

# Frequently Asked Questions Competency Model Development

## Q1: Why has DoD established a competency based approach to strategic workforce management?

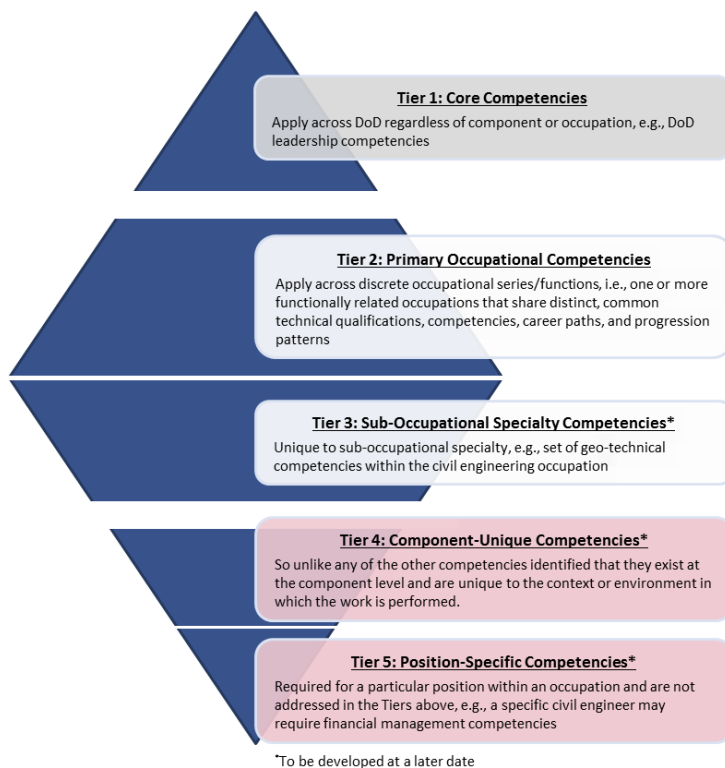
A1: Title 10 U.S.C. 115b requires the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) to develop and implement a strategic workforce plan that includes an assessment of the critical skills and competencies needed now and in the future within the civilian workforce along with strategies to close competency and skill gaps. A competency based approach supports strategic workforce planning and effective talent management. A consistent approach for developing and assessing workforce competencies increases reporting accuracy and ensures a common understanding of the competencies and proficiency levels required for successful performance and mission accomplishment. The initial focus of the DoD competency management initiative is to develop competency models for all Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs). Competency models will be developed for all other major occupations once the MCO models are completed.

## Q2: What is a competency?

A2: DoD defines a competency as an observable, measurable set of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that are needed for successful job performance. See DoD's competency framework and taxonomy below:

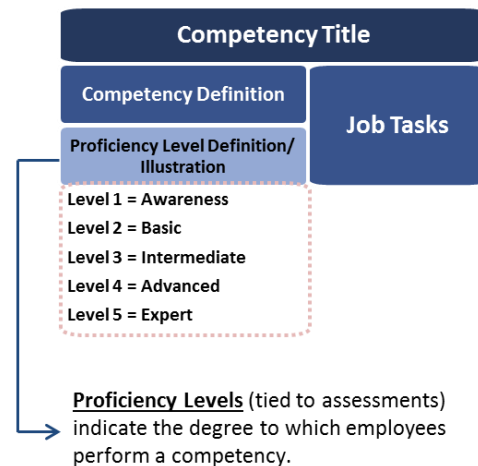
## DoD-wide Competency Taxonomy

### Five-Tiered Competency Framework



### Competency Components

Each competency in the Five-Tier Framework is described by the following components:



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### **Q3: Why do competencies matter in DoD?**

A3: Occupational competencies reflect what is necessary for successful job performance. To ensure successful performance it is critical that employees understand the competencies and the proficiency levels assigned to their position. To that end, DoD is committed to developing competency models for all MCOs and major occupational series. In 2014 DoD will validate the MCO competency models for implementation across the occupational series. The individual competencies for each position within the series are assigned by supervisors/managers.

### **Q4: What are the benefits of competency assessments to civilian employees?**

A4: Competencies benefit not only DoD but help our civilian employees determine what they do well and where they can target areas for improvement. A competency assessment allows employees to formally take stock of their areas of strength and areas for development. Additional benefits include:

- *Providing a Focus for Future Development.* Competency assessment results allow the employee and supervisor to plan for future development or assignments.
- *Increasing Ongoing Dialogue with the Supervisor.* Participating in a competency assessment will provide an opportunity for the employee and supervisor to have an informal discussion on future training and development options.
- *Informing Short- and Long-Term Career Decisions.* Self-assessments can provide insights that lead to identifying one's preferred job, future aspiration or, at the very least, information about one's strengths.

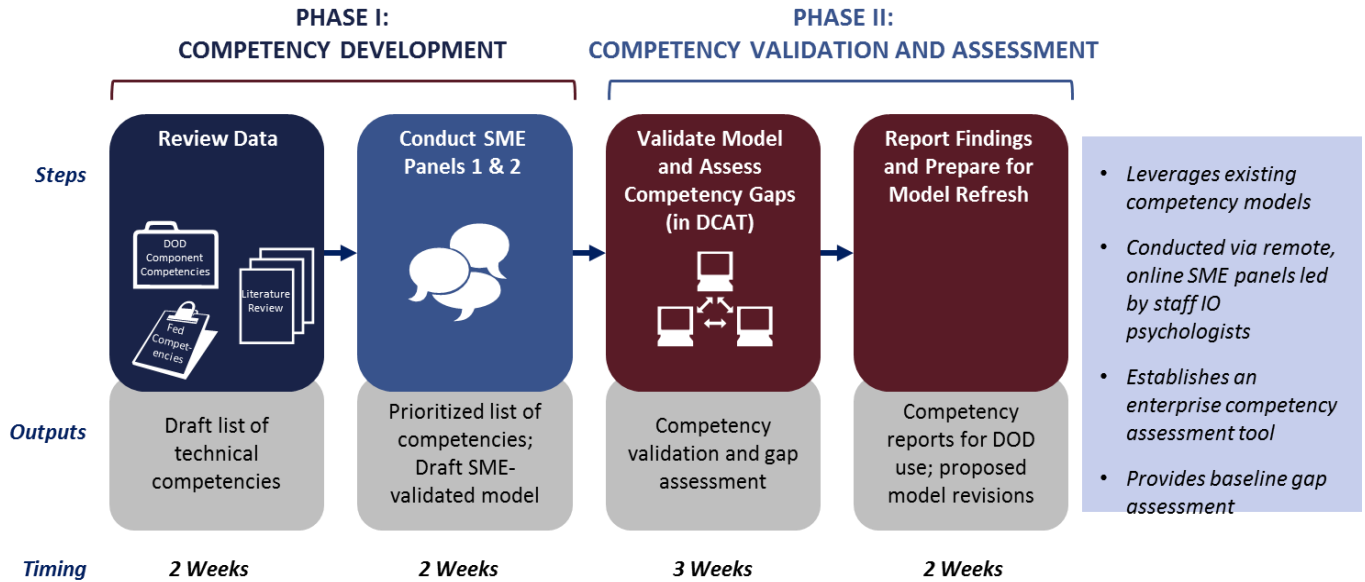
Note that during the Defense Competency Assessment Tool (DCAT) Initial Operating Capability, November 2013 to May 2014 the tool will be available only to civilian employees in mission critical occupations who have been randomly selected to participate in their series competency assessment survey.

### **Q5: What is the DoD process for developing competency models?**

A5: DoD uses an organizational job analysis methodology to identify occupational competency models and target proficiency level requirements that include subject matter experts (SMEs) along with a survey of a stratified random sample of civilian employees in the applicable occupational series. A group of experienced SMEs from across the Department participate in focus groups that identify occupational competencies and associated tasks. This process includes the validation of position competencies and an inventory of requirements through surveying incumbents' self-assessments and validation by supervisors. SMEs participating in the focus group have a minimum of five years experience performing and/or supervising the technical work being performed in the occupational series. The figure on the next page illustrates the DoD competency development process and validation timeline.

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*\*Streamlined process reducing Competency Development from 6+ months to 2 months\**

### **Q6: Will DoD’s initiative impact previously developed occupational competencies?**

A6: Several Functional Communities have existing competency models that span the Department (e.g., Acquisition and Financial Management occupations, HR Specialists, some Logistics occupations). These occupations will not be re-modeled at this time; instead DoD will leverage those extensive resource consuming efforts. Priority for model development is given to those occupations that do not have an existing enterprise competency model, have been officially designated as “mission critical” by DoD, or have a large population.

### **Q7: Have competency models been developed for all occupational series across the Department?**

A7: The Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS), Strategic Human Capital Planning Division (SHCPD) is overseeing the development of competency models for all major civilian occupations (those series found within DoD’s functional community structure). The focus has been to complete the competency models for MCOs and assess these employees. The results of the MCO workforce assessment will be included in the DoD Strategic Workforce Plan report to Congress.

### **Q8: How will DoD validate competency models?**

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A8: DoD competency model validation is an iterative process:

- DoD subject matter experts (SMEs) within the occupational series participate in competency model development panels, and based on their knowledge and expertise, they identify the competencies and tasks required for successful performance within the series.
- A second DoD SME panel is convened to gain further feedback and independent validation of the initial set of competencies developed for the occupational series.
- Once the competencies have been drafted by two expert panels, the final validation takes place through the DCAT, where a stratified random sample of employees and their supervisors provide input on employee and position target proficiency levels, how frequently the competencies are performed, how difficult they are to perform, and how critical it is to perform the competency without error.

**Q9: Are DoD competencies compatible with USA Staffing competency assessment questionnaires?**

A9: DoD competencies provide the framework for the development of selection assessment questionnaires used in USA Staffing. The SHCPD is collaborating with the Staffing Civilian Transitioning Program Division (SCTPD) to ensure enterprise competencies provide the framework for selection assessment questionnaire development and the basis for qualification standards, or the change to qualification standards.

**Q10: How will civilian employees' competencies be assessed?**

A10: Civilian employee competency proficiency levels will be assessed on-line through the Defense Competency Assessment Tool (DCAT). Randomly selected employees and their immediate supervisors will assess the employee's proficiency level in each of the competencies required for the position. Employees randomly selected to complete the assessment are encouraged to discuss the results to guide future training and development. The competency assessment is NOT a performance evaluation and will be used for professional developmental purposes only.