



Frequently asked questions

What led to this project?

Answer:

In 2020, a group of Engineers Without Borders organisations advocated for changes to the [international engineering framework](#) for graduate attributes and professional competencies. We highlighted that to address this century's complex problems, engineers must be able to reflect on and think critically about the role of engineering itself.

From research (including [our research](#)), we spotted a gap in navigation tools that support engineering professionals to critically reflect on the role of engineering, learn about what is important, but perhaps more significantly, to commit to making a difference to the way they support society now and for generations to come. This project sought to translate research, advocacy and the needs of society into a Compass that helps build capability within our profession to drive globally responsible practices.

What is this Global Responsibility Competency Compass designed to do?

Answer:

- To practically support where people need competency, for application in day-to-day projects.
- To be relevant to anyone at any stage of their career.
- To complement the key stages of the development of engineers. To help point individuals towards useful learning for their portfolio of evidence against attributes required by licensed professional engineering institutions (PEIs) and UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence and Commitment (UKSPEC).
- To be inclusive of non-engineers. The Compass values the contribution of non-technical skills and it challenges the dominance of narrow competencies valued in engineering.
- To provide the structure and shared language to talk about global responsibility.
- To unpack complexity and uncertainty, and providing clarity on what competencies are useful.
- To reinforce that learning doesn't stop, and we are framing this to support people learn, re-train, and constantly evolve their competencies.
- To motivate practitioners to develop their competencies as a core part of being responsible professionals.

Have you considered how the compass maps with existing competency frameworks?

Answer:

Yes - We've taken the time to map out the essence of some of these frameworks as part of our research. This mapping is available on request to community@ewb-uk.org @ewb-uk.org. It's important to note that the Compass is not itself a framework.

Working out how we reshape our professions to respond to the challenges of our age is complex, especially in a fast-changing world. So it's natural to find overlaps between tools and frameworks.

How was the Compass created?

Answer:

We gathered insights from lessons learnt over the past 20 years, reviewed the latest research and advocacy, and engaged hundreds of people from March 2022 to June 2023.

We would like to thank all those that generously provided insights throughout this process.

How is your Compass different from existing competency frameworks?

Answer:

It is not a competency framework, but a guide to those working in engineering. The Compass is not intended to replace existing competency frameworks, but to overlay them with the competencies of global responsibility.

The Compass fills a gap and is focused on engineering.

- It is designed for practitioners, not those within formal education.
- It is not sector specific, and is transferable and shared across engineering.
- It helps professionals interpret existing frameworks that often are quite high level in descriptions of sustainability, ethics or inclusive approaches.
- It is evolving, and not fixed.

Here are some other frameworks you might find useful.

For professionals:

- [Climate Framework](#) (for Built Environment professionals)
- [Inner Development Goals](#)

We wish to acknowledge the OECD's competency compass for learners, from which we took inspiration.