

# LANTRA

Raising skills, backing business

## **National Occupational Standards (NOS) Quality Criteria**

The Quality Criteria for developing NOS have been developed by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) in partnership with Sector Skills Councils (SSC) and other standard setting organisations. This now places the emphasis and responsibility for quality assurance of National Occupational Standards (NOS) with SSCs and other standard setting bodies.

The quality criteria does not just focus on what is required to produce quality NOS. They take a broader, whole-system approach designed to deliver the right NOS to meet the needs of sectors and occupations across the UK.

This document provides a summary of the quality criteria. The quality criteria are divided into 9 sections which are shown below:

### **1 - Responsibility for National Occupational Standards**

NOS may only be developed and maintained by recognised standards setting organisations and they are required to ensure the NOS meet all the quality criteria. The people working on NOS must be competent in the activities they are carrying out, or developing their competence under supervision. NOS training is now available for all SSC staff.

### **2 - Analysis of Sector/Occupational Needs**

Each standards setting organisation must gather and maintain up-to-date UK-wide labour market information about the sector it covers. They are also required to prepare a business case for developing new or revising NOS and make sure that a representative sample of employers, stakeholders from across the UK are involved.

### **3 - Functional Analysis (job activities)**

NOS must come from an analysis of the functions (activities) which are carried out in order to achieve the key purpose of the occupation. This functional analysis must identify all the key activities which need to be carried out, by an individual, to achieve the key purpose of the job.

#### **4 - Identification of Existing NOS and Common Functions**

Prior to any developments of NOS, work must be carried out to identify NOS which may already exist or are under development. This will involve working with other sectors/occupations where similar or the same functions are carried out e.g. customer service

#### **5 - Specifications of National Occupational Standards**

NOS must specify the standard of performance an individual must achieve when carrying out a function in the workplace, together with the underpinning knowledge. The NOS will be presented in a standard template and must contain the following mandatory parts:

- Reference number
- NOS title which is unique, concise, clearly and accurately describes the function
- NOS overview which clearly and concisely describes what the NOS is about, not a summary of the content
- Performance criteria stating the standard of performance required
- The knowledge and understanding which is essential for the effective performance of the function
- Technical data to aid users and developers to identify the version and validity of the NOS.

There are also optional criteria which may be included:

- Scope/range that have a critical impact on the quality of performance required
- Values which an individual is expected to demonstrate when performing the functions e.g. respect confidentiality
- Behaviours these tend to be generic and are often linked to employability skills e.g. make time available to support others
- Skills which may specify the professional, technical, managerial or interpersonal skills required
- Glossary
- Links to other NOS.

The NOS must be written in such a way that they can be used in every part of the UK where the function is carried out and reflect current practice. They must be free from direct or indirect unfair discrimination against individual or groups of individuals.

#### **6 - Importing and Tailoring National Occupational Standards**

Where there is an existing NOS which accurately describes the standard of performance required of individuals, this NOS may be imported into the suite. In some cases the NOS can be tailored to make the NOS more meaningful for the occupation which is importing it e.g. rewriting the overview section or rewording performance criteria or knowledge.

## **7 - Approving and Maintaining National Occupational Standards**

Standards setting organisations check to make sure all the quality criteria have been met and then submit the NOS for approval. It is the responsibility of the standards setting organisation to keep the NOS under review to keep them current.

## **8 - Supporting the Implementation of NOS**

Standards setting organisations should plan how to ensure NOS are used by stakeholders in its sector for business and skills development. They will also make the NOS and NOS products available on websites or through other media.

## **9 - Evaluating National Occupational Standards**

Standard setting organisations must gather information about who is using NOS and NOS based products and for what purpose. They are also required to collate feedback from users to feed into reviews and develop indicators to measure the impact of NOS.

The full document can be found on the UKCES website at:

[www.ukces.org.uk/server.php?change=SearchDisplay&search=NOS+quality+criteria&x=48&y=12](http://www.ukces.org.uk/server.php?change=SearchDisplay&search=NOS+quality+criteria&x=48&y=12)