



Guidelines for SFIA Assessors



This is the third of a series of guidelines for SFIA assessments. Keep informed of further developments by registering on the SFIA website. www.sfia-online.org.

This document describes recognised and generally accepted good practice in the field of SFIA 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 - assessments. They are not prescriptive in describing only one way.

It is intended to help assessors to perform SFIA assessments and also for organisations to establish their preferred approach.

Introduction

These guidelines are for people who are using SFIA to assess the skills and competencies of other people.

SFIA assessments typically form part of a wider end to end process, e.g.

- Employers use assessments across the human capital development cycle; recruiting, onboarding, learning and development, performance management, resourcing, career development and talent deployment, leadership development, engagement and retention, employee experience and wellbeing.
- Professional and/or industry bodies use assessments to certify competency levels, maintain register of member's skills, assess industry / or national skills gaps
- Service providers use assessments to evaluate and describe the capabilities of their people and provide like for like cost comparisons
- Training and education providers use assessments to evaluate the outcomes of their learning activities

Guidelines for the end to end process are described in the [Guidelines for independent/objective SFIA assessments](#).

Who can perform SFIA assessments?

SFIA is designed to be a practical resource for people who manage or work in or around information and communication technologies, digital transformations and software engineering.

- SFIA has a simple and consistent structure and avoids technical jargon.
- This means that for most of the purposes listed above; assessors do not require **in-depth training** in SFIA before performing an assessment.

However ...

- assessors need to be experienced professionals who understand the industry context of the SFIA components being assessed
- as a minimum, assessors need to understand the SFIA framework and concepts sufficiently to perform the required assessment.
 - this can be achieved using the material available on the SFIA website and/or using in-depth SFIA training from a SFIA training part
- assessors should be competent and knowledgeable in the methods/tools needed to perform the assessment. E.g. competency-based interviewing
- typically, assessors should be operating at a SFIA level 4 or higher.
- depending on the context of the assessment; assessors may need to be operating at higher SFIA levels for assessing higher level individuals.

Using self-assessments

As part of a SFIA assessment; in most cases, it is good practice to ask the individuals being assessed to complete a self-assessment. The benefits of incorporating a self-assessment include:

- to engage the individuals in the process leading to greater understanding and ownership of the outcomes of the assessment
- to give the assessor a broader perspective enabling them to see things from the individual's point of view
- to provide an early warning of differences in perspective ahead of any meetings or discussions

It is recognised that in some cases; a self-assessment may not be the preferred approach.

Guidelines for self-assessment using SFIA area also available on [the SFIA website](#).

The importance of being objective and impartial

For a variety of reasons, it is difficult to be objective, impartial and consistent in a self-assessment. E.g.

- by mis-understanding the definition of the SFIA skills e.g. by relying only on the skill name and not taking note of the skill description
- by over- or under-estimate their skill levels

So, the role of an assessor is key to provide an independent/objective view of SFIA skills and competency levels, based on the context and intended outcomes of the assessment process.

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

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

The Steps for SFIA assessments

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 the work experience of the individual being assessed

Assess SFIA skills

For each SFIA skill you select:

- Read SFIA skill description (confirm it matches the individual's experience)
 - Read SFIA skill at a level description
 - Select and record appropriate level(s)
 - If you choose a level that exceeds the individual's level of responsibility assessment; confirm this is appropriate by reviewing **Assess SFIA level of responsibility step**
-

Key Points

- SFIA is designed to be easy to understand and use.
- A SFIA assessment can be performed quickly. However, significant value can be obtained with more thought and a little preparation.
- Understand why you are performing the assessment, what the desired outcomes are, and, what part you as the assessor play in any end-to-end assessment process.
- Familiarise yourself with the key concepts of SFIA
- Consider both the generic attributes that characterise the levels of responsibility and the professional skills described in SFIA
- SFIA is about experience of performing the skill not just having knowledge of the subject matter
- Follow a structured assessment process, based on the individual's work experience to assess accurately with good supporting evidence.
- Pick the SFIA skills relevant to your use of the assessment.
- The assessment does not have to address all skills, only those necessary, and it may be added to 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

- Line Managers, practice managers, HR & L&D consultants, resourcing specialists, recruiters, SFIA consultants & practitioners who are using SFIA to assess other people's skills and competencies
- Employers, professional bodies and other organisations who want to understand generally recognised practice in the using SFIA to perform independent/objective 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 assessment, your work or academic environment and the planned use of the assessment outcomes.
- There is an active global ecosystem of SFIA Partners, SFIA Training Providers, 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. Details are available on [the SFIA website](#).

Find an individual's 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 the individual's achieved 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 the individual's relevant jobs or roles match to SFIA's generic levels of responsibility.

Notes

- Remember, at this stage the focus is on responsibilities based on the individual's actual work experience; not what they have potential for 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

		<p>time and opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual’s 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 the individual’s line manager or co-workers to get their views • If the individual has 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 the individual is 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 they have demonstrated.
	<p>You will now have a good understanding of the individual’s normal level of responsibility.</p> <p>This indicates the SFIA level at which the individual successfully operates at work.</p> <p>Make a note of the level(s) as it provides a very good sense check for the individual’s maximum skills levels in the following steps of the self-assessment.</p>	<p>Alternatives</p> <p>Assessment against the Level of Responsibility can be done in a variety of ways. Select the approach which is optimal based on the reason for doing the assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the individual’s 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 the assessment, you should consider the different ways to identify and prioritise the skills 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

The categories and sub-categories do not have definitions themselves; they are simply a structure to aid navigation. They 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.
- There is a risk of missing relevant skills using this method. This can happen if assumptions are made based on category/sub-category names and if the assessor does not have knowledge of all the skills in the framework.
- If you cannot locate a skill - you should refer to the alphabetical list.

Option 2 - use the SFIA Views

SFIA Views for a number of areas are available [on the website](#) e.g.

	<p>The SFIA user community has developed a number of views based on domains of interest. They provide a subset of the SFIA skills. You can use these views to focus on the skills that may be most relevant to the individual's areas of experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software engineering • Digital transformation • Big data, analytics and data management • Agile • DevOps <p>The views are intended as guidelines only. Contact the SFIA Foundation if you can't find a view that you are looking for.</p> <p>If you cannot locate a skill - you should refer to the alphabetical list.</p>
	<p>Option 3 - use the Alphabetical list</p> <p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Some organisations maintain employee skills inventories to support workforce planning, resourcing and agile working practices. In these cases, a comprehensive assessment of all the individual's skills can be useful. • 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.
	<p>Option 4 - use the standard Job Roles</p> <p>Some assessments may be performed against the requirements of a specific job or role. For example, for a job interview.</p>	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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. <p>Note that some organisations may name the skills differently to SFIA. If you cannot find a particular skill in</p>

SFIA, it may be worth reading through the alphabetical list for variations to the name you are familiar with.

Assess the individual's SFIA Skills:

Once you have selected the SFIA skills to assess against. There are 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 the assessment.

Read the SFIA skill names and overall skill descriptions of the skills you want to assess and confirm that the skill described is relevant to the individual's 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 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 the individual's selected generic level of responsibility - see above
3. Target the individual's

Notes

- Professional judgment is required when assessing; not a simplistic tick-list, check-box approach against the phrases in the skill level descriptions.
- The SFIA skill-at-a-level descriptions are written in plain, jargon-free language to enable you to match the individual's work-experiences to the levels described.
- SFIA skill-at-a-level descriptions describe real life, work-based experiences and actions. If the individual has not done what the level description says, then they don't have the skill at that level.
- If a skill-at-a-level is relevant to the individual, it should be repeatable – that is, they 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. The individual can be very knowledgeable but not have had the opportunity to apply their knowledge in a work environment. If that is the case, they 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

	<p>assessment at the skill level targets you are assessing against. E.g. for a job vacancy, a skills profile for their current or future role, a professional certification</p> <p>Read the skill-at-a-level-descriptions and compare the individual’s work experience to the activities and responsibilities described.</p>	<p>use: to help determine if a given individual has the skill; and if so, at what level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFIA skill descriptions are not always cumulative between levels. Depending on the purpose of the assessment – it may be useful to capture all applicable levels to provide a comprehensive view.
	<p>Record the individual’s skill levels.</p> <p>As with the generic levels of responsibility, there are options for recording the results of the assessment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A single level number per SFIA skill to represent the highest level for each skill you have assessed against. A graduated rating scale instead of a binary yes or no against all levels relevant for the individual’s assessment (see appendix). This can provide a richer picture to inform the overall assessment. Capturing all levels of a skill demonstrated by the individual. 	<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 the individual’s 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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). <p>Number of skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no target for the number of SFIA skills an individual should have

	<p>4. A diagnostic, micro-assessment against each of the indicators within the skill-at-a-level description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appropriate number will be dependent on the individual's own experience, the nature of their specialisation, the operating model and size of the organisations they have worked in, and on the structure of SFIA (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
	<p>If the Skill-at-a-level description seems too low/too high for the individual's experience, then consider the levels immediately above and below.</p>	<p>If you have chosen a level which is higher than the individual's generic level from the previous steps, you should go back to confirm if you also match the higher generic level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 the individual's professional work experience at SFIA skill levels higher than their level of responsibility. <p>By doing this you can indicate areas where the individual is developing beyond the core competency level and/or they could be expected to execute some work activities requiring that level of skill</p>
	<p>Evidencing the SFIA assessment</p> <p>It is generally good practice to record evidence to support the assessment. In many use cases, recording supporting evidence will be necessary to make further use of the assessment.</p> <p>SFIA describes work-based responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It follows that an assessment of skills has to focus on the individual's experience of doing something, in the workplace and that experience should preferably have 	<p>Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples from the individual's "body of work" should meet the following criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They should relate to something that they have specifically done or achieved; not something that the individual's 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. The individual's skills assessment is focussed on demonstrated behaviours / achievements not about potential. <p>Recency of experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual's skills assessment should be contemporary, meaning they could use any of the skills selected, at the level you determined, to get a job done. Generally, if an individual hasn't used a skill for a long period time, their ability to perform that skill will be significantly diminished. A SFIA assessment should focus on the skills the individual has 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

been repeated more than once over a period of time

For this purpose; examples from the individual's "body of work" are useful to support your assessment.

current skills. A record of older can be useful in a number of ways:

- Provide context for the individual's current skill set / work experience
- demonstrate to others how the individual's career history and portfolio of skills have evolved over time.
- Provide 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 an individual has 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 the individual has all the related skills
 - Being the manager or Chief Technology Officer of many people or teams means the individual will have a broad understanding of what their people do, but, it does not mean they have their skills or that they have the highest skill levels in their team
- Expert knowledge is not the same as a high level of competency.
 - Being a level 6 or 7 in SFIA does not, in isolation, equate to being a deep subject matter expert. Instead, they relate to strategic/operational leadership in a skill or discipline.

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 the individual's 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.

**Single
combined
assessment
@ Level 2**

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 the individual’s 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.

A separate assessment against each generic attribute

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, assessment 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 task 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. Demonstrate 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) consistently 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 the individual’s 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 the individual’s 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.

Assessment against each generic attribute using a graduated rating scale

Generic Attributes	Level 1 Follow	Level 2 Assist	Level 3 Apply
Autonomy	<p>Works with limited discretion, is expected to seek guidance in unexpected situations.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Works with limited discretion in resolving issues or making decisions without frequent requests.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Works with discretion in planning and responding to issues and assignments, makes specific decisions, and is able to address issues when they arise.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets about 2/3rds</p>
Influence	<p>Has influence, may work with, or interact with immediate colleagues.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Has influence, may have the ability to influence others, may have contact with customers, suppliers and partners in own domain, seeks to build relationships.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets about 2/3rds</p>	<p>Has influence and influence others. Has working level contact with customers, suppliers and partners, may supervise others. Has an understanding of user/customer needs which impact the work assigned to them and represents this in their work.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets less than 1/3rd</p>
Complexity	<p>Performs routine activities in a structured environment. Requires assistance, supervision.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Performs a range of work activities in structured environments. May require assistance, supervision, and advice.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Performs a range of work activities, sometimes complex and non-routine, in complex environments. May require assistance, supervision and advice. Uses a methodical approach to solve, identify and resolve issues.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets about 1/2</p>
Knowledge	<p>Has basic generic knowledge appropriate to area of work. Applies newly acquired knowledge, develops skills.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Has basic generic knowledge, potential generic knowledge typically found in industry bodies of knowledge. Also gained a basic amount of specific knowledge, information which is carried out automatically and applied effectively.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Has specialist knowledge necessary to perform the work assigned to them. Has a good understanding of the wider business context. Has an appreciation of the wider business context. Takes action to develop knowledge.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets less than 1/3rd</p>
Business skills	<p>Has sufficient communication skills for effective dialogue with others.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Has sufficient communication skills for effective dialogue with customers, suppliers and partners. Is able to plan, schedule and monitor work within short term horizons. Demonstrates a formal and planned approach to work.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid green; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets All</p>	<p>Has sufficient communication skills. Has sufficient communication skills to work with others and the ability to work within short term horizons. Has a limited awareness and understanding of relevant legislation, standards and procedures.</p> <p style="text-align: center; border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px;">Meets less than 1/3rd</p>

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.

Assessment against each of the indicators separately, to create a detailed diagnostic of strengths and development areas

	Level 3 Apply	Assessment	Evidence / Comments
Autonomy	Works under general direction.	++	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
	Uses discretion in identifying and responding to complex issues and assignments.	++	Rabitur efficitur rutrum ante, vitae dapibus lacus vulputate sed. In nisi diam, commodo at fermentum vitae, vestibulum et ante.
	Receives specific direction, accepts guidance and has work reviewed at agreed milestones.	+/-	Integer mattis ipsum id pellen
	Determines when issues should be escalated to a higher level.	+/-	Cras in erat non justo posuere bibendum vitae sit amet sem
Influence	Interacts with and influences colleagues.	+	Nullam suscipit tincidunt euismod. Fusce et elementum est. Integer mattis ipsum id pellentesque efficitur.
	Has working level contact with customers, suppliers and partners.	-	Bulum at lorem eleifend, ullamcorper sapien a, fermentum nulla. Proin faucibus eget nisi vel pellentesque.
	May supervise others or make decisions which impact the work assigned to individuals or phases of projects.	+/-	Maecenas gravida, turpis at faucibus suscipit, arcu diam efficitur nulla, nec euismod mi ante id ligula. Duis facilisis lacus et tincidu
	Understands and collaborates on the analysis of user/customer needs and represents this in their work.	+	Etiam ac vestibulum velit, sit amet vehicula elit.
Complexity	Performs a range of work, sometimes complex and non-routine, in a variety of environments.	++	Ellentesque quis purus orci. Donec facilisis vitae erat et hendrerit
	Applies methodical approach to issue definition and resolution.	+	Cras in erat non justo posuere bibendum vitae sit amet sem

+ denotes a strength, - denotes a development area

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 the individual’s 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.













Assess against all skill levels, working upwards from the lowest level							
SFIA skill name	Level 1 Follow	Level 2 Assist	Level 3 Apply	Level 4 Enable	Level 5 Ensure, advise	Level 6 Initiate, influence	Level 7 Set strategy, inspire, mobilise
Problem management PBMG			Investigates problems in systems, processes and services. Assists with the implementation of agreed remedies and preventative measures. 	Investigates and monitors systems to investigate and resolve problems in systems, processes and services. Coordinates problem resolution. Assists with the implementation of agreed remedies ... 	Ensures that appropriate action is taken to anticipate, investigate and resolve problems in systems and services. Coordinates solutions. Documents the relevant information. 		
Incident management USUP		Following agreed procedures, identifies, registers and categorises incidents. Gathers information to enable incident diagnosis and implementation of appropriate remediation. 	Following agreed procedures, identifies, registers and categorises incidents. Gathers information to enable incident diagnosis and implementation of appropriate remediation. 	Performs and diagnoses incidents according to agreed procedures. Investigates causes of incidents and seeks resolution. Escalates unresolved incidents. Facilitates recovery, reporting ... 	Ensures that incidents are handled according to agreed procedures. Investigates escalated incidents to support resolution and seeks escalation. Facilitates recovery following resolution of ... 		
Change management CHMG		Documents changes based on requests for change. Applies change control procedures. 	Develops, documents and implements changes based on requests for change control procedures. 	Analyzes, analyzes, develops, documents and implements changes based on requests for change. 	Develops implementation plans for complex requests for change. Evaluates risk to the integrity of services. Ensures that all proposed implementation includes testing, performance. 	Ensures that organizational policy for the management of change in live services and test environments. Ensures that all proposed treatment is linked to the ... 	

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

Use the assessment of the individual's 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.

e.g. Having assessed myself as around level 4, my skills assessment can start there for my selected skills. I can then look at neighbouring levels to confirm my self-assessment

SFIA skill name	Level 1 Follow	Level 2 Assist	Level 3 Apply	Level 4 Enable	Level 5 Ensure, advise	Level 6 Initiate, influence	Level 7 Set strategy, inspire, mobilise
Problem management PBMG			✔	✘			
Incident management USUP		Following agreed procedures, identifies, registers and categorises incidents. Gathers information to enable incident resolution and promptly allocates incidents as appropriate.	Following agreed procedures, identifies, registers and categorises incidents. Gathers information to enable incident resolution and promptly allocates incidents as appropriate...	✔	✘		
Change management CHMG		Documents changes based on requests for change. Applies change control procedures.	Develops, documents and implements changes based on requests for change. Applies change control procedures.	✔	✘	Sets the organisation's policy for the management of change in live services and test environments. Ensures effective control and treatment of risk to the ...	

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


This narrows the 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.

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

e.g. Software Engineer target SFIA skills and skill levels

- Programming / software development 3
- Software design 2
- System integration and build 2
- Testing 2



SFIA skill name	Target level	Skill level description	Assessment	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.	✓	Maeconas gravida, turpis at faucibus suscipit, arcu diam efficitur nulla, nec euismod mi ante id ligula. Duis facilisis lacus et tincidu