

GES Technical Framework

The Government Economics Service (GES) Technical Framework defines the technical/professional skills for members of the Economics profession within government, and how these apply at each grade.

There are three key professional skills:

- Application of knowledge
- Analysis of Data
- Effective communication

These skills encapsulate the role GES economists are expected to deliver on a day-to-day basis, through the effective application of knowledge to the development and delivery of government policy. These skills reflect what GES economists should be able to do. They therefore complement the existing GES syllabus that gives advice on what GES economists should know.

Using the GES Technical Framework with the 'Civil Service Success Profiles' Framework

The GES framework covers only skills and knowledge which are specific to economics. For this reason it should be used in conjunction with the Civil Service Success Profiles (CSSP) framework which covers the skills and knowledge required from all civil servants (for instance 'Delivering at Pace'). Online resources have been developed to support implementation of the CSSP framework and are available from the CSL portal.¹

Together, the Civil Service Success Profiles and GES technical framework define the core standards for anyone working in the GES and are relevant to all members.² The GES technical framework should be used to inform development discussions of GES members with their development managers to ensure balanced Continuous Professional Development (CPD). They should also be used in conjunction with the CSSP for recruitment and performance purposes.

The recommended approach to the adoption of Success Profiles in GES recruitment is as follows:

- Technical (and 'Ability') elements of GES recruitment processes are maintained in their existing format(s).
- The competency-based elements are updated to reflect the relevant 'behaviours'.

Departmental discretion is advised for the following elements of the Success Profiles:

- Behaviours – in terms of which behaviours to use for individual roles
 - Experience
 - Strengths (Training will be required prior to using this approach – See CSL)
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- If you are considering whether someone is fit for promotion as an economist, you need to be confident that the candidate meets the promotion standards for all relevant aspects of the 3 professional skills.

¹ The url is <https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/success-profile-framework>. You will need a CSL password to log in.

² The CS ambition is that the CSSP will be used for recruiting, promoting, appraising and developing CS staff. However, the current focus of the implementation of Success Profiles is on recruitment. The next stage is to look at other people processes.

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- If you are setting objectives for yourself or an economist member of staff, the GES technical framework can be used together with the CSSP and departmental guidelines.³

³ Refer to CSL guidance on the 'Behaviours' element of the CSSP which has replaced the CSCF: <https://civilservicelearning.civilservice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/behavioursjune18.pdf>. More specific guidance on setting objectives using the CSSP is yet to be developed.

GES Professional Skills: Assistant Economist (HEO(d) or HEO)⁴**1. Application of knowledge**

Apply economic tools and techniques, and synthesise evidence from a range of sources, as appropriate. Particular reference should be made to the Green and Magenta Books that contribute to the policy/ROAMEF cycle⁵.

- Provide expert advice with regards to appraisal, impact assessments, evidence based business cases, and evaluation.
- Apply techniques such as monetisation and discounting as outlined by the Green Book⁶, in order to apply Cost Benefit Analysis.
- Apply techniques to establish/identify robust counterfactuals in order to effectively measure policy impact and causation, as detailed in the Magenta Book⁷.
- Have an in-depth theoretical and empirical knowledge of how markets function, being able to advise on the impact that various policy interventions might have. Understanding the role incentives play in forming rational decisions, and how markets affect and reflect incentives of economic agents.

2. Analysis of data

Be able to analyse and handle data for the purposes of producing evidence to advise decision-makers.

- Work with and understand economic models and interpret output data for the purposes of providing supporting evidence.
- Source, handle and process data sets based on best evidence/economic theory to form estimates about outcomes of likely policies.
- As appropriate, ensure that micro-economic estimates are consistent with the prevailing macroeconomic environment.
- Be able to explain key assumptions feeding into the model, ensure that they are transparently presented with results and that key risks and sensitivities are assessed.
- Apply econometric knowledge to understand how parameters used in models are estimated; be aware of issues relating to model specification and efficiency.
- Be proficient in using Excel and other relevant software packages.
- Undertake appropriate Quality Assurance in accordance with Aqua Book⁸ guidance.

3. Effective communication

Provide effective and appropriate written and oral communication to colleagues and stakeholders from many different backgrounds.

- Build effective working relationships with non-analytical colleagues and other analytical professions, to facilitate continuous discourse and build mutual understanding of how to work together.
- Communicate effectively with non-economists, conveying the relevance and impact of economic concepts without the use of specialist terminology.
- Be able to tailor the details of their communications, ensuring that it is appropriate to the needs to the audience.

⁴ Assistant Economist is a training grade, we therefore expect AEs to develop these skills over a number of posts, under supervision from their line manager or development officer.

⁵ ROAMEF cycle – Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback.

⁶ Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

⁷ The Magenta Book: Guidance for Evaluation <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

⁸ The Aqua Book: guidance on producing quality analysis for government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-aqua-book-guidance-on-producing-quality-analysis-for-government>

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- Be able to provide wider socio-economic and political contexts that might impact and influence the appropriate course of action.

GES Competencies: Senior Assistant Economist (SEO)

1. Application of knowledge

Apply economic tools and techniques. Synthesise evidence from a range of sources, as appropriate. Particular reference should be made to the Green and Magenta Books that contribute to the policy/ROAMEF cycle⁹.

- Provide expert advice to all, including senior officials with regards to appraisal, impact assessments, evidence-based business cases, and evaluation.
- Apply techniques such as monetisation and discounting as outlined by the Green Book¹⁰, in order to apply Cost Benefit Analysis. Critically assess shortcomings and where appropriate suggest improvements & develop methodologies.
- Thorough expert knowledge of techniques to establish/identify robust counterfactuals in order to effectively measure policy impact and causation, as detailed in the Magenta Book¹¹.
- Have an in-depth theoretical and empirical knowledge of how markets function and market failure, being able to advise senior officials on the impact that various policy interventions might have. Understanding the role incentives play in forming rational decisions, and how markets affect and reflect incentives of economic agents.
- Lead scoping work programmes, management of internal or external analytical projects and potentially building links with academia.

2. Analysis of data

Be able to analyse and handle data for the purposes of producing evidence for policy advice.

- Work with, quality assure and understand economic models and interpret output data for the purposes of providing supporting evidence.
- Source, handle and process data sets based on best evidence/economic theory to form estimates about outcomes of likely policies. Become expert on these.
- As appropriate, ensure that micro-economic estimates are consistent with the prevailing macroeconomic environment.
- Be able to explain key assumptions feeding into the model, ensure that they are transparently presented with results and that key risks and sensitivities are assessed.
- Apply econometric knowledge to understand how parameters used in models are estimated; be aware of issues relating to model specification and efficiency and how they impact. Proactively explore and propose appropriate techniques/analysis.
- Be proficient in using Excel and other relevant software packages.
- Undertake appropriate Quality Assurance in accordance with Aqua Book¹² guidance.

3. Effective communication

Provide effective and appropriate written and oral communication to colleagues and stakeholders from many different backgrounds.

- Build effective working relationships with policy colleagues, including at times some senior colleagues and other analytical professions, to facilitate continuous discourse and build mutual understanding of how to work together.
- Communicate effectively with non-economists, conveying the relevance and impact of economic concepts without the use of specialist terminology.

⁹ ROAMEF cycle – Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback.

¹⁰ Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

¹¹ The Magenta Book: Guidance for Evaluation <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

¹² The Aqua Book: guidance on producing quality analysis for government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-aqua-book-guidance-on-producing-quality-analysis-for-government>

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- Be able to tailor the details of their communications, ensuring that it is appropriate to the needs to the audience.
- Be able to provide wider socio-economic and political contexts that might impact and influence the appropriate policy response.

GES Professional Skills: G7 and G6¹³**1. Application of knowledge**

Apply economic tools and techniques, and synthesise evidence from a range of sources, as appropriate. Particular reference should be made to the Green and Magenta Books that contribute to the policy/ROAMEF cycle¹⁴.

- GES economists are expected to provide, and guide their team in providing, expert advice with regards to appraisal, impact assessments, and evidence-based business cases, and evaluation.
- Oversee the development of the evidence base (bringing in expertise from other analytical professions as appropriate). This includes anticipating evidence needs, scoping work programmes, management of internal and external analytical projects and building links with academia.
- Supervise the application of and critically assess techniques such as monetisation and discounting as outlined by the Green Book¹⁵, in order to apply Cost Benefit Analysis. Where appropriate demonstrating the ability to develop and improve techniques used.
- Critically review and suggest improvements to techniques used by the team to establish/identify robust counterfactuals to effectively measure policy impact and causation as detailed in the Magenta Book¹⁶.
- Have an in-depth theoretical and empirical knowledge of markets forces, market failure, and how these impact on the incentives of economic agents. Applying this knowledge into the advice provided to senior officials and ministers and on the impact of any proposed policy interventions.
- Develop yourself as a professional economist by ensuring you receive training and support that allows you to reach your full potential. Additionally, contribute to the development of the economics profession.

2. Analysis of data

Be able to analyse and handle data for the purposes of producing evidence to advise decision-makers.

- Quality-assure economic models, challenge input data and assumptions and interpret output data for the purposes of providing supporting evidence, in line with the Aqua Book.
- Advise staff on the most appropriate source, handling and processing of data sets based on best evidence/economic theory to form estimates about outcomes of likely policies.
- From review of data ensure that micro-economic estimates are consistent with the prevailing macroeconomic environment. Where disparities exist challenge with staff and resolve.
- Apply econometric knowledge in order to fully understand how model inputs are estimated as well as being aware of issues related to model specification and efficiency and how they impact on estimates.
- Ensure that all assumptions are transparently presented with results and that key risks and sensitivities are assessed.
- Be comfortable in using Excel and other relevant software packages.

¹³ Given the range of roles covered by G7 and G6 economists, these skills are expected to develop over time.

¹⁴ ROAMEF cycle – Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback.

¹⁵ Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

¹⁶ The Magenta Book: Guidance for Evaluation <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

3. Effective communication

Provide effective and appropriate written and oral communication to colleagues and stakeholders from different backgrounds.

- Build effective working relationships with senior officials and other analytical professions to facilitate continuous discourse and build mutual understanding.
- Communicate with non-economists with credibility and authority, conveying the relevance and impact of economic concepts without the use of specialist terminology.
- Be able to tailor the details of their communications, ensuring that it is appropriate to the needs of the audience.
- Demonstrate full awareness of and sensitivity to the wider socio-economic and political contexts that might impact and influence the appropriate policy response.
- Influence policy and operational colleagues to ensure key risks are communicated to senior officials and ministers.

GES Professional Skills: SCS

1. Application of knowledge

Provide strategic direction to economic analysis undertaken by their department.

- As GES leaders, ensure that the best economic evidence available is feeding into policy decision making process.
- Anticipate and understand the direction of policy and have strategic oversight of resources to ensure that their team are producing evidence that is relevant and able to respond to the needs of Ministers and other customers.
- Oversee the development of the analysts in their team by ensuring they receive training and support that allows them to reach full potential and increase capability. Take up, and encourage analyst to take on, corporate roles for the economics community.
- Understand the wider analytical community, their respective skills sets and how they can be utilised in order to produce the most effective analysis to meet the needs of customers.
- Ensure analysis uses economic tools and techniques, and synthesises evidence from a range of sources, as appropriate. Particular reference should be made to the Green¹⁷ and Magenta Books¹⁸ that contribute to the policy/ROAMEF cycle¹⁹.
- Have oversight of the evidence base at the disposal of their team, ensuring that it is robust and fit for purpose.
- Have an in-depth theoretical and empirical knowledge of markets forces, market failure, and how these impact on the incentives of economic agents. Applying this knowledge into the advice provided to senior officials and ministers and on the impact of any proposed policy interventions.

2. Analysis of data

Undertake robust quality assurance of analysis and advice.

- Have ownership and be accountable for the outputs of economic models.
- Ensure that all economics models follow best practice with regards to quality assurance, in line with the Aqua Book.
- Have strategic oversight of the models and ensure that they are fit for purpose in terms of producing advice for policy and that key risks are assessed and understood.
- Ensure that all staff are sufficiently trained and resourced in terms of operating models and handling data.

3. Effective communication

Provide effective and appropriate written and oral communication to colleagues and stakeholders from many different backgrounds.

- Build effective working relationships with senior officials and leaders of the other analytical professions to facilitate continuous discourse and build mutual understanding.
- Influence policy and operational colleagues to ensure key risks are communicated to senior officials and ministers.
- Be able to interpret high level policy direction and communicate the implications on their team, providing clarity of direction.
- Communicate to senior officials and Ministers with credibility and authority, conveying the relevance and impact of economic evidence without the use of specialist terminology.
- Develop and communicate high level policy specifications into effective work programmes.

¹⁷ Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

¹⁸ The Magenta Book: Guidance for Evaluation <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book>

¹⁹ ROAMEF cycle – Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback.

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- Demonstrate full awareness of and sensitivity to the wider socio-economic and political contexts that might impact and influence the appropriate policy response.
- Be able to tailor the details of their communications, ensuring that it is appropriate to the needs of the audience.

ANNEX: GES Approach to Civil Service Success Profiles: GES central recruitment process

Civil Service Success profiles encompasses a wider range of elements than the pre-existing civil service competency framework. There are five elements of the Success Profiles:

- **Ability:** Aptitude/Potential to perform to standard.
- **Behaviours:** Actions/ Activities that result in effective performance.
- **Experience:** Knowledge/Mastery of subject gained through exposure to it.
- **Strengths:** Inherent assets i.e. the things we're naturally good at.
- **Technical:** Specific professional knowledge, skills and qualifications.

The GES' existing recruitment processes already align well with the success profiles framework. Our existing processes include the technical element and competencies (now replaced by a new set of 'behaviours'). Some (student and graduate entry) also include numerical and verbal reasoning which test 'Ability'. The table below sets out which element is incorporated by each scheme:

Scheme title	Success Profile				
	Technical	Ability	Behaviours	Experience	Strengths
Summer student	√	√	√		
Sandwich student placement	√	√	√		
Economist Fast Stream	√	√	√		
Assistant Economist/ Main Stream	√	√	√		

Summer student:

- Application form
- Numerical test
- Interview testing professional knowledge and behaviours

Sandwich student placement:

- Application form
- Numerical test
- Interview testing professional knowledge and behaviours

Fast Stream:

- Online tests - Questionnaires - Situational Judgement and Behavioural, E-tray exercise, Video interview
- Application Form
- Half-day assessment centre - Leadership exercise, group exercise and analysis exercise
- Half-day Economic Assessment Centre - Technical report, Short answer question, Presentation & Interview

Main Stream:

- Application Form
- Half-day Economic Assessment Centre - Technical report, Short answer question, Presentation & Interview testing behaviours