

How to ...

Complete the Waiver Competency annex form

Since the Waiver Competency Annex form was introduced a high percentage of our experienced Waiver candidates are choosing this option. The Competency annex form gives the candidate the opportunity to include their experience from several different projects they have worked on in the last three years.

This guide offers some practical advice to help you develop a good Competency annex form likely to pass first time.

Choose the right subjects

Choose subjects that will illustrate you have achieved the Core Competencies, and will demonstrate your sound basic understanding of UK Government IA policy and your ability to implement this using a pragmatic, risk management approach.

Each section can be about almost any Information Assurance subject, within the context of implementing UK Government policy. It could be technical (such as configuring a system), strategic (such as developing or implementing an aspect of policy) or a combination of the two. It could be about actually doing some Information Assurance work, or about advising others how to do it - as a consultant or a trainer, for example.

Remember that the examiner is looking primarily for your understanding of Government IA policy and evidence that you have applied it – at whatever level you work.

Complete in itself

The form should be complete in itself so do not include unnecessary supporting material. Keep it concise and remember the guidelines on length (350 to 500 words per section) – the examiner should not have to read through additional information. Avoid padding – keep to the point. Waffling won't get you extra marks!

Giving good evidence

You need to satisfy the examiner that you meet all the Core Competencies - but you will not do so if your evidence is poor. The example below shows a weak piece of evidence and a better version, showing how it could be presented.

Government Practitioner core competency 2.1: Business focus

Understands business aims and objectives, and establishes develops or advises on Infosec policy (and/or local working standards) that manage the risk to protect and enable these

Inadequate submission evidence

Systems with joint accreditation status require negotiation between different accreditation authorities to ensure best security measures are implemented without impeding either authority's business aims.

Q: What is wrong with this?

A: It does not indicate what the applicant actually did, nor with what results.

Better submission evidence

I am responsible for the security profile of [system name], with a business requirement to exchange data with [other system name], which is managed under a different security and business authority. I have engaged with both business authorities in order to fully understand the business requirement, which is [describe]. As a result, I also engaged with the [other system's] accreditation authority and have agreed the security policy for both systems and the data exchange arrangements. These are [describe]. These arrangements have resulted in the required business benefits for both parties as described above, with the residual risk, acceptable to both business regimes.

Q: Why is this better?

A: It does not just describe what the candidate did, but also clearly states the situation, why the candidate acted as they did and what the outcome was.

Remember the annex form is your chance to show that you understand IA concepts and how the subjects relate to other internal and external business activities.

Illustrate a risk management approach to IA by describing what options were open to you and what conflicts you had to deal with, justifying the decisions you made. Make sure you include the how and why, and the lessons learned.

Remember each section should be a short reasoned case.

Abbreviations and jargon

We all use abbreviations in our work, but it is good practice to keep these to a reasonable minimum and try to avoid using unnecessary jargon. The examiner should not have to understand your organisational abbreviations and jargon.

Ask for help if you need it

If you need guidance or advice on any part of the process, do contact the ITPC secretariat – we are here to help.

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