

Independent Oversight Competency Framework

Version 05: January 2025

Revision History

Version Number	Revision	Date
Version 1	First draft issued for comments.	31/08/2021
Version 2	Updated to incorporate steering group comments and suggestions	29/09/2021
Version 3	Updated to incorporate working group comments and suggestions	10/11/2021
Version 4	Updated to include new sections on Assessment of Competences and Competency Review Framework	30/11/2023
Version 5	Updated to change 'Nuclear Delta®' to 'Nuclear Professionalism Standard'	18/10/2024

Acronyms and Abbreviations

IO	Independent Oversight
IOWG	Independent Oversight Working Group
SDF	Safety Directors' Forum
YNPF	Young Nuclear Professionals Forum

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Background

Effective delivery of an Independent Oversight (IO) function within an organisation depends on the competence of the IO professionals within that function. Therefore, it is imperative that all individuals undertaking IO activities have the necessary experience, training, skills and credibility to conduct work and that continuous development of individuals with these attributes is maintained. The purpose of this document is to create a standardised set of competences for IO professionals across the UK Nuclear Industry. The competences represent the minimum standard expected by an IO professional in the UK Nuclear Industry and forms the basis of an assessment and accreditation mechanism under the banner of the Nuclear Institute's membership scheme.

The competences are designed to be subject-matter agnostic, in that they describe the generic skills and behaviours expected of any type of IO professional without expecting any form of specific subject matter expertise in any technical topic. Different organisations will place different assurance requirements on their respective IO functions so not all topic areas will be relevant to each individual organisation. As such, the level and type of specific technical subject matter expertise required by an individual organisation of their specific IO function is left to the discretion of individual organisations.

To articulate this concept in a consistent way throughout this document the terminology 'nuclear operations' is utilised to represent **any** potential technical area(s) where IO may be required by an organisation; this includes but is not limited to nuclear, radiological or conventional safety, security, safeguards and environmental protection. Indeed, in some organisations this extends to include quality, technical, design, financial and corporate governance assurance. This equates to the organisation's mandate that it gives to its IO function.

The creation of this Independent Oversight (IO) Competency Framework was instigated by the Independent Oversight Working Group (IOWG), a sub-group of the Safety Directors' Forum (SDF) and completed with the assistance of the Young Nuclear Professionals Forum (YNPF) and Nuclear Institute.

The competences outlined within this document were derived from:

- Principles for Independent Oversight contained in the IO Good Practice Guide,
- Nuclear Professionalism Standard established for professional membership of the Nuclear Institute's, and
- Existing competence frameworks from different companies across the UK Nuclear Industry.

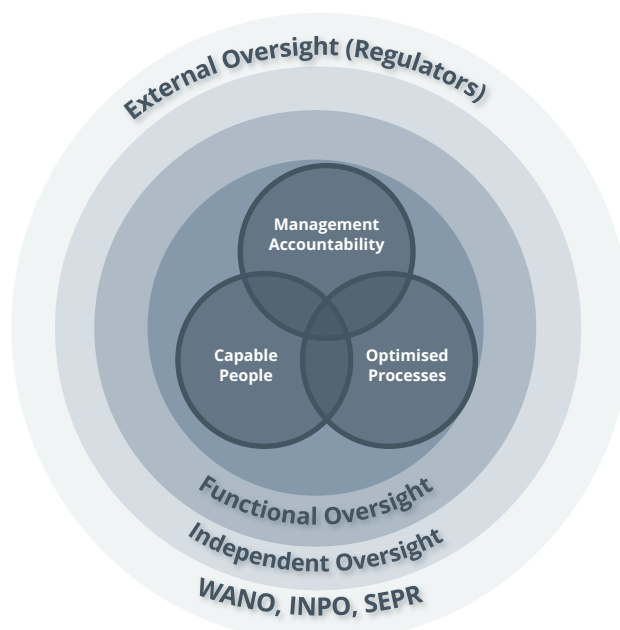


Figure 1: Inter relationship between forms of oversight

Independent Oversight Competency Framework

1. Underpinning Oversight Knowledge

The competences within this section seek to ensure that IO professionals have the appropriate knowledge that underpins oversight activity and how that integrates within their role.

1.1	Understanding of the IO Good Practice Guide and the key principles of an IO function.
1.2	Understanding of the drivers, role, scope and strategy of IO within an organisation and its interface within internal teams.
1.3	Understanding of the relevant licences, permits, authorisations and conditions required for nuclear operations.
1.4	Knowledge of relevant external regulatory bodies for nuclear operations ¹ ; their legal powers, intervention approaches and enforcement activities.
1.5	Understanding of general UK regulatory and legislative framework and its application to nuclear operations ¹ .
1.6	Understanding of relevant nuclear operation ¹ justifications and the application of methodologies to prepare, authorise, implement and modify them.
1.7	Understanding of key risks associated with nuclear operations ¹ and how these risks are assessed and managed.
1.8	Understanding of the principles of nuclear science and engineering applicable to the role.
1.9	Understanding of how organisational culture permeates and influences individual and group actions.

2. IO Processes

The competences within this section highlight the skills required by an IO professional in order to perform their roles competently.

2.1	Prioritises individual IO activities, utilising a risk-based approach whilst understanding regulatory requirements and an organisation's risk appetite.
2.2	Plans the use of different assessment tools from the IO toolset in order to achieve a single aim, outlining the purpose, objectives, aims and boundaries of each activity.
2.3	Applies the specified range of assessment tools to generate the evidence required for each identified purpose.
2.4	Analyses the evidence from the assessment tools deployed to generate the conclusions and actions required to influence change.
2.5	Informs directors and senior management of IO findings, utilising appropriate reporting and/or escalation arrangements
2.6	Critically self-assesses their personal IO performance against documented standards (e.g. IO Good Practice Guide)

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3. Personal Skills and Behaviours

The competences within this section highlight the personal attributes required in order to competently perform IO. Figure 2 illustrates how these attributes are connected to create a proficient IO professional.

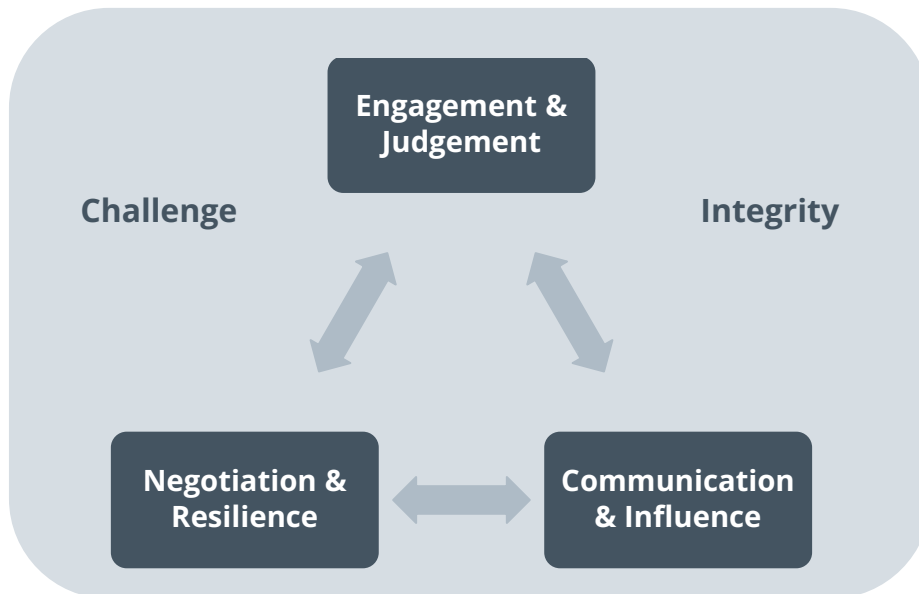


Figure 2: Personal Skills and Behavioural Connections

Challenge and Integrity	
3.1	Displays the courage to actively challenge acts, behaviour and work which could undermine matters within the scope of the IO function.
3.2	Avoids complacency, maintaining and encouraging a questioning attitude.
3.3	Applies principles of human performance and error-reduction techniques.
3.4	Thinks creatively to identify new ideas, actively contributing to continuous improvement.
3.5	Demonstrates integrity by exhibiting honesty, transparency, discretion, personal accountability and objectivity in all work matters.
Engagement and Judgement	
3.6	Encourages and engages in open discussions, actively sharing and listening to diverse viewpoints appropriately and ensuring inclusivity.
3.7	Uses knowledge and experience to make sound judgement in complex situations, whilst de-personalising issues, seeking other inputs as necessary and exercising a proportionate and pragmatic approach to IO.
Communication and Influencing	
3.8	Communicates complex issues effectively with various audiences, ensuring key messages are clearly understood by all relevant stakeholders of varying backgrounds.
3.9	Demonstrates subtle and complex forms of influencing, building strong relationships with support and understanding.
3.10	Enacts a clear vision and direction, based upon the declared strategy of both the company and the IO function, and encourages others to follow it.
Negotiation and Resilience	
3.11	Recognises the limitations of their knowledge, seeking guidance when necessary.

3.12	Works resiliently and flexibly, responding positively to change, challenge or setback; remains confident in their own knowledge and experience.
3.13	Negotiates and facilitates resolution of differences between parties, taking account of all perspectives and assimilating information gathered objectively from various sources.

Assessment of Competences

An individual's evidence is first sponsored as 'suitable and sufficient' by a member of the IOWG before entering the Nuclear Institute (NI) for assessment following the NI's established membership scheme methodology for Member (MNUCL) and Fellow (FNUCL). The Nuclear Independent Oversight Professional (NIOP) route to NI membership uses a 2-assessor review against the IO Competency Framework instead of the assessment being made against the Nuclear Professionalism Standard. The IO Competency Framework has been mapped against the Nuclear Professionalism Standard and is judged to be an equivalent level of nuclear professionalism, but with a specific emphasis on competences most relevant to Independent Oversight.

As a professional member of the Institute, individuals will be required to maintain their CPD and each year they will be required to confirm that they are undertaking CPD and are updating their record to maintain their professional membership and if appropriate any registration designations they hold.

Competency Framework Review Process

The IO Competency Framework will be reviewed by a nominated sub-group of the IOWG at least every 5 years, as part of the routine review of the associated SDF Good Practice Guide, and in conjunction with authorised NI representatives. This will take cognisance of development of regulatory standards.

References

IOWG Good Practice Guide Issue 3