BSA Manual Support Document

Contractors
Competency Matrix Guidance

Plasterer

Overview

The purpose of this framework, along with the Routes to Competence and SKEB (Skills, Knowledge, Experience, and Behaviour Statements), is to outline the current standards and qualification landscape for Plasterers. Developed through sector expert consultation, it aims to assess whether the existing training and qualification methods effectively ensure workforce competence and meet industry standards.

The framework consolidates all approved training and assessment standards for Plasterers. It highlights national variations in competence requirements, as reflected in the Functional Map of the SKEB and the Routes to Competence. Note that the Scottish version is still under consultation.

The Functional Map outlines current industry-agreed competencies, while Generic Trade Competencies cover trade-relevant competence statements. Behaviours are based on BSI Flex 8670 and should be assessed as part of all competency evaluations. Core Trade Competencies define essential functions in terms of skills, knowledge, and experience.

This framework will be continuously updated in line with evolving industry standards, legislation, and ongoing consultations.

Functional Map Activities

Core Construction Competencies	England & Wales	Scotland	Training	Re-validation
Conform to general workplace health, safety and welfare	x			
Conform to productive work practices	x			
Move, handle and store resources	x			
Confirm work activities and resources for the work				
Develop and maintain good working relationships				
Confirm the occupational method of work				
Core Trade Competencies				
Erect standard masonry structures	x		Plaster skim finish and basic trowel skills Solid plastered surface application	
Set out to form standard masonry structures	x		Producing internal solid finishes	
Erect masonry to form architectural and decorative structures	x		Producing external render finishes	
Set out to form complex masonry structures	x		Introduction to drylining (tacker, boarder) Install Plasterboard by direct bond (dot & dab)	

Generic Skills & Knowledge

Interpret Information	Safe work practices	Selection of resources	Minimise the risk of damage	Approach to work
Interpret information related to the work and resources to confirm its relevance for the following: drawings, project specifications, schedules, risk assessments, method statements, and manufacturers' guidance and specifications. Understand methods for interpreting and extracting relevant information from drawings, project specifications, schedules, risk assessments, method statements, manufacturers' guidance, and legislation/regulations governing buildings. Follow organisational procedures for implementation and recognise the importance of accurate information, reporting concerns when necessary. Be aware of basic principles of digital design and modelling systems.	Comply with relevant legislation and project guidance to ensure safe and healthy work practices. This includes preparing and maintaining a safe work area, using health and safety control equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), and safely handling, moving, and storing materials, tools, and equipment. Address health risks, hazardous materials, and follow environmentally responsible practices. Safely use access equipment, work at height, and report risks, hazards, accidents, and emergencies. Understand fire safety equipment and its use, and respond to incidents following organisational procedures. Adhere to security procedures for operatives, the public, and tools. Promote mental health awareness, wellbeing, and apply Fairness, Inclusion, and Respect (FIR) in all interactions.	Select the required quantity and quality of materials, components, fixings, tools, and equipment for the methods of work. Confirm that resources and materials meet the specifications. Understand how to use these resources and report any related issues. Identify hazards associated with the resources and methods of work and implement solutions. Calculate the quantity, length, and wastage of materials as part of the work procedure. Follow organisational procedures for resource selection, understanding why they were developed and how they are used. Recognise the importance of resource characteristics, quality, uses, sustainability, limitations, and defects, and how to rectify any defects.	Comply with organisational procedures to minimise the risk of damage to the work and surrounding areas by protecting the work from damage, maintaining a safe, clear, and tidy work area, and disposing of waste in accordance with current legislation. Understand the purpose of protection from general workplace activities, other occupations, and adverse weather conditions, and minimise damage to existing building fabric. Safely dispose of waste following environmental responsibilities, organisational procedures, manufacturers' guidance, statutory regulations, and official guidance. Recognise the importance of maintaining a safe, clean, and organised work area.	Complete the work within the allocated time, following organisational procedures and the work programme, while meeting the needs of other occupations and the client. Understand the importance of adhering to deadlines and the programme and recognise the needs of other trades. Familiarise yourself with progress charts, timetables, and estimated times, and follow organisational procedures for reporting any circumstances that may affect the work programme. Emphasise the importance of teamwork and communication in achieving project goals.

Behavioural Competencies

- Take responsibility for your own and others' health, safety, and wellbeing, and report any non-compliance.
- Work effectively within a team, adapting communication methods to suit the audience and respecting lines of communication.
- Manage time efficiently and consider the differing requirements of site and domestic environments.
- Prioritise sustainability by reusing, recycling, and safely disposing of waste.
- Adapt to changing client needs and represent your trade and employer positively.
- Contribute to a fair, inclusive culture.
- Take responsibility for your actions and judgments.
- Uphold strong work ethics, including honesty, integrity, and respect.
- Work within your competence, seeking advice when needed.
- Pursue continuous professional development to maintain or increase competence.
- Consistently achieve high-quality work using best practices

Apply finishing plaster to surfaces

Skills	Knowledge
To carry out the task of applying finishing plasters, begin by performing pre-user checks on all power tools and equipment, ensuring they are in good working condition, and promptly recording and reporting any faults or defects. Select the appropriate hand tools and equipment for the task, and ensure they are properly maintained and stored to prevent damage. Calculate the required areas, estimate quantities, and select the correct materials for the finishing plasters based on the specifics of the project. Before applying the finishing plasters, assess the background surfaces for any defects, ensuring they are suitable for restoration or repair. Prepare a variety of background surfaces using both modern and traditional methods, ensuring 90° internal and external angles are formed, and install beads and trims where necessary. This includes preparing walls, reveals, sills, and soffits. Mix finishing plaster materials to the correct ratios according to the manufacturer's instructions. Then, using the appropriate tools, apply the plaster to solid backgrounds, ensuring accurate application and finishing. This includes working with pre-plastered surfaces, lightweight backing plasters, existing surfaces, and plasterboard, and ensuring the accurate formation of internal and external angles.	Types and Characteristics of Finishing Plasters and Beads: Finishing Plasters: Include gypsum, cement-based, and ready-mixed plasters, used for smooth, durable finishes. Beads and Trims: Metal or plastic strips that create neat edges at internal/external angles and protect corners. Pre-User Checks and Tool Maintenance: Power Tools: Inspect tools for damage, check safety features, and report faults. Hand Tools: Ensure tools are clean, sharp, and properly stored after use. Surface Assessment and Preparation: Defects: Look for cracks, dampness, or unevenness and repair before plastering. Suction Levels: Identify background suction (high, medium, low) and prime as necessary. Preparing Surfaces for Plaster: Cleaning and Priming: Remove dust and contaminants; apply the appropriate primer for better adhesion. Install Beads and Trims: Ensure straight, reinforced edges on corners. Calculating Quantities: Area and Material Estimation: Measure surfaces and estimate plaster quantities based on area and thickness. Mixing Finishing Plasters: Mixing: Follow the manufacturer’s ratios for consistency. Use hand or mechanical mixing as required. Applying Finishing Plasters: Techniques: Apply floating coats, smooth the surface, and use beads for sharp edges on plasterboard or existing surfaces.

Produce internal solid plasters

Skills	Knowledge
Carry out pre-user checks on power tools and equipment, recording and reporting any faults or defects. Select, use, maintain, and store hand tools and equipment appropriately. Calculate areas, estimate quantities, and select materials for internal solid plastering. Prepare various background surfaces for internal plastering, including one- and two-coat work, 90° angles, beads, trims, reveals, cills, soffits, walls, and ceilings, while restoring and repairing as necessary. Mix plastering materials to the correct ratio as per manufacturers' instructions. Apply and finish one- and two-coat plaster to different internal backgrounds, such as reveals, cills, soffits, walls, and ceilings, while restoring and repairing surfaces. Apply internal solid plaster to solid backgrounds, including the formation of 90° angles, consolidation, and mechanical key application.	Understand the types and characteristics of solid plaster materials, plaster beads, trims, keying (mechanical bonding), and Expanded Metal Lath (EML). Perform pre-user checks on power tools, record faults, and report defects. Use, maintain, and store hand tools and equipment properly. Calculate areas and estimate material quantities for internal solid plastering. Prepare surfaces for plaster application, including one- and two-coat work, 90° angles, beads, trims, reveals, cills, soffits, and walls/ceilings, ensuring proper cleaning and repairs. Mix materials according to manufacturer instructions. Apply and finish plaster to a range of surfaces, including reveals, cills, soffits, walls, and ceilings, using modern and traditional techniques. Form 90° angles, consolidate, and apply mechanical keying as needed. Finish with hand application and ensure use of beads and trims.

Apply solid render to background surfaces and produce finishes

Skills	Knowledge
Carry out pre-user checks on power tools and equipment, and record and report any faults or defects. Select, use, maintain, and store hand tools and equipment appropriately. Calculate areas, estimate quantities, and select materials for external render finishes. Prepare various background surfaces for external rendering using modern or traditional methods, including 90° internal and external angles, bead and trim installation, walls, reveals, cills, and soffits, as well as restoring and repairing surfaces. Mix render materials to the correct ratio according to manufacturers' instructions. Apply a range of external render finishes using modern or traditional methods, ensuring mechanical keying, including the formation of 90° angles, hard angles, bead and trim installation, and rendering walls, reveals, cills, soffits, and restoring or repairing surfaces.	Understand the types and characteristics of traditional and modern rendering materials such as sands and cements, silicone-based renders, render reinforcement mesh, pebble dash, accelerators, limes, plasticisers, and waterproofers. Carry out pre-user checks on power tools and equipment, ensuring any faults or defects are recorded and reported. Conduct pre-installation checks, including verifying structural integrity, dampness, vents, and the location of services (gas, electricity, water, media cables). Select, use, maintain, and store hand tools and equipment properly. Calculate areas, estimate quantities, and choose the appropriate materials for external render finishes. Prepare a variety of background surfaces using modern and traditional methods to receive external render finishes, including one-coat, two-coat, and three-coat work, as well as 90° internal and external angles, the formation of hard angles, bead and trim installation, reinforcement, and surface restoration or repair. Identify and use primers and sealers in line with manufacturers' instructions. Mix materials for external render finishes correctly according to the specified ratios. Apply a range of external render finishes using traditional and modern methods, ensuring a mechanical key, dubbing out, and scratch coats are incorporated for one-coat, two-coat, and three-coat applications. This includes working on internal and external angles, installing beads and trims, forming hard angles, and applying finishes to walls, reveals, cills, soffits, and restoring or repairing surfaces. Complete post-installation checks to ensure the work complies with specifications and industry standards.

Install Plasterboard Systems

Skills	Knowledge
Carry out pre-user checks on power tools and equipment, ensuring faults or defects are recorded and reported. Select, use, maintain, and store hand tools and equipment properly. Calculate areas, estimate quantities, and choose materials for plasterboard systems. Prepare a range of background surfaces, including solid, timber, and metal, for the installation of plasterboard systems, ensuring surfaces are restored and repaired as needed. Measure, mark out, and cut plasterboard to fit the required area, including around openings, reveals, and services. Mix adhesive compounds to the correct ratio, following manufacturers' instructions. Install plasterboard on horizontal and vertical surfaces, including timber or metal structures, reinforcing joints using specified mechanical fixings. Ensure proper restoration and repair as required. Direct bond plasterboard to solid backgrounds, sealing around perimeters, window openings, reveals, and services using the specified adhesive compounds, and perform any necessary restoration and repair.	Types and Characteristics of Plasterboard and Installation Systems: Understand the various types of plasterboard (e.g., standard, moisture-resistant, fire-resistant) and their applications in different installation systems. ▪ Pre-User Checks on Power Tools and Equipment: Conduct pre-use checks on power tools and equipment to ensure they are safe and operational. Record any faults or defects and report them accordingly. ▪ Pre-Installation Checks: Inspect the installation area for structural integrity, ensure there are no obstructions or hazards (such as dampness, vents, or services like gas, electricity, and water), and verify readiness for plasterboard installation. ▪ Selection, Use, Maintenance, and Storage of Hand Tools and Equipment: Choose appropriate hand tools and equipment, use them correctly, maintain them in good working order, and store them safely when not in use. ▪ Calculation of Areas, Estimation of Quantities, and Selection of Materials: Measure the area to be covered, estimate the number of plasterboard sheets needed, and select the correct materials (plasterboard, adhesives, fixings) for the job. ▪ Preparation of Background Surfaces: Ensure solid, timber, and metal backgrounds are ready for plasterboard installation. This includes preparing, restoring, and repairing surfaces to ensure a secure attachment. ▪ Selection of Mechanical Fixings and Adhesive Compounds: Choose the appropriate mechanical fixings (e.g., screws, nails) and adhesive compounds based on the plasterboard type and surface requirements. ▪ Measurement, Marking, and Cutting Plasterboard: Measure and mark plasterboard accurately to fit the area, around openings, reveals, and services. Cut plasterboard to the correct dimensions. ▪ Mixing Adhesive Compounds: Mix adhesive compounds to the correct ratio as per the manufacturer's instructions to ensure the proper bonding of plasterboard. ▪ Installation of Plasterboard: Install plasterboard on horizontal and vertical surfaces, ensuring proper alignment and using the specified mechanical fixings for timber or metal backgrounds. Reinforce joints where necessary and perform repairs where required. ▪ Direct Bonding of Plasterboard: Apply direct bonding of plasterboard to solid backgrounds, ensuring proper sealing around perimeters, window openings, reveals, and services using the appropriate adhesive compounds, including restoration and repairs as needed.