different activities they have completed
- Describe what they did well
- Describe what they could have done better
- Explain how they have made progress over time

Video Reflection Forms (Form VI)

Video Reflection Forms are used in different situations, depending on role. For example, trainers can use these forms to reflect on their practice for improvement, or they can record themselves for the validation of specific competencies when direct observation is not possible.

To use *Video Reflection Forms*, candidates will:

- Deliver training sessions, activities or a workshop
- Record their practice on video
- Reflect on their practice and write down their observations and learning
- Submit as evidence for validation, if desired.

Video Reflection

Workshop

Workshop title:

Date:

Location:

Participants

Number of participants: men: women:

Level of education:

Familiarity with topic:

1. What did you do to prepare for teaching this lesson?

2. Did you adapt the lesson from the original? If so, how?

4. Validate progress and achievement

The fourth stage of the competency process is to seek validation of existing competencies, and, if demonstrable, to confirm them and move on to new development goals. To assist with this process, a competency validator (mentor or supervisor) should refer to a candidate's assessment results and priority competency areas.


Observation

A validator needs to observe a candidate's competencies to verify them. To do this, a validator can refer to the candidate's assessment rubric, observe the candidate's behaviour, and jointly decide with the candidate which of the described competencies they possess. There are different ways candidates can demonstrate competencies.

Candidates can provide evidence of behavioural competency through observation:

- While performing competencies on the job
- Using recorded video of the competencies being performed
- During an exercise or simulation

Knowledge or Theory Questions

Theory or knowledge-based competencies (marked with a book symbol ) must be validated through a discussion with a competency mentor or supervisor. Each knowledge competency in the framework corresponds to a specific question, which validators will use to assess a candidate's understanding of the topic and their depth of knowledge, and to confirm if the answer meets the expected criteria. To provide consistency for candidates in the assessment of knowledge-based competencies, validators will refer to a guide that lists expected responses.

Self-Reflection Forms

Candidates can use different self-reflection forms to create a portfolio to demonstrate specific competencies. By regularly completing and updating different forms such as *Experience Records*, *Peer Feedback Forms*, and

Learning Plans, a candidate is able to create a body of evidence to demonstrate growth across a variety of competencies within their professional practice. This portfolio of evidence can be used to validate the consistency of competencies in place of regular observation.

Validators

In CAWST’s competency framework, validators are typically CAWST staff who have facilitated the competency process with WET Centres and training partners. A validator can be either a CAWST International Training Advisor (ITA) or an International Education and Training Advisor (IETA). However, validators may also be supervisors, managers, or trainers of an organization responsible for facilitating the competency process with others. CAWST recommends that anyone acting as a validator obtain certification in all three levels of the competency framework for that role.

Validators should also possess:

Knowledge of the	Skills in	Attributes including
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency process • Reasons for developing competencies • Different ways of assessing competencies and when to use them • Importance of self-assessment • Ethics required of a validator • Principles of adult education • Record keeping requirements • Importance of confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing competence • Managing records • Communication • Interpersonal relationships • Providing effective feedback • Ethical behaviour • Completing forms correctly • Advising candidates during a meeting • Providing feedback • Observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Humility • Respect toward others • Respect for confidentiality • Tact • Desire to help others • Friendliness • Approachability

Competency Roles

This section outlines the five roles within CAWST's competency framework and the competency groups for each role. The competency groups list the specific skills, knowledge, and performance expectations for each role. These reflect the competencies we have identified as necessary for certain roles during our work with our partners and WET Centres.



ROLE 1: Trainer

There are five categories of competencies for trainers: professional practice, training methodology, training delivery, inclusion, and logistics. Within each category, CAWST has identified specific competencies at Foundation, Intermediate, and Advanced levels.



Trainer Competency Groups

Professional Practice

Accuracy of information
Relationship building
Professional development

Debriefing and feedback
Mentoring and coaching



Training Methodology

Relevant learning
Participatory education
Learning styles

Lesson planning
Learning environment
Learning progression



Training Delivery

Body language
Active listening
Effective questioning
Giving clear instructions

Voice quality
Responding to participants
Training with others
Group management



Inclusion

Gender
Culture

Language
Barriers to participation



Logistics

Preparation and organization
Time management

Problem-solving
Reporting



ROLE 2: Biosand Filter Technician

The role of biosand filter technician includes competencies related to the construction, installation, and quality control of biosand filters. This role is currently being updated, and will be publically available by the end of summer 2017.

ROLE 3: Community WASH Promoter

The role of community WASH promoter includes competency groups in core WASH knowledge and skills, household water treatment, behavior change, and working with households and communities effectively. This role is currently being updated, and will be publically available in the fall of 2017.

ROLE 4: Consultant

The role of consultant includes competency groups in interpersonal and administrative skills, client relationship management, WASH technical information, and project implementation. This role is currently being updated, and will be publically available in 2018.

ROLE 5: Water Quality Technician

The role of water quality technician includes competency groups related to microbiological and chemical testing of water, quality control, and analysis. This role is currently being updated, and will be publically available in 2018.

Please contact CAWST for additional information or if you have questions about any of the above competency roles.