

HEADS OF PROFESSION GROUP TECHNICAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

About the Advisory Cadres

FCDO is recognised for its world-class technical and analytical capability in International Development. This capability is concentrated in our Advisers who are international development policy and investment delivery experts. Advisers help identify, generate and utilise the best evidence, knowledge, technology and ideas to improve the impact of UK Aid.

Advisers have key roles in programme design, appraisal, management and evaluation; in the development and implementation of policy; and, in development diplomacy and international partnerships. They play a critical role in inter-disciplinary thinking and thought leadership, linking programmes and bringing deep expertise to maximise impact. They have strong links with development networks, research organisations and professional bodies in the UK and globally.

There are approximately 1000 advisers, in grades [A1](#), [A2](#) and [A2L](#), in FCDO, with a diverse mix of UK and non-UK home civil service and locally employed advisory staff. Advisers are employed across FCDO and other ODA spending government departments, primarily by country programmes and lead policy and research teams. Advisers are accredited to one or more of thirteen advisory cadres which are professional bodies within FCDO ([Climate and Environment](#), [Conflict](#), [Economics](#), [Education](#), [Evaluation](#), [Governance](#), [Health](#), [Humanitarian](#), [Infrastructure](#), [Livelihoods](#), [Private Sector Development](#), [Social Development and Statistics](#)).

The Economics, Statistics and Evaluation cadres are linked to government-wide advisory services.

Each cadre has a [Head of Profession \(HoP\)](#), who provides thought leadership, quality assurance (the right advice from the right adviser in the right place) and continuous professional development.

Advisory capabilities

Advisers have a lot to offer FCDO and other ODA spending government departments.

- A **world class reputation** of technical credibility;
- An **expert depth of technical expertise**, developed through learning in specialist areas and significant country level experience;
- **High standards of quality assured** professional technical knowledge, thought leadership and appraisal, based on evidence from the latest research and data;

- **Experience of applying** technical expertise to operational delivery in varying **contexts** (geographic, political, socio-economic, institutions);
- **Vibrant Communities of Practice and Networks of professional contacts** and institutional connections with whom FCDO collaborates

Advisers have certain capabilities in common. These are embedded into each of the TCFs and include but are not limited to the following:

- **International Development** expertise to maximise the impact of UK investment and policy.
- Thought leadership from specific professional perspectives as well as the ability to work with others to generate **interdisciplinary** solutions.
- Deep and broad expertise and flexibility.
- Leading or supporting the development, implementation and review of **policy**.
- Designing, appraising, managing, monitoring and evaluating **programmes and research**.
- Using **evidence** to inform policy and programming, translating evidence into action, including monitoring and evaluation.
- Engaging in **development diplomacy, thinking and working politically**
- Networking and brokering **partnerships** with governments, civil society, the private sector, multilaterals, research organisations and professional bodies in the UK and globally.
- Applying key **economic and commercial concepts** and ensuring value for money.
- Harnessing the potential for **data/digital/technology/innovation**.
- Ensuring that we do-no-harm, while proactively benefiting poor and excluded people by integrating gender equality, child protection, disability inclusion and **social safeguards**, including Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and Sexual Harassment.
- Considering **climate and environment** elements of programme, policy and portfolio design and management, and ensuring environmental safeguarding.
- **Political Economy Analysis**, building stability, understanding drivers of conflict in **Fragile and Conflict Affected States** and how they cut across to other sectors.
- Demonstration of strong civil service behaviours in applying, communicating, influencing and leading technical and evidence-informed processes and engagement

How Technical Competency Frameworks (TCFs) should be used

TCFs are structured and presented so that for every cadre:

- competencies are clearly defined in terms of *what* rather than *how*;
- each competency has *working, practitioner* or *expert* levels;
- this allows breadth and depth of expertise to be mapped;
- competencies are marked as *optional* or *required*;

- there is clear signalling of different ways each competency can be *acquired*;
- there is clear signalling of how each competency can/will be *evidenced*.

TCFs use modular systems where each individual demonstrates their expertise in each competency, assessed at accreditation using the type of evidence indicated. We have three levels of accreditation, corresponding to the three advisory grades (A2L, A2 and A1). Modules and credit thresholds for each level is defined by HoPs in their respective TCF.

This approach will underpin improvements in many areas, including:

- cadre diversity and inclusion – by being very clear and transparent about the requirements for cadre entry and progression and how they can be acquired and evidenced;
- advisory career paths – by clearly setting out the skills required at each grade, that can be adopted across government;
- FCDO capability – by improving FCDO's ability to understand our current capability and build future capabilities;
- government ODA capability – by providing a clear framework we are proud to export and that can be easily understood and adopted.

Your level of expertise

- **Working Level:** You have a working knowledge and practical experience of this competency. You are self-sufficient at applying this within a restricted number of areas, or under supervision in more complex areas.
- **Practitioner:** You have detailed knowledge and significant experience of this competency. You can apply and advise on more complicated or difficult issues in relation to this area. You are able to assess, determine and adopt a flexible approach. You actively share lessons learned.
- **Expert:** You have expert knowledge and experience in this area. You are known as an expert, acknowledged by others across government and partners. You apply this competency to complex issues. You use your knowledge and experience to review/change practice by using a wide range of tools.

About the Humanitarian Cadre

Humanitarian advisors help teams implement: UK humanitarian reform policy commitments to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain dignity of those affected by conflicts or disasters; UKAID strategy objectives on strengthening resilience and responding effectively to crises; UK commitments to uphold International Humanitarian Law, humanitarian principles and “leave no one behind” in some of the most challenging contexts.

They provide advice on evidence-based policy positions, advocacy and design and deliver relevant DFID programmes (many are Senior Responsible Owners for programmes and are familiar with the special programming procedures for emergency response). They work in a range of different contexts, from those focused on preparedness, rapid onset, recurring and especially protracted crises including, fragile and conflict affected states. They advise on bespoke policy and programme engagement tailored to the context - including whether the response is host-Government or international agency-led. Humanitarian advisors also provide cross cutting support to mainstreaming crises, disaster risk and resilience into other teams’ where relevant.

There are over 60 humanitarian advisers across DFID – mostly overseas, including those working in the most fragile and conflict affected states. A number of advisers also work in the UK in thematic policy, research and geographical teams.

Humanitarian Technical Competency Framework

Competencies		Your level is.....			You get this			Evidence might look like						
		Working	Practitioner	Expert	Post Grad Educ	Work experience and training	Self-directed study	Interview	Written Test	Qualification	Published Paper/Thesis	Project Report	Evidence of successful use	Professional Level Log
Primary competencies	HUM1. Planning and managing relief operations					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	HUM2. Humanitarian theory and architecture					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	HUM3. International humanitarian law and principles					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	HUM4. Crisis risk and resilience					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Specialist competencies (HUMSP)	All advisers must have a base level understanding of key sector issues (e.g. see 1.1-1.2 below), but advisers are also expected to have sector or thematic specialist competencies that might include: Health; nutrition; protection; social development, inclusion (gender, age, disability) and accountability; food security, livelihoods and markets; multi-purpose cash; water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter; education; civil military coordination; risk financing; humanitarian information management; social protection and humanitarian linkages; forced displacement etc.					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	

See detail on each competency and minimum entry requirements below

Optional	Mandatory
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Competency HUM1: Planning and Managing a relief operation	
1.1.	<p>An adviser can identify, assess and analyse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple sources of data and evidence, including through digital innovations, direct field observations and specific data including: sector level (e.g. nutrition, health, food security (e.g. IPC), livelihoods, markets, protection, shelter and WASH etc.); demographic; hazards, resilience, coping and vulnerability (incl. consideration of differences in relation to gender, age, disability and other groups) The quality, completeness, ethics and appropriateness of different data sources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dynamics and trajectory of crises (e.g. recognising the risk that many crises are likely to recur or remain protracted – especially in FCAS), links with climate and environmental issues and differences in urban/rural, low income/middle and higher income contexts • The conflict, political and security context in which DFID and its partners are operating, including: factors causing and exacerbating conflict; the relationship between conflict and aid programming; local, regional, international or UK domestic political factors of relevance to humanitarian objectives (e.g. national political economy issues; regional influence; UN security council positions; and domestic policies and UK counter terrorism legislation, etc.) • Current preparedness and response activities, including: quality, capacity; coverage and inclusion; appropriateness; relevance; value for money; risks; monitoring and accountability (Esp. to affected populations) and understand relevant longer-term development interventions • Latest evidence of what works and key economic and commercial concepts over what offers best value for money and all considered against the specifics of the context, humanitarian standards (e.g. SPHERE, Core Humanitarian Standards etc.) and associated sector level approaches (e.g. nutrition, public health, food security, protection etc)
1.2.	<p>Enabling an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in programme and policy efforts to <u>strengthen data</u>: collection, data, sharing and analysis. • Conduct robust <u>needs analysis</u> (and be an informed user of others' analysis), identify priority needs (based on severity and scale) and anticipate/ prepare for crises or deteriorations in ongoing crises through effective early warning • Conduct robust <u>response analysis</u>, identifying priority areas for intervention and delivery channels offering greatest value for money, inclusion and ensuring the views of affected population are central to response design. • <u>Develop and deliver DFID strategies, response plans</u> – including appropriate contingency planning, preparedness and monitoring and evaluation • Develop and deliver <u>policy</u> positions and design and deliver associated policy influencing objectives, strategies - including through development diplomacy • <u>Design, appraise and manage effective programmes</u> (including where relevant as Senior responsible Owners) which: offers best value for money, contribute to humanitarian reform and other UK policy objectives (including strengthening resilience and building stability objectives where appropriate); is within risk appetite; is conflict sensitive; and adheres to safeguarding issues, such as: sexual exploitation and abuse, climate and environment, data privacy and effectively manages other risks etc. • Establish <u>effective networks and partnerships</u> with key actors (Humanitarian and development agencies, Governments, and private sector) and provide credible policy and programme advice into other DFID teams and external stakeholders (e.g. Nat Govt, UN, NGOs, etc)
Competency HUM2: Humanitarian Theory and architecture	
2.1	<p>An adviser can identify, assess and analyse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation and structure of the international humanitarian ecosystem, including the roles and mandates of key UN organisations, INGOs and of the Red Cross movement and the architecture that exists to coordinate humanitarian action • The roles, responsibilities and capacities of national governments and national NGOs/ CSOs, diaspora and private sector in preparing for, and responding to crises, and how to engage with relevant actors when designing and managing DFID preparedness, response or resilience activity; • Key humanitarian reform developments and initiatives past and present (including DFID's Humanitarian Policy, the World Humanitarian Summit, Grand Bargain and Global Compact for Refugees), what they attempt(ed) to achieve and level of success/why • The policy framework that governs the UK's humanitarian work, including DFID humanitarian operational and policy objectives; and UK policies with regard to working in fragile and conflict affected states, building stability and Leave No One Behind • The potential relevance of development programmes (e.g. safety nets and social protection; livelihoods; health and nutrition; education etc.) and actors (internally and externally, such as MDBs/IFIs) in preparing and responding to crises

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financing of humanitarian action and crisis response, including the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, and the different financing instruments that are used to deliver response and broader resilience objectives (e.g. pooled funds, risk financing etc); • The framework that governs civil-military partnerships in emergencies.
2.2	<p>Enabling an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence the overall crises response to ensure it is bespoke to the context and in order to maximise the combined effectiveness of the entire humanitarian ecosystem and not just the international response system • Advise on a balanced and appropriate approach to DFID’s policy and programming decisions before (ex-ante) and after/during (ex-poste) a crisis using whatever mix of instruments is needed to achieve desired humanitarian outcomes; • Contribute to the overall effectiveness of HMG’s response to crises, drawing on all available assets – humanitarian, development assistance, diplomatic, military or other Government Depts. • Promote effective and cost-efficient use of military assets in humanitarian operations
Competency HUM3: International Humanitarian Law and Principles	
3.1	<p>An adviser can identify, asses and analyse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key legal frameworks that govern humanitarian action, with a particular focus on international humanitarian and refugee law; • How to apply humanitarian principles including in complex operations; • The political framework that operates in relation to humanitarian issues, including the role of the UN Security Council and other UN-bodies; • Different approaches to the protection of civilians, including the role of international peace-keeping forces
3.2	<p>Enabling an adviser to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an informed client of expert legal judgement and advice • Support the development of the international legal and policy frameworks to support the protection of those affected by conflict and natural disasters; • Contribute or lead the design/ development of policy positions (including across HMG or with external actors), advocacy or programmes that better protect civilians, enhance humanitarian access and strengthen compliance with relevant legal frameworks (e.g. IHL etc). • Lead or contribute to HMG direct and indirect policy advocacy/development diplomacy over efforts to protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access • Monitor the effectiveness and impact of mandated and other actors in the protection of civilians and other persons of concern.
Competency HUM4: Crisis risk and resilience	
4.1	<p>An adviser can identify, assess and analyse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conceptual basis of crisis resilience, DFID’s policy framework and approach for resilience, protracted crisis and the triple nexus. Can analyse the relevance, challenges and opportunities in areas at risk of recurring shocks, protracted crises – including situations of “no peace, no war” • The linkages between resilience, conflict and climate change adaptation and potential response options such as social protection and safety nets; livelihoods; health; and other sectors • The roles and responsibilities of national and subnational governments and actors, UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators, MDBs, NGOs/ CSOs, diaspora and private sector in strengthening resilience and reducing the risk of crises, and how to engage with such actors when designing and managing DFID activity directly or through engaging with other parts of DFID • The potential relevance and contribution of development programmes, actors and planning tools in contributing to crisis risk resilience and in reducing needs over time.
4.1.	<p>Enabling an adviser to:</p>

- Identify design and deliver effective humanitarian policy or programme contributions to strengthen resilience in areas at risk of shocks or in protracted crisis;
- Identify opportunities and advise/support on the efforts of other cadres and teams to use alternative instruments to strengthen resilience in areas of risk of recurrent shocks or in protracted crisis that complement or may be coherent with humanitarian efforts;
- Work across DFID, HMG and other external actors in order to contribute to inter-disciplinary approaches that strengthen preparedness and help mainstream resilience – thereby making the most of a range of instruments to achieve VFM resilience outcomes.

Competency HUM SP: humanitarian specialist

All advisers are expected to have a base level understanding of key sector issues (e.g. see under competency HUM1 1.1.-1.2), but advisers are also expected to have sector or thematic specialist competencies that might include:

Health; nutrition; protection; social development, inclusion (gender, age, disability) and accountability; food security, livelihoods and markets; multi-purpose cash; water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter; education; civil military coordination; risk financing; humanitarian information management; social protection and humanitarian linkages; forced displacement etc.

S1.1	<p>Adviser can identify, assess and analyse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual frameworks for that sector and other key issues, including where relevant the sections of other cadres' competency frameworks which speak to crisis contexts (e.g. livelihoods, health, nutrition (see health and livelihoods), education, social development etc.) • Latest evidence, best practice and current debates in this area • Specific institutional structures, responsibilities and financing arrangements • Links with development framework and actors
S1.2	<p>Enabling an adviser to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contribute or lead to programme design, delivery and monitoring or policy development and advocacy in this area • Able to initiate, contribute or challenge best practice among colleagues or other external stakeholders • Be an informed client of super specialist sector expertise

Accreditation Criteria

Minimum entry requirements	
A2L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of HUM1-4 at working level or above; AND • 1 x HUMSP at working level or above; AND • Key civil service behaviours at this level
A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of HUM1-4 at practitioner or above; AND • 2 or more HUMSP at practitioner level or 1 at expert level; AND • Key civil service behaviours at this level
A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of HUM1-4 at expert or above; AND • 3 or more HUMSP at practitioner level or more than 1 at expert level; AND • Key civil service behaviours at this level

The assessment methodologies marked in this TCF, represent the full range of ways competencies may be assessed during accreditation. Clear guidance will be provided about which competency is being assessed and through which methodology, at each stage of the accreditation process.