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# **MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR THE ASSESMENT OF COMPETENCIES / QUALIFICATIONS ACQUIRED IN WORK**

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# Introduction

The traditional career model, where a person obtains a qualification in an educational institution and then goes to work, and the main unit of measurement of his / her competencies / qualifications acquired in a person's work (CAPW) is the number of years spent in a particular company / organization or sector, is no longer relevant in today's context and no longer applicable. It is clear that learning goes far beyond formal education. The conditions for the formation of CAPW are created by various on-the-job learning opportunities, internships, team and project work, renewable technologies and the like, therefore the concept of CAPW assessment and recognition is changing and evolving accordingly. There is a tendency to move from centralized assessment systems to a practice where both the competency models themselves and the principles and criteria for assessment of CAPW level are developed, constantly updated and initiated by the employers themselves or their associations. In addition, a person's accumulated competencies are equated with talent. And talent management in a particular organization is one of the most important factors in discovering and promoting, or ignoring and disrupting employees' personal motivation, their desire to improve their work performance, and consciously designing their careers.

This Manual of CAPW assessment and recognition procedures is designed to be used by representatives of employers' organizations responsible for providing CAPW. It can also be useful to business and manufacturing managers and administrators responsible for formulating and implementing company personnel policies and identifying professional development needs. This Manual is also a methodological tool for career counselors and assessors directly involved in the assessment and recognition of the CAPW.

Recognizing, assessing and validating learning achievements (knowledge, skills and competences) acquired through non-formal learning or work is still an organizational and methodological challenge in both the formal education system and the labor market. Recently, this has become one of the biggest challenges in the development of professional development policies and in emphasizing that regardless of the environment and context, we are learning everywhere throughout life.

In global practice (eg Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, Australia and elsewhere), competency models for a specific professional area are developed for clarity and transparency in the following four stages of human resource management:

- in the formulation of requirements for a specific job position,
- staff selection and recruitment processes,
- monitoring the quality of staff performance, and
- as a basis for career planning, raising the level of professionalism both at the level of the individual and at the level of the company, institution or organization.

Although all of the above stages involve the assessment of competencies, this Manual will focus on the fourth stage, which aims to assess the competencies that employees have acquired in the course of their work, through (mostly) non-formal learning. As such an assessment identifies not only the CAPW but also areas for improvement in order to achieve a higher level of excellence, on the basis of the results of this assessment the employee may: 1) request a review and increase in the salary ratio, 2) apply for a higher position, 3) to initiate the development of a purposeful further professional development plan and its coordination with the employer.

The CAPW assessment procedure could serve as a tool for the recognition of employees' informal but highly qualified qualifications and for the identification of professional development needs.

**The guidelines in this Manual are indicative and aim to discuss the conditions for identifying, assessing and recognizing non-formal and informal learning in a variety of contexts.**

NB! The CAPW assessment mentioned in this guide is linked to continuing education. This assessment is not intended to change or in any way call into question the conditions for the award of initial vocational training qualifications (and in some cases higher education qualifications) which are laid down in national laws and regulations.

This Manual of CAPW evaluation procedures must be valid and appropriate to the national context, and must therefore be flexible and open to improvement. Thus, this Manual is not exhaustive - we recommend to review it regularly and provide relevant guidance specific to the changing context or individual areas of professional activity.

# Basic concepts

**Assessment** - the systematic collection and assessment of evidence of learning achievement to determine the relevance of the evidence to the competencies identified in the CAPW description and to recognize the CAPW.

**Assessor** - a specialist in the field who is assessed, who systematically assesses knowledge, abilities, skills and values and compares them with the established description of the CAPW or the agreed competency model. The assessor must be qualified not only in the field of assessment of his / her direct professional activity but also in the field of competence assessment.

**Competencies acquired in the person's work (CAPW)** - a set of competencies acquired in the course of work recognized by a company or business organization or institution representing employers.

**Competence** - a practically tested ability to use the acquired knowledge, skills and values and attitudes in an integrated and purposeful way in various work or study situations, as well as to develop professionally and personally.

**Competency model** - a structure designed to describe the sets of competencies required for the successful performance of work tasks.

**Consultant** - a person who provides an employee with detailed information about the purpose, procedure, course, results, and expediency of a CAPW assessment.

**Provision of CAPW** – the procedure performed by the company, business organization or institution representing the employers, during which, after assessing and / or recognizing the competencies acquired by the employee in the work activity, a document certifying the acquisition of the qualification acquired in the work activity is issued.

**Qualification** - a set of competencies or professional experience and competencies required for a certain activity, recognized in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts.

# 1. Purpose and methodological basis of CAPW assesment

**When developing CAPW assessment procedures, it is necessary to clearly define the purpose and methodological justification of this assessment, identifying its benefits at the level of the region, economic sector, specific institution / organization or associated structure, and individual.**

In order to determine whether and how a person is qualified to perform a certain professional level activity, or what level of mastery he / she has achieved through non-formal learning in the work activity, the acquired competencies, which are expressed as knowledge, abilities, practical skills and values, are assessed.

As mentioned above, this Manual focuses on the assesment of the CAPW, where the results of the assesment can be used:

- as a basis for determining the level of excellence (the CAPW assessment will be attested by a certificate listing the recognized competencies);
- for purposeful planning of personal professional career, at the same time raising the level of professionalism of employees at the organizational level (in order to ensure continuous professional development, a person is provided with career planning consultations and individual professional development guidelines / directions are established);
- as a basis for applying for a higher position or higher salary (the results of the assesment are a basis for applying, but they do not guarantee a higher salary or a higher position – it depends on the personnel management policy of the company, institution or organization in a particular economic sector).

The methodological framework for the assessment of the CAPW is based on the core idea that competence can be assessed when it is deconstructed into activity-specific measurable categories such as *knowledge, (general) competences, practical skills and values*.

The CAPW assessment process and methods include the assessment of all four of these components. Different categories require the selection of the most appropriate methods

for their assessment. The most obvious and easiest is to assess knowledge (using elementary knowledge tests). Perhaps the most difficult to see, recognize, and assess are personal qualities and values (these are recognized in the practice of employers and personnel management professionals as no less important and critical to the success of a mastery than specific defined professional competencies). Specific examples of the selection of assessment methods to assess specific areas of competence will be provided in Chapter 5 of this Manual.

## 2. Principles of CAPW assessment

**The assesment of the CAPW is based on certain principles and should be clearly stated in the assessment methodology. These principles need to be explained in detail, as they should serve as ethical guidelines for assessment.**

The following are examples of principles for the assessment of non-formal (in-service) competencies that are recommended for the development of the CAPW methodology:

- the assessment of the CAPW is based primarily on the principle of free choice. The assessment of non-formal learning or acquired professional experience has a positive effect on individuals' professional self-awareness and should therefore be linked to the individual choice of whether or not to participate in the assessment procedure.
- the principle of voluntariness emphasizes that it is not the employer but the individual who decides to participate in the process of assessing (his or her) competencies. The person concerned is responsible for the evidence of achievement and competence submitted for assessment, motivated and thoroughly prepared for assessment, and (he or she) consciously designs (his or her) professional career.
- the principle of availability of assessment ensures that assessment of prior learning achievements and CAPW is accessible to all, regardless of the way, place or time of acquiring competencies. In accordance with this principle, the person concerned is given the opportunity to assess his or her learning achievements at a time convenient to him or her in the real workplace.

- the principle of purposefulness and informativeness ensures that the assessment of competencies is deliberately perceived as an opportunity to obtain recognition for existing CAPWs. Employers consciously choose the level at which it would be appropriate for employees to introduce a CAPW. Employees who will be interested in participating in a CAPW assessment must be provided with full information about the purpose, principles, and progress of the assessment.
- the principle of goodwill and cooperation ensures that the employer facilitates and motivates employees to participate consciously in the CAPW assessment and the related career planning process based on individual professional needs.
- the accuracy, validity and transparency of the assessment procedure are linked to the validity of the assessment results. Transparency in assessment is achieved through a combination of different assessment methods, such as self-assessment, reflection, observation, conversation, and so on. Assessment tools must be clearly stated and assessment criteria must be provided. The competencies presented in the professional standard or competency model serve as Assessment Criteria, thus ensuring the transparency and comparability of the assessment process.
- the principle of trust in the professionalism of assessors. The objectivity and transparency of the CAPW assessment and recognition process is also determined by the fact that the assessment is organized and carried out by persons and / or bodies with the appropriate qualifications and authority to carry out the assessment. This right is obtained through special training for CAPW assessors.
- the involvement of the social partners in the CAPW assessment and recognition processes ensures ongoing contacts between businesses, employers, experts in the field and vocational training institutions.



## **3. CAPW assessment conditions**

### ***3.1. General conditions***

The assessment of the CAPW is based on European Union and national legislation, professional standards, qualifications frameworks and CAPW descriptions. The main starting point for identifying evaluation criteria and requirements for the assessment process is the CAPW descriptions. The direct links and coherence of the CAPW assessment procedure with existing legislation guarantee the confidence of stakeholders in the process of recognition of non-formal learning achievements as well as in the assessment results and documents issued.

Recognition of the CAPW can also be exercised if the person has not obtained an initial formal qualification in a particular professional field. There are two ways to recognize a person's CAPW:

1. when a person has obtained a formal qualification (has a diploma) and the work-acquired mastery gained through experience is considered as an additional competence. OR,
2. when the person has not obtained a formal qualification (diploma) in an educational institution, but demonstrates competence in work and can reasonably prove that he or she has acquired appropriate knowledge, abilities and skills for certain high-level work activities not in the formal education system but in work contexts.

After assessing the knowledge, abilities and skills acquired in an informal way (work activity) and identifying the lack thereof for a specific professional activity, a person may be recommended to participate in a training program, course or other form of training that provides such knowledge or skills for professional development.

## ***3.2. Financial and human resources for the assessment procedure***

**When modeling the CAPW assessment methodology, one of the key practical moments is to predict what financial and human resources will be needed to carry out the assesment effectively and why.**

The division of financial resources is not defined - it is usually a matter of the policy of a particular company / institution, which is decided autonomously. Because the results of a CAPW assessment relate to career planning and the opportunity to apply for a higher position and a higher salary, the most common practice is to provide advice and assistance in preparing the assessment process at the employer's expense, while the assessment procedure is paid for by the employee.

When designing a funding mechanism for the CAPW assessment and recognition process, it should be emphasized that the procedure cannot be cheap. It must be borne in mind that, firstly, quality assurance of processes has its value and cost, and secondly, in cases where the candidate bears part of the costs of the process, personal motivation and commitment to prepare properly for the assessment process is much higher.

The company / institution shall ensure that the persons involved in the assessment (consultants and assessors) are appropriately qualified to provide advice and assessment, and shall ensure the highest quality and transparency of the assessment process (including preparation for the assessment).

It is advisable to consider having one or more nationally accredited assessors in each sector of the economy. They could be selected from a publicly available list by the company / institution or person initiating the assessment. It is recommended that the cost of the evaluation procedure be set at national level.

### ***3.3. Participants in the assessment process: functions, responsibilities and qualification requirements***

In order to ensure the quality and transparency of the CAPW evaluation process, it is necessary to define the roles, powers, responsibilities and qualifications of all those involved. The qualification requirements for the CAPW assessor and the consultant must be clearly defined, further specifying where and how the competence and professional preparation of the assessor and the consultant to participate in the assessment process will be ensured.

In common practice, the individuals involved in the CAPW assessment process are:

- **the candidate** whose CAPW will be assessed;
- **a consultant** to help the candidate prepare for the CAPW assessment process and prepare his / her CAPW presentation;
- **the assessor (s)**, who will use the clear assessment criteria and the various assessment methods and techniques to determine whether the candidate has succeeded in acquiring certain knowledge, skills, abilities and values and whether his / her advanced qualifications can be recognized. It is important to mention that in order to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure the objectivity of the assessment, the same person cannot be in the role of consultant and assessor.

Based on examples of good practice, the following are recommended descriptions of the roles, qualification requirements and appropriate preparation for the CAPW assessment process of all three participants in the assessment process (candidate, consultant and assessor).

**A candidate** who makes a decision to participate in his or her CAPW assessment process must first be motivated and have a good understanding of where and for what reason he or she intends to participate. Therefore, the candidate should be provided with full information about:

- the purpose and essence of the assessment process;
- the preparation for the assessment;
- the assessment process itself;
- the assessment methods and, most importantly,

- the possibilities of using the assessment results.

During the preparation for the assessment, the candidate's biggest and most important task is to reflect in a structured way on two issues:

1. what my career perspective is and what it will give me, what opportunities the CAPW assessment will open up, and
2. what my work experience and achievements show that my job can already be called high-level excellence activities - what facts, examples of activities and results I could use to demonstrate this change.

The main tasks of **the consultant**:

- to provide detailed information on the purpose of the CAPW assessment, process, assessment criteria;
- answer questions (methodological, organizational or even motivational);
- to assist the candidate in properly preparing for the assessment process by collecting and providing appropriate evidence of his / her CAPW;
- to advise the candidate on how to prepare a portfolio of learning outcomes and CAPW evidence, to prepare for an assessment interview (interview) or to observation of practical skills in the workplace.

One of the main principles of the consultant's activity is goodwill and impartiality. In order to respond to the candidate's awareness principle, the role of the consultant should not be dominant in the preparation phase of the CAPW assessment. The main condition for ensuring the effectiveness of the CAPW subsystem is a motivated candidate who is actively interested in and asks questions about his / her career planning and professional development opportunities after the CAPW assessment. The consultant must create the conditions for dialogue, during which, with the help of the consultant, the candidate identifies his / her own CAPW, discovers his / her professional development needs and directions for achieving them. Consulting can be either individual or group.

N.B. The roles of *consultant* and *assessor* should be clearly separated. The work of the consultant ends when the candidate's learning achievement portfolio is completed and submitted for assessment. Consulting in a CAPW assessment is usually done on a mentoring basis, with more experienced and recognized staff / colleagues providing all the necessary information to the person preparing for the CAPW assessment. Alternatively, in the case of more flexible financial means or for smaller companies /

institutions, the consultant may be an independent, external expert who does not work for that company / institution but is delegated by an employers' association or the like.

Skills and knowledge required for a consultant:

- describe the essence and purpose of the CAPW assessment;
- use various conversation techniques: questioning, active listening, etc .;
- list the main principles of CAPW assessment;
- explain the main steps and specificities of the CAPW assessment process in the candidate's workplace or sector of economic activity;
- explain the requirements for preparation for the assessment;
- list the legislation governing the assessment of the CAPW in a particular sector of economic activity, company, institution or organization;
- to ask questions promoting self-analysis of professional achievements;
- assist the candidate in gathering evidence of his / her professional experience;
- to help the candidate to prepare a portfolio of his / her professional experience.

Values and attitudes required of the consultant:

- understanding and supporting the idea of lifelong learning;
- separation of roles and responsibilities between the consultant and the assessor;
- non-exceeding the functions of a consultant, ensuring the absence of conflicts of interest;
- refraining from evaluating the content of the information provided (this is the assessor 's function);
- impartiality and refraining from expressing a subjective opinion;
- ensuring confidentiality;
- adherence to professional ethics.

**The assessor** is the person who assesses the CAPW and decides whether the evidence provided by the candidate is relevant and justifies having certain CAPWs. The functions of the assessor relate to competence in two areas: firstly, the assessor is a professional and expert in the professional field being assessed, and secondly, he is qualified and well versed in the CAPW assessment process, its methodology and the selection of appropriate assessment methods. The assessor must also have a thorough knowledge of the formal qualification requirements set out in the professional standards and the

qualification requirements set out in the CAPW descriptions in the field of activity being assessed.

It is recommended that CAPW assessors be certified and professionally prepared to perform the assessment. There are various practices of evaluators and evaluation commissions: a CAPW assessor may be a professional from the same company, institution or association, as well as a representative of a Chamber of Commerce and Crafts or a trade union - it is important that they represent the same field of activity and that the assessment process is transparent and objective; a CAPW assessors can also be independent, external qualified professionals working in the same industry.

The main functions of the assessor are:

- assess whether the candidate's declared CAPW (knowledge, skills and values) is sufficient to recognize a high level of excellence;
- provide professional, comprehensive and constructive feedback to the candidate on the results of the assessment and, if necessary, direct individual trainings, seminars or workshops focused on the individual's professional development needs.

Skills and knowledge required for the assessor:

- describe the qualification requirements corresponding to the CAPW level in the specific sector of the economy;
- describe general competencies, personal qualities and professional values relevant to the specific job;
- describe the existing competency models in a specific economic sector;
- explain the meaning and essence of the CAPW assessment;

- list the main principles of CAPW assessment;
- describe in detail the course of the assessment process: the main stages of the assessment process and the specificity of the specific economic sector;
- list the legislation governing the assessment of the CAPW;
- be able to properly select and apply the methods used in the CAPW assessment process;
- compare the candidate's evidence of his / her on-the-job learning outcomes with the competency model in force in the relevant economic sector;
- provide objective feedback on the results of the CAPW assessment;
- list opportunities for professional development in a specific field of professional activity;
- communicate with the candidate and the consultant and, if necessary, mediate with the training institutions;
- prepare all documentation related to the assessment of the CAPW, its results and the recognition of the CAPW.

Values and attitudes required of the assessor:

- understanding and supporting the idea of lifelong learning;
- impartiality;
- independent and objective decision-making;
- refraining from expressing subjective opinions and relying on objective criteria;
- monitoring and improving one's performance as an assessor;
- confidentiality and observance of professional ethics.

### ***3.4. Exceptions and limitations***

Although it is envisaged that the recognition of the CAPW may be carried out by the employers themselves or their associated structures, it is necessary to consider and indicate whether and what restrictions may be placed on the assessment and recognition of the CAPW in a particular sector of the economy. Also - in which areas of activity and at what level it makes sense for specialists to carry out a CAPW assessment. According to the practical examples of recognition of the CAPW, the assessment and recognition of

the CAPW does not apply in the medical sector, nor in the case of regulated professions where the qualification requirements are laid down by law.



## 4. CAPW assessment process

When developing the CAPW assessment methodology, it is necessary to describe the entire evaluation process in a detailed, informative and step-by-step manner in a way that is equally clear to all parties: the organizers of the assessment (companies, institutions or their associated structures); the assessors (consultant and evaluator), and for a candidate seeking recognition of a level of professional competence.

The CAPW assessment process consists of four main stages: preparation for assessment, assessment, recognition and certification of assessment results, and designing further careers based on assessment results. Depending on the nature of the activities involved in the evaluation of the CAPW, the need for human resources is encountered at each stage of the evaluation. The latter should be evaluated and anticipated when planning the CAPW assessment service (see Figure 1).

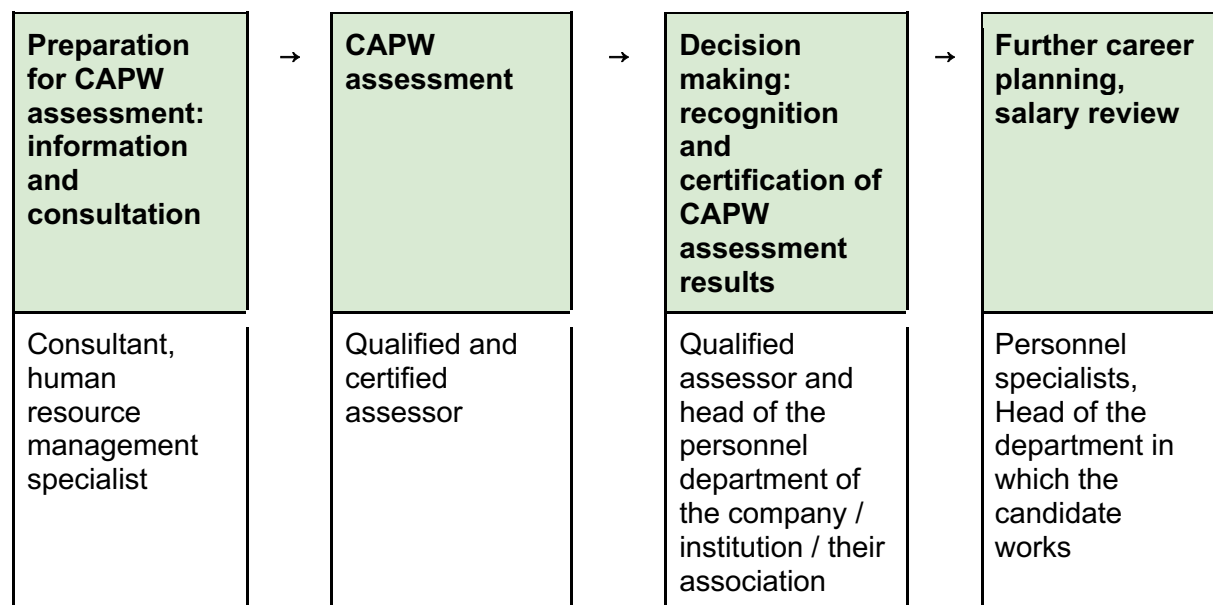


Figure 1. CAPW assessment stages and responsibilities

**Preparation for assessment** / information and consultation includes the following steps:

- acquaintance of the candidate with the assessment procedure, principles, criteria, requirements for preparation for assessment, possible assessment results;
- pre-assessment counseling;
- *preparation of a portfolio illustrating the candidate's professional achievements.*

At this stage, it should be ensured that the candidate is properly acquainted with the purpose of the assessment, his / her personal benefits in planning his / her career, the benefits for the employer, and the use of the assessment results. The principles of CAPW assessment should also be discussed and the assessment process (how, why, when, by what methods, and who will evaluate) be presented in an informative way. During the preparation phase, the candidate should receive detailed advice on his / her contribution to the assessment, the time required for preparation, the criteria to be followed for the assessment, the career prospects and the competencies to be assessed as evidence of his / her mastery. One of the main objectives at this stage is to "inventory" the available CAPWs and gather evidence of their existence. CAPW evidence is presented in a self-assessment portfolio of competencies. The basis of the assessment (professional activity portfolio) is a self-reflection of the candidate's performance based on specific evidence of the CAPW. During the preparation phase, it is necessary to ensure that the candidate is provided with professional advice. In terms of time, the preparation phase for the CAPW assessment is the longest, as it is based on an in-depth analysis of the candidate's performance and learning achievements.

**Assessment.** At this stage, the evidence of the candidate's learning achievements presented in the learning achievement portfolio is analyzed using a variety of assessment methods. This analysis takes place before the assessment interview with the candidate. The portfolio of learning outcomes and the CAPW evidence it contains are assessed on the basis of the following criteria: *authenticity, necessity, relevance, quantity and diversity of evidence*. In the assessment phase, the candidate's non-formal (on-the-job) learning achievements are compared with assessment criteria and indicators (competencies identified in the CAPW description or competency model). The assessment is performed by a specialist or a team of specialists in a specific sector of the economy. In order to ensure the principle of impartiality, the consultant assisting in the preparation of the assessment procedure and the assessor may not be the same person. The assessor

prepares the assessment report and provides feedback based on the specific assessment criteria.

**Decision-making** - the recognition (certification) of assessment results is the issuance of a document certifying a person's non-formal learning achievements and CAPW. The decision as to which individual competencies are recognized as a CAPW is made by the assessor or a specially constituted assessment panel. The document recognizing the level of competence of the evaluated candidate entitles the person to perform more complex activities, to apply for a higher position and remuneration, and to plan further career growth. The assessment determines the person's level of competence (see Figure 2) and, if necessary, discusses professional development directions and / or professional career prospects. If a person's achievements only partially match the competencies identified in the CAPW description, the candidate may be issued with a certificate of specific competencies and recommended to participate in a professional development program. Determining and marking CAPW levels is one of the key tasks in developing the CAPW subsystem in various sectors of the economy.



Figure 2. **Determination of CAPW levels after evaluation**

**Further career planning** is based on the results of the assessment: recognition of the CAPW and identification of areas for professional development. Specialists of the Personnel (Human Resources Management) Department and specialists of the

department where the employee who participated in the assessment procedure works continue to plan individual professional development actions that meet the needs of professional development: participation in trainings, practicums, internships, motivational events, etc. In this case, an individual learning plan is developed and the person can choose those subjects / courses / internships / internships in which he or she would acquire the missing competencies to achieve a certain level of CAPW.

## 5. Content and methods of CAPW assessment

When developing a CAPW assessment methodology, it is necessary to anticipate and present recommended assessment methods and to clearly justify their rational choice based on a formally defined and agreed concept of competence.

The following is a recommended definition of competence (see Figure 3) and a list of methods for assessing knowledge, skills, abilities and values that could serve to develop a methodology for the recognition of CAPW in a particular industry, enterprise, institution or associate.

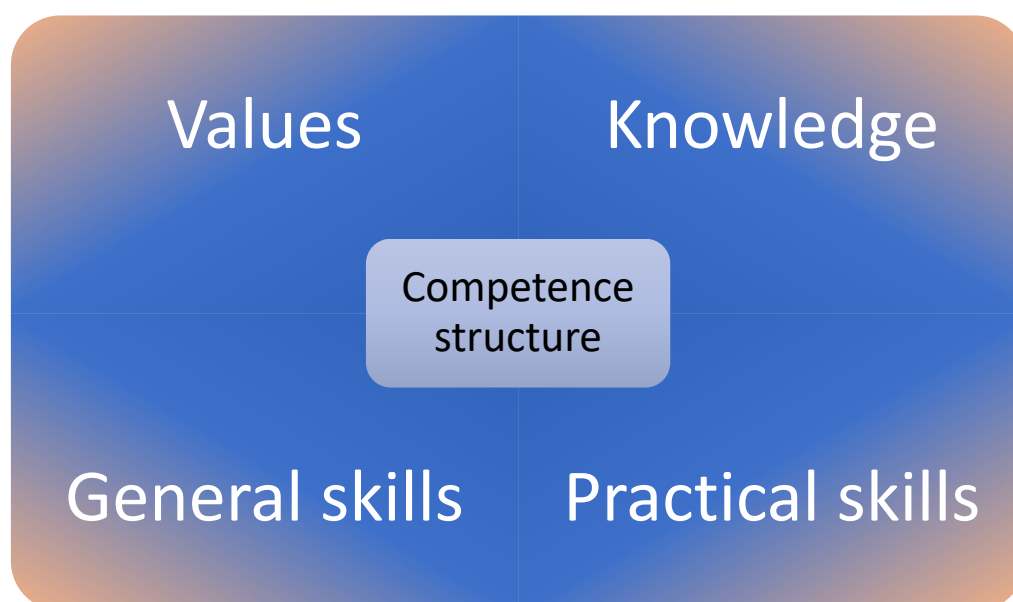


Figure 3. **Competence structure**

Assessment methods should be selected in such a way as to identify the expression of knowledge, general and practical skills and values in the employee's daily work activities, behavior and performance. In other words, evidence of the expression of competence must be gathered by monitoring and analyzing a person's work performance, professional behavior and specific work outcomes (see Figure 4).

Components of	Evidence of competence can be seen:
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competence	IN ACTION ↓	IN BEHAVIOR ↓	IN THE RESULTS OF THE WORK ↓
KNOWLEDGE →	selected assessment methods ...	selected assessment methods ...	selected assessment methods ...
GENERAL AND PRACTICAL SKILLS →	selected assessment methods ...	selected assessment methods ...	selected assessment methods ...
VALUES →	selected assessment methods ...	selected assessment methods ...	selected assessment methods ...

Figure 4. **Logical matrix of comprehensive competence assessment**

The selection of a variety of competence assessment methods ensures the identification of the expression of competence in practice. The main assessment methods to be used are:

- preparation and analysis of a portfolio of professional activities,
- formal knowledge testing,
- simulation tasks (simulation),
- monitoring of work activities,
- interview, questioning (activity-oriented interview / professional discussion),
- feedback from colleagues, and so on.

**A portfolio of professional activities** is a set of evidence based on self-analysis of learning achievements (acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning, as well as in the work environment) that has a systematic structure. Portfolio is probably the main method to measure CAPW. A portfolio is a comprehensive set of evidence of competencies acquired by a candidate (with the assistance of a consultant if necessary). It could conditionally be called an extended CV, where each entry submitted is accompanied by proof of the declared competencies acquired. In order to promote the motivation and awareness of employees and to plan their own professional career in the chosen sector of the economy, it is very important that the candidate himself is involved in the preparation of his / her portfolio. It is therefore important to ensure that the compilation of the portfolio is based on the candidate's self-assessment and personal reflection.

In most cases, the portfolio of professional activities provides evidence that best reflects the specifics of a particular activity, which may include:

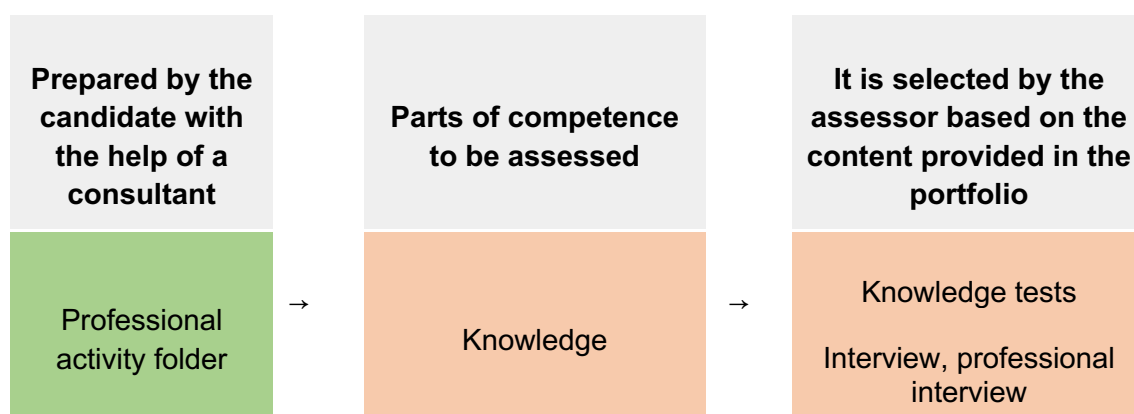
- list of courses, training attended by the candidate and certificates;
- presentation of the results of the work performed (photographic or video material);
- supporting documents for the practice;
- characteristics and feedback provided by (previous) managers;
- evidence of participation in traineeships;
- recommendations from other professionals, colleagues, and especially important
- the candidate's own personal reflections, in particular on experiences that are difficult to document.

The portfolio approach is based on self-analysis and therefore encourages the candidates themselves to follow their work activities more consciously, to take an interest in professional development opportunities and to design their professional careers.

**N.B.** In the portfolio development phase, a special role is given to the consultant, who helps the candidate to identify the experience, non-formal learning activities and acquired competencies, as well as to structure the chronology of his / her professional experience appropriately.

**N.B.** The content structure of the portfolio must follow the list of qualification requirements in the CAPW description or the competency model for a particular profession.

The purpose of all other assessment methods below (see Figure 5) is to determine whether a person's competencies listed in a portfolio can be demonstrated by real personal knowledge and practical skills.



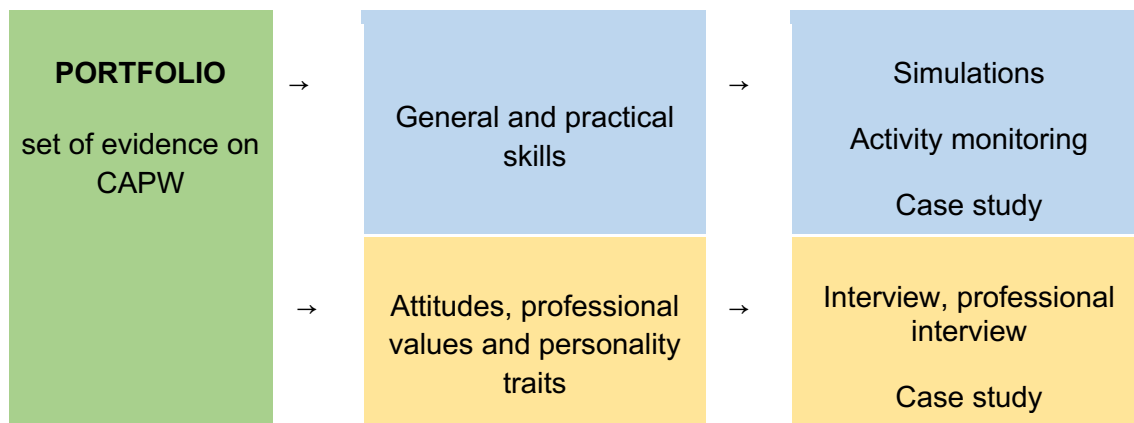


Figure 5. **Logical matrix of assessment methods**

**Interviewing** (professional discussion) is one of the most traditional methods of data collection not only in the social sciences or market research, but is also an integral part of recruitment or competence assessment processes. The interview method allows the assessor to communicate directly with the candidate and gather information about work experience, work specifics, clarify ambiguous answers to questions, discuss questionable and contradictory information (if any), directly invisible motives, experience, subjective attitudes towards professional activities and / or life phenomena, etc. It is important to mention that a well-executed interview method can also help to assess the candidate's general abilities, attitudes and values. It is important to note that when assessing a candidate's level of excellence based on his or her CAPW, the employer should care not only about the competencies he or she already has, but also about what the employee sees as a direction for their future professional development. In other words, what the candidate identifies as his or her personal learning need. The interview method is perfect for that.

In the assessment of the CAPW, it is recommended to organize a semi-structured interview, which is based on pre-structured questions, but leaves room for different wording and interpretation, as well as additional, clarifying questions. The main advantage of the interviews is the less formal aspect of the formal assessment procedure, which can lead to the development of peer-to-peer communication on professional experience.

Based on practical examples, it is considered most effective to ask 8-10 key questions during the interview to help reveal various aspects of the candidate's professional qualifications. The most appropriate questions are open-ended. By not providing possible



answers and thus allowing the candidate to provide more information that he considers relevant. The recommended optimal *interview duration* is 20-40 minutes (do not exceed 60 minutes). If the interview is expected to take more than an hour, it is recommended to split it into two parts. The *environment, place and time of the interview* are also very important. A natural, everyday and normal working environment, rather than an administration cabinet, gives the candidate a greater sense of security and self-confidence and psychologically reduces the impression that a formal assessment process is taking place. The best time to do an interview is late morning, noon, or early afternoon.

The information obtained during the interview needs to be recorded in order to properly present the analysis of the interview and the evaluative conclusions.

The following are the main mistakes of the assessors conducting the interviews:

- lack of interest and non-absolute attention to the candidate during the interviews,
- inaccurate questions,
- sometimes, in a hurry to hear the correct answer, the assessor takes the initiative and thus does not allow the candidate to express his / her thoughts, draws hasty conclusions, speculates, expresses his / her opinion,
- comparison of the candidate with other colleagues,
- ignoring the candidate's emotional state,
- non-verbal disturbance of the candidate's speech (the assessor carefully examines the candidate, reads his / her portfolio, which he / she did not know in advance, shows boredom),
- "leaving" the frame of the interview, moving away from the main topic of the interview,
- commenting on the candidate's personal qualities and not on specific professional actions,
- the attempt to "read between the lines" is a common mistake where the assessor relies on his personal insights and intuitions without asking additional, clarifying questions,
- the 'friend of the soul' effect, where there is a tendency to better appreciate those with whom it is easier to communicate,

- the effect of background information when information gathered about the candidate (from colleagues or people in the same group) affects the assessor's perception during the interview.

**N.B.** The quality of interviews is largely determined by the assessor's ability to communicate constructively, psychological knowledge and skills, so the assessor's preparation and professionalism are very important.

**Formal knowledge testing** is used to assess the level of theoretical knowledge. CAPW assessment usually uses the same tests and exams as the formal learning system. It should be noted that this method assesses only the fact of having / not having knowledge, but not the ability to apply this knowledge in a specific situation. It is therefore clear that formal knowledge testing alone is not sufficient to assess CAPW. However, knowledge assessment tests work well as one of several applicable methods.

During **performance monitoring**, the assessor monitors the candidate performing daily tasks in a real work environment. This method can be used to monitor and analyze characteristics such as decision making, leadership, analytical thinking, ability to plan, respond to unplanned situations, candidate behavior, performance-related character traits, task solving, and performance. The performance monitoring process usually consists of three steps:

1. *pre-observation meeting* - when the criteria for observation, duration, planned way of discussing the results, etc. are discussed;
2. *observation*, where the observation of a specific professional activity of a candidate under natural circumstances is carried out for a certain period of time in accordance with the criteria discussed. It is important to note that a candidate may behave unnaturally and uncharacteristically knowing that he or she is being observed. In this case, it is recommended to spread the observation time over a few days, thus ensuring that the candidate is given the opportunity to fully demonstrate his / her mastery in a variety of circumstances;
3. *a meeting to discuss the results and summaries of the observation* - when the evaluator provides the candidate with constructive feedback on the observed activity and prepares a written analysis of his / her observations.

The monitoring method, like all other assessment methods, may have potential drawbacks. This can happen if the assessor:

- has preconceived notions regarding the candidate;
- monitors and evaluates not on the basis of a list of objective criteria but on the basis of his personal experience and insights;
- is influenced by his own very positive or negative mood that day;
- draws conclusions from a first impression;
- compares the candidate's performance not with that of the criteria with that of the former employee;
- observes a candidate who unexpectedly finds himself in an atypical, non-routine, difficult situation that day.

**Simulation tasks** (simulation) - an imitation of a normal work task or situation, used to determine the quality of the implementation of such a task in a real situation. Simulation creates a realistic situation, during which the candidate's knowledge and ability to perform specific work tasks are assessed. This makes it possible to decide whether the candidate has the high qualifications required for a similar job.

**A case study** is a described event, situation, problem, circumstance and their analysis, when the essential details are singled out, and the candidate is asked to design, submit and justify a reasoned decision. Although the case study method is time consuming both in preparing situation descriptions and finding solutions to them, it allows to see and evaluate the candidate's experience, analytical thinking, ability to generate new ideas, teamwork ability, as well as ability to quickly orientate in a new, unfamiliar situation, value choices, possible patterns of behavior, etc.

**Peer feedback** - when the presence of learning achievements or CAPW is guaranteed by a third party who confirms with his / her testimony and signature that the candidate's self-assessment is adequate.

**Assessment of general abilities and values.** Most organizations in different sectors of the economy identify themselves as unique in terms of the sector-specific knowledge and skills that their employees need to have. However, there is a growing trend in recent years that in innovative companies, in addition to excellent professional knowledge and skills, employees are expected to have much more and much more versatile abilities and personal qualities, such as: communication, openness, striving for continuous improvement, intellectual leadership, integrity, reliability, response to stressful situations,

and so on. Naturally, the identification and assessment of key competences and values poses perhaps the greatest challenge to measurability in practice. Therefore, in order to facilitate the selection of the most appropriate assessment methods for the assessment of these categories, the following are some examples of general skills and values that can be both universal and specific to the nature of a particular work activity:

- examples of general skills:
  - ability to work in stressful situations,
  - ability to advise and train colleagues,
  - ability to perform tasks thoroughly,
  - ability to perform tasks independently,
  - ability to initiate related activities,
  - ability to analyze data and situations,
  - attention to detail,
  - consistency,
  - ability to generate new ideas,
  - ability to communicate well in professional language terminology,
  - ability to cooperate,
  - ability to communicate with people of all ages,
  - ability to analyze performance,
  - ability to resolve conflict situations constructively,
  - ability to think creatively,
  - ability to think critically,
  - ability to respond appropriately to complaints,
  - ability to identify problems, etc.
- examples of attitudes and values:
  - taking personal responsibility,
  - adaptation to different situations,
  - authenticity and originality,
  - recognition and correction of errors,
  - taking care of one's own and others' health,
  - efficiency,
  - openness,
  - diligence,

- striving for the highest result,
- interest in and empathy for one's own activities,
- discipline,
- not engaging in gossip,
- integrity,
- forgiveness,
- efforts to exceed expectations,
- empathy,
- enthusiasm,
- self-monitoring,
- concentration,
- finding a common language,
- orientation towards completion of works,
- goal orientation,
- commitment, listening, etc.

## 6. Quality assurance of the CAPW assessment procedure

The organization coordinating the evaluation of the CAPW should anticipate how to ensure that the evaluation and recognition of the CAPW is a transparent, high quality and efficient process. It should therefore develop a quality assurance system for the CAPW assessment in order to ensure that both the CAPW assessment procedure and, at a later stage, the development of individual learning / development plans meet the highest quality standards and all the principles applicable to the CAPW assessment process.

The following is a list of recommended checklists to assess the quality of the CAPW assessment process:

### 1. Purpose of CAPW assessment:

- does the proposed CAPW assessment procedure meet the personnel policy needs of the industry, company, institution or association?
- does the proposed CAPW assessment procedure meet the professional interests of the candidates?
- is the CAPW assessment procedure aimed not only at the one-off recognition of competencies but also at the professional development, professional development and continuous career planning of the employee?
- are the purpose and objectives of the CAPW evaluation described and explained in the same way to managers (staff policy makers), evaluators and candidates?

### 2. Principles of CAPW assessment:

- are the assessment principles clearly communicated to the relevant actors in the CAPW assessment process: those responsible for staff policy-making, candidates, evaluators and consultants?
- do the assessment principles ensure the clarity, objectivity and transparency of the assessment procedure?

### 3. CAPW assessment conditions:

- does the CAPW assessment procedure relate to the national qualifications framework and qualifications system?
- do the results of the CAPW assessment meet the professional standards of formal education?
- are quality advisory services on the purpose of CAPW assessment and preparation for the assessment ensured?
- is the preparation, professionalism and impartiality of assessors ensured and how?
- is there a training program for assessors?

#### 4. CAPW assessment process:

- are the persons responsible for the organization and coordination of the assessment and recognition of the CAPW foreseen and designated?
- is there a CAPW certification in line with the long-term goals of the employers' association?
- is the transparency of CAPW assessment and recognition procedures ensured and how?
- is there an external discussion on the quality of the assessment process and is it constantly updated / improved?

#### 5. Content and methods of CAPW assessment:

- is the content of the assessment clearly defined - is it clear which competencies will be assessed?
- do the assessment methods make it possible to determine the level of theoretical knowledge and practical skills that will be reflected in the actual activity?
- does the evaluation process include a self-assessment of the candidate's performance?
- do the assessment methods allow to see the expression of competencies in daily work activities, candidate's professional behavior and work results?