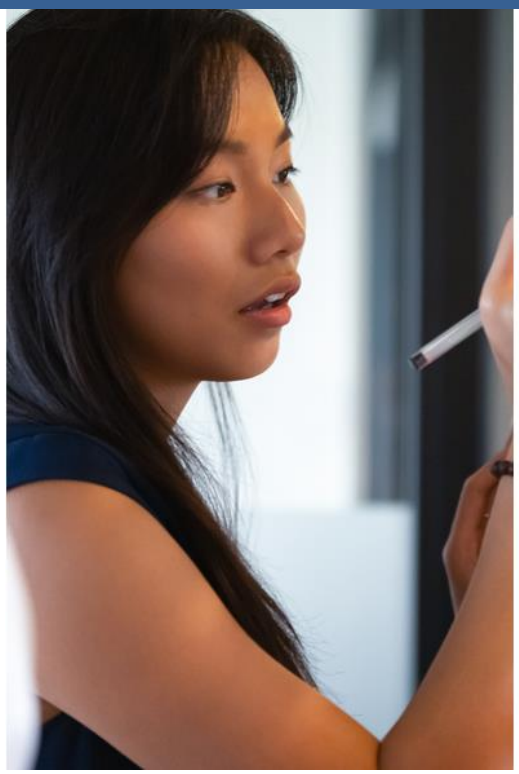
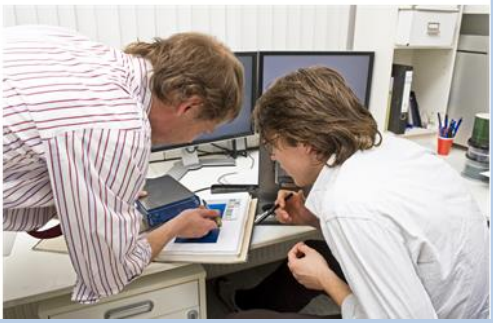
SFIA® FOUNDATION

SFIA Self-assessment guidelines





This document describes recognised and generally accepted good practice in the field of SFIA self-assessment.

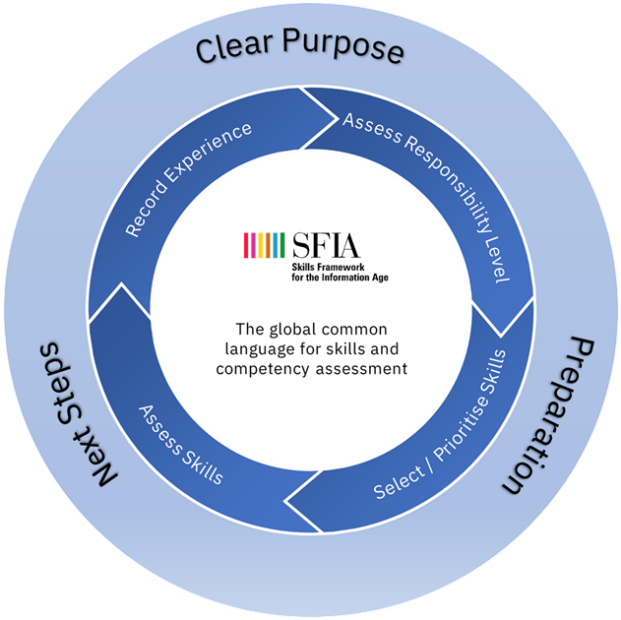
The SFIA Foundation obtained input from a global, collaborative working group of experienced SFIA users.

The guidelines are illustrative of different approaches to SFIA self-assessment. They are not prescriptive in describing only one way.

It is intended to help individuals to perform their own SFIA assessment and also for organisations to establish their preferred approach.

This is the first of a series of guidelines for SFIA assessments.

Keep informed of further developments by registering on the SFIA website. www.sfia-online.org.



Introduction

A self-assessment of your own SFIA skills and skill levels is a valuable activity to support your professional development.

A self-assessment can be completed by individuals, independently, as a review and reflection of their work experience, skills and responsibility.

A self-assessment is also, commonly, a necessary input to managed processes such as:

- job applications and interviews,
- one-to-one conversations with a line manager or a practice manager / career mentor - discussing performance and professional development needs
- an application for registration or certification with a professional body
- a formal SFIA skills assessment by an independent assessor

In these cases; your ability to provide an objective, accurate assessment of your own level of skills and experience adds professional credibility to you as an individual.

For a variety of reasons, individuals may over- or under-estimate their skills and skill levels. By its nature; it can be difficult to be objective and impartial in a self-assessment.

- SFIA helps by providing a structured framework, with clear incremental skill level descriptions to aid objectivity.
- Accuracy and robustness are also improved by using a self-assessment process which relates SFIA skills to documented evidence of workplace experience

Following these guidelines means that a SFIA-based self-assessment provides a good starting point for professional discussions related to work experience, achievements, skills and professional development.

The Steps to Self-assessment

Clear Purpose	• Be clear on why you are doing a SFIA self-assessment
Preparation	• Get SFIA reference material / choose an assessment tool • Familiarise yourself with the key concepts of SFIA • Collate personal work documents and evidence as required
Assess SFIA level of responsibility	• Consider SFIA generic levels 1 to 7 • Assess against autonomy, influence, complexity, knowledge and business skills • Record results
Select / prioritise SFIA skills to assess	• Target skills to assess e.g. for current or future role, a job vacancy or against industry standard definitions OR • Navigate the full set of SFIA skills to find the skills relevant to your work experience
Assess SFIA skills	For each SFIA skill you select: • Read SFIA skill description (confirm it matches your experience) • Read SFIA skill at a level description • Select and record appropriate level(s) • If you choose a level that exceeds your level of responsibility assessment; confirm by reviewing **Assess SFIA level of responsibility** step
Record work experience to support assessment	• Recording supporting evidence is helpful, and in some cases essential to make use of the assessment. • Capture the work experience which matches the responsibility levels, skills and skill levels you have selected • Consider updating your personal work/career records to include your skills assessment
Next steps	• Review the purpose of the assessment. Has that been achieved? • In what other ways can you use this assessment? • When would it be useful to repeat / update the assessment?

Key Points

- A self-assessment can be performed very quickly, but significant value can be obtained with more thought and a little preparation
- Understand why you are performing self-assessment
- Familiarise yourself with the key concepts of SFIA
- Consider both the Generic Attributes and Professional Skills
- SFIA is about experience of performing the skill not just having knowledge of the subject matter
- Follow a structured assessment process, based on work experience to avoid over- or under-estimating your skill levels
- Pick only the skills relevant to your use of self-assessment
- The self-assessment does not have to address all skills, only those necessary, and it may be added incrementally in the future
- It is good practice to collate and record evidence to justify the skills and skill levels claimed

Detailed Guidance

Target audience

- Individuals exploring SFIA by means of a self-assessment of their skills
- Individuals performing a self-assessment as part of a managed process led by an employer, professional body, or other organisation
- Line Managers, HR & L&D consultants, resourcing specialists, recruiters, SFIA consultants & practitioners who are supporting employers, professional bodies and other organisations to adopt SFIA and want to understand generally recognised practice in the use of self-assessments

Notes

- SFIA is a flexible resource and can be applied in many ways.
- These guidelines are illustrative, and present alternative approaches. They do not mandate a single definitive approach.
- The approach you choose will depend on the purpose of your self-assessment, your work or academic environment and the planned use of the assessment outcomes.
- There is an active global ecosystem of SFIA Partners, SFIA Consultants and Practitioners. They are available for advice on SFIA assessments and the use of specific processes and tools (including skills assessment software) to support SFIA assessments. Full details are available on the SFIA website.

Clear Purpose:

SFIA is a flexible resource and can be applied to many activities and opportunities. Before you start a self-assessment, it can be helpful to think why you are doing it.

Making a note of what you are trying to achieve will help focus and guide your self-assessment efforts.

Examples

As an individual I would like to:

- Find a good way of describing the breadth and depth of my experience
- Establish a baseline for planning my next career steps and my professional development
- Assess myself against the needs of a particular job/role or qualification
- Develop high quality, focused, learning and development objectives based on actual needs

As an employer I would like to:

- Help my employees discover and communicate the full breadth and depth of their skills to support processes such as professional development and resource deployment.

Preparation:

Although the process of assessment can be performed quickly it can be helpful to collect some material in advance. Alternatively, you can complete a self-assessment and then review and improve once you have collected supporting material.

Get the SFIA Reference material	Supporting SFIA material is available on this website. You will need to register for a Personal Licence in order to download the material. The personal licence is free of charge - register here. If you are using a tool or HR system to support assessment; some or all of the SFIA content may be embedded in the tool.
Base your assessment on your actual work experience. Cross-reference your own personal work records to for a comprehensive and accurate assessment.	To help this it can be helpful to gather relevant personal information before starting the assessment. This is (optional, as may not be required for some assessment approaches) Examples • Your CV / resume • Recent job descriptions, assignment objectives, or terms of reference for your work • An organisation chart • A list of your key stakeholders or contacts at work • Key deliverables you have produced, the outcomes you achieve in your work • Records of training and education you have received • Feedback from managers, colleagues, customers or others • Your reflective learning journal
Find time, head-space, and a comfortable environment without distractions.	Things to consider • Some people prefer working directly with a computer or device, others prefer the use of paper, pencil to jot down notes and ideas • Returning to assessments after a short period of time, e.g. the following day or week, will bring a different perspective and allow you to reflect and improve your initial assessment • Ideally, a self-assessment is not a one-off exercise and can become a useful and on-going professional development tool. You can revisit after a period of time and/or completion of a significant piece of work or development action. • The purpose of a self-assessment is not to aim for the highest skill level, treat it as an investigation in order to match yourself to the levels described. • Be realistic; it can be difficult to be impartial when assessing yourself, but there is no benefit in over- or under-assessing e.g. you may miss out on development opportunities or apply for

jobs/assignments for which you are not suitable.

- Many self-assessments are the first step in a managed process (e.g. a job interview, a conversation with your manager, an interview with a professional body or independent skills assessor). In these cases; your ability to provide an objective, accurate assessment of your own level experience adds professional credibility to you as an individual.

Find my SFIA level of responsibility:

The backbone of SFIA is a common language to describe levels of responsibility across roles in all the professional disciplines represented in SFIA.

The value of the generic SFIA Levels of Responsibility is often overlooked by new users of SFIA. Experienced users recognise that the levels of responsibility provide the solid foundation for SFIA skill level assessments.

Review and understand SFIA's generic levels of responsibility. This is an important first step which will provide the foundation for the next steps in the assessment and beyond. Read through the generic descriptions. Notice the incremental difference in each responsibility as you move from level 1 to 2 to 3 etc. Do this for each of the 5 generic responsibilities in turn. You will start to get a feel for which level matches best to your current level of responsibility.	Notes • The SFIA Framework consists of seven levels of responsibility from Level 1, the lowest, to Level 7, the highest. The levels describe the behaviours, values, knowledge and experience that an individual should have in order to be identified as competent at the level. • There are 7 levels of responsibility in SFIA; each are described by 5 generic responsibilities. • The levels are precisely written to be progressive, distinct and consistently described. • The generic responsibilities describe five important attributes of responsibility called autonomy, influence, complexity, knowledge and business skills. • These are applicable to all jobs and roles no matter what the specialism, the size or nature of an employer, the geographical location etc. This content can be found on the SFIA Foundation spreadsheet, the A3 chart, the complete reference guide and the SFIA website.
Consider how the expectations of your current or latest job or role match to SFIA's generic levels of responsibility.	Notes • Remember, at this stage the focus is on responsibilities based on your current work experience; not what you have potential or aspirations towards. • While SFIA does not align years of work experience to SFIA levels; it is natural that to build up experience to match the higher SFIA levels will take

	time and opportunity. • Your accountabilities / responsibilities may be documented formally in a role profile, job description, position description, or a "terms of reference" for a piece of work or assignment. In many cases, it may be less formal. You could discuss with your line manager or co-workers to get their views • If you have experience of operating at a higher level in previous role assignments, then you may want to consider that experience too (see guidance on Recency below). • You may think that you are contributing more or less than the formal expectations of the role – again you can use the SFIA Levels of Responsibility to highlight the behaviours/attributes /competencies you have demonstrated.
You will now have a good understanding of your normal level of responsibility. This indicates the SFIA level at which you operate in your current or recent work, Make a note of the level(s) as it provides a very good sense check for your maximum skills levels in the following steps of the self-assessment.	**Alternatives** Assessment against the Level of Responsibility can be done in a variety of ways. Select the approach which is optimal based on your reason for doing the assessment. • A single, combined, overall assessment – considering all the 5 generic attributes but not scoring each individually • Assessment against each generic attribute to inform an overall level of responsibility. Use this to highlight strengths and development areas against each attribute. • Assessment using a graduated rating scale instead of a binary yes or no. This can provide a richer picture to inform the overall assessment. • Assessment against each of the indicators within the generic attributes separately, to create a detailed diagnostic of your strengths and development areas.

Select / prioritise the skills to assess:

One of SFIA's strengths is its comprehensive, industry-wide, coverage - as a result there are many different professional and technical skills described in SFIA.

- SFIA is a flexible resource, and, to assist navigating the framework, the skills can be grouped, filtered, and viewed in alternative ways to support specific disciplines, organisations and frameworks and the different needs of users.
- The SFIA website provides some helpful views of SFIA skills and the SFIA Complete Reference Guide uses categories and sub-categories to group skills.

Before performing your self-assessment, you should consider the different ways to identify and prioritise the skills you wish to assess against.

Option 1 - use the SFIA Categories and Sub-categories The SFIA framework groups skills into categories and sub-categories. Colour coding is also used to identify the categories. This is shown on the website, the Complete Reference Guide and the A3 sized summary chart.	Notes The SFIA categories are • Strategy and architecture • Change and transformation • Development and implementation • Delivery and operation • Skills and quality • Relationships and engagement These categories and sub-categories do not equate to jobs, roles, organisational teams or areas of personal responsibility. • It is common practice that skills for a specific job description are made up of skills taken from multiple categories and sub-categories. • The categories and sub-categories are intended to assist with navigation, e.g. when incorporating SFIA skills into role profiles, job descriptions, or, when building an organisation's own competency framework. The categories and sub-categories do not have definitions themselves; they are simply a structure to aid navigation
Option 2 - use the SFIA Views The SFIA user community has developed a number of views based on	SFIA Views are available for • Software engineering • Digital transformation • Service management • Big data, analytics and data management • Agile

domains of interest. They provide a sub-set of the SFIA skills. You can use these views to focus on the skills that may be most relevant to your areas of experience.	• DevOps The views are intended as guidelines only. If you cannot find a particular skill you may wish to follow up with the alphabetical list. This is available on the A3 sheet, in the SFIA complete reference guide and website. • Contact the SFIA Foundation if you can't find a view that you are looking for.
Option 3 - use the Alphabetical list If you know the name of particular SFIA skills, you can find them in the A-Z index, or you can simply read through the skills in order.	• Assessments against all of SFIA skills are the most comprehensive • It can also be a non-directive way of identifying the relevant skills – i.e. without an overlay of SFIA categories or views. • If you have broad work experience and / or broad professional development interests, you can browse the full list to find the skills of interest. • Assessing against the entire SFIA framework can be valuable in ensuring that nothing is inadvertently missed. Of course, this may require a greater investment of time. • Some employers maintain employee skills databases to support workforce planning or resourcing needs. In these cases, a comprehensive assessment of all your skills can be useful.

Option 4 - use the standard Job Roles
 	
Some assessments may be performed against the requirements of a specific job or role. For example, for a job interview.
	Examples
	
	• The SFIA framework does not prescribe jobs or roles. However, SFIA provides the foundation for a number of industry approaches to defining roles.
	• Employer provided job roles / SFIA skills profiles
	• Vacancies posted with SFIA skill and skill level expectations
	• Some professional bodies have industry-based accreditation schemes based on SFIA skills and skill levels
	• The SFIA framework does not describe jobs or roles. However, SFIA provides support for a number of industry approaches to defining roles.
	  ○ European ICT
	  ○ GDS / DDAT roles
	  ○ Job Families
	  ○ Other standard skills profiles may be available from other sources e.g. from the Australian Public Sector, Chilean Government
	  ○ Use care when using industry profiles - they are usually generic and may not always be suitable for your specific needs.
	
	Note that some organisations may name the skills differently to SFIA. If you cannot find a particular skill in SFIA, it may be worth reading through the alphabetical list for variations to the name you are familiar with.

Assess my SFIA Skills:

Once you have selected the SFIA skills to assess against. There are a number of different options for assessing SFIA skills and recording a SFIA skill assessment.

- If you are doing this as part of a managed process or tool; then the approach is likely to be prescribed for you.

If you are doing this as a stand-alone exercise, then select an approach which will support the purpose of your assessment.

Read the SFIA skill names and overall skill descriptions of the skills you want to self-assess and confirm that the skill described is relevant to your experience.	**Notes** • The overall SFIA skill description is important as it provides the context for the individual skill level descriptions There are some SFIA skill names which appear to have a similar scope. By reading the overall skill description you can be sure to choose the right one. E.g. Consulting (CNSL) and Specialist Advice (TECH), Emerging technology monitoring (EMRG), Innovation (INOV) and Research (RSCH).
Decide which Skill-at-a-level descriptions are relevant for this self-assessment. Depending on the purpose of the assessment; there are different approaches to selecting which skill levels to assess against: 1. Assess against all skill levels, working upwards from the lowest level 2. Assess the skill levels which are closest to your selected generic level of responsibility - see above 3. Target your assessment at the skill level targets	**Notes** • The SFIA skill-at-a-level descriptions are written in plain, jargon-free language to enable you to match your own work-experiences to the levels described. • SFIA skill-at-a-level descriptions describe real life, work-based experiences and actions. If you have not done what the level description says, then you don't have the skill at that level. • If a skill-at-a-level is relevant to you, it should be repeatable – that is, you have done the activities described successfully, done them more than once and could do them again. • SFIA level descriptions are **not** descriptions of knowledge. They describe the application and mastery of skills in the workplace, not just knowledge of the topic or subject matter area. The descriptions focus on how knowledge is applied to produce results in the workplace. You can be very knowledgeable but not have had the opportunity to apply the knowledge in a work environment. If that is the case, you could not be said to have the skill. • The descriptions are diagnostic, not prescriptive. The SFIA skill is not intended as a complete definition of all the activities that could be carried out by someone with that skill. It is intended for diagnostic use: to help determine if a given individual has the skill; and if so, at what level. • So professional judgment is required when assessing; not just a tick-list, check-box approach.

you are assessing against. E.g. for a job vacancy, a skills profile for your current or future role, a professional certification **Read the skill-at-a-level-descriptions and compare your work experience to the activities and responsibilities described.**	
Record your skill level. Similar to the generic levels of responsibility, there are options for recording the results of your assessment. 1. A single level number per SFIA skill to represent the highest level for each skill you have assessed against. 2. A graduated rating scale instead of a binary yes or no against all levels relevant for your assessment (see appendix). This can provide a richer picture to inform the overall assessment. 3. A diagnostic, micro-assessment against each of the indicators within the skill-at-a-level description	**Notes** • A single level number for a skill does not imply that you have skills to perform all the activities describe in lower levels. If that is important for the purpose of the self-assessment you should also assess against all the relevant lower levels. • SFIA does not define technology, methods, approaches or technical knowledge because these change rapidly but the underlying skills are more persistent. However, these elements can be mapped against SFIA skills, and act as skill attributes. • The individual skill levels you select are likely to be closely linked to your overall / dominant Level of Responsibility (from step 1). This is because the SFIA level descriptions are based on the Level of Responsibility (see SFIA "Skill-at-a-level graphic") • SFIA does not describe all skills at all 7 levels. This is a specific design feature which reflects that not all professional skills are applicable at all levels. This means that on occasions you may look for a SFIA skill-at-a-level it does not exist. In that case you will need to search for a related skill e.g. ○ Managing software development projects or teams are described in the SFIA skill called Programming/software development (PROG,) higher levels skills related to running systems development functions are described in the skill called Systems development management (DLMG). **Number of skills** • There is no target for the number of SFIA skills an IT / Software Engineering / Digital professional should have • The appropriate number will be dependent on your own experience, the nature of your specialisation,

	the operating model and size of the organisations you have worked in, and on the structure of SFIA (e.g. some skill areas are decomposed to a lower level than others) • Taken in isolation, the total number of SFIA skills is not a significant measure of worth or value • More important is demonstrable value achieved from the skills you have
If the Skill-at-a-level description seems too low/too high for your experience, then consider the levels immediately above and below.	If you have chosen a level which is higher than your generic level from the previous steps, you should go back to confirm if you also match the higher generic level. • To be fully competent at a target skill level it is usually expected that you meet the Level of Responsibility characteristics at the same or higher level. • However, in some circumstances it can be very useful to identify your professional work experience at SFIA skill levels higher than your level of responsibility. By doing this you can indicate areas where you are developing beyond the core competency level and/or you could be expected to execute some work activities requiring that level of skill
Evidencing your self-assessment It is generally good practice to record evidence to support your self-assessment. In many use cases, recording your supporting evidence will be necessary to make further use of the self-assessment. **SFIA describes work-based responsibilities** • It follows that an assessment of skills has to focus on your experience of doing something, in the workplace and that experience should	**Notes** • Examples from your "body of work" should meet the following criteria ○ They should relate to something that you have specifically done or achieved; not something that your team or colleagues have done ○ They should describe an activity that has already happened. ○ They are not intentions for the future or what you feel you could do if you were given an opportunity. Your skills assessment is focussed on demonstrated behaviours / achievements not about potential. **Recency of experience** • Your skills assessment should be contemporary, meaning you could use any of the skills you selected, at the level you determined, to get a job done. • Generally, if you haven't used a skill for a long period time, your ability to perform that skill will be significantly diminished. Your skill assessment should focus on the skills you have used in the last 5 years (+/- 2 years depending on the nature and level of the skill) • In some use cases it can be helpful to record skill levels older than this but try to distinguish them from your current skills. Older skills can be useful in a number of ways:

	preferably have been repeated more than once over a period of time For this purpose; examples from your "body of work" are useful to support your assessment.	○ context for your current skill set / work experience ○ demonstrate to others how your career history and portfolio of skills have evolved over time. ○ Provides a complete skills inventory for organisational resourcing purposes, for example if a skill needs to be reactivated, brought back into currency, and utilised. **Application of knowledge not the acquisition of knowledge** • Academic or theoretical knowledge can be a vital component of competency. However, SFIA's focus is on how that knowledge is applied to produce results in the workplace. • Being knowledgeable of and working across many disciplines does not mean you have the skills related to those disciplines E.g. ○ Working as an Enterprise Architect gives insights and exposures to many disciplines, but that does not mean you have those skills ○ Being the manager or Chief Technology Officer of many individuals or teams means you have a broad understanding of what your people do, but, it does not mean you have their skills or that you have higher skill levels than your team • Expert knowledge is not the same as a high level of competency. ○ Level 6 or 7 do not in themselves equate to being an experienced, deep subject matter expert. Instead, they relate to strategic/operational leadership in a particular skill or discipline.

Record my work experience:	The previous step highlighted the option to support your self-assessment with evidence from your current / previous work-based responsibilities.	

	Once you have finalised your SFIA skills and skill levels; you can create a record of how our work experience supports your assessment of your SFIA skills and skill levels.	Examples
		• Annotate your CV / resume
		• Create a document which lists your SFIA skills and levels and provides a brief description of roles, jobs, projects, assignment from your work experience
		• Make sure you highlight what you have personally achieved, provides some sizing of the work and its impact,
		• Just a simple job title or project name will not provide enough detail to match what you have done with your assessed SFIA skill and skill level
		• Try merging the wording from your CV with the SFIA level description e.g.
		  ○ ***As a designer/lead developer:***
		  ○ I worked with business analysts to understand requirements and transform that into High-level **design** and Low-level **design** for ***<<insert name of application>>***
		  ○ I **coded, tested, debugged and documented** ***<<insert name of applications>>.***
		  ○ **I took responsibility for the following stages of development**: preparing work breakdown structure (WBS), conducting workshops for the team, resolving the queries for the complete delivery of the end-to-end project from requirement analysis through to the deployment into production
		  ○ **I provided inputs to project and quality plans** for the overall project working directly with the Project Manager.

Next steps:

You have now completed the self-assessment.

To maximise the value you get from this exercise, you should now put this into action.

Review the "why am I doing this section".

- How has your self-assessment helped you?
- In going through the detailed self-assessment what other uses can you think of for your self-assessment.
- When or how often would it be useful to update this self-assessment.

Examples

Assess myself against the needs of a particular job/role

- complete a job application bringing focus to your strengths and skills

Find good ways of describing the breadth and depth of my experience

- use some of the SFIA descriptors to bring your CV/resume to life
- mix the SFIA wording with your work experience to provide a professional looking summary

Planning my next career steps.

- Looking at your self-assessment; explore the nearby SFIA skills or skill levels. Which of these sounds appealing? Think about what you would need to do to achieve them.
- Look at SFIA skills you do not possess; do any of those sound interesting or valuable for your current job or planned career steps?
- Look at other job roles - and the underlying skills

Developing high quality, focused, learning and development objectives

- Now create learning and work experience objectives based on the gap between your current skills/levels and the skills/levels you would like to develop.

Tips for working with a long list of SFIA skills

If you have chosen a "long list" approach to SFIA skills assessment, then you may benefit from using a sorting method

1. Read each skill name and/or skill description

Sort each skill into one of 3 sets:

- Set 1 – a skill I definitely have
- Set 2 – a skill I may have – I will need to do some more investigation
- Set 3 – a skill I definitely don't have

The aim of this approach is to prioritise, not to assess as many skills as possible.

- This is not an assessment of your knowledge/awareness of IT concepts and activities
- it is an assessment of the demonstrated application of skills in a professional working environment.
- So, keep focused on activities you actually perform (ideally on a regular basis) – they will be your skills.

2. This prioritises the skills to look at and can make the detailed skills assessment more focused and productive. However, there are risks of missing some skills because the name may not initially resonate.
3. If you have had a broad and varied career you may also prioritise your skills assessment against current, past and future career path.

    - E.g. you might be thinking "I used to be a programmer so I could claim some skills but I moved into an Architect role and that is what is important to me now so that is the area I will focus on"

4. For all skills in group 1; proceed to a detailed assessment against the SFIA Skill Level Descriptors.
5. Only return to the skills in group 2 when you have completed your assessment of all skills in group 1.

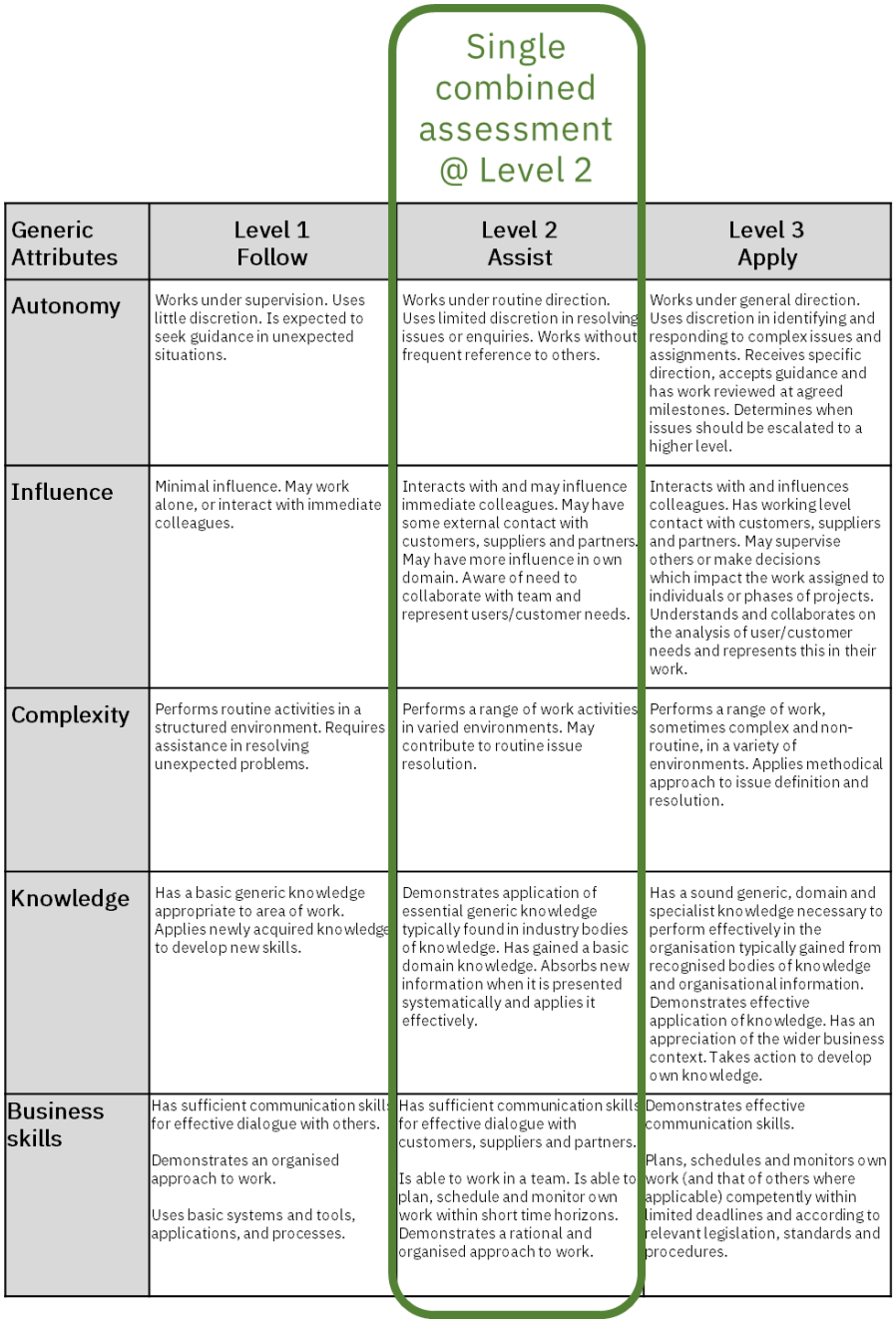
Appendix A

Illustrations for alternative approaches for assessing and recording your Level of Responsibility and SFIA skills.

Figure 1 Single combined assessment

An overall assessment to find a single level of responsibility which best fits your work experience. All of the 5 generic attributes are considered but they are not scored individually.

The diagram is illustrative only. Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.

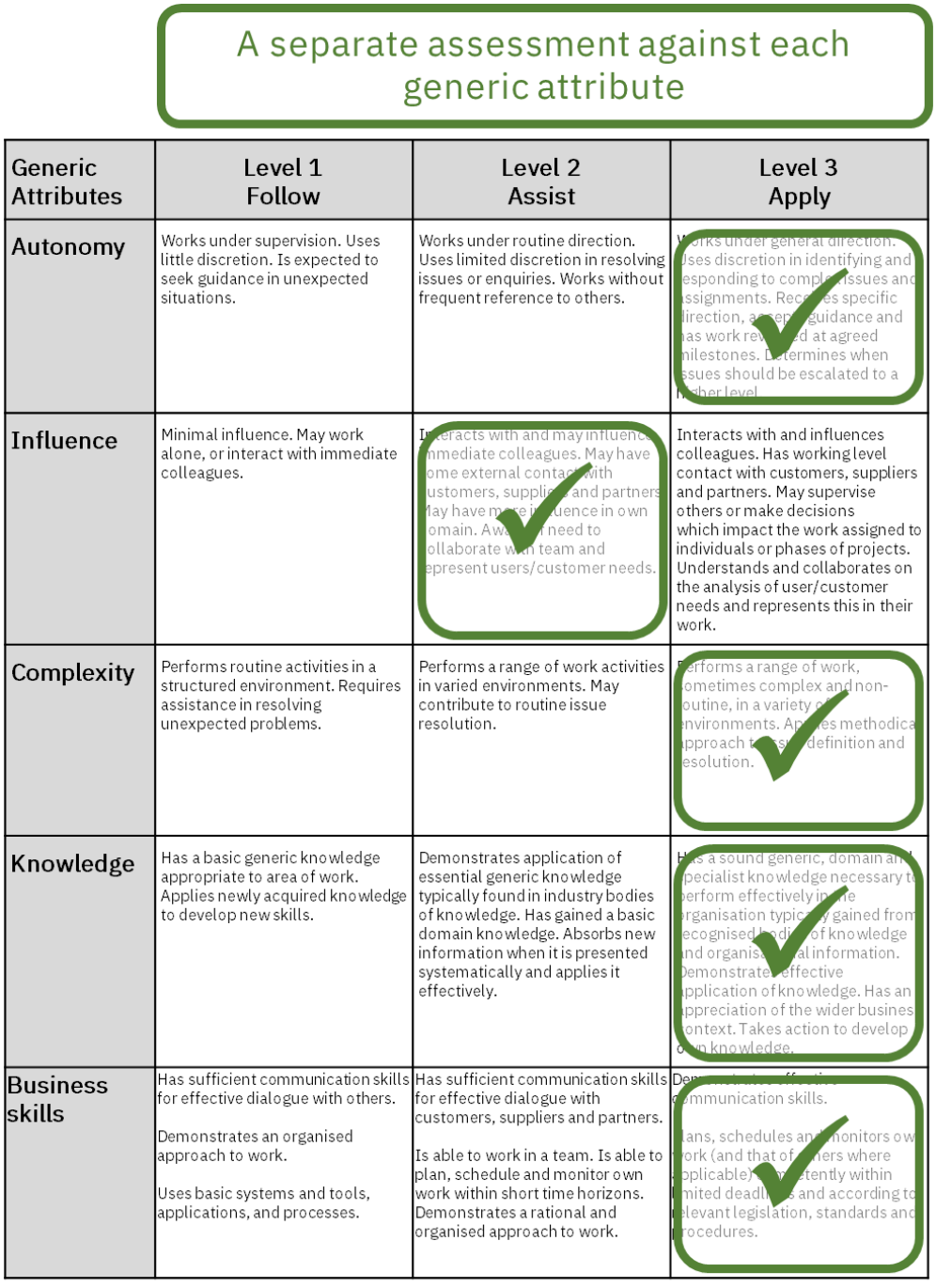


Generic Attributes	Level 1 Follow	Level 2 Assist	Level 3 Apply
Autonomy	Works under supervision. Uses little discretion. Is expected to seek guidance in unexpected situations.	Works under routine direction. Uses limited discretion in resolving issues or enquiries. Works without frequent reference to others.	Works under general direction. Uses discretion in identifying and responding to complex issues and assignments. Receives specific direction, accepts guidance and has work reviewed at agreed milestones. Determines when issues should be escalated to a higher level.
Influence	Minimal influence. May work alone, or interact with immediate colleagues.	Interacts with and may influence immediate colleagues. May have some external contact with customers, suppliers and partners. May have more influence in own domain. Aware of need to collaborate with team and represent users/customer needs.	Interacts with and influences colleagues. Has working level contact with customers, suppliers and partners. May supervise others or make decisions which impact the work assigned to individuals or phases of projects. Understands and collaborates on the analysis of user/customer needs and represents this in their work.
Complexity	Performs routine activities in a structured environment. Requires assistance in resolving unexpected problems.	Performs a range of work activities in varied environments. May contribute to routine issue resolution.	Performs a range of work, sometimes complex and non-routine, in a variety of environments. Applies methodical approach to issue definition and resolution.
Knowledge	Has a basic generic knowledge appropriate to area of work. Applies newly acquired knowledge to develop new skills.	Demonstrates application of essential generic knowledge typically found in industry bodies of knowledge. Has gained a basic domain knowledge. Absorbs new information when it is presented systematically and applies it effectively.	Has a sound generic, domain and specialist knowledge necessary to perform effectively in the organisation typically gained from recognised bodies of knowledge and organisational information. Demonstrates effective application of knowledge. Has an appreciation of the wider business context. Takes action to develop own knowledge.
Business skills	Has sufficient communication skills for effective dialogue with others. Demonstrates an organised approach to work. Uses basic systems and tools, applications, and processes.	Has sufficient communication skills for effective dialogue with customers, suppliers and partners. Is able to work in a team. Is able to plan, schedule and monitor own work within short time horizons. Demonstrates a rational and organised approach to work.	Demonstrates effective communication skills. Plans, schedules and monitors own work (and that of others where applicable) competently within limited deadlines and according to relevant legislation, standards and procedures.

Figure 2 Assessment against each generic attribute

Assessment against each generic attribute to inform an overall level of responsibility. Use this to highlight strengths and development areas against each attribute. Identify the highest level of each attribute which matches your work experience.

The diagram is illustrative only. Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.



Generic Attributes	Level 1 Follow	Level 2 Assist	Level 3 Apply
Autonomy	Works under supervision. Uses little discretion. Is expected to seek guidance in unexpected situations.	Works under routine direction. Uses limited discretion in resolving issues or enquiries. Works without frequent reference to others.	Works under general direction. Uses discretion in identifying and responding to complex issues and assignments. Receives specific direction, accepts guidance and has work reviewed at agreed milestones. Determines when issues should be escalated to a higher level.
Influence	Minimal influence. May work alone, or interact with immediate colleagues.	Interacts with and may influence immediate colleagues. May have some external contact with customers, suppliers and partners. May have more influence in own domain. Aware of need to collaborate with team and represent users/customer needs.	Interacts with and influences colleagues. Has working level contact with customers, suppliers and partners. May supervise others or make decisions which impact the work assigned to individuals or phases of projects. Understands and collaborates on the analysis of user/customer needs and represents this in their work.
Complexity	Performs routine activities in a structured environment. Requires assistance in resolving unexpected problems.	Performs a range of work activities in varied environments. May contribute to routine issue resolution.	Performs a range of work, sometimes complex and non-routine, in a variety of environments. Applies methodical approach to issue definition and resolution.
Knowledge	Has a basic generic knowledge appropriate to area of work. Applies newly acquired knowledge to develop new skills.	Demonstrates application of essential generic knowledge typically found in industry bodies of knowledge. Has gained a basic domain knowledge. Absorbs new information when it is presented systematically and applies it effectively.	Has a sound generic, domain and specialist knowledge necessary to perform effectively in the organisation typically gained from recognised bodies of knowledge and organisational information. Demonstrates effective application of knowledge. Has an appreciation of the wider business context. Takes action to develop own knowledge.
Business skills	Has sufficient communication skills for effective dialogue with others. Demonstrates an organised approach to work. Uses basic systems and tools, applications, and processes.	Has sufficient communication skills for effective dialogue with customers, suppliers and partners. Is able to work in a team. Is able to plan, schedule and monitor own work within short time horizons. Demonstrates a rational and organised approach to work.	Demonstrates effective communication skills. Plans, schedules and monitors own work (and that of others where applicable) competently within limited deadlines and according to relevant legislation, standards and procedures.

Figure 3 Graduated scale assessment of each generic attributes

Assessment using a graduated rating scale instead of a binary yes or no. This can provide a richer picture to inform the overall assessment.

Identify the extent to which your work experience matches each level. Assessments may be performed against each level (e.g.by working up from level 1) or can be more selective starting around your expected level of work experience.

The scale for graduation can be quantitative (as in the example below) or more qualitative (e.g. meets all, major gap, minor gap, meets none). Regardless of the scale used; the emphasis is on an diagnosis rather than a prescriptive, word by word approach.

The diagram is illustrative only. Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.

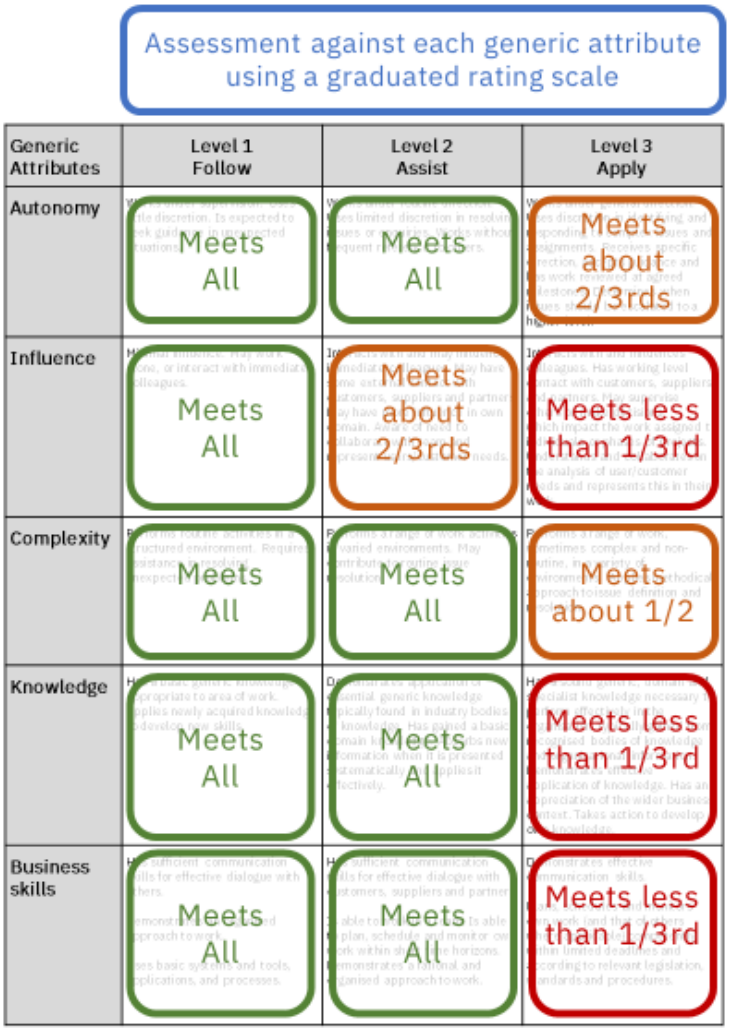


Figure 4 Detailed diagnostic assessment against individual indicators

Assessment against each of the indicators within the generic attributes separately, to create a detailed diagnostic of your strengths and development areas.

The diagram is illustrative only. Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.

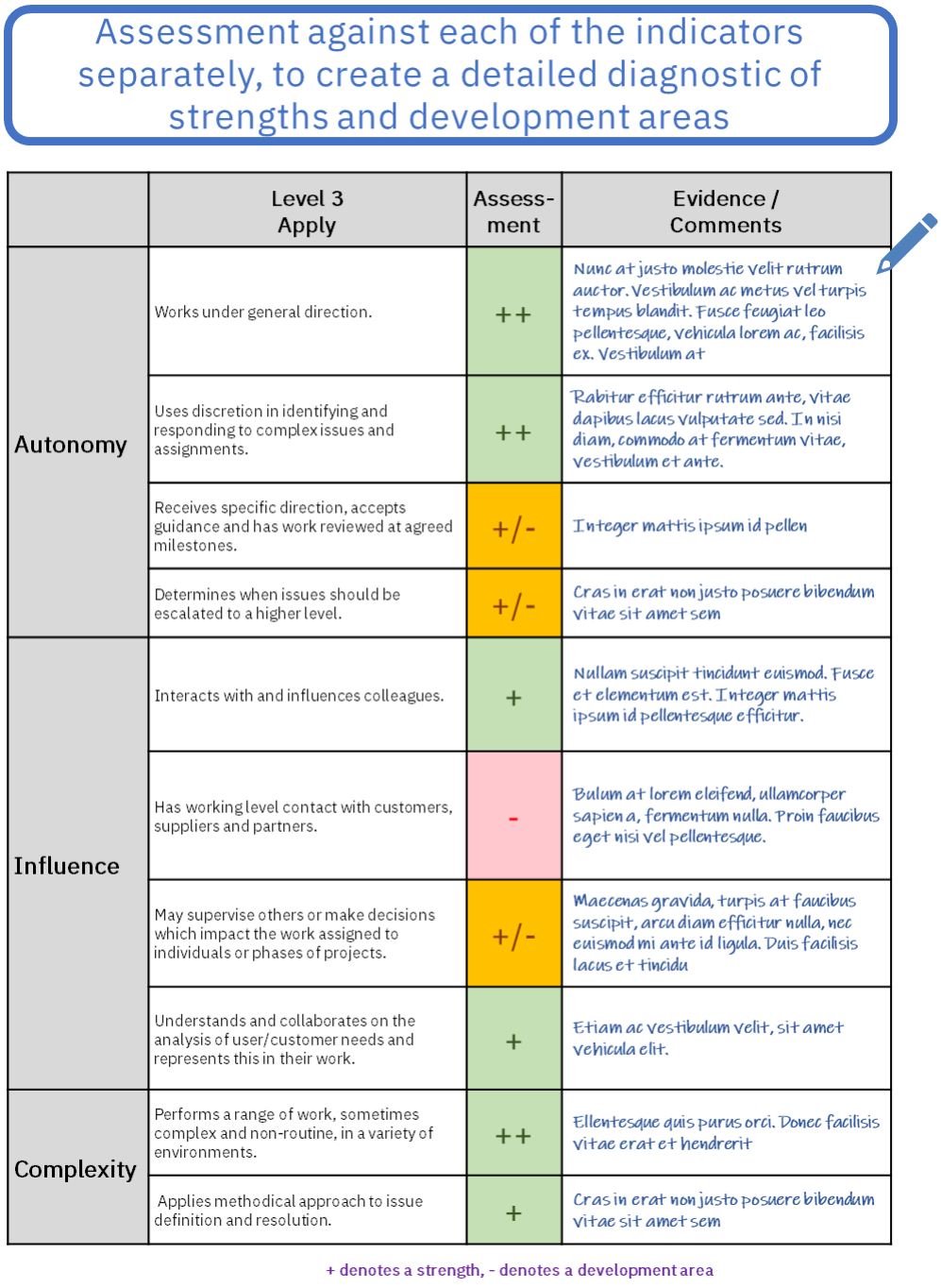


Figure 5 Assessment of SFIA skills - Assess against all skill levels, working upwards from the lowest level

Assessment against each skill level definition to find the best match to your work experience.

The diagram is illustrative only. A graduated rating scale instead of a binary yes or no can be used to provide a richer picture. (Similar to figure 3.)

There is no right or wrong number of skills to assess against. Refer to the "selection and prioritisation" guidelines above.

Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.

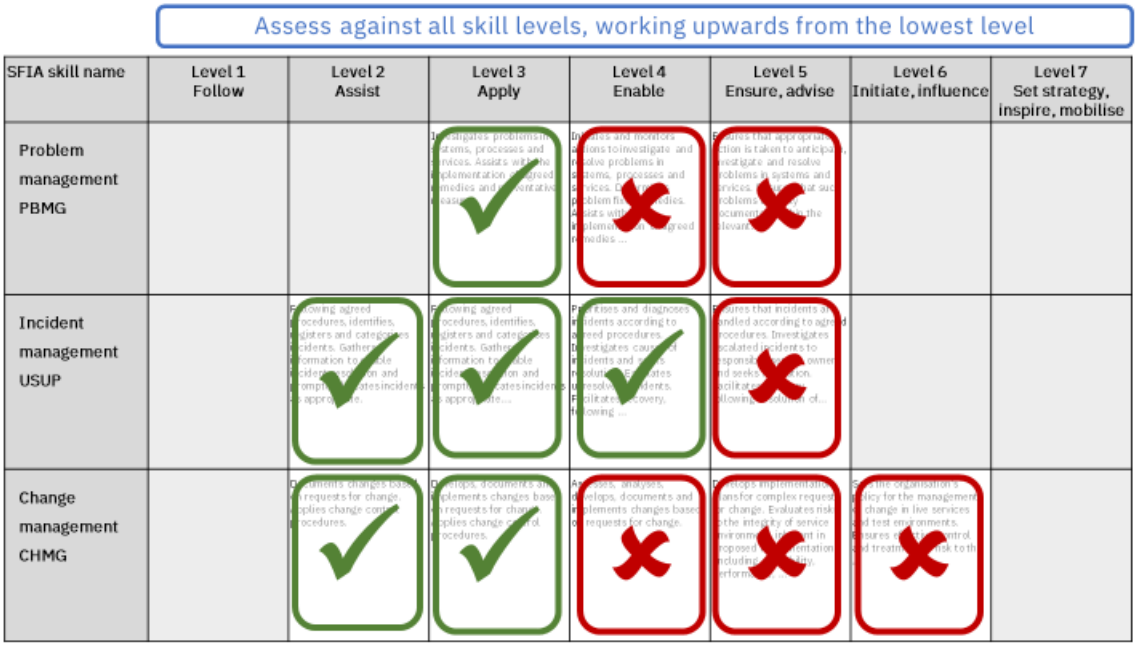


Figure 6 Assessment of SFIA skills - Assess the skill levels which are closest to your selected generic level of responsibility.

Use the assessment of your individual level of responsibility to target skill assessments around a level.

The diagram is illustrative only. A graduated rating scale instead of a binary yes or no can be used to provide a richer picture. (Similar to figure 3.)

There is no right or wrong number of skills to assess against. Refer to the "selection and prioritisation" guidelines above.

Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.

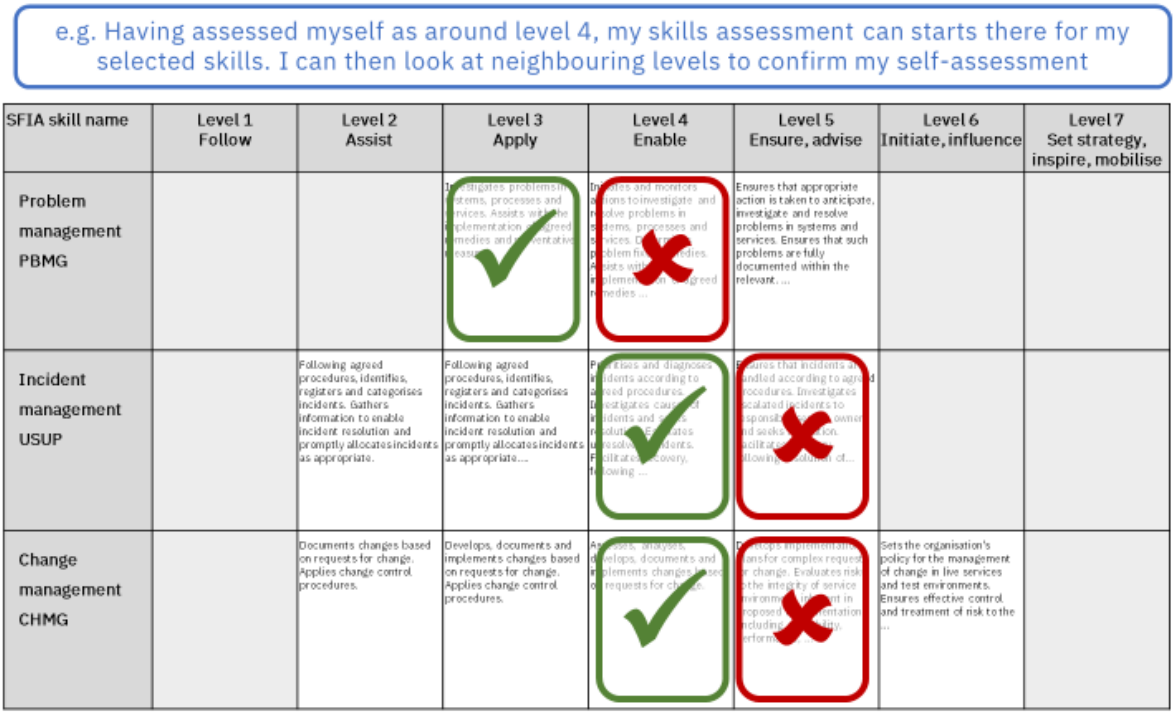
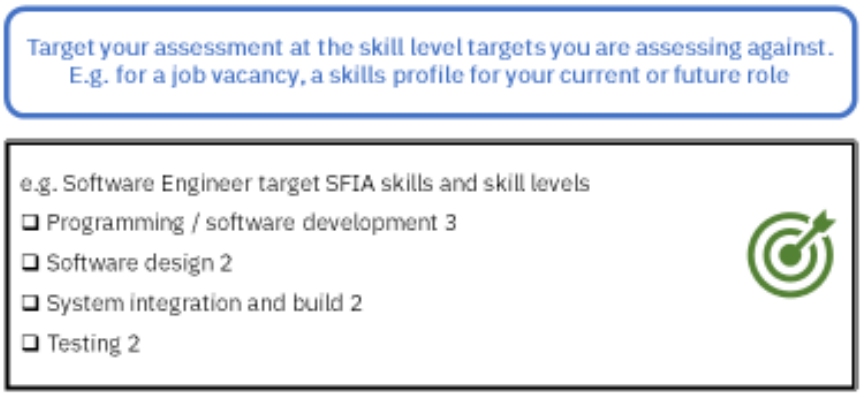


Figure 7 Assessment of SFIA skills - Target your assessment at the skill level targets you are assessing against. E.g. for a job vacancy, a skills profile for your current or future role, a professional certification

This narrows your focus to specific skills and skill levels. This can help in planning job applications; planning career moves and professional development.

The diagram is illustrative only. Spreadsheets and/or assessment tools may be used to record the details; but are not essential for a self-assessment.



SFIA skill name	Target level	Skill level description	Assess-ment	Evidence / Comments
Programming / software development	Level 3 - Apply	Designs, codes, verifies, tests, documents, amends and refactors moderately complex programs/scripts. Applies agreed standards and tools, to achieve a well-engineered result. Collaborates in reviews of work with others as appropriate.	✓	Nunc at justo molestie velit rutrum auctor. Vestibulum ac metus vel turpis tempus blandit. Fusce feugiat leo pellentesque, vehicula lorem ac, facilisis ex. Vestibulum at
Software design	Level 2 - Assist	Creates and documents detailed designs for simple software applications or components applying agreed modelling techniques, standards, patterns and tools. Contributes to the design of components of larger software systems. Reviews own work.	✓	Nullam suscipit tincidunt euismod. Fusce et elementum est. Integer mattis ipsum id pellentesque efficitur.
System integration and build	Level 2 - Assist	Produces software builds from software source code. Conducts tests as defined in an integration test specification, records the details of any failures. Analyses and reports on integration test activities and results. Identifies and reports issues and risks.	✗	Ellentesque quis purus orci. Donec facilisis vitae erat et hendrerit
Testing	Level 2 - Assist	Defines test conditions for given requirements. Designs test cases and creates test scripts and supporting data, working to the specifications provided. Interprets, executes and records test cases in accordance with project test plans. Analyses and reports test activities and results. Identifies and reports issues and risks.	✓	Maecenas gravida, turpis at faucibus suscipit, arcu diam efficitur nulla, nec euismod mi ante id ligula. Duis facilisis lacus et tincidu