Adapting the WHO Rehabilitation Competency Framework to a specific context

A stepwise guide for competency framework developers

Version for field testing

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World Health Organization

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements iv

1. Introduction 1

2. Potential applications of a competency framework 2

3. Good practices when developing a context-specific rehabilitation competency framework 3

4. Key considerations when developing a context-specific rehabilitation competency framework 4

5. The process of developing a competency framework modelled on the rehabilitation competency framework 5

Annex 1. Template for a workplan 15

Annex 2. Template for recording competency framework contributors 17

Annex 3. Template for competency framework structure 19

Annex 4. Template for a feedback form 22

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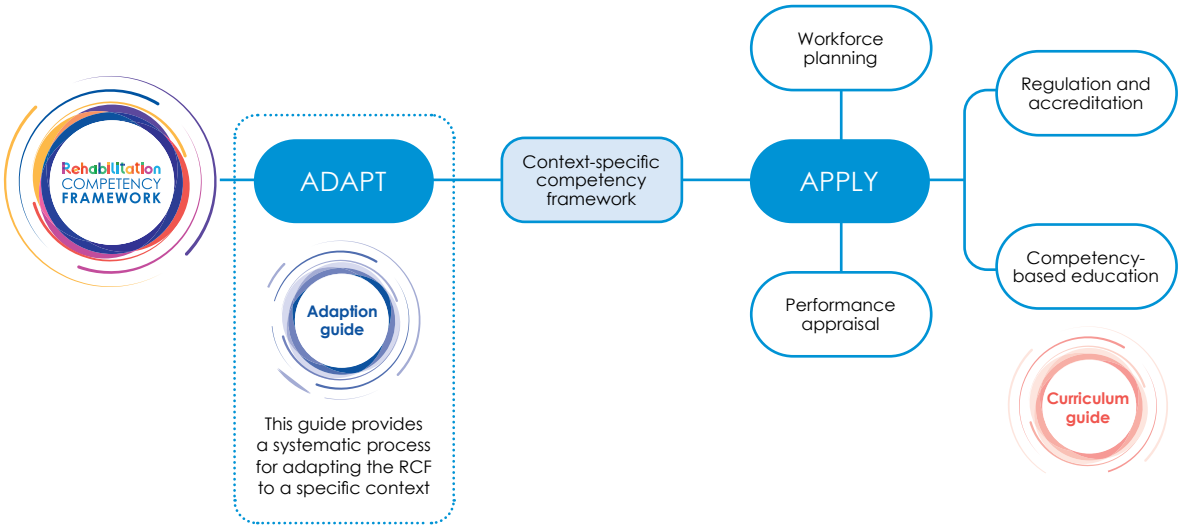
1. INTRODUCTION

This guide complements the Rehabilitation Competency Framework (RCF) and proposes a methodology for adapting the RCF model to a specific context, such as for a particular profession, specialization or setting. Adapting the RCF involves extracting the relevant content and customizing it for the context and intended application. Once adapted, the context-specific framework can be implemented, such as to support education and training, regulation, or performance appraisal (see Section II).

The RCF was designed to provide an organizational structure and language for developing rehabilitation competency frameworks that can be applied regardless of the intended audience or application. However, in order to be fit for purpose, every competency framework should reflect local values and beliefs, the scope of practice of the target audience, and the level of specificity required for its potential applications.

There is no one universally agreed way of approaching competency framework development; however, applying certain good practices, factoring in key considerations, and adopting a systematic process of content development can help ensure a positive outcome. This document offers these practices and considerations and guides competency framework developers through the phases and steps of adapting the structure and content of the RCF to a specific context. Templates to support the development process can be found in the annexes.

Figure 1. Progression from the RCF to implementation of a context-specific competency framework



2. POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS OF A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Competency frameworks can serve a range of purposes. Historically, they emerged with two distinct aims: to support the development of capabilities (generally the primary concern of the education sector), and to help define standards of performance (generally the primary concern of the labour sector). Currently, many competency frameworks aim to achieve a hybrid of both, yet each requires specific characteristics. Table 1 summarizes some of the common applications of competency frameworks that relate to either or both aims, and the requirements of a framework intending to be applied in each way.

Table 1. Examples of applications of competency frameworks for rehabilitation and their corresponding characteristics

Application	Key characteristics of competency frameworks
Supporting rehabilitation education and training, such as through guiding curriculum development	• Have a focus on the competencies and behaviours learners should develop, but also consider the activities and tasks they may need to perform • Typically include different levels of proficiency, or milestones, that should be achieved at different stages of education and training or of career development • Define the knowledge and skills that underpin the competencies and behaviours • Are forward-looking, or aspirational in expectations of performance
Supporting professional regulation, accreditation or licencing for rehabilitation	• Have a focus on activities and tasks that rehabilitation workers should be competent in performing, but also consider the competencies and behaviours that enable rehabilitation workers to perform effectively • Typically define a single level of proficiency required to be considered as competent • Capture existing or current expectations of performance
Supporting performance appraisal of rehabilitation workers	• Include both competencies and activities, with clear performance indicators (examples of how these would be demonstrated in a particular real-life scenario) • May include different levels of proficiency that capture where a person's performance sits along a continuum, or a defined level of proficiency, whereby a person is deemed either competent or not • Typically include performance indicators relevant to the context in which competencies and activities will be demonstrated • Capture existing or current expectations of performance

When developing a competency framework modelled on the RCF, it is important to consider carefully how the framework will be used and what it requires in order to serve its purpose. Without such consideration

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