

# Competency-Based Training and Assessment

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Competence or competency is the attainment of job proficiency. A competency (note the use of “a”) is a set of defined behaviors that provides a structured guide which enables the identification, development, and evaluation of the behaviors in individuals for specific tasks, skills, and/or abilities. In the workplace, it’s the ability of an individual to perform a job properly. It is also a set of criteria upon which competence can be measured.

The International Hearing Society’s (IHS) Competency Model is a collection of multiple skills and abilities that together define successful performance in the hearing instrument dispensing office. It provides a clear description of what a professional needs to know and needs to be able to do, that is, the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job. The competency model is found in the appendix.

Competency-based training provides the trainer with a roadmap for teaching the knowledge and skills necessary for safe and successful entry-level practice. It allows for a highly individualized learning process by focusing on the outcomes of training. The outcomes of training are measured by an assessment, that is, the evaluation and documentation of a trainee’s progress.

The clinical evaluation of trainees in healthcare professions is challenging even for the most experienced trainer. A systematized performance assessment called a rubric is a learner/trainee-centered assessment approach that focuses on identifying the degree to which a trainee exhibits a skill thus encouraging behavioral changes in learners. Rubrics enable the trainer to determine the level of mastery the trainee has acquired for specific skills/competencies. Rubrics can be used at judicious intervals during the training process to assess professional growth and development and at the end of the training period to prepare the trainee for licensure.

The rubrics developed for this Trainer Manual are based on the current IHS Competency Model. They provide the observable skill sets that are expected of a Hearing Aid Specialist. These outcomes-based assessment rubrics provide tools for objectively assessing trainee learning while focusing on achieving clearly defined outcomes. Practice can improve the performance of these essential skills through the outcomes-based assessments that rubrics provide when they’re used as a feedback tool for trainees. Competency-based assessments are provided for each of the skill areas identified in the competency model. In addition, the appendix contains a comprehensive assessment that can be used as a tool for your trainee’s mid-training and/or final evaluation before taking a competency examination for licensure.

The state/provincial licensing law and rules/regulations that define the scope of practice in a jurisdiction can be thought of as another competency statement. As a licensee and certainly as a trainer, you must have a copy of your federal/state/provincial licensing laws and rules/regulations. Insert these documents in the appendix. In the United States the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is another stakeholder in patient safety. The FDA regulations or equivalent should be placed in the appropriate Appendix. Another component of competence involves the attitudes and conduct of a practitioner, and these are typically set-out in a code of professional conduct or Code of Ethics of a professional organization. IHS’ Bylaws and Code of Ethics are provided.