

How to assess CSSD Staffs competency

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BACKGROUND
The question

Safe sterile processing depends on people who can apply knowledge consistently in real work. A job title or course certificate alone does not demonstrate competence.

Core question: If you work in a CSSD, which specifications must you demonstrate?

FRAMEWORK
Nine job dimensions

01 Knowledge

02 Skills

03 Abilities

04 Tools and technology

05 Tasks

06 Work activities

07 Work context

08 Education

09 Work values

MODEL
Competence is integrated

KNOW
Knowledge

DO
Skills

CAN
Abilities

ACT
Behaviour and ethics

Competence appears when these elements work together in the actual CSSD context.

METHOD
A practical assessment cycle

1
Analyse the job
List critical tasks, risks, equipment, standards and expected behaviours.

2
Define observable criteria
Translate each requirement into a clear and measurable performance standard.

3
Collect multiple evidence
Combine knowledge tests, direct observation, simulation, records and audit findings.

4
Identify the gap
Compare demonstrated performance with the required level for the role.

5
Train and support
Use targeted education, coaching and supervised practice, not generic retraining.

6
Reassess and document
Confirm improvement and keep evidence for quality management and accreditation.

ASSESSMENT
Evidence must match the task

Written or oral testKnowledge and reasoning

Direct observationRoutine task performance

SimulationRare or high-risk events

Record reviewTraceability and compliance

Audit and indicatorsConsistency over time

FeedbackBehaviour, teamwork and communication

APPLICATION
CSSD competency checklist

☐ Uses PPE and controls exposure risk

☐ Cleans and inspects reusable medical devices correctly

☐ Selects packaging and process parameters appropriately

☐ Loads, monitors and releases sterilization cycles safely

☐ Maintains traceability and responds to nonconformities

☐ Communicates clearly and follows professional ethics

☐ Works safely with equipment, chemicals and technology

INTERPRETATION
A CERTIFICATE IS NOT COMPETENCE

Competence must be demonstrated in context, against defined criteria, with more than one source of evidence.

TAKEAWAY
Conclusion

A dependable CSSD competency system links the job, the person and the evidence. It defines what good performance looks like, observes it in practice, closes gaps and confirms improvement.

Assess the work people actually do, not only what they know.

REFERENCES
Selected resources

U.S. Department of Labor, O*NET Online
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2013
Society of Hospital Medicine
National Center for Biotechnology Information
Migrant-Friendly Hospitals initiative