

Continuing Competence and our Competence Statement

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What you need to know

This section provides information on our Competence Statement and how it applies to continuing competence.

What is the Competence Statement?

On 11 March 2015, the SRA Board approved the publication of a competence statement for solicitors. Made up of three parts (a statement of solicitor competence, the threshold standard and a statement of legal knowledge), the competence statement defines the standards expected of solicitors at the point of qualification and the steps they need to take to maintain these standards.

The competence statement is an integral part of our new approach to continuing competence. For a solicitor, meeting the competences set out in the competence statement forms an integral part of the requirement to provide a proper standard of service.

For more information read the competence statement [[/solicitors/competence-statement](#)].

Ensuring your ongoing competence: how does our Competence Statement apply?

You are required to provide a proper standard of service to your client. For a solicitor, meeting the competences set out in the Competence Statement forms an integral part of the requirement to provide a proper standard of service.

The Competence Statement can be used to help you meet this requirement. It is a tool to help you reflect on your practice, identify and address your learning and development needs, so that you keep your skills and knowledge up to date. To do this, you will need to:

- Apply the Competence Statement to your practice and practice area to identify what is relevant
- Use the Competence Statement to identify and address your learning and development needs
- Continue to maintain your knowledge and skills in relation to your practice and practice area
- Continue to maintain knowledge of those areas of law which are relevant, even if outside your particular practice area.

You are not required to maintain knowledge of law which has no bearing on your practice area.

Using the Competence Statement in practice

There are a number of ways you can use the Competence Statement to help ensure your ongoing competence. It can be used as a starting point to develop something new or it can be aligned to existing approaches.

We suggest below a number of ways to help you do this. Our suggestions are not mandatory

nor is the list exhaustive. It is designed to provide a prompt for discussion; it is up to you to decide how you apply the Competence Statement in how you ensure ongoing competence.

Use the Competence Statement as standalone tool

We have already explained how individual solicitors can use the Competence Statement to reflect on their practice [[/solicitors/resources/cpd/tool-kit/identify-learning-development/](#)] and ensure ongoing competence. Using it as a learning and development tool on a regular basis can help ensure that your knowledge and skills are up to date and you continue to provide a proper standard of service.

Employers are also responsible for delivering a proper standard of service to their clients and for training their staff to maintain a level of competence appropriate to their work and level of responsibility. The Competence Statement can be used by employers to identify organisational learning and development needs and develop plans meet these needs.

You could:

Integrate Competence Statement into existing performance management systems

Most firms have some form of performance management system in place, for example, regular appraisals or reviews for employees. You can use the Competence Statement as a tool to support an appraisal or review process, for example, it can be used by solicitors and their employers in setting and reviewing objectives in relation to learning and development.

Introduce a performance management system

If you don't currently have a performance management in place, then you may want to consider introducing one. Resources are available, for example, through the Chartered Institute of Professional Development, to help you do this.

Integrate into existing competence frameworks

We know that many firms already have competence frameworks in place to define what is required of employees to perform effectively. There should be an alignment between our Competence Statement and the content of your competence framework. Where gaps are identified, you may want to consider how you can reflect our Competence Statement in your framework.

Develop a competence framework

If you currently don't have a competence framework, you can use the content of our Competence Statement to develop one. Resources are available, for example, through the Chartered Institute of Professional Development, to help you do this.