1.1.5 ***Writing performance criteria***

So far you have used the key job tasks identified in subsections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 above to create top-level competency statements (see subsection 1.1.3) with their accompanying descriptions (see subsection 1.1.4). The next step is to define performance criteria or components, which elaborate on the competency statement, further differentiating responsibilities and identifying a range of situations. The term "performance criteria" in this case does not mean standards for judging performance quality, but rather the defining characteristics of performance. In this sense, "criteria" and "components" might both be used to label the details of a competency.

In defining performance criteria, you will need to avoid jumping ahead to describe background skills and knowledge, in other words, what you need to know to perform the job tasks. The performance criteria are steps in the task, or components of the task.

Recall that our operational forecaster needs to "provide continual national situational awareness of both surface and upper-air meteorological products and observations including changes". What does the forecaster actually do to achieve this goal? The forecaster needs to:

–   Analyse and diagnose the weather situation as required in forecast, warning and alert preparation;

–   Monitor the evolution of weather parameters and validate current forecasts, warnings and alerts based on these parameters;

–   Evaluate the need for amendments to forecasts and updates of warnings/alerts against documented criteria and thresholds.

Also, the forecaster is required to relay important information to users. Therefore, the forecaster needs to:

–   Use the approved communication channels to disseminate forecast, warning and alert products;

–   Explain meteorological data and information using suitable terminology to meet specific user's needs.

By using this one item in the job description, we have identified several performance criteria or components, which are included in the second level of the competency requirement. For some service areas, these statements will be brief, while for others they will require more detail. Avoid combining multiple components into the one statement.

Recall from subsection 1.1.3 that action verbs from the revised Bloom's Taxonomy indicating a task, such as analyse, diagnose, monitor, evaluate, use, and explain, should be used, and are especially important when describing performance criteria. Performance is never described using the verbs "know" or "understand", which indicate background knowledge only. Nor does the phrase "demonstrates knowledge of" turn "know" into an action verb appropriate for a performance criterion.

Ensure that the performance criteria or components identified are specific to the technical area. Broad statements such as "effective communication skills", "team work" and "knowledge of information technology" should be avoided. These transferable skills are more likely to be background (or assumed) knowledge and skills, which are prerequisite for the performance component. These will be considered in the next step.

 NOTE: The text above was extracted from WMO-No. 1205 Guide to Competency