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**Setting the Standard – Principles for Writing NOS**

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| **General** |
| * Never assume that where NOS already exist that they meet all these principles. Check each NOS in full and apply the principles * Check the NOS database for suitable NOS before determining a need to develop a new NOS * Consider whether it is a generic function and therefore could be covered by an existing generic NOS or a new generic NOS developed * Write in 2nd Person – (*you, your, they, their*) * Use plain English – drop unnecessary words. If it’s not adding any value then remove it * If you need to read the criteria more than once to understand it then break it down * Bullet points – only use if necessary to avoid duplicating criteria, 2-3 are ok but any more then consider new criteria * Be consistent with language and terminology. Use the same phrases, words and terminology where possible to retain consistency across a NOS or suite of NOS * Write in plural – (*risks not the risk*). Writing in singular suggests the criteria may only need to be met once * Should be applicable across the UK |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Using adverbs in NOS titles where possible (*promote* not *promoting; respect* not *respecting)* * Using verbs that are difficult to assess (recognise, ensure) * Including examples in the PCs, Knowledge and Scope/Range * Reference to specific pieces of legislation/naming specific legislation (use *current* or *relevant legislation*) * Proliferation of NOS * Taking existing NOS and adding context to the title thereby creating a new NOS * Taking existing NOS and allocating a new URN to indicate its inclusion in a new suite. If you identify an existing NOS as being relevant to a new sector/suite/function then update the metadata do not allocate a new URN. * Using abbreviations and acronyms. |

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| **Title** |
| * Should reflect the NOS content. * Should describe a work function * Always start with the verb, then the object and where necessary add context (but not always). *Examples - Good example of NOS title: Protect yourself from the risk of violence at work. Poor example of NOS title: Specialist or bespoke software* * When adding multiple functions to a NOS you must be certain that all functions can be carried out by one individual working in the same role. (*For example - Plan, supervise, enforce and review sentences in the community - can the same person carry out all 4 functions?)* * Contextualising a title can often restrict a potentially generic NOS to a particular sector, occupation or role. Consider using existing generic NOS or if developing a new NOS consider whether this can be written generically to be used in multiple NOS suites and for multiple sectors. * Ensure that the NOS has a unique title. Check for duplicates on the NOS database. |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Making a potentially generic NOS specific to a sector unless absolutely necessary. Example: SFJ BG201 Develop and implement a strategy for tackling domestic and/or sexual abuse/violence – the focus of this NOS is about developing and implementing a strategy and doesn’t necessarily need to be contextualised, the sector doesn’t have to be included in the title. * Using adverbs in NOS titles where possible *(promote not promoting; respect not respecting*) * Proliferation of NOS * Creating new NOS just to add contextualisation to the title |

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| **Unique Reference Number (URN)** |
| * Each NOS developed should be given a URN – this should include a prefix reference to the developing SSO. |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Creating new URNs for NOS that are imported – there is no need to create a new URN (indicating a new NOS) just to identify that it is suitable for inclusion in a new suite of NOS. The metadata should just be updated to indicate/signpost that it is suitable for use by the sector/suite of NOS |

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| **Overview** |
| * The overview must reflect a summary of the NOS content, don’t just copy the title, expand on this. More than one sentence is usually required |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Rewriting the whole of the NOS content to be included in the Overview. * The same Overview for the entire suite of NOS – the Overview should relate to the specific NOS and reflect a summary of the content. |

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| **Elements** |
| * Most NOS are expressed as single elements now and do not have Element sub-headings. * Consider whether you need to split into Elements. Sometimes this can lend itself to duplication of PCs or Knowledge Points. (For example – PC *complete records in accordance with organisational procedures* may then be added to each Element when one PC will do. |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Duplication of PCs and Knowledge Statements |

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| **Performance Criteria** |
| * Always start with the verb, and then the object and then the standard (do something, to something, how well). * It is always useful when reading through the PCs to prefix them with ‘you must be able to’ and therefore check that they make sense/read correctly. * Ask yourself - can the criteria can be performed badly and still be achieved by the learner? If yes, then it needs changed. * Although not all NOS will be used in qualifications or to underpin/inform qualification it is still useful to consider how the PC will be assessed and evidenced * Make sure all performance criteria relate back to the title of the NOS. * Make sure you use verbs that will measure performance and not knowledge. * Use consistent language and terminology both within the NOS and across the suite of NOS * Write in plural – (*risks not the risk*). Writing in singular suggests the criteria may only need to be met once |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Using adverbs (qualifiers) as a standard to measure performance as they are difficult to measure (*for example ‘promptly’ or ‘timely’ could be replaced with ‘within organisational timescales’)* * Adding performance that don’t always happen (exceptions). If the activity doesn’t occur regularly then think about whether it should be added to the knowledge instead of the performance. * Words/phrases - develop an appreciation of, are aware of, develop an insight to… must be avoided as these can’t be observed or evidenced. * Duplication of criteria. * Using compound statements, create separate criteria. * Reference to specific pieces of legislation/naming specific legislation * Using ‘behaviours’ as the standard as they can be very difficult to assess. * Including examples * Lists of items to be covered – consider whether they are essential or whether they can be expressed by a single statement. Or, alternatively included in the Scope/Range. * Using methods of assessment – (*demonstrate, state, observe*) |

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| **Knowledge and Understanding** |
| * NOS should contain the essential knowledge required for the role. * Consider the weighting of knowledge and performance remembering NOS are competence based and the knowledge is to support the practice * Use consistent language and terminology both within the NOS and across the suite of NOS * It is always useful when reading through the Knowledge statements to prefix them with ‘you must know and understand’ and therefore check that they make sense/read correctly * Break up multiple-compound statements or use sub-numbers to break up lists. * Consider the use of some common knowledge statements for use across a suite of NOS. |
| ***Avoid*** |
| * Writing knowledge statements for every performance criteria. Some knowledge may be implied by the doing so don’t add anything that is obvious * Using the same set of knowledge statements throughout the suite of NOS (make sure they are relevant to the NOS). * Including examples * Lists of items to be covered – consider whether they are essential or whether they can be expressed by a single statement. Or, alternatively included in the Scope/Range. * Reference to specific pieces of legislation/naming specific legislation |

**Additional Information (this section is optional)**

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| **Scope/Range** |
| * Scope or range should only be used where different circumstances or situations have a critical impact on performance. Scope or range should not be used simply to provide illustrative examples or clarify the meaning of a term or phrase (which can be done in a glossary). * The terms "scope" and "range" are sometimes used interchangeably in suites of NOS, however technically, "range" specifies conditions which *must* be met and "scope" indicates the different variables an individual *might* have to deal with. * This is not a mandatory component of NOS, however, if you chose to use Scope/Range then apply it consistently within the NOS and across the suite of NOS. * The language and terminology used in the PCs and Knowledge is carried through to the Scope/Range. * The Scope/Range should relate back to the PCs (consider using the same stem as used in the PC). |
| **Values** |
| * This is optional and does not have to be completed. However, if used then ensure consistency across the suite of NOS. * This may refer to overarching values recognised by the sector |
| **Behaviours** |
| * This is optional and does not have to be completed, however, if used then ensure consistency across the suite of NOS. * Generally speaking, we discourage the inclusion of behaviours because they are subjective and difficult or impossible to assess. Where used, this section should not include performance criteria, either repeated from the PCs or additional to the main content of the NOS. * Behaviours should not be used to define quality of competence. |
| **Skills** |
| * This is optional and does not have to be completed, however if used then ensure consistency across the suite of NOS. * This may give a short list of the skills which will be evidenced, as a guide to anyone considering if this NOS is appropriate for their use. |
| **Glossary** |
| * List of key words and phrases, with explanations of the particular meaning of these words and phrases as they are used within the NOS. * This is optional and does not have to be completed, however if included the words, phrases and definitions should be consistent throughout the suite of NOS. * This should be used to define words that people are not familiar with, and which are pertinent to the individual NOS, not words which are in common usage |
| **Links to other NOS** |
| * This is optional and does not have to be completed. * This may include the URLs and titles of closely related NOS showing how this NOS interfaces with other NOS in the same suite and/or other suites |
| **External Links** |
| * This is optional and does not have to be completed. * This may include links to professional bodies, codes of practice, professional standards and regulatory frameworks. Beware of including anything which may go out of date and therefore do not include hyperlinks. |

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| **Metadata** |
| * You must complete every section of the metadata prior to uploading the NOS to the database. * You must add allthe key words relevant to the NOS as these are used in the search function of the NOS Database. * You must add in all the occupations to which the NOS apply |
| **Importation of NOS (Change to Metadata)** |
| * A form is to be completed when importing standards whether they are from your own organisation or from another organisation. This is to allow the metadata to be updated. (The form can be found on the NOS Database). * Please note if a NOS is currently under review it cannot be imported until it has been fully approved. You should contact the Originating Organisation to request they add the metadata on your behalf prior to their submission of the Final NOS. |
| **Replacing old with new** |
| * A form is to be submitted along with the approval of your final NOS to indicate that NOS are being replaced (to indicate ‘Legacy’ or ‘Archive’). (The form can be found on the NOS Database).   **Definition of ‘Legacy’ NOS:**  The NOS is no longer current and has been superseded by a newer NOS, however this NOS is imported by another organisation and / or is still used within a current qualification.  **Definition of ‘Archive’ NOS:**  The NOS is no longer current has been superseded by a newer NOS, this NOS has not been imported by another organisation or used within a current qualification. Please note ‘Archived’ NOS will be removed from the NOS Database. |

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| **Quality Assurance** |
| * SSOs have a responsibility for the quality of the NOS they develop and therefore must have quality assurance systems in place * All NOS should be internally quality assured before uploading the final versions to the NOS database for approval. * NOS templates should be completed, sense checked and proof read aiming for a perfect output prior to uploading to the NOS database. |

**Other reference documents** –

* Blooms Taxonomy
* SCQF Level Descriptors