

The Relationship between training, competency and suitability.



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Approach to training



The “process”

- consider training group
- aims & objectives
- content and structure
- mechanism of delivery

The “end-product”

- an effective workforce
 - competent in the role undertaken

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Ability ? Competence ? Suitability ?



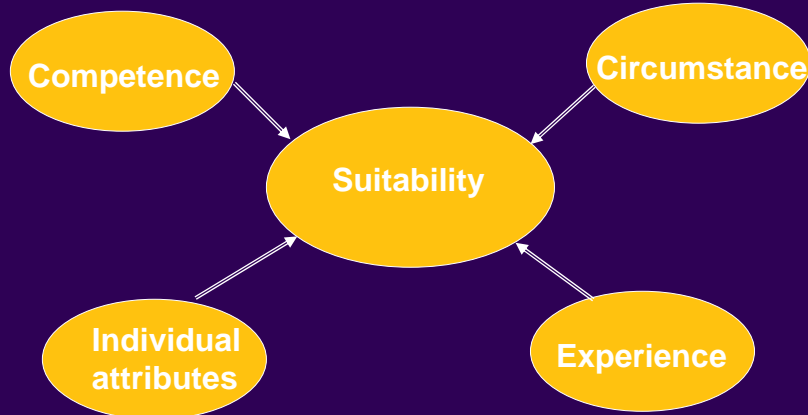
Employer requires an individual who is **competent** in the role/function undertaken and **suitable** for appointment in that role.

Competence : “being able to do”

- requires relevant knowledge and skills

Suitability

- cannot be assumed from competence
- influenced by a number of factors



Radiation worker

Function

To work in safe manner in accordance with the employer's procedures

Requirements (IRR99)

Must know

....risks to health, precautions to be taken, importance of compliance

Competence implied

Must be able to

.....work safely

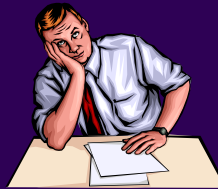
..... follow instructions/procedures

Radiation worker : Training (UK)



- wide range available
 - 1:1 instruction → formal courses (1- 2 days)
- presentation format (sometimes practical element)
- generally no form of assessment of understanding or ability
- no follow-up in workplace
- record of attendance taken as proof of adequate training

Turn up and listen !



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Radiation worker : Issues



Generally, no problem - any weakness in the approach to training does not impact on radiation safety in practice, *provided* the circumstances do not vary !



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Radiation Protection Supervisor (RPS/RPO)



Function

Supervision: plays an important role in ensuring observance of procedures

Requirements IRR99

Employer must appoint a "suitable" RPS , who ...

- understand regulatory requirements
- understand precautions to be taken
- knows what to do in the event of an emergency
- can supervise effectively

Competence implied

Must be able to ..

- Work safely and follow instruction
- assess and understand the degree of hazard/analyse a situation
- supervise other effectively

RPS/RPO : Training (UK)



- Onus on employer to ensure adequate training
- No "standards" for RPS training, but guidance available by way of HSE Core of Competence
- Wide range of training available - varying interpretation of Core of Competence
- No comment provided on degree of competence attained
 - assessment/exam sometimes offered
 - in some cases "qualification" inferred from course attendance

RPS/RPO : Issues



NRPB Exam : perceived benefits

- evidence that employees had “gained”
- evidence of employer compliance

Concerns

- written test can only assess knowledge and understanding
 - difficult to gauge competence
- employers view a “pass” as endorsement employee ability and suitability, and..
- ...a “fail” as a lack of suitability

Neither is true !



Solution

- an assessment of degree of competency in specified areas

Simple written
test of
knowledge

+

Practical
assessment of
understanding
and ability

=

Assessed
competence in
specified areas

- may be used as a tool by the employer when judging overall competence and suitability



RPA(QE)



Function

To advise the employer

Requirements (IRR99)

Employer required to consult a “suitable” RPA with regard to observance of IRR99

Competence required

To be suitable an RPA must...

... possess the knowledge, experience and competence required in order to advise with respect to the employer's circumstances.

RPA : Training (UK)



- detailed training requirements addressing knowledge and understanding
- competence explicitly required (although not practice specific)
- range of training courses available
 - conventional, distance learning
 - very effective, but do not address suitability
- determination of suitability is the responsibility of the employer
 - must chose a qualified RPA with appropriate experience

Conclusions



- Knowledge, competency and suitability are key factors for persons working with radiation
- Training can go a long way to address competence, but
 - current training tends to be focussed on information provision
 - facilitating the attainment of competence not a primary consideration
 - assessment of competence rarely addressed
- Improvement in approach is straightforward
 - re-direction of effort
 - care with e-training ??!

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For reference



HSE Core of Competence for RPS training

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/irp6.pdf

HSE Criteria of Competence for RPAs

www.hse.gov.uk/radiation/ionisng/rpa/statementrpa.htm

www.srp-uk/rpa2000

www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/training

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