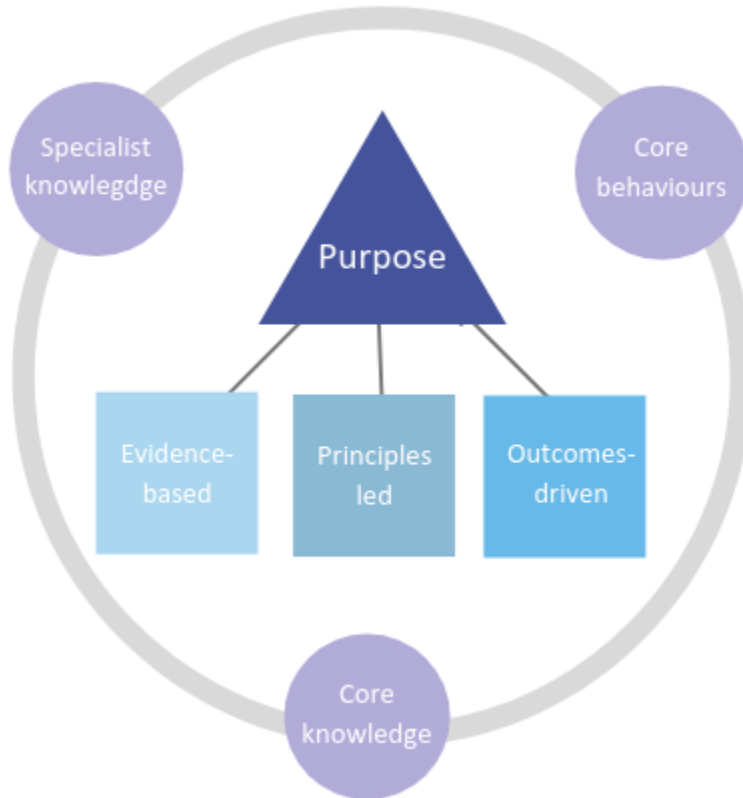


## Annex 7B – Guidance to the competence framework

# General principles for construction professionals and workers



This competency framework has been developed taking into account the following principles.

### **Purpose**

The fundamental purpose of all construction professionals and those working on higher risk residential buildings is to deliver better living and working environment for the public. This includes procuring, designing, creating and maintaining buildings that are safe for those who live and work in them. Everyone connected to building procurement, design, construction and management has a role to play in delivering this purpose, which is why it sits at the heart of our competence framework.

### **Principles**

We expect those involved in construction to do what's right by following three key principles: buildings matter – people matter – professionalism matters.

Our work should be outcomes driven. This means that we will champion better living and working environments by making a positive difference on every level – personally and professionally. This includes behaving ethically and reflecting on individual behaviors.

Our work is evidence-led. This adds weight to professional judgment by supporting building construction through diverse sources such as research, gathering data and listening to our stakeholders.

Our principles of competence setting out what we expect from each other are well understood and the basis on which we undertake our work.

### **Core behaviours**

These are our ways of thinking and acting which makes us effective in our work. Core behaviours must include valuing people, inclusivity, ethical practice, passion for learning and situational decision making which is an awareness of how the context should inform the judgements we make. Our behavior always reflects the ethics of our profession in relation to the decisions we make.

### **Core knowledge**

Our core behaviours are supported by core knowledge. Regardless of our role, sector or specialism, these are the things we need to know to consider ourselves suitably expert in construction to be able to work in the public interest.

### **Specialist knowledge**

The individual frameworks for specialist disciplines set out the specialist knowledge required to enable individuals to work on higher risk residential buildings.

The following sections set out competence framework for higher risk residential buildings. However, we believe the above apply to the construction profession.

## 0.1 Introduction

This competence framework has been developed in response to recommendations set out in the Final Report of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

The report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 5.1: The construction sector and fire safety sector should:

- a. demonstrate more effective leadership in relation to developing a responsible approach to delivering building safety and integrity;
- b. work with other sectors to learn and translate good practice and implement it within the sector;
- and c. develop continuous improvement approaches to competence levels.

Recommendation 5.2:

a. The professional and accreditation bodies working within the construction and fire safety sectors should continue the work started in response to the interim report and present a coherent proposal to government within one year. As a minimum, this proposal should cover the role and remit of an overarching body to provide oversight of competence requirements and support the delivery of competent people working on HRRBs, including:

- the professional bodies, professions and disciplines in scope;
- its membership and governance;
- its role in receiving, agreeing and monitoring the individual competence frameworks for those bodies, professions and disciplines in scope for individuals within their membership or on their register, and/or whether a single competence framework for professional bodies in scope should be established;
- its role in agreeing and monitoring accreditation and reaccreditation, and the period within which the competence of individuals should be reassessed and reaccredited;
- its role in establishing a method for demonstrating or proving competence;
- how the correct balance between construction sector skills and fire safety skills should be balanced; and
- whether the competence requirements for those working on HRRBs should also be extended to cover other multi-occupancy residential buildings and to institutional residential buildings.

b. Progress should be monitored by government, with the professional and accreditation bodies providing government with quarterly progress reports.

c. If government does not consider that the proposed approach provides the necessary assurance to the JCA, or there is evidence that the fragmented approach to the oversight of competence will continue, then government should mandate a body to establish the competence levels required and oversee its implementation.

Recommendation 5.3: Relevant parties, along with the relevant professional bodies, should:

- a. Continue to work together to develop a new common approach and competence framework which meets the requirements of the new regulatory framework and the new skills required of Building Standards Inspectors when working on HRRBs, and those offering consultancy and verification services to duty-holders.
- b. This framework should apply to all Building Standards Inspectors whether they are LABS Inspectors and part of the JCA or AIs offering their services to Building Standards or to duty-holders.
- c. Consider whether these competence requirements for Building Standards Inspectors working on HRRBs, and AIs, should also be extended to cover those working on other multi-occupancy residential buildings and institutional residential buildings.

Recommendation 5.4: Relevant parties should work together, along with the relevant professional bodies, to develop and define a robust, comprehensive and coherent system for:

- a. the competence requirements for the role of building safety manager of HRRBs; and
- b. the remit of this role in introducing and overseeing the process by which residents in HRRBs would be able to access fire safety awareness training.

## 0.2 Objectives of the framework

We have set out a framework for the assessment of the necessary competencies for architects and designers, referred to as “building designers”, working on higher risk residential buildings. Its purpose is to ensure that building designers working on these buildings have the skills and knowledge to undertake their work in an effective way that ensures building safety.

It can also be used to:

- support the development of qualifications for architectural and designer training or academic courses
- assist in assessment of candidate suitability for building designer roles
- support building designers to develop their own career and personal development plans
- revalidate ongoing competency of building designers on a periodic basis.

The framework sets out the core competencies required by any person undertaking work as a building designer and sets out the level of competence expected of these professionals. Typically, building designers may include the following roles:

- Architects
- Design technicians
- Building surveyors
- Architectural technologists
- Architectural technicians
- Engineers where not covered by other competency frameworks
- Building Engineers
- Any others persons deemed appropriate by the Overarching Competence Body

The differing levels of competency are defined through a mapping exercise which reflects the different level of decision-making responsibility relevant to that role. Further information is provided in the following sections:

**Section 1 – Using the Competency Framework** sets out how to use this competency framework.

**Section 2 – Building designer competence framework for higher risk residential building** sets out the framework for assessment and validation and provides guidance on how suitable competence may be demonstrated.

Once the role of the Principal Designer in relation to HRRB is more clearly defined it will be necessary to consider how this framework may need to be amended to reflect that role, or whether a separate specific framework for principal designers should be developed using this framework as a base.

### 0.3 Scope

This framework is relevant to any person acting as a building designer in relation to the construction, alteration, extension or maintenance of higher risk residential buildings. It may also include specialist design professionals (such as façade designers) who have responsibility for the design of significant components of a building.

In this context, the role of the building designer is understood to be a person who provides services relating to the architectural planning, layout, specification and coordination of a building including its design and construction or maintenance. Other members of a design team who undertake similar functions (such as engineers or fire engineers) will normally be covered by other competency frameworks.

### 0.4 Roles and responsibilities relevant to this competence framework

In principle we believe that competence for building designers should be managed at two levels: Building Designers leading on HRRB projects should be independently verified as competent against this framework, with all others working under the Building Designers supervision internally assessed and audited against the same framework.

This is the practical framework against which industry can deliver effectively. MHCLG may wish to consider the extent that the assessment of competence which is not independently assessed (i.e. those working under supervision of the Building Designer) is audited or reported to the JCA for HRRB.

This could be achieved by imposing a legal duty on any business offering building design services to ensure design work on an HRRB is led by a person independently validated as a competent Building Designer. Building designers will then have a subsidiary duty to manage and take responsibility for assuring the competence of those working under their supervision on higher risk residential buildings.

In practice the responsibility and competence of those working under the Building Designer will vary depending on their role within the design team, experience and seniority. There should be an explicit duty on the Building Designer (both as a legal entity and as an independently validated person managing an HRRB project) to check and audit the competence of those working under their supervision.

The Building Designer or their employer will therefore be required to use suitable competence assessment techniques to map out specific responsibilities and skill sets and ensure people are working within the safe limits of their competence.

These assessment processes should use the different levels of competence described in section 1.3 of this document mapped against the Building Designer Competency Framework.

Building Designers may also undertake the Principal Designer role yet to be defined by MHCLG, as well as the Principal Designer role as defined by the CDM Regulations. These are additional competencies which are not covered by this framework at this time.

## 0.5 Eligibility, qualifications and prior learning

Any person wishing to be independently assessed against this framework should:

- Be a current full member in good standing of a relevant construction professional organisation
- Be required to have in place a suitable programme for continuing professional development (CPD)
- Be subject to and adhere to a Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures
- Have suitable academic qualifications in a construction-based subject
- Have the specified or relevant experience in more complicated building projects

The baseline minimum standard of prior learning for a competent Building Designer to be independently validated against this framework will be a level 6 Degree (or equivalent) with at least 2 years post qualification experience relating to HRRB or similar more complicated buildings.

## 0.6 Definitions

Building designer

Principal Designer

Lead Designer

Roleholder

Dutyholder

[To be completed by Building Safety Competence Committee (BSCC)]

# SECTION 1

## 1.0 Using the Architects and Building Designer Competence Framework

### 1.1 What is competence?

Competence is the ability to put skills, experience and knowledge into practice in order to perform a job in effective and efficient manner to an established standard.

Building designers working on higher risk residential buildings must demonstrate that they have the competencies necessary to ensure that design and construction of the building which they are working on, or over which they have authority protects life safety effectively throughout the building life cycle.

Building designers must have the key competencies relating to fire safety, structural safety, public health and building safety and be able to apply these principles consistently and effectively in practice.

### 1.2 Who assesses competence?

[This should be aligned with BSCC structure, process and accreditation once determined]

This framework sets out additional competencies specific to higher risk residential buildings. This framework and its associated assessment and associated validation process will be approved by the Building Safety Competence Committee (BSCC) to ensure that it meets the required standard.

Assessment of individuals to meet the competence framework is undertaken by independently verified professional bodies or suitably accredited bodies whose procedures for assessing competence have been approved by the BSCC or an independent body approved by the BSCC.

As set out in section 0.5 of this guide, building designers must already be a member of a professional body with relevant qualifications and experience prior to seeking assessment against this framework.

### 1.3 Using the competence framework

[This should be aligned with BSCC structure, process and accreditation once determined]

The way in which competence is assessed will be determined or approved by the BSCC. The Building Designer competence framework is set out in section 3. Competencies are structured under 5 key headings:

- A Technical knowledge and understanding
- B Assessment of design, process, systems services and products
- C Responsibility, management and leadership
- D Effective communication and inter-personal skills
- E Professional Commitment

Core competencies are listed under each heading. These competencies provide typical scope and knowledge relevant to that competence that will be expected. The third column of the framework sets out the specific competencies that candidates should be able to demonstrate and the fourth column explains common ways that the competencies could be evidenced.

The level of knowledge, understanding and skill associated with each competency varies depending on the relevant level of responsibility against which a candidate is being assessed and are described as follows:

**Level 1 - Awareness**

Has an understanding of the competency, its relevance to own work and any key inter-relationships

**Level 2 – Appreciation**

Has sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to apply the competence under the management of a more senior professional

**Level 3- Detailed knowledge**

Has all essential knowledge and understanding to be able to act with autonomy in making key decisions and delivering a broad range of outcomes relevant to the competency

**Level 4 - Comprehensive Knowledge**

Has comprehensive and in-depth knowledge and the skills required to effectively make complex decisions and judgements in relation to the competency.

For the Building Designer leading on an HRRB project, competence will be expected at Level 4 across all the core competencies. The level of knowledge of those working under supervision of the Building Designer should then be mapped and audited relative to their role.

## 1.4 Validation and re-validation

The accreditation and reaccreditation process should comply with requirements as set out by the BSCC [as yet to be determined].

In principle, Building Designers need to be assessed in a structured manner in order to be validated and registered as competent to work on higher risk residential buildings. This validation process should be undertaken by a body independent of the business for which the building designer works and be either a professional body recognized by the BSCC, or a suitable accredited organisation.

Accredited Building Designers should undergo a reaccreditation process every five years to ensure that:

- The scope of work for which they need to be competent has not changed, and if it has to reflect this in their reaccreditation appraisal
- They have maintained their competence in relation to the work they undertake
- They have developed or plan to develop new competencies where necessary.

The validation and revalidation process for accredited Building Designers will be overseen by an independent validation panel consisting of at least two persons at the same level or higher seniority and with relevant experience in the same sector.



Where building designers are working under the supervision of an independently validated Building Designer, their competence should be assessed (either internally or by third parties) by a panel composed of suitably experienced peers. This can include line managers within the same business, or for those professionals working in smaller organisations suitably qualified peers from another organisation.

The validation and revalidation process should as a minimum consist of:

### **Part 1 - Submission of records**

- An updated competence self-assessment;
- An accompanying report setting out relevant experience gained over the preceding two to five-year period;
- CPD records and information on any additional qualifications or career development activity in at least the previous two years;
- A summary list of the work undertaken over the preceding two years providing brief details of the scale, nature and value of projects in that timescale;
- References or testimonials from professionals or clients relating to the competencies.

### **Part 2 - A Competency based interview**

An interview should be held and should use a structured competency-based approach utilising the information submitted to test key areas of the building designer's competence. The interview should consist of:

- A presentation followed by Q&A based on the report as submitted with the application.
- A structured interview which tests as a minimum
  - All category A competencies.
  - All Category B competencies.
  - At least one question each relating to a competency from categories C, D and E.
  -

The outcome of the validation or revalidation process should be:

- A report confirming competence; or
- A report setting out areas for development, (with accreditation subject to submission and approval of a suitable personal development plan); or
- A report identifying areas for further development in terms of scope or competence.
- 

Where the applicant succeeds in demonstrating competence the professional body will pass their details on to the BSCC who will add their details to the HRRB register.

## **1.5 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

[Suitable requirements for undertaking and monitoring / evidencing CPD to maintain and develop competence should be introduced in line with requirements established by the BSCC]

All building designers working on higher risk residential buildings must comply with the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements of their relevant professional or accrediting body. They are responsible for demonstrating their continuing competence to work on higher risk residential buildings.

## 1.6 Personal Career Development

Building designers at all grades should:

- Review their competence self-assessment annually
- Identify development needs; and
- Undertake relevant continuing professional development to develop or maintain existing skills.

This could be by meeting a set of prescribed objectives, or through setting a personal development plan.

## 1.7 Complaints, disciplinary and appeals

[A suitable mechanism to deal with complaints or concerns about the competence of building designers will need to be in place in order to ensure that any person determined to be no longer competent is removed from the register].

Where concerns are raised about the competence of a building designer in relation to work on higher risk residential buildings, the professional or accrediting body should in the first instance deal with that complaint through their disciplinary procedures.