



CA2025 Training Programme

**Assessing proficiency in the
Professional Values & Attitudes and Acumens Learning Outcomes**

October 2021

1 INTRODUCTION

This document explains how the proficiency matrices for the Professional Values & Attitudes and Acumens (Enabling Competencies) learning outcomes will be used in practice to assess proficiency in these learning outcomes.

This document should be read together with the three Decision Trees provided:

- Professional Development Summary Decision Tree for the Professional Values and Attitudes learning outcomes.
- Learning Outcome Review Decision Tree for the Acumen learning outcomes.
- Professional Development Summary Decision Tree for the Acumen learning outcomes.

2 PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ATTITUDES Practice and display of behaviours			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured summatively only (based on an accumulation of evidence demonstrated by the trainee in the current and previous Professional Development Summary cycles.) • Trainee role: Submit evidence meeting SAICA's quality guidelines (consider who, what, where, when, how and why) that reflects specific details of the context in which the behaviour was demonstrated. • Reviewer role (Learning Outcome Review): Confirm, and thus corroborate, acceptability of the evidence (quality and context) to be assessed summatively. • Evaluator and/or Assessor role (Professional Development Summary): Summative assessment and rating of proficiency. 			
Dimensions	Levels of proficiency		
	1 – Foundational	2 – Intermediate	3 – Advanced
a) Frequency How often	Occasionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific circumstances • Always 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of circumstances • Always
b) Context Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple • Straight-forward situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple • Complexity limited to specific situations only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult • Complex situations

2.1. There are two dimensions that indicate proficiency in the Professional Values and Attitudes:

Frequency

A reference to **how often** the behaviour is being demonstrated.

Frequency can only be measured *summatively*, based on an accumulation of evidence.

Context

A reference to the **complexity** of the situation in which the behaviour is demonstrated.

It is important to note that neither of these indicators refers to the actual ability to demonstrate the behaviour. The trainee is expected to demonstrate the behaviour. Proficiency is then an indication of how often it is demonstrated (frequency) and in what context.

2.2. When a trainee documents evidence in the Learning Outcome Review:

The **behaviour** will need to be described. i.e. How was the behaviour demonstrated?

SAICA will prescribe certain qualities required of the evidence (similar to the process for the Professional Conduct (PC) values in the 2016 Training Programme) to facilitate the summative decision-making process.

Evidence will need to:

- be specific (explaining the specific interaction, action, task, steps taken, etc.);
- be detailed (consider where, what, when, who, why and how);
- show an understanding of the learning outcome being demonstrated; and
- indicate how (to motivate that) the behaviour demonstrates the learning outcome.

The **context** will need to be described.

Information about the context will be important for the facilitation of summative decision-making. Ultimately the context needs to demonstrate the appropriate professional mind-set at entry level into the profession (i.e. a high level of responsibility, autonomy and experience).

2.3. In the proficiency matrix, context is described as follows:

- Foundational: In a simple context with straight-forward situations
- Intermediate: In a simple context with complexity limited to specific situations
- Advanced: In a difficult context with complex situations

Within a practical training environment, the complexity of a situation will increase during the term of the contract as the trainee assumes increasing responsibility and is required to act with greater degrees of autonomy.

By way of illustration, in the early stages of a contract, trainees largely simply follow instructions in straight-forward situations that require/demand straight-forward responses to demonstrate the Professional Values and Attitudes learning outcomes. As they progress in their contracts, trainees start to assume greater responsibility, with fewer instructions in more complex situations that require more sophisticated responses, in line with the higher stakes, to demonstrate these learning outcomes.

2.4. The reviewer role in the Learning Outcome Review:

Proficiency can only be measured summatively based on an accumulation of evidence.

The role of the reviewer is therefore to confirm the acceptability of the evidence submitted by the trainee, (similar to the process for the Professional Conduct (PC) values in the 2016 Training Programme).

Reviewers will need to confirm that the trainee has presented the appropriate quality of evidence and has appropriately described the context. In confirming the acceptability, the reviewer will also be corroborating that the documented evidence accurately reflects the demonstrated behaviour and the context.

2.5. Evaluator (and/or Assessor role) in the Professional Development Summary:

The evidence submitted in the current and previous cycles will need to be evaluated and summative rating of proficiency provided.

The evaluator will need to consider how **frequently** the behaviour has been demonstrated and the **context** within which the trainee was able to demonstrate the behaviour.

Based on the evidence presented, the evaluator will determine whether the behaviour was demonstrated:

- On multiple occasions in a variety of circumstances (advanced frequency)
- On multiple occasions but only in specific circumstances (intermediate frequency)
- Only occasionally (foundational frequency)

Once the frequency has been considered, the evaluator will consider the context in which the behaviour was demonstrated and whether the context on which the evidence is based demonstrates an appropriate professional mind-set at entry level to the profession (i.e. does it

reflect an appropriate level of responsibility, autonomy and experience in the situations that the trainee presented).

As a last step, evaluators need to consider whether the trainee will be able to replicate this behaviour in other similar contexts. In making this determination, the evaluator can look more widely at evidence from any source (not only that presented by the trainee.)

Refer to the Professional Development Summary Decision Tree for the Professional Values and Attitudes learning outcomes.

3 ACUMENS (ENABLING COMPETENCIES)

ACUMENS (ENABLING COMPETENCIES)			
Ability to apply during technical task performance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured formatively (based on evidence presented in an LOR) and summatively (based on an accumulation of evidence presented by the trainee in the current and previous PDS cycles.) • Trainee role: Submit evidence meeting SAICA's quality guidelines (consider who, what, where, when, how and why) that reflects specific details of the technical context in which the acumen learning outcome was displayed. • Reviewer role (LOR): Confirm, and thus corroborate, acceptability of the evidence and provide a formative rating of proficiency. • Evaluator and/or Assessor role (PDS): Summative assessment and rating of proficiency. 			
Dimensions	Levels of proficiency		
	1 – Foundational	2 – Intermediate	3 – Advanced
a) Task understanding Application of acumen learning outcome in the technical context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic • Key ideas and principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate • Uses some analysis/evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced • Thorough analysis/evaluation • Makes useful recommendations (where appropriate.)
b) Task completion Complexity of the technical context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows pre-determined steps to perform the task • Uses limited knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates tasks and performs them • Integrates knowledge sources and skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple in some areas ○ Limited in other areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates tasks and performs them • Integrates knowledge sources and skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple ○ In all areas
c) Guidance Guidance about how to demonstrate the acumen learning outcome. (Questions to gather info / consultation acceptable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or none
d) Dependencies Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works under supervision • Tasks with a low level of risk and complexity • Uses established processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries out some tasks independently • Responsible for the quality of own work • Part of a team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages own work • Responsible for the quality and quantity of the work • May be responsible for leading a team and / or managing certain functions

3.1. There are four dimensions that indicate proficiency levels for the acumen learning outcomes. One relates directly to the acumen learning outcome, while the other three relate to the technical context in which the learning outcome is demonstrated. The order of the dimensions below corresponds to the order of the questions in the decision tree.

3.2. In designing the decision trees a key focus was practical implementation in the training programme and reducing complexity in the application of the measure. Therefore, for some dimensions, the critical components of the intermediate and advanced levels have been combined and a trainee can meet the overall proficiency requirements by meeting either the intermediate or advanced levels of these individual dimensions, provided the critical components are met.

3.3. Guidance

In the proficiency matrix, the level of guidance is described as follows:

- Foundational: Requiring frequent guidance
- Intermediate: Requiring limited guidance
- Advanced: Requiring little or no guidance

This dimension revolves around the extent to which the trainee needed guidance to be able to demonstrate the **acumen learning outcome** before or during task completion. This does not relate to whether the trainee asked questions before or during completion of the task, but rather to what extent the trainee needed to be shown **how** to demonstrate the learning outcome.

In reflecting on this dimension, it should be noted that professionally qualified individuals do (and should) consult with peers. Consultation with peers or more senior staff does not necessarily indicate that a trainee is unable to demonstrate the learning outcome without guidance. Collecting information (by obtaining insight from someone with more experience or to obtain a broader context) should not be interpreted as guidance in this context.

3.4. Task Completion

Proficiency in this dimension comes from a combination of two elements related to the **complexity of the task** within which the acumen learning outcome is being demonstrated:

- Was the trainee able to initiate and perform the task (or did they follow a set of pre-determined steps)?
- In performing the task, did the trainee integrate multiple knowledge sources and skills? This could include different acumens, information sources and / or technical disciplines.

3.5. Task Understanding

Proficiency in this dimension reflects to what degree the trainee is able to analyse / evaluate and make useful recommendations, where appropriate, in applying the acumen learning outcome in the relevant technical context:

- Foundational understanding of the task: basic, key ideas and principles.
- Intermediate understanding of the task: using some analysis/ evaluation.
- Advanced understanding of the task: thorough analysis /evaluation and making useful recommendations, where appropriate.

The “where appropriate” in relation to making recommendations reflects that as a trainee the opportunity to make recommendations is not always available. This may be a requirement for the

task and then this becomes measurable, but the lack of opportunity should not prevent a trainee from obtaining the required level of proficiency

Trainees need to ensure that they document information about the task understanding when documenting the technical context.

3.6. Dependencies

This dimension should not be confused with the Guidance dimension. In this context Dependencies do not reflect the extent to which the trainee might rely on someone or something else for aid, support, etc. In the proficiency matrix, the Dependencies dimension relates to the degree to which the trainee is autonomously responsible for:

- The quality of their own work; and/or
- The quality of work of others (e.g. of staff they are supervising.)

In considering this dimension, the decision tree allows for a range of practical experience where trainees work independently or as part of teams.

3.7. The reviewer role in the Learning Outcome Review:

Proficiency in the acumen learning outcomes is measured both formatively and summatively.

The role of the reviewer is to rate the trainee's proficiency based on the evidence presented in the Learning Outcome review (which needs to cover all of the dimensions.)

The first step for the reviewer is therefore to consider whether the trainee has provided sufficient information to cover all the dimensions and then to determine the level of proficiency demonstrated based on the evidence presented.

Refer to the Learning Outcome Review Decision Tree for the Acumen learning outcomes

3.8. Evaluator (and/or Assessor role) in the Professional Development Summary:

The Evaluator is responsible for providing an overall (summative) rating of proficiency for the acumen learning outcomes. To do so, the evaluator will first consider the ratings received by the trainee in the Learning Outcome Reviews during the current and previous Professional Development Summary cycles and then consider whether the trainee is able to consistently demonstrate the learning outcome at the level reflected in those ratings obtained in the Learning Outcome Reviews and whether there is evidence from any other source to the contrary.

Refer to the Professional Development Summary Decision Tree for the Acumen learning outcomes