



# Skills Base



Hi there!

Welcome to your very own Skill Identification Guide.

Skill identification is a fundamental part of skill management and refers to the practise of determining what skills are used by which staff in your organisation. It's through excellent skill identification that organisations can effectively organise training programs, form teams, manage projects and understand their organisation. The Skills Base guide to skill identification will enhance the way your organization approaches competency management by teaching you how to identify and assign skills within your organisation according to industry best practice approaches. By following these strategies and techniques, you'll learn how to label, describe, and assign skills in meaningful, relevant, and assessable ways.

Here's what we've got in store for you:

- A review of the common approaches to skill identification
- A host of best practise strategies for skill identification and assigning
- A step by step guide to skill information gathering

We hope you enjoy this guide, and if you'd ever like to learn more about skill identification, we're only an email away.

All the best,  
The Skills Base Team



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# A Review of The Common Approaches to Skill Identification

For organisations new to skill management, skill identification is typically the most daunting hurdle to overcome. Leaders often imagine that going through an entire organisation and breaking up the work of every staff member into discrete and assessable skills is a task requiring months of work or the help of specialist consultants. This is fortunately not the case. Organisations equipped with the right advice and strategies can easily and quickly create and assign an entire skill library. Providing organisations with the best practice advice and strategies they need to do this is the purpose of this document, but in order to provide context to the coming advice, let's first examine the different ways organisations currently practise skill identification.

## **Method One: Extracting skills from existing libraries**

Faced with a need to form a library of skills quickly, organisations often look to extract skills from existing libraries. This approach appears promising at first, as organisations quickly discover skill sets with dozens or hundreds of skills they believe could be relevant to their organisation. The trouble comes for organisations when they must apply these newly discovered skills to the work of their staff. Inevitably, the organisation discovers their new skill library doesn't match all the work their staff perform closely enough, that some skill names don't match the ones already used by the organisation, and that many skill descriptions are absent, inadequate, or irrelevant.

For many organisations, attempting to adopt existing skill libraries becomes a disheartening experience as they soon realise the work they went through to discover and adopt these skills has been wasted time and effort.

## **Method Two: Extracting skills from existing libraries and modifying where necessary**

Enterprising organisations will commonly seek to minimise the effort they spend identifying skills by finding skill libraries they like, extracting what information they can from those libraries, then modifying the libraries' skills and adding new skills as needed. Compared to Method One, this is a considerably better approach as organisations end up with a consistently formatted skill library which more accurately represents the skills relevant to the organisation. This approach isn't without its faults however. One significant and insidious problem organisations face when utilising this approach is the incidental adoption of the problems associated with their chosen skill library; for example, a skill library might not describe skills in sufficient detail, but an organisation upon seeing the provided skill descriptions becomes lulled into believing this reduced level of detail is sufficient to avoid subjective interpretation of skills. Mimicked poor practise can come from other sources too, like the wording of skill names, the formatting of names and descriptions, how skills are assigned, and so on. Essentially, this approach reduces the time and effort an organisation takes to conduct effective skill identification, but doesn't guarantee the organisation will adhere to best practises.



### **Method Three: Identifying own skills**

The third option organisations have for skill identification is to do all the work themselves. To create every skill name, description, and assignment from scratch. Unequivocally, this is the most time-consuming option organisations have. If organisations adhere to best practise strategies however, this approach is also the most rewarding.

The Skills Base team recommends that all organisations conduct skill identification this way because it is the most reliable way to create skills which are meaningful, concise, and relevant to every staff member to whom they are assigned. Naturally enough, the remainder of this document is dedicated to revealing the best practise approaches required to achieve this.

## **Identifying Staff Skills**

To identify an entire suite of organisational skills from scratch requires four steps.

### **Step One: Select Your Skill Library Rules**

Skill Library rules help your organisation to create high-quality, relevant skills.

Skills Base has created an easily distributable Skill Library Guide in PPT format to help organisations with this task. If you haven't received the doc, please get in touch to receive your copy!

### **Step Two: Gather Skill Information**

Once you've selected the rules by which your new skill library will function, the next step is to gather the information you need to create your organisation's skill library. In practical terms, this involves working with members of your organisation to discover, describe and assign the skills performed by your staff in the process of their work.

How you approach this task will vary according to your organisation's size and structure, as well as how you've chosen to assign staff skills. For organisations who have decided to assign skills according to staff roles, Skills Base suggests adhering to the following steps:

1. The team leading the skill identification task should create a skill identification document which:
  - a. Explains the rules they would like the organisation's skill library to conform to, providing suitable examples of conforming skills where possible.
  - b. Provides an area for supervisors to list a role name as well as associated skills and skill descriptions
2. The skill identification team should distribute this document to a range of supervisors across the organisation, meeting with them online or in person shortly after to discuss what the skill identification team is trying to achieve. The skill identification team should



take care to involve a broad cross section of supervisors. Optimally, the supervisors involved should together oversee 95%+ of the different job roles within the organisation (with the potential exception of chief organisational officers).

3. The supervisors should work with their teams to identify the skills required by each job role. How the supervisors and their teams go about this is up to them and approaches may vary across teams. An approach Skills Base has found to be effective is for supervisors to distribute the skill identification document to a single representative of a job role within each team, then have the selected staff send back the completed document to their supervisor for review.
4. Once the supervisors possess completed skill identification documents for each of the job roles they oversee, they should send back the documents to the skill identification team.

### **Step Three: Review Your New Skill Library**

With skill information in hand, the skill identification team is now ready to complete their skill library. Again, assuming the organisation has assigned skills according to job role, Skills Base recommends the following approach:

1. Review all returned skill identification documents to ensure provided skills and descriptions adhere to relevant skill library rules.
2. Combine all skills identified for each specific job role.
3. Review all job role skills. This will involve deleting duplicate skills, merging skill descriptions, etc. You now know have a completed list of skills to assign staff.
4. Organise all collected skill information into categories according to their similarity in type. This is especially important for users of Skills Base Skills Base because the Skills Base platform assigns skills to staff on a skill category level.

This process may reveal that some staff feel they use significantly different skill sets than others despite having the same job role. In this case, Skills Base recommends the identification of a new job role(s) so that all staff are assigned skills which they feel are relevant to them.

## **What Next?**

Congratulations for making it this far! You're now ready to go forth and develop your organisation's very own skill library. You don't have to do this alone though. If you'd like help identifying your organisations skills, or managing any other aspect of your organisation's competencies, feel free to [get in touch](#) with Skills Base, we'd be happy to help.