

## WHAT MAKES UP A COMPETENCY?

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A competency is made up of the following three elements: skill, knowledge and attribute.

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### What's the difference between skills, knowledge and attributes?

A skill is about doing something well – your ability to choose and perform the right technique at the right time. It's usually developed through training and practice. For example, you could become a skilled writer by practicing writing in a particular style. You can become skilled at being safe in the workplace by practicing techniques during classroom exercises or labs.

Knowledge is the information that you know, including theories, facts and procedures, and the ability to apply this information in different situations. For example, you could have knowledge about different communication styles. You may know the key steps to plan a program or project and be well versed in strategies for evaluating success. Putting these together takes knowledge.

An attribute is an inherent characteristic or quality and is often expressed through what you think, do and feel. For example, you could be known for staying positive and calm in challenging situations. You may also bring a 'can-do' attitude to your work - able to try new things, ask for new assignments and demonstrate initiative.

Together, these three elements make up a competency.

- + For example, you could develop competency regarding communication by practicing your writing and listening skills, acquiring knowledge about different communication styles and learning techniques that help you keep calm under pressure.
- + Or you might develop competency around workplace safety by taking a natural attribute like attention to detail, and using it to practice safe work techniques (skill development) and then researching new and different methods (gaining knowledge) that can be implemented to increase safety.

### Competencies are described in ways that are:

- + Observable
- + Measurable
- + Linked to the workplace, academic environment and other life experiences
- + Transferable
- + Based on performance