

MANAGING COMPETENCE FOR DUCTWORK INSTALLATION ACTIVITIES – UPSKILLING

Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG)

Sector Led Group 10 – Installation & Maintenance (10.2 Engineering Services)

Ductwork Installer Competence Group (DICG)

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The Engineering & Building Services Skills Alliance (EBSSA) brings together leading organisations from across the engineering, building services and environmental technologies sectors to collaborate on shared workforce training and skills priorities. A coalition of Actuate UK members together with BEAMA, CIPHE, TICA-ACAD and MCS, EBSSA provides a credible voice for skills across all engineering and building services.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the wake of the Grenfell Tower fire, a comprehensive review of building regulations and legislation was carried out to deliver the recommendations made in Dame Judith Hackitt's report 'Building a Safety Future'. This triggered change in both primary and secondary legislation which further embedded the requirement for demonstration of individual competence and organisational capability for those carrying out work in the built environment. The Industry Competence Steering Group, a formal sub-committee of the Building Safety Regulator's statutory Industry Competence committee, is tasked with supporting employers to define and address approaches to demonstrating competence within their areas.

Within this structure, the Ductwork Installer Competence Group (DICG) was formed to lead the development and implementation of individual competence frameworks related to ductwork installation (installation of industrial and commercial ventilation, fume extract, fire resisting and smoke control ductwork, fire and smoke dampers, and associated components).

The first phase of DICG's work, in relation to basic installer competence, was published by the Engineering and Building Services Skills Authority (EBSSA) in Spring 2026. This document presents work from the second phase of DICG's work, related to upskilling installers in other technical activities and towards supervisory roles. This includes competence requirements for work site coordination, inspection & pre-commissioning, commissioning, decommissioning and aspects of inspection and maintenance. Following a period of consultation, finalised documentation will be approved through the Building Services Engineering Skills Partnership Committee signalling formal adoption by industry. Subsequent implementation activities will then be led by the relevant skills body.

DICG has discussed existing challenges in defining and measuring competence, highlighting key recommendations for improvement. These include alignment with revised qualification structures, ensuring consistency of training and assessment, and integration with the devolved nations.

A functional map and framework of competencies has been set out to create a benchmark for competence. This breaks down discrete upskilling activities and sets standards for these in terms of skills, knowledge, experience & behaviour, in line with the requirements of BS 8670-1. That statements are also mapped back to other relevant standards and frameworks, such as the BSE Skills NOS.

Proposed routes to competence, including evidence requirements for both initial demonstration and validation, and demonstration of currency of competence and revalidation have been set out. This includes routes for new entrant, job mover and experienced worker. These are based around achievement of relevant qualifications and ongoing evidencing of experience and behaviour in line with the framework of competencies.

It is acknowledged that additional activity will be required in order to move towards this future state, and sets out an outline implementation plan. Proposed actions will be integrated into the phase 1 implementation plan to create a coordinated approach across ductwork installation.

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	6
1 Scope	9
1.1 Occupational area	9
1.2 Purpose	9
1.3 Occupational relevance	9
1.4 Limitations and exclusions	10
1.5 Building types	10
1.6 Geographical scope.....	10
2 Background & context	11
2.1 Links to phase 1 work	11
2.2 Activities identified	11
2.3 Existing occupational standards	11
2.4 Existing qualifications and assessment programmes	12
2.5 Industry training	13
2.6 Manufacturers' training	13
2.7 Initial validation	13
2.8 Currency of competence and ongoing validation	14
2.9 Devolved nations consistency.....	14
3 Functional map and framework of competencies	15
3.1 Development background	15
3.2 The functional map and framework of competencies	15
3.3 Mapping to other standards and frameworks	15
4 The standard for competence.....	16
4.1 Target audiences.....	16
4.2 Preparing to evidence competence.....	16
4.3 Collecting evidence of competence	16
4.4 Validating competence	16
4.5 Revalidation of competence	17
4.6 Proposed routes to competence	17
4.7 Relationship to organisational capability	18
4.8 Ongoing monitoring and maintenance	18
5 Implementing the standard	19
 Appendix 1 – Consolidated list of recommendations.....	20
Appendix 2 – Terms & definitions.....	21
Appendix 3 – Bibliography	23

i INTRODUCTION

i.1 Drivers for change

In 2017, the Grenfell Tower fire created shockwaves throughout the built environment sector and generated a great deal of focus on deficiencies in both construction practices and the capability of the construction workforce.

It was recognised in the report of Dame Judith Hackitt, 'Building a Safer Future: Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety' (also known as the Hackitt Report) that a simple, more effective regulatory framework would be required to deliver change. This included moving to an 'outcomes-based' model, rather than a prescriptive rules-based model reliant on complex and detailed guidance. To achieve this, competent people who are capable of understanding their responsibilities for safety & integrity and thinking for themselves are required, alongside capable organisations which put individuals in a position where they can act competently.

The Building Safety Act 2022 (the Act) has introduced a new regulatory regime which puts a legal requirement to demonstrate competence front and centre, to directly address this issue. The Act, together with supporting secondary legislation sets a general requirement for competence at both individual and organisational levels:

- Organisational capability – Organisations must have the organisational capability to perform their functions. Organisational capability is defined within Building Regulations as having the appropriate management, policies, procedures, systems and resources in place to ensure that individuals under the control of the organisation comply with relevant regulations and that those in development are appropriately supervised
- Individual competence – Any person carrying building or design work must possess the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours (SKEB) necessary

i.2 Addressing organisational capability and individual competence

Organisational capability is currently measured through various third-party certification schemes, or through trade body membership. Third-party schemes are commonly employed by larger companies and are not mandated. Smaller contractors would typically make use of trade body schemes which audit and provide oversight of organisational processes.

Approaches to setting out requirements for, and implementing mechanisms for, demonstrating organisational capability are currently under consideration in collaboration with the wider built environment sector. This work is on-going and is not directly addressed within this document.

i.3 Addressing individual competence

The Industry Competence Steering Group (ICSG) is a formal, cross-sector working group of the Industry Competence Committee (ICC), a statutory committee of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). ICSG provides a vehicle for industry collaboration in development and implementation of competence frameworks in the built environment.

ICSG is made up of multiple sector led groups (SLGs), each leading work in a specific area. Within this, SLG 10 is focussed on competence frameworks for installation and maintenance. The structure of SLG 10 is split into 5 super sectors, each focussed on different aspects of the installer landscape. SLG 10.2 covers roles and activities associated with engineering services, including ductwork installation.

In addition, SLG 12 is representing the wider picture of passive fire protection. As such, SLG 12 also has an interest in supporting work on competence in ductwork installation, particularly around fire resisting and smoke control products and systems.

i.4 The Ductwork Installer Competence Group (DICG)

The DICG was formed to take forward the development of a sector-based approach to competence on behalf of SLG 10, linking into the wider work of SLG 12. It is formed from industry specialists and employer / sector body representatives in line with the principles underpinning the work of ICSG (see page 2 for a full list of participating organisations).

The work described within this report focusses on defining an approach to individual competence in ductwork installation activities, upskilling installers in other technical activities and towards supervisory roles. This builds upon work published by EBSSA defining baseline installer competence (available on the EBSSA website for reference - <https://www.ebssa.uk/our-work>). The activities in scope are defined in section 2.2.

Work has been aligned with the requirements set out in BS 8670-1:2024, the code of practice for competence frameworks for building safety – core criteria.

At every stage, DICG has endeavoured to consult with or include the work of other relevant bodies or working groups to ensure a joined-up approach to competence with allied areas.

i.5 The structure of this document

This document has been created to set out an intended ‘future state’ for individual competence for those carrying out more complex ductwork installation activities. This is set out in five sections:

Section 1 – Scope

This section provides information on the applicability of this document. This includes the purpose and scope of the work carried out in terms of occupation, building types and geographical area.

Section 2 – Background & context

The section provides contextual information around current competence arrangements within areas identified for upskilling, including strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities, which has informed the development of subsequent sections. Throughout this section, recommendations for improvement have been embedded, which are reflected in the proposed framework, standard for competence and/or implementation plan. These recommendations are summarised in Appendix 1 – Consolidated list of recommendations.

Section 3 – Functional map and framework of competencies

This section sets out the activities carried out within the agreed scope, and the benchmark for competence within them in terms of skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviour (SKEB).

Section 4 – Standard for competence

This section includes details of how competence can be validated and revalidated against that standard to ensure both initial competence and currency of competence.

Section 5 – Implementing the standard

This section sets out expected actions required to turn the future state into a reality, including revision of standards and associated education products, and actions to ensure consistency across the training and assessment landscape.

Additional information is included within the appendices. Appendix 2 sets out terms and definitions used in the document, and appendix 3 provides a bibliography of further publications in support of this document.

This document provides industry guidance on demonstrating competence in ductwork installation and other key activities at crucial trade junctions. Whilst the requirements of the Building Safety Act (2022) and secondary legislation such as the Building Regulations 2010 and their 2023 amendment have been taken into account in its production, its content does not constitute regulatory guidance and it is not intended to provide interpretation of the law. Responsibility for complying with the law sits with the individuals and organisations carrying out work. Signposting to relevant legislation and regulations can be found within Appendix 3.

i.6 The consultation and adoption process

This document is intended to provide a mechanism for consultation with the wider sector. Following closure of the consultation all comments will be reviewed by DICG and, where required, amendments may be made to the functional map and framework of competencies, the standard for competence, and/or the implementation plan.

Final proposals post-consultation will be submitted to the Skills Partnership Committee for adoption and publication through its formal processes. Following approval, implementation will be continued by BESA (the relevant skills body) in collaboration with DICG and other stakeholders, including training & assessment providers as appropriate.

1 SCOPE

1.1 Occupational area

Core competence requirements for ductwork installers were set out in phase 1 of DICG's work. The outputs of this can be found on the EBSSA website (<https://www.ebssa.uk/our-work>). The following definition of ductwork installation was used during that work, and underpins the developments outlined in this document.

Installation of industrial and commercial ventilation, fume extract, fire resisting and smoke control ducts (or any of these) with the related installation of fire dampers, intumescent dampers (non-mechanical fire barriers), and smoke control dampers. This includes verifying the function of all types of dampers as per design and operation, and installation of associated equipment such as fans, attenuators and support structures. Scope excludes installation of controls and commissioning of whole installed systems.

The work set out here builds on phase 1 outputs and relates to:

- upskilling of individuals from baseline competence, allowing progression towards 'craft' level

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this work is to set out an industry approach to developing, measuring, and validating the competence of those undertaking activities against the scope set out in section 1.1. This will ensure that defined arrangements are in place by which competence can be objectively measured and confirmed, increasing safety.

This will be added to phase 1 work to create broader guidance for industry covering a range of ductwork installation activities.

This document and its underpinning details are designed for use for a variety of purposes, including:

- Development of industry wide tools for measuring and validating competence
- Development of organisational approaches to evidencing workforce competence
- Alignment and/or recognition of existing training, assessment, qualifications
- Development of new training, assessment, qualifications, and occupational standards
- Strengthening arrangements for organisational capability through third party certification schemes or trade body membership schemes

No specific sector-based legal requirements for validation or revalidation of competence in relation to ductwork installation currently exist, however the Building Safety Act (2022) and associated legislation place an onus on individuals and employers to prove competence to work in critical activities in construction and the built environment.

1.3 Occupational relevance

This approach to competence has been designed for those carrying out activities within the definition in section 1.1. This includes activities which may be carried out by:

- Ductwork installation craftsperson
- Ductwork installer
- Ductwork and damper installer
- Fire resisting ductwork installer

1.4 Limitations and exclusions

The scope of this work applies to industrial / commercial, healthcare and large-scale residential settings.

This work applies to upskilling activities only. Competence requirements relating to other ductwork installation activities can be found in phase 1 outputs (<https://www.ebssa.uk/our-work>).

1.5 Building types

The requirements set out in this document apply to work carried out on both new build construction sites and in existing buildings. They also apply equally to work carried out on higher-risk buildings (HRBs) and other building types.

1.6 Geographical scope

The proposals set out have been designed to apply to the whole of the UK to create a consistent standard for competence. Further discussion with bodies in devolved nations may be required to implement these proposals outside England.

2 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.1 Links to phase 1 work

Core competence requirements for ductwork installers were set out in phase 1 of DICG's work. The outputs of this can be found on the EBSSA website (<https://www.ebssa.uk/our-work>).

During that work, a gap between baseline competence for installers and those operating at craft level was identified. This represented upskilling from baseline competence towards more complex work and supervisory roles. Expansion of the framework and pathways to cover these activities was a key recommendation of the phase 1 work, and an action was included within the implementation plan to carry this out.

2.2 Activities identified

Activities relating to upskilling were identified through discussion of installer scope of work and examination of the RQF level 3 / SCQF level 6 qualification structures. These were revised during 2025, and changes proposed to their scope following publication of the DICG phase 1 consultation, reducing scope to exclude performance of electrical work. The remaining units represent areas of activity over and above those addressed during phase 1 competence work:

- Work site coordination
- Inspection and pre-commissioning of industrial and commercial ductwork systems
- Commissioning of industrial and commercial ductwork systems
- Decommissioning of industrial and commercial ductwork systems
- Inspection & maintenance of fire dampers and smoke control dampers

Inclusion of these activities will allow alignment between existing routes in industry and the emerging competence framework and allow for installers to evidence a wider scope of competence than that originally set out during phase 1.

Recommendation 1: Upskilling activities should reflect revisions made to qualification structures during the 2025 consultation

Additional information from qualification working group members highlighted that commissioning in this sense related to commissioning of ductwork only, not to full system commissioning such as might be carried out by a commissioning engineer. It was acknowledged that this type of work is likely to be undertaken by few installers and is the exception rather than the rule in terms of scope of installer work. To ensure consistent application of the framework, this should be made explicit within the framework and associated documentation produced.

Recommendation 2: The scope of commissioning should be made explicit within the framework and associated documentation

2.3 Existing occupational standards

Current National Occupational Standards (NOS) are the only descriptions of competence currently in use. These were reviewed and updated during 2025, but no significant alterations were made aside from integration of inclusion of statements in relation to safe isolation in relevant NOS to account for removal of performance of electrical work from the suite. Apprenticeship occupational standards in England were withdrawn during 2023 due to low uptake.

The NOS primarily reflect skills and knowledge requirements, with some implicit requirements for experience and behaviour. Explicit requirements for experience and behaviour have not

been fully articulated. Addition of further statements in the competence standards in these areas will therefore be required in order to support industry in discharging their legislative and regulatory responsibilities. Integrating NOS into wider competence standards set by industry will maintain alignment between qualifications systems and wider legal or best practice requirements.

Scope of NOS covers both pipework and ductwork systems. The relevant context statements for ductwork systems should be included within the activity descriptions within the functional map.

Concerns around the level of detail included in the NOS have also been identified which may result in inconsistent interpretation in resulting qualifications and assessment programmes. Some clarification detail may therefore be required in the competence standards which does not appear in the NOS.

Recommendation 4: The activities should be based on the relevant NOS (as updated in 2025), contextualised for ductwork and dampers

2.4 Existing qualifications and assessment programmes

Multiple existing qualifications cover the activities proposed for inclusion in section 2.2:

- SVQ Heating and Ventilating: Ductwork Planning and Installation (SCQF level 6) (GR58 23)
- SVQ Heating and Ventilating: Industrial and Commercial Installation (SCQF L6) (GR59 23)

These also underpin the ductwork and heating & ventilation pathways of the SCQF level 6 Modern Apprenticeship in Scotland (heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration).

To help navigate this, additional support should be given to industry to understand how qualifications contribute to competence requirements, as defined in the Building Safety Act. It is expected that this is delivered through the BSE Skills Partnership.

Recommendation 5: The Skills Partnership Committee should approve all products which contribute to evidence of competence and make it clear how these relate to the activities and statements set out within the competence framework

The NOS underpinning these qualifications were updated during 2025, and revised qualification structures proposed (see section 2.2). Alignment between these revised structures and any proposed routes to competence will be important to ensure cohesive structures to deliver competence are in place.

Discussions regarding assessment strategies for revised qualifications are still in progress with Qualifications Scotland¹, due to disagreements over proposed requirements for on site assessment. This has delayed roll out of revised qualifications products whilst alternatives are explored. Despite this, to futureproof the framework, alignment with the updated requirements agreed during 2025 will be needed.

Recommendation 6: Routes to competence should reflect the most recent version of the qualification structures

¹ Qualifications Scotland assumed statutory responsibility for awarding and accrediting qualifications in February 2026, fully replacing its predecessor the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) referenced within DICG's phase 1 work

As with phase 1 work, a lack of consistency between qualifications / assessment providers has also been identified. Differing interpretation of knowledge and skills requirements driven by the generic nature of the NOS and their relationship to NVQs (where providers are not required to cover everything within the scope / range statements) results in differing levels of detail in input and assessment. Adding to the assessment specification being created as a result of phase 1 work (designed to provide more detailed guidance around scope and content of assessment²) to cover these activities will help to drive consistency.

Recommendation 7: Additions should be made to the standard assessment specification being produced for ductwork installation to drive consistency of assessment between providers aligned to the competence standard

2.5 Industry training

As identified during phase 1 work, existing programmes are largely based around on-site assessment with little formal training input. Where individuals do not reach the standard of assessment no formal training is available to refer them to. Much training takes place in the workplace, within organisations, without clear direction on scope of content.

Adding to the training specification being created for ductwork installation as a result of DICG's phase 1 activity would support training provision for the widened scope of activities. Input from training providers will be essential to ensure this guidance is fit for purpose.

Recommendation 8: Additions should be made to the standard training specification being produced for ductwork installation to support consistency of training delivery

2.6 Manufacturers' training

Individuals should undertake any appropriate manufacturers training, alongside demonstration of baseline competence. This should be noted in the routes to competence set out.

Recommendation 9: The requirement for manufacturers' training should be set out within routes to competence

2.7 Initial validation

Initial validation of competence across the full scope of SKEB is not consistently made. Experience and behaviour are not currently explicitly set out within the standards available, and so cannot be consistently assessed through vocational qualifications. Some assessment is made through the level 3 Modern Apprenticeship in Scotland, although again experience and behaviour are implicit rather than explicit and these are inaccessible to learners in other nations.

Creation of additional guidance on how to evidence competence as defined within the Building Safety Act has already been captured within the implementation plan resulting from DICG's phase 1 work.

Card provider registration is currently used as a proxy for validation of competence. This currently relates primarily to skills and knowledge and is based on qualification achievement and on-going registration with BESA SKILLCard, subject to completion of the relevant health, safety & environment (HS&E) test. Those meeting the requirements are able to obtain a gold card (advanced craft), based on qualification achievement at RQF level 3 / SCQF level 6.

² Note that any specification created should be designed to sit alongside BSE Skills' existing assessment strategy

Additional consideration of how card schemes may be able to support demonstration of competence across the full scope of SKEB should be made.

Recommendation 10: BESA SKILLCard should consider how it might support validation / evidencing of competence across the full scope of SKEB

2.8 Currency of competence and ongoing validation

Currency of competence is essential to ensure that the workforce is not only capable now but remains capable in the future. A key component of the new competence regime is that competence must be maintained over time and that maintenance should be demonstrated.

Currently, no formal ongoing assessment of competence is made. Card scheme re-registration is based on achievement of the relevant HS&E test, with evidence of occupational competence coming solely from qualification achievement. No continuing demonstration of sector based SKEB is required. No industry agreed thresholds for maintenance of competence or continuing professional development (CPD) are in place.

Recommendation 11: Routes to competence should consider the threshold(s) for continuing demonstration of competence

Completing formal CPD is not the only mechanism for retaining skills and knowledge. Consideration should be given to how continuing to evidence application of skills and knowledge (experience) plays into currency of competence.

Recommendation 12: Routes to competence should consider all potential mechanisms for ensuring currency of competence, not just formal training and/or assessment

2.9 Devolved nations consistency

In setting out requirements for the development, measurement and validation of competence, consideration of the best methods of ensuring consistency between England and the devolved nations is required. This is particularly important where parts of the workforce on national borders may operate in more than one nation. It is essential that a consistent bar for competence is set and adhered to throughout the UK.

Additional collaboration with skills bodies will be required to encourage take up of the additional requirements for competence identified in the devolved nations, over and above NOS, as these sit outside the direct scope of application of the Building Safety Act.

Recommendation 13: Additional collaboration with the devolved nations should be made to drive consistency in standards of competence across the UK

3 FUNCTIONAL MAP AND FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCIES

3.1 Development background

A functional map has been created which breaks down the work carried out within the scope of ductwork installation upskilling (as defined in section 1.1) into discrete activities. These activities reflect the roles, responsibilities and types of work undertaken. These activities have then been aligned to the roles set out within that definition – this is indicative only. Individuals should demonstrate competence in these activities where they fall within their scope of work.

Each activity has then been broken down into competency statements outlining the skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviour (SKEB) required to perform that activity competently. The most recent versions of the NOS have been used as the basis for skills and knowledge statements. Statements for experience and behaviour have been added in line with previous phase 1 work to create fit for purpose competence standards.

Together, the functional map and SKEB statements set out the benchmark for competence in each activity. These are designed to be used in conjunction with the expectations of the standard for competence set out in section 4. The routes to competence defined within that standard have been designed to facilitate demonstration of competence against this framework.

3.2 The functional map and framework of competencies

The detailed functional map and SKEB statements can be found in the spreadsheet included alongside this consultation document: DICG-OP010 – Ductwork Installation FM & SKEB (upskilling) v1.

3.3 Mapping to other standards and frameworks

The SKEB statements developed have been mapped against BS 8670-1, the relevant BSE Skills NOS.

Emerging requirements for construction products competence as outlined in the WG12 whitepaper are now being formalised in BS 8670-2 (Core Criteria for Construction Products Competence. Code of Practice). Mapping may be carried out to this standard at a later stage, following publication.

Consideration has also been given to the contents of the whitepaper by the Joint Competence Initiative for the Building Envelope Sector (JCI), published in June 2023.

4 THE STANDARD FOR COMPETENCE

4.1 Target audiences

- New entrants
- Job movers
- Experienced workers

4.2 Preparing to evidence competence

Individuals may use a combination of formal and informal learning to prepare to demonstrate competence.

Training alone (without embedded summative assessment) does not provide evidence of competence, but it is a useful enabler to prepare individuals to create the evidence of skills and knowledge required. Training may be carried out in house or through third-party training providers. When purchasing training, individuals and employers should check that this meets the requirements of the framework and will have value to them.

In addition to aiding development of knowledge and skills, informal learning in the workplace will also help to develop experience and behaviour.

4.3 Collecting evidence of competence

Individuals (in conjunction with their employer where appropriate) should select relevant activities from the functional map according to their role scope. Determination of competence should then be made through gathering evidence that the SKEB statements set out for relevant activities have been met in accordance with one of the routes to competence outlined in section 4.6.

- Evidence of skills and knowledge should be obtained through achievement of a relevant programme of assessment meeting the competence standard, approved as fit for purpose by the Skills Partnership Committee
- Experience (continuing application of skills and knowledge) can be demonstrated through collecting and storing evidence of work carried out in accordance with the benchmarks for experience set out within the selected activities
- Evidence of behaviour may be gained through performance management systems, including formal appraisals or reviews, or supervisor / team-leader feedback

Individuals who have yet to meet the required standard of competence for a particular activity should be supervised by a competent individual until competence has been demonstrated.

Where individuals are required to work at height, they should also hold the relevant qualifications / accreditations for the type(s) of access equipment / work types being employed. Guidance on appropriate programmes of learning and assessment is available through the Access Industry Forum (<https://accessindustryforum.org.uk/>). Where the individuals are not personally installing or using the equipment but are protected by it, the equipment should be installed / used by individuals holding the relevant qualifications.

4.4 Validating competence

Individuals and their employers should validate that evidence of competence is in place across the full scope of relevant standards, as set out in the SKEB statements within the framework, and in accordance with the routes to competence.

It is recommended that a third-party system is utilised, to provide an objective check. For example, this may be through a specific third-party installer certification scheme, a certificated quality management system incorporating management of individual competence, or a trade association membership scheme. Widening of the current industry registration scheme to incorporate full requirements for competence may also support industry in validating competence.

Where use of third-party validation is inappropriate, structured mechanisms for collating and checking evidence should be in place.

4.5 Revalidation of competence

Continuing demonstration of competence and revalidation of that competence are a key component of any assurance scheme. Competence should be revalidated every five years. As with initial validation, it is recommended that a third-party system is utilised to provide an objective check.

Evidence contributing to revalidation should be collected according to the routes to competence set out in section 4.6.3 and the requirements of the framework of competencies.

4.6 Proposed routes to competence

The following are routes to competence for each entry point. It is expected that an employer or individual will define the job role relevant to their scope of activities (as set out in section 4.3) aligned to the relevant occupation, and that individuals will be developed to that level using the appropriate route.

It should be noted that further development and agreement may be required to put those routes to competence in place, specifically to ensure that appropriate products are in place for individuals and their employers to access. Until the point where new routes to competence are available, existing competence guidance should be followed.

4.6.1 Initial evidence of competence

Individuals should develop their skills, knowledge, experience and behaviour in the workplace, supported by appropriate third-party training where required.

Individuals must provide the following evidence of competence:

- Completion of a qualification indicated by the Skills Partnership Committee as meeting the requirements of the competence framework, in mandatory activities and relevant optional activities
- Collated evidence of experience in line with the requirements of the competence framework, in mandatory activities and relevant optional activities
- Collated evidence of behaviour in line with the requirements of the competence framework, in mandatory activities and relevant optional activities

Individuals will be eligible for a gold, Advanced Craft SKILLCard for ductwork installation on completion of the first item, and the relevant Health, Safety & Environment (HS&E) test.

Where individuals are working at heights, they should also meet the relevant requirements (see section 4.3).

4.6.2 Adding additional competencies

Individuals may wish to add additional areas of competence following initial demonstration. Where that is the case individuals should complete the relevant qualification units and collate evidence of experience and behaviour as described in section 4.6.1.

4.6.3 Evidencing currency of competence

Evidence of currency of competence should be collected regularly throughout the five-year validation period, in order to support revalidation. Individuals must provide the following evidence of ongoing competence:

- Completion of any relevant skills / knowledge updates (CPD) (e.g. legislative updates, technological changes)
- Completion of skills / knowledge refresher training / assessment for relevant activities
- Ongoing evidence of experience (continuing application of skills and knowledge over time) meeting the requirements of activities in the framework for which competence needs to be maintained
- Ongoing evidence of behaviour meeting the requirements of activities in the framework for which competence needs to be maintained
- Completing the relevant HS&E test where ongoing SKILLCard registration is required

Individuals should also have completed manufacturer training relevant to their scope of work and the products / systems being installed.

Where individuals are working at heights, they should also meet the relevant requirements (see section 4.3).

4.7 Relationship to organisational capability

Alongside demonstrating the competence of individuals within their workforce, companies also need to demonstrate organisational capability.

Work has been carried out by the Building Safety Regulator's statutory Industry Competence Committee (ICC) and an Industry Task and Finish Group (ITFG) to develop guidance on organisational management of competence – a key component of organisational capability. Intended to provide high level principles and practical ways to apply these respectively, this guidance provides key prompts and case studies to support organisations in developing a proportionate approach to managing the competence of their staff and supply chain. The guidance can be found on the BSI's [Built Environment Competence Hub](#).

4.8 Ongoing monitoring and maintenance

This standard and the functional map / framework of competencies will be managed and maintained by the BSE Skills Partnership, with practical support provided by DICG.

The Skills Partnership will maintain a list of approved programmes which contribute towards the evidencing of competence in order to support employers in identifying appropriate provision.

5 IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARD

It has been acknowledged that further development work will be required to put in place the proposed routes to competence for the sector. The following table sets out the next steps required to fully implement the competence requirements set out within this paper, over and above those already agreed during phase 1 work (<https://www.ebssa.uk/our-work>). It should be noted that this list is not necessarily exhaustive, and further actions might be identified as work progresses.

Where specific product development is required, estimated time required for that development to take place has been factored into the timescale outlined, aligned to current phase 1 plans. This may be subject to change as more detailed requirements emerge.

Activity required	Purpose	Owner	
Integrate requirements for upskilling activities into standard training specification being developed through phase 1 work	To drive consistency in training & support alignment of training with assessment	BESA / DICG / training providers	Q1 2027
Integrate requirements for upskilling activities into standard assessment specification (requirements and guidance for assessors and assessments) being developed through phase 1 work	To drive consistency in assessment between providers	BESA / DICG / assessment providers	Q1 2027
Resolve assessment strategy issues to allow the updated NOS and qualification structures to be used	To ensure that appropriate qualifications products are available for use	BESA	TBC
Create specification for refresher training / assessment	To ensure that appropriate refresher training / assessment can be put in place for revalidation of competence	BESA / DICG / training & assessment providers	TBC

APPENDIX 1 – CONSOLIDATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Upskilling activities should reflect revisions made to qualification structures during the 2025 consultation

Recommendation 2: The scope of commissioning should be made explicit within the framework and associated documentation

Recommendation 4: The activities should be based on the relevant NOS (as updated in 2025), contextualised for ductwork and dampers

Recommendation 5: The Skills Partnership Committee should approve all products which contribute to evidence of competence and make it clear how these relate to the activities and statements set out within the competence framework

Recommendation 6: Routes to competence should reflect the most recent version of the qualification structures

Recommendation 7: Additions should be made to the standard assessment specification being produced for ductwork installation to drive consistency of assessment between providers aligned to the competence standard

Recommendation 8: Additions should be made to the standard training specification being produced for ductwork installation to support consistency of training delivery

Recommendation 9: The requirement for manufacturers' training should be set out within routes to competence

Recommendation 10: BESA SKILLCard should consider how it might support validation / evidencing of competence across the full scope of SKEB

Recommendation 11: Routes to competence should consider the threshold(s) for continuing demonstration of competence

Recommendation 12: Routes to competence should consider all potential mechanisms for ensuring currency of competence, not just formal training and/or assessment

Recommendation 13: Additional collaboration with the devolved nations should be made to drive consistency in standards of competence across the UK

APPENDIX 2 – TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Behaviour

Observable traits or ways of working that should be displayed. Observable things that an individual does or does not do

Competence / individual competence

Application of skill, knowledge, experience, and behaviour consistently by an individual to achieve a specific outcome

Standard for competence

Procedures & requirements for developing, measuring, validating, and proving competence against agreed skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviours required for an individual undertaking a role, function, activity, or task in order to perform their work to predetermined standards and expectations and maintain or improve their performance over time. This is sometimes referred to as a competence framework or competence standard

Continuing professional development (CPD)

Activities undertaken by an individual to maintain and develop competence, including formal and informal learning, self-assessment, obtaining feedback and identifying areas for improvement

Ductwork commissioning

Dynamic and functional testing of ductwork systems, e.g. flow rate, volume and leakage prior to whole system commissioning under live operating conditions

Experience

Participation in relevant activities or observation of facts and events leading to acquisition, improvement or demonstration of skills and knowledge

Formal learning

Organised and structured learning against formal learning objectives

Framework of competencies

Agreed statements of skills, knowledge, experience, and behaviour against specific activities identified in the functional map

Functional map

A map of activities included in the sub-sector, split into pre-determined levels of complexity

Individual

A single human being

Informal learning

Self-directed learning, or learning from experience

Higher-risk building (HRB)

Building subject to enhanced regulatory requirements or where risks might be considered elevated (for example as a result of the physical characteristics of the building, the way in which the building is used, or as a result of human factors)

Job role

The specific combination of activities performed in a specific role, as agreed between an employee and an employer. This may change over time, or from employer to employer, or between employees of the same employer

Knowledge

Assimilation of facts, theories, and practices in relation to a given role, function, activity, or task

Occupation

The area of work undertaken by a category of employees, each of which may have a related but different job role. This is standard across the entire industry

Organisational capability

The combination of people, practices and other resources brought together by a business to allow it to function effectively

and deliver value to customers and stakeholders

Pre-commissioning

Inspection, testing and verification of individual equipment and systems that ensures components are installed correctly, safely and are ready to operate.

Qualification

A regulated programme of assessment, sometimes with aligned training, which results in the issue of a nationally recognised award being made upon completion

Revalidation

The formal process or reassessing an individual's competence against a sector-

specific framework on a periodic basis to check that competence has been maintained

Sector-specific competence framework

A competence framework relevant to a specific role, function, activity, task, trade, or discipline

Skill

The ability to perform an activity or task consistently with a specific intended outcome

Validation

The formal process of assessing an individual's competence against a sector-specific framework

APPENDIX 3 – BIBLIOGRAPHY

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