The Profession Map – 'built by the profession, for the profession'

A roadmap for success

The newly launched Profession Map offers members an important tool for self-assessment of competence and continuing professional development. Mike Turner, CQI Head of Profession, explains the research that went into developing The Profession Map and why it's important for members

The world where professionals ply their trade is changing so rapidly that continuous professional development has never been so important. The recent surge in debate about the power of artificial intelligence (AI) is one indicator of the rise in influence of digital technologies. If you believe recently published data by Precedence Research (**bit.ly/3ovCLmC**) that the investment in AI is set to double every two years until 2030, we are still on the starting blocks of this marathon of digital technological change.

But will this come at too big a price to the environment? As bigger and more ubiquitous data centres sap the world's energy resources, we face the realisation that the threshold of a 1.5C increase in global temperatures could be breached as soon as 2027. Addressing the imperatives encapsulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework is a growing urgency for all disciplines. This will require innovative action and intimate knowledge of how to balance risk and opportunity. Professionals who embrace this concoction of challenges will lead the way in the next 10 years. ▶

It is the CQI's mission to champion quality management for the benefit of society. By Royal Charter this requires it to advance education in, knowledge of, and the practice of, quality. It is the CQI's core business to be clear about what constitutes professional competence, now and for the future. For more than 100 years, it has made huge strides in doing this, a big step of which was to publish its Competency Framework in 2014. This simple summary of 'what good looks like' has attracted global interest, and a recent survey of members found that 59% of CQI members and 75% of IRCA members have used it since its inception.

However, nine years is a long time in the world of the 21st century. The pressure of the challenges listed earlier should be reason enough to revisit the original framework, but business leaders are also struggling to acquire the skills they need. The CQI's most recent Workforce Insight research survey found that 67% of the organisations that responded were struggling to recruit sufficiently competent people to quality and audit roles. In addition, a third of respondents were hungry for more professional knowledge and skills.

With this in mind, it was becoming evident that the existing Competency Framework was not meeting the needs of the profession. What was required

was a new version, at sufficient detail to assist in planning personal and team competence development.

A more practical tool
In summer 2021, the CQI decided to embark on a project to develop a more practical tool for competence development. The work was carried out by Catalyst Consulting and subjected to rigorous peer review by the CQI's Research Advisory Panel, a group of experts, highly experienced professionals and academics.

The work was directed by a detailed scoping document and a set of 13 design requirements relating to form, function and fit with existing sector-based material. These two specifications were critical touchstones throughout the project timeline.

The literature review focused on:
- the characteristics of the description of competence in a professional development context;
- the constituents of competence in general ie, how it can be defined and described;
- relevant sources of information on the competences of a quality professional.

The outcomes of this stage were then used to carry out a comparative analysis with credible benchmarks,

including existing frameworks in the rail and nuclear sectors. However, while these sources were of importance, the real engine room of development was extensive consultation with the profession.

The CQI boasts some 19,000 members with a unique global perspective on what professionals must do well, across the wide range of quality management-based roles. Three separate calls for involvement were issued to all members, offering four options for participation. Almost 450 professionals actively contributed to the design and test process, with some having more than one involvement.

The initial list of competences was developed by the combination of a survey, in-depth interviews, focus groups and workshops. The results of this were then tested for any gaps or omissions by comparison with sources of quality management excellence, such as the ISO 9000 series of standards and business excellence and award-based models.

This resulting design was subjected to extensive testing. The following four stages were used to test that the:
- lists of competences for each competence area of the original framework represented a necessary and sufficient set;
- lists of competences for each of the four tiers (from the foundations of

competence to a more advanced state) were a consistent set;
- demands of challenges such as digital transformation, environmental, social and governance (ESG), innovation and risk were sufficiently captured;
- text was at a reading level considered as 'plain English' and comprehensible to an international audience.

In addition, professionals across quality and audit roles were asked to carry out self-assessments, all finding it easy to use. Throughout this process, the original design requirements were progressively validated and signed off.

While it has been the result of a rigorous process, The Profession Map is not set in stone for the next nine years. It is something that will be built on and amended as required. It was created by the profession and will continue to be shaped by the profession.
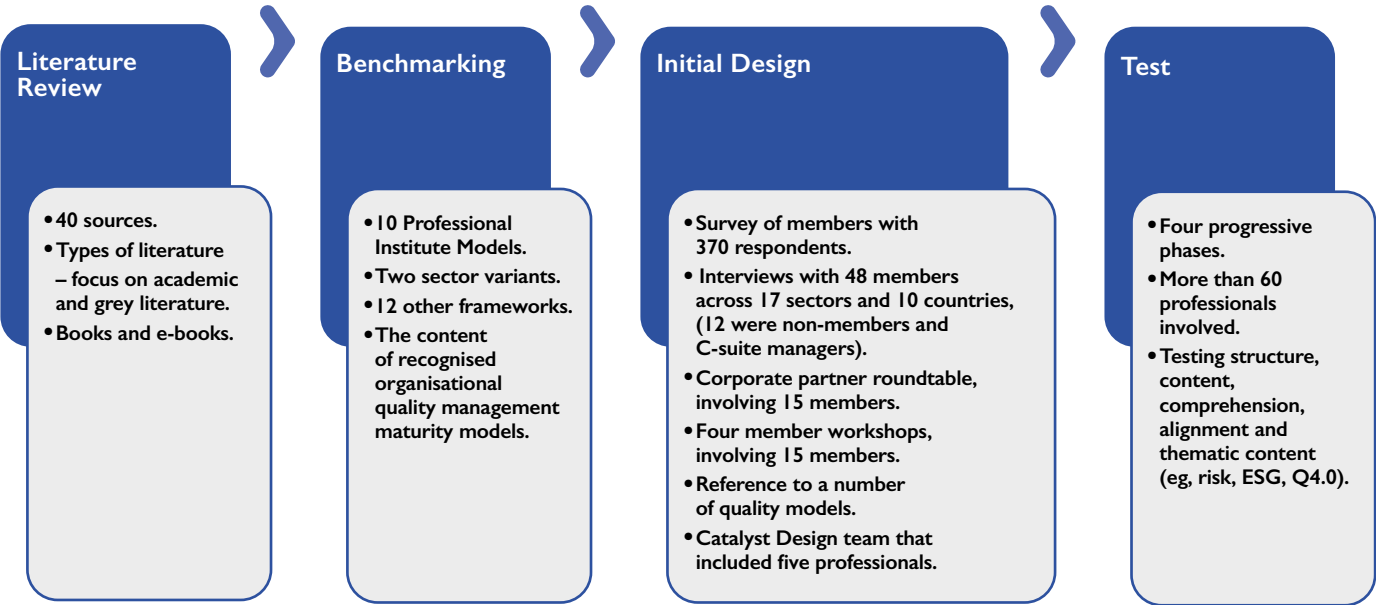
Your route to success
The Profession Map is much more than a rebranded Competency Framework.

You can use it to understand and benchmark your current professional competence profile, to identify areas for improvement, and to give clarity on what you need to do to progress.
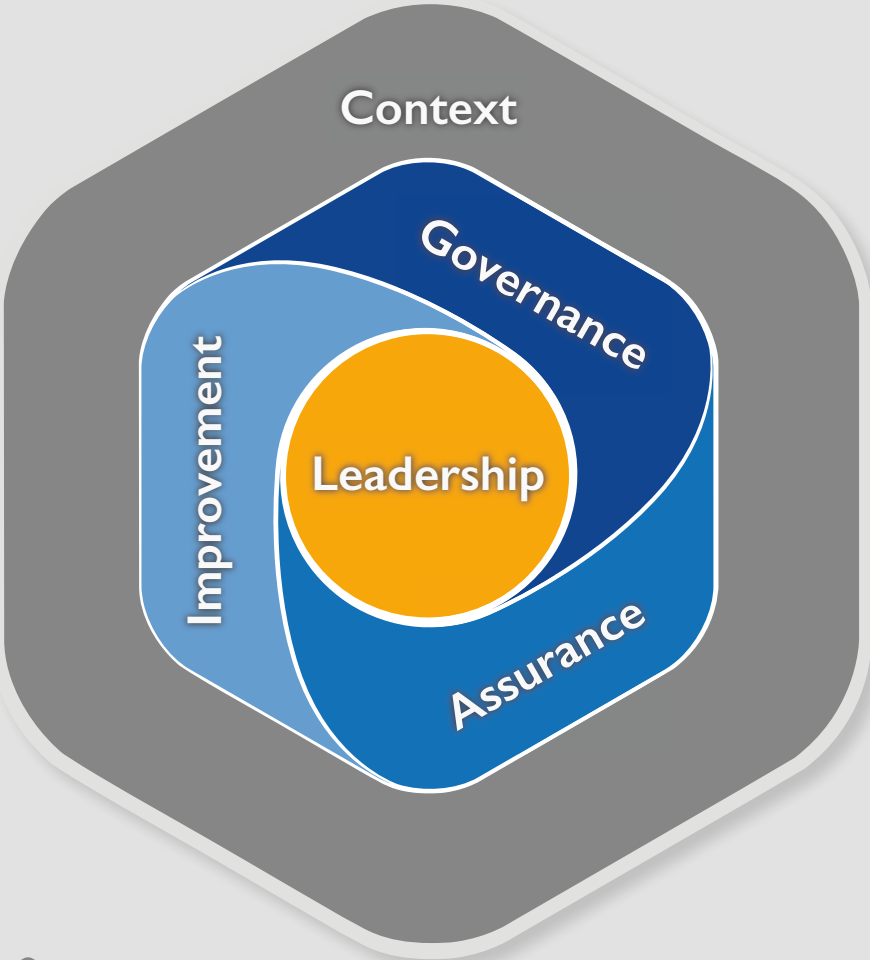
If you know where you want to get to in your career, by putting The Profession Map at the heart of your CPD planning, you will stand a much better chance of getting there.

Whatever career success looks like for you, let The Profession Map be your guide. ▶

Learn more about the development of The Profession Map and how it can be used in our videos: bit.ly/3qSPW27

Four-stage process diagram

Literature Review
- 40 sources.
- Types of literature – focus on academic and grey literature.
- Books and e-books.

Benchmarking
- 10 Professional Institute Models.
- Two sector variants.
- 12 other frameworks.
- The content of recognised organisational quality management maturity models.

Initial Design
- Survey of members with 370 respondents.
- Interviews with 48 members across 17 sectors and 10 countries, (12 were non-members and C-suite managers).
- Corporate partner roundtable, involving 15 members.
- Four member workshops, involving 15 members.
- Reference to a number of quality models.
- Catalyst Design team that included five professionals.

Test
- Four progressive phases.
- More than 60 professionals involved.
- Testing structure, content, comprehension, alignment and thematic content (eg, risk, ESG, Q4.0).

Four-stage process of enquiry – more than 500 'touch points' with professionals

Profession Map diagram

Context
- Customers and the marketplace
- Legal and regulatory requirements and voluntary standards
- Partners and suppliers
- The structure and identity of the organisation

Governance
- Developing and delivering strategies, policies and plans
- Developing and consistently delivering products and services
- Developing and delivering processes and projects

Assurance
- Providing confidence that requirements can be satisfied
- Monitoring and measuring for assurance
- Assessing and auditing for assurance
- Reporting and addressing assurance findings

Improvement
- Delivering sustainable improvement
- Managing change
- Innovating and creating opportunities

Leadership
- Being the 'Quality Conscience'
- Demonstrating a 'Quality Approach'
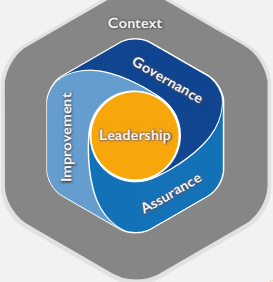- Working as a 'Quality Facilitator'
- Acting as a 'Quality Role Model'

You've read the how and the why – now hear from members on the value of The Profession Map to quality professionals and their teams

Lee Butcher CQP MCQI, Senior Manager Environment, Quality and Safety, Siemens Gamesa

For the past few years, quality engineers, experts and managers have been working diligently on their own jobs, to improve their own situations. However, gaps quickly emerge when companies undertake large-scale organisational changes. The people who were the experts in one area become limited by their narrow scope of knowledge. This also poses business risks, as the resources of an organisation are not always transferrable, leading to undesired consequences for our companies and our colleagues.

In a move to promote more career development within our quality professionals in Siemens Gamesa, we identified an approach of a competency framework. The competency framework was directed to highlight the variety of expertise that truly well-rounded, world-class quality professionals need. The Profession Map takes this a step further and will be critical to allowing us to assess and understand our quality professionals and aid development of not only individuals, but our whole organisation.

Suzanne Hill CQP FCQI, Director & Quality Executive, Assured Quality Improvements

The Profession Map is the benchmark tool to increase the value and competence of quality professionals, and using it can also help professionals to pursue Chartered Quality Professional status.

As a mentor of budding quality professionals, I was keen to support the development of this framework. The added breadth and guidance will enable quality professionals to focus on the right issues to future-proof organisations. These competences will increase professional standing of the quality function, which is important to be a successful influencer within any industry. As a perceived non-value add profession, our soft skills, married with key quality tools, are essential to gain recognition and make a difference.

As a consultant, The Profession Map is an ideal tool to facilitate and embed the long-term growth and recognition of quality professionals as key business partners within any client. It will grow strong professionals who are capable of sustainably leading the governance and improvement activities within any sector, often the missing cogs in an organisation. The governance of improvement activities, in line with business strategy, is essential to keep ahead of the competition and ultimately the survival of any organisation. Using The Profession Map, designed by a recognised chartered institute, is a great way to enable benchmarked organisational governance and improvement.

To stay ahead, quality professionals at every level need to grow and learn, so we can all use The Profession Map to identify gaps and improve our knowledge, capability and breadth. We should all learn something new every day – every day is a school day!

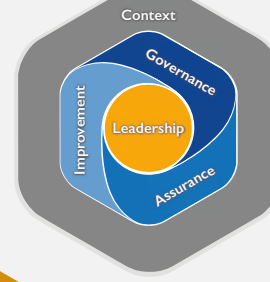### Natalie Shoemark-Dyer CQP FCQI, Head of Quality at Aspire Defence Services

Thinking specifically of the younger generation, The Profession Map will be a really important tool for those who are new to the quality profession. It will provide a useful framework for them to reference against in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. I think it will be great to provide a benchmark to work with and aspire to.

I'm hoping it will also help demonstrate the differing backgrounds that quality professionals come from and the rich variety that makes our roles so interesting. As we know, quality is not always a first-choice career pathway for young people and I think this is because what quality professionals do is not always known or understood. The Profession Map will seek to illustrate this at all different levels across organisations.

It will not only give an indication of the types of roles, but provide an insight into the routes that individuals can take to reach them.

When I first started out in quality, I would have benefited from this type of tool, as it would have helped shape my development planning. It is certainly something I will be using personally and with my own team, moving forward. The Profession Map will allow qualifications, as well as different areas of knowledge and skills, to be identified, to help form development plans with real meaning.

There is something very reassuring in having a clear pathway to follow, and this tool will support that. It's great to see another tool to help young people in developing bright futures as quality professionals.

William Rankin CQP FCQI, Senior Operational Quality Lead, Inmarsat and Chair of the CQI Audit special interest group

In my current role as a Senior Operational Quality Lead at Inmarsat, it is essential we keep innovating, investing, and enhancing our capability as customer requirements become more demanding and competition becomes more aggressive. Trust is earned in my industry and quality and audit professionals are seen as central to support rapid changes in technology as we head into a superior age in digital capability.

The CQI has always been at the forefront of research, publishing tools, models and frameworks to support quality and audit professionals. Its latest tool, The Profession Map, is the result of many months of work between the CQI, its quality circle of volunteers and industry to revise the original Competency Framework and bring it up to date in this fast-paced digital age.

The tool will enable quality and audit professionals from any industry to understand the status quo of their abilities, and highlight the strengths and opportunities that can ultimately transform the way we build personal continual professional development plans. This will be particularly useful across knowledge, skills and behaviours required for being successful today and in the future.

The Profession Map provides an incredibly efficient and effective view of the challenges and opportunities of the digital age, which are happening now. The focus on staying fresh and relevant, as well as being ready, is essential to success. This tool has evolved at the right time to support my own personal development and career map while navigating the challenges and opportunities that come with the digital age.

Explore The Profession Map online and learn more at quality. org/content/ profession-map