NS⁴P®

Sustaining Skills for a Safe and Secure Nuclear Future

A Guide – NS⁴P Employer Accounts

This guide is aimed at employer users who want to learn more about the NS⁴P: what it does, how it is used and how an account is created. Read alongside the At a Glance Guide – NS⁴P Overview and the FAQs – Employer Users it aims to help you learn more about the NS⁴P.

What is an Employer NS⁴P Account?

The NS⁴P is a secure online system which contains the agreed Competence Framework for the nuclear industry and it provides an innovative tool for those working in the sector to assess, verify and record an individual's competence, training and qualifications.

An employer account gives your organisation its own secure area within the NS⁴P system, which is customisable to your organisation (e.g. you can add your company logo) and which can only be accessed by you[1].

Once you have an account set up, it remains 'live' until you inform the National Skills Academy for Nuclear (NSAN) that it is no longer required.

The combination of Employer NS⁴P accounts and Individual NS⁴P accounts means the sector has, for the first time, a standardised approach to skills development and recognition which is transferable between employers.

How can I use the NS⁴P?

You can chose how you use an employer account. Designed with flexibility in mind the NS⁴P can be used in full, in part and/ or can be customised to your organisation's requirements. Here are some examples of how it may be used:

- The Competence Framework is used as reference material to benchmark an organisation's own competencies against industry agreed standards.

- The full NS⁴P system is used. Staff competence is assessed against appropriately selected competencies, recorded and verified, alongside training records and qualifications.

- Part of the NS⁴P system is used e.g. to record staff training and qualifications only.

- The system is used to view the shared records of another organisation (the Gatekeeper functionality) to demonstrate the competence of their staff when: responding to tenders; working for Site Licence Companies; demonstrating SQEP compliance to the regulators.

- The system is used to view the Skills Passport record of Individual Account Holders e.g. to check an Agency Supply Worker's qualifications and training records.

- An organisation uses the NS⁴P system but tailors it to their requirements e.g. they add in new competencies unique to their organisation.

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1 The NSAN System Manager is the only individual outside your organisation who can access your company data. This functionality is required to allow the set-up of your organisation and to assist you should you encounter any system issues.

What can I do in an account?

Within an account you can:

- Set up your organisation in a way which makes sense to you; for reporting, assigning job roles, users, competencies etc. For example, you can create an organisation structure which reflects subsidiaries, geographical sites etc.

- Customise the content e.g. add company logo, personalise the system generated e-mails, add company specific training courses.

- Access the Competence Framework and use it as is, or take competencies to create a Competence Framework that's right for your organisation e.g. if you are a niche business you may wish to use only the discipline areas relevant to your skills base.

- Create and manage job roles. You can assign each role competencies, target levels and a competence assessment process.

- Create and manage users. Each user can be assigned a line manager, a job role(s) and a user type within the system which determines what they can see and do within their NS^{4}P account. There are five types of users in the system: a Skills Passport Holder, a Line Manager, a Discipline Expert, an Employee Administrator and a Gatekeeper.

- Create task assessments and assign each one competencies, target levels and a competence assessment process. This may be used to understand the competencies required to deliver a project and match resources accordingly.

- Create and manage teams of individuals.

- Manage the competence assessment process e.g. activate an assessment which will e-mail all users assigned, via their job role or a task, an alert notifying them that they have a self-assessment to complete.

- Upload evidence in support of a competence assessment.

- Upload qualification and training records and 'verify' records in the system.

- Set permissions for individuals, internal or external to your organisation, to view certain Skills Passport records within your NS^{4}P account. This is called the Gatekeeper function. This may be used, for example, to allow another organisation whom you wish to work with to confirm in 'real time' that your staff are Suitably Qualified and Experienced Personnel (SQEP). It can also be used internally e.g. to allow a project manager to view the skills of a team and determine suitability for a tender.

- Search and view employees and individual contractors (where they have given you permission to do so) Skills Passport records. You may also (if you have been given permission) to view the Skills Passport records of individuals external to your organisation e.g. supply chain companies who are tendering for work.

- Assess, verify and record an individual contractor's competence (where mutual consent has been given for access to an individual NS^{4}P account).

- Use the reporting and resource planning tools to analyse your data and support your processes e.g. search for individuals with a 'Human Factors Integration' competency, search on the number of complete competence assessments, search your organisation on various criteria to locate resources or build and manage teams for tender.
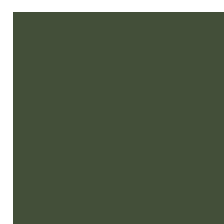
What is the Competence Framework? The Competence Framework provides a common language for the industry and defines the standard for 'excellence' across the sector. It contains a suite of competencies, grouped into categories of Core Knowledge and Behaviours, Business Enablers and Disciplines. These competencies, together with level descriptors of competence, set a common standard for workers within a nuclear environment.

As of 31st October 2014, the Competence Framework is not yet fully populated: a number of competencies are available to use now with others coming online over time. The Core Knowledge and Behaviour competencies are available in addition to four main competency groups in Disciplines: Control, Electrical and Instrumentation, Mechanical Engineering, Project Management and Technical Nuclear Safety. The timeframe for future development of competency areas has been published and as new content becomes available it will be uploaded to the system.

What is a competence assessment? NS^{4}P incorporates a tool to assess, verify and record competence. Competence assessments are linked to either a job role or a task and can have assigned competencies, a target level set for each competence and an assessment process which you can tailor.
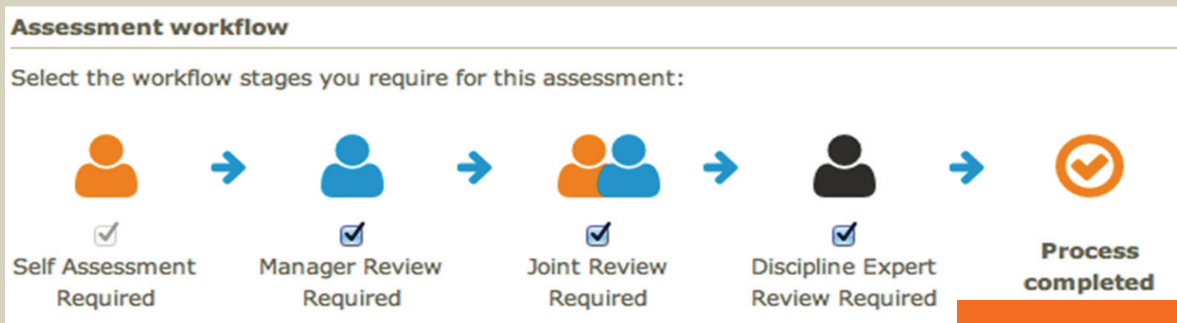
How does it work? An individual is notified by e-mail that they are required to undertake an assessment. Once logged into their account they can access their assessment and work through it by selecting the appropriate level (0-4) of competence they believe they demonstrate. Levels, agreed to industry standards, are defined in the system. Comments and evidence can be uploaded to support the self-assessment.

Example screenshot from the NS^{4}P which allows the employer administrator or line manager to select the assessment process for a job or task by ticking the required boxes.

Example screenshot from the NS^{4}P showing the target levels outlined in the assessment process.

Once complete, their line manager is notified by e-mail that a line manager review is required. When the line manager is logged into their account they can access the assessment and undertake a 'blind'[2] review. When complete, the line manager is notified that a joint review is required. The joint review requires a discussion between the line manager and individual based around the scores they each selected (now visible) and evidence to agree a joint review score which is submitted, along with any additional comments and evidence.

Example screenshot from the NS⁴P showing the assessment key which can be seen during the joint review stage of the assessment process.

This may be the final stage of assessment in many organisations but the process does allow for a further review step, if required and enabled. A Discipline Expert Review allows the calibration of competence assessments for individuals, across a team, department or organisation. Once the competence assessment process review is complete, the competence record automatically uploads to the individuals Skills Passport.

Example screenshot from the NS⁴P showing the front page of the Skills Passport.

2 A blind review means that the individual's self-assessment scores are not visible to the line manager. This reflects good practice and ensures manager assessments are not influenced or skewed. The line manager can however view any comments and files that an individual has uploaded as evidence against competencies.

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What are the benefits of having an account?

The NS⁴P has been designed to provide a transferable record of competence across the industry. With the ability to record qualifications, training and competence it provides a recognised platform to demonstrate and share skills. The NS⁴P:

- enables you to keep an easily accessible, up to date record of your employees training, qualifications and competence;

- helps you to demonstrate that your workforce is Suitably Qualified and Experienced (SQEP) to regulators and in response to tenders. SQEP is a regulatory requirement for many roles which operate in the nuclear sector;

- allows you to share your data online, in real time;

- supports mobility between employers. Once skills are 'verified' in the system it removes the requirement for further checks;

- facilitates skills analysis at an individual, group and organisation level e.g. identification of key strengths and skill gaps;

- assists with organisation reporting e.g. monitoring training courses;

- can support HR processes (e.g. workforce planning, talent management, succession planning, recruitment, learning and development, organisational design etc.) and inform business decisions e.g. do we have the required skills to win this tender?;

- reduces the requirement to check a new employee or individual contractor's training and qualifications records once 'verified' in the system.

Who is using the NS⁴P?

The NS⁴P is not a mandated requirement for working in the industry; however it is seen by some employers as highly desirable. The NS⁴P was launched in October 2014, so it is new to individuals, Agency Supply Organisations and employers[3] and it will take time before it is fully established. Although the NS⁴P provides immediate benefits for users, its full potential for transforming the sector will be realised over the next few years as more employers and individuals use and share data through the system. We don't expect change to happen overnight but by signing up for a NS⁴P account now, you are taking a proactive step and making a commitment to transforming the way the sector approaches skills.

An up to date list of all organisations using the NS⁴P is available in the Employers FAQs.

How do I create an account?

Any employer who is a member of the NSAN is eligible to use the NS⁴P. There is no additional cost for using the system.

If you are a member of NSAN and you would like to learn more about the system or you would like an NS⁴P account created for your organisation, please contact your Regional Manager. Your Regional Manager will be able to provide further information to help you decide if the NS⁴P is the right tool for your business and help you consider what is required prior to and during implementation.

If you are not a member of the NSAN and would like to learn more, please visit www.nsan.co.uk or e-mail enquiries@nsan.co.uk

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3 Although a number of employers have migrated to the new system from its predecessor, the Nuclear Skills Passport (NSP).