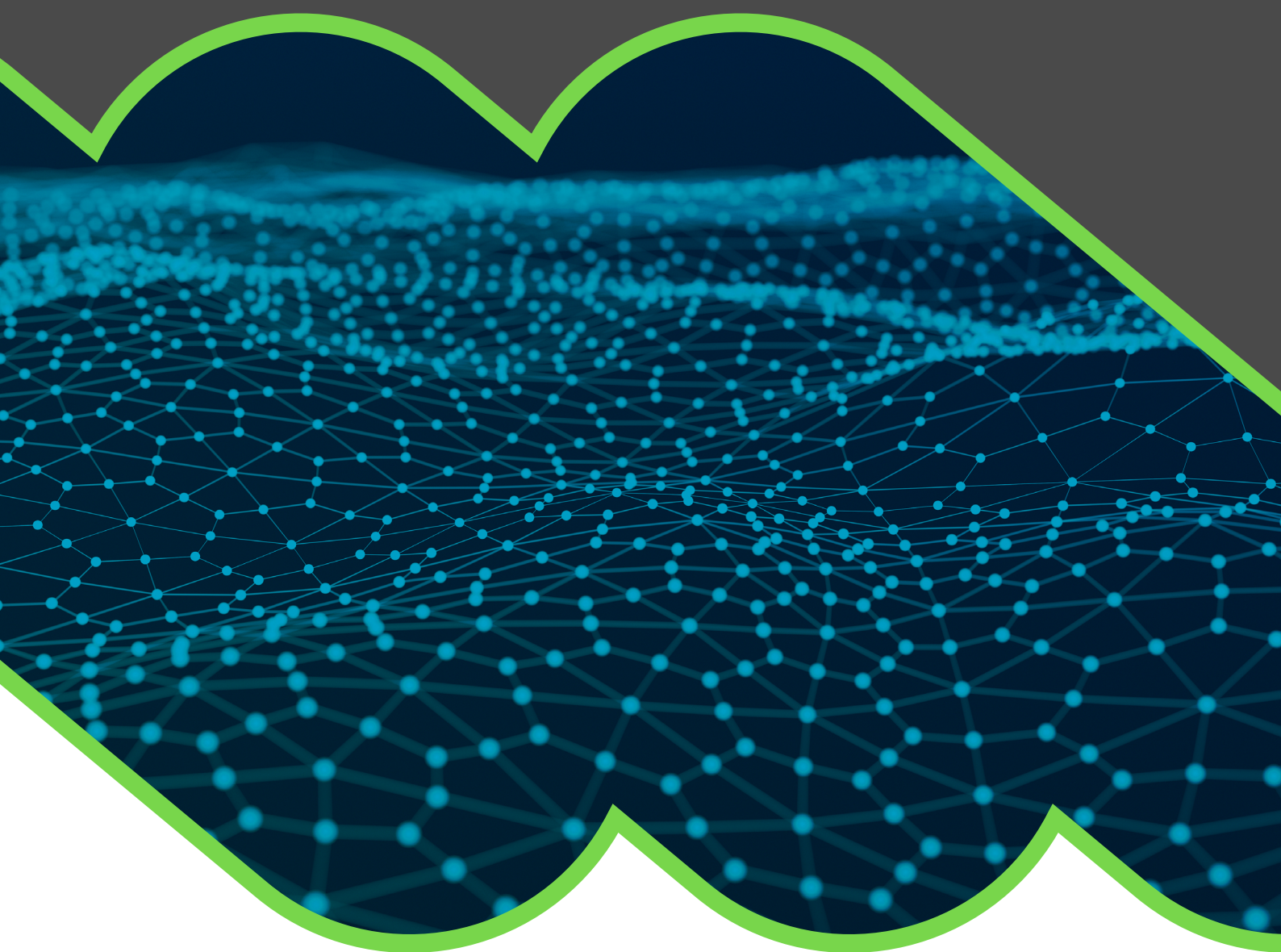


Competency Framework

Best Practice Guide



SHL.

Whether you have a competency framework, or are looking to create a new one, there are a number of characteristics that represent what 'good looks like'. When reviewing the strength of a competency framework we recommend considering the following seven areas to help determine alignment with best practice principles.

1. Aligned

Alignment is concerned with the extent to which your framework is 'current' and driving the behaviours needed to deliver on your organisational strategy. If your framework is more than two years old, or you have recently had a significant shift in organisational strategy, we would recommend a review.

This should include a review of key documentation such as annual reports, people strategy, and your

company vision and values, as well as progressing discussions with senior stakeholders to identify the key business drivers and desired culture. Remember to not only consider what is important now but also in the future.

Finally use a well-researched methodology, such as the SHL 2017 research that links business challenges to supporting behavioural competencies to help maximise this 'visioning' output.



2. Structured

Complex frameworks look impressive but can be off-putting and challenging to embed. Consider the structure of the framework and how this will support your needs. For example, you might create a flat, one-levelled framework that provides a simple view of behavioural expectations across your organisational grades and functions; alternatively you may require

a levelled framework that describes the behavioural shifts required as employees move into more complex or senior roles.

Another example is the extent to which all job roles and levels require the same competencies; it might be the case that a competency only applies to roles requiring the leadership of others.

3. Discrete

This best practice area relates to two key facets that will cause confusion if not corrected.

Firstly, do the competency headings, descriptors and underlying behaviours overlap with those of other competencies in your framework? If they do then it is suggested this overlap is removed. For example, a common mistake is to include reference to a strategic imperative, e.g. customer service, into all or many competencies in a framework, in such cases it is better to 'ringfence' such behaviours within a single, discrete competency.

Secondly, to what extent is a single competency trying to cover multiple behavioural areas? Try and keep a competency's scope limited to behaviours that relate well to a key construct or theme. If this is not the case it might be that a competency requires splitting.



4. Relevant

A framework that speaks the language of the business is more likely to embed quickly and engage those concerned. To deliver on this area it is critical to ensure those using the framework have been effectively engaged when the framework is created or changed. Indeed it's not optimal, for example, to determine

the content of the framework by only sampling employees within a specific region if the framework is to be used globally. Involving the end-user will also help guard against using generic behavioural language and allow for the contextualisation of behaviours that will resonate more with employees.

5. Measurable

The framework should consist of 'behavioural' indicators beneath competency headings which should be observable and therefore measurable. If we consider a competency area, 'Relates well to others', an example of a poor behavioural indicator might be 'Works hard to understand others'.

This would be better described using indicators such as 'Asks open questions to allow individuals to fully express their opinions' and 'Listens attentively to others and paraphrases what has been communicated to check understanding'.



6. Benchmarked

Whilst identifying competencies and behaviours that are unique to your own organisation and context is critical, it is also useful to consider how your framework benchmarks against best-in-class frameworks that have been created from years of research and experience. An example of one such framework is SHL's Universal Competency Framework (UCF). Created in 2001, the UCF has been used to assist hundreds of clients when building their own integrated corporate competency frameworks. The UCF is based on an in-depth review of the behavioural competency domain reflecting both

SHL research, models created by other providers and models developed by our clients and for our clients. The UCF has been refined over time, with the latest review in 2016, and is relevant for all organisational roles, levels, sectors, and sizes of organisation, large or small, global or single site.

Benchmarking your framework against the UCF will help identify competency gaps that could be important to address, and also help to ensure your framework is comprised of discrete competencies.

7. Embedded

The extent to which your framework is embedded into critical people processes in your organisation will help you appreciate how practical it is for others to use it. A competency framework should be the foundation of people processes, providing the language that supports key activities across the employee lifecycle from the hiring of employees through to performance management and career development.

In addition to explicitly representing your framework into these processes, another great test of how embedded your framework is comes from conversations with employees, managers and leaders. Indeed a truly embedded behavioural framework will exist in the day-to-day language of business.

If you have any questions on the seven areas above please contact us to explore how we can support you with reviewing your existing framework, or creating a new one, in line with these best practice principles.

info@shl.com