Chapter 4. Competencies

Competencies set the standards
To work out if someone is competent to do a job we first need to work out what the job is. So it has to be broken down into its component tasks, or elements. Then the person's understanding of the elements and his ability to perform them can be assessed against desired outcomes (performance criteria). If he demonstrates satisfactory understanding and competence across a set range of functions he can be accredited as competent (see below). But if his understanding and performance is not satisfactory he can be trained properly and re-assessed, using the competencies as the basic training tool.

As well, the list of competencies can be kept on hand and used as a reminder or check list, just to make sure nothing is forgotten. Finally, they can be used in re-training, to keep standards high.

Setting and maintaining high standards for projectionists is very important, because two vital concerns are at stake. These are firstly public safety, for obvious reasons, and secondly, the film itself, which can be easily damaged unless it is handled and screened properly. Some competencies that are listed below do not appear to have any direct link with screening procedures. But, for instance, unless a projectionist knows what to do in an emergency so the audience can safely and quickly clear the auditorium, nothing else really matters. In this context the projectionist has a key role, and if he is not competent to carry out that role he should be either properly trained or not engaged in the first place. It is clearly the responsibility of individual film society committees to ensure all projectionists are competent.

Using the competencies
The list that follows sets out the many elements that a projectionist may have to carry out at some time. Not all elements will be needed by everyone all the time. So the first step in any training and assessment process will be to select the elements that are critical to your situation. These are your core elements. For example, your projectors, screen and sound system may be permanently installed, in which case you will not need to cover all the elements dealing with setting them up every time you are preparing to screen a film. After you have selected your core elements, select other elements that are not critical but which are likely to be useful at some time. For instance, you may not play music in the auditorium before and after the film, but knowing how to do it could be handy. These are your non-core elements. You may also wish to add extra elements that are important to your individual needs. Combine all the elements you have selected to make up your training and assessment program.

Accreditation
Formal accreditation can only be achieved through a properly recognised Registered Training Organisation (RTO). It may be possible for the Australian Council of Film Societies (ACOFS) to become an RTO for this purpose. But given that demand for accreditation is not likely to be very heavy, certainly not in the foreseeable future, an informal process can probably achieve the same result with a lot less fuss. Using the list of competencies provided, anyone can make up a program and carry out an assessment. If you just can't live without formal accreditation, contact ACOFS (details are at the end of *Part 1, Introduction – Start here*).

Note:
There are important differences between projecting 16 mm and larger formats such as 35 mm and 70 mm. The competencies set out in this manual relate only to 16 mm. Projectionists wishing to become accredited for larger formats will need to enrol in a formal training program conducted by organisations such as Technical and Further Education (TAFE).

Projectionist competencies – 16 mm

Competency	Elements	Performance criteria
Section 1. **Receive, unpack and identify print**	Before opening film transit case, examine it for external damage. Note any damage to case for inclusion in report.	The case is in good condition and able to protect the film during transit. Supplier is informed of any problems.
	Open case and check that cans are a snug fit inside case. If not, note that extra packing for return is needed.	Cans and film are protected from excess movement and shocks during transit.
	Check that number of cans in case matches number recorded on can labels.	The correct number of cans has been received.
	Check that title on cans matches title of scheduled film.	The correct film has been received (subject to check of individual reels).
	Investigate and correct any errors. Note any corrections for inclusion in report.	Errors are corrected. Supplier is informed of any problems.
	Remove each can and examine for external damage. If possible, repair damage. Record any damage for inclusion in report.	All cans are in good condition and able to protect film. Supplier is informed of any problems.
	Open each can and remove reel for inspection. Before untaping leader, examine each reel for damage.	All reels are in good condition and will not (a) damage film or (b) impede the smooth passage of film during screening.
	Replace damaged reels. Record any damage for inclusion in report.	Damaged reel is not used. Supplier is informed of need for vigilance.
Section 2. **Prepare venue and projection area**	Ensure area around projector is clear, clean and tidy.	Area around projector contains no hazards or obstructions.
	Locate power outlets. Check power outlets are working.	Power is available.
	Plan shortest and safest routes for power and sound leads.	Leads do not pose a safety hazard.
	Locate main and emergency audience lighting controls. Check exit and emergency lighting is working.	House lights dim and rise as required. Exits are lit and audience can exit quickly and safely in event of emergency.
	Plan auxiliary and safety lighting. Fire extinguishers are in position.	Emergency plan is prepared and ready if needed.
	Ensure auditorium is clean.	Audience is welcomed and valued.
	Arrange seating to suit anticipated	All audience members can view the

	audience. Locate controls for fans/heaters/air conditioner. Have them working at least 10 minutes before screening starts. Switch entrance, lobby, toilet and house lights on well in advance of screening time. (If relevant) Start house music at least 10 minutes before screening time.	complete screen. Audience is comfortable. All areas are adequately lit for audience comfort, convenience and safety. Auditorium is welcoming and atmosphere is prepared for screening.
Section 3. **Prepare film for screening** 1. Check film's physical condition and readiness for screening.	Untape film leader and check for vital information: 'start' or 'head', title, reel number in screening sequence eg '1 of 3' or '1/3', and if relevant, 'scope'. If leader information is wrong, correct it and note for inclusion in report. Check that film is correctly wound on and that head is out. If tail is out, rewind the film. Examine film for loose wind. If film is floppy on reel, rewind. Examine film for failed and rough splices, failed or rough perforation repairs and other physical damage that could impair smooth passage of film during screening. Repair splices and perforation damage with full width splicing tape. Trim neatly. Note any action taken for inclusion in report.	The correct film has been received. Information on leader is correct. Supplier is informed. During screening, film moves in the correct direction. Film will move smoothly through supply sprocket during screening. Film's smooth passage during screening is not impeded. Supplier is informed of any problems.
2. If using changeovers, additional preparation.	Prepare reels and projectors in correct order. Locate and record changeover cues.	Program is screened in correct order. Changeovers occur at correct times.
Section 4. **Prepare equipment** 1. Prepare projector	Check belts and moving parts periodically for wear and looseness. Replace and adjust as necessary. Lubricate projector according to technical manual. Check film path and clean after every screening. Clean other parts of the projector regularly. Check there is no build up of material anywhere on film path, especially in gate area.	Projector is mechanically reliable. Film is not damaged during its passage along the film path.

	Ensure lens is clean. Use a high quality soft brush and puffer to clean lens. If necessary, use special lens tissue or correct lens cleaning fluid and lens cloth. If cinemascope film is to be screened, fit anamorphic lens. Ensure sound system is working satisfactorily. Maintain in accordance with technical manual.	Highest possible screen image quality is achieved. Screen image is in correct aspect ratio. Highest possible sound quality is achieved.
2. Set up projector	Place projector on sturdy, stable platform at sufficient height to avoid interruption to image during screening. Position projector square to screen Set up reel arms. Connect external speaker. Connect power lead. Switch power on at outlet. Check power is on at projector. Switch on exciter lamp. Set volume control at low to medium level. Ensure power and speaker leads are safe to use, that they are not excessively long and are not looped. If leads are exposed on the floor, tape over or cover with carpet.	Projector is stable and safe. Image will not be interrupted if people stand during screening. Image will focus over the whole screen. Projector is ready for threading. Leads do not pose a safety hazard.
3. Set up screen	Ensure screen is clean and in satisfactory condition for screening. Set screen at a height that will avoid interruption to image during screening. Set up screen at correct throw. Switch motor and lamp on, focus the blank image and adjust the distance between projector and screen. The throw is correct when the sharp projected image is slightly larger than the screen mask. If cinemascope film is to be screened, ensure masking is set correctly.	Screen is ready for screening.
4. Set up speaker/s	Position speaker/s at least 1.2 m off the floor, close to screen and clear of audience sight lines. Connect leads. Experiment until best set up is achieved.	Sound system is ready for screening.
5. Thread the film on to the projector	Load empty reel on take up arm. Load full reel on feed arm. Note that film	Projector is threaded and film is ready for screening.

	comes off reel clockwise and that perforations are on near side. Follow threading procedures set out in your user handbook. Rotate inching wheel forwards to check threading is correct and that projector's mechanical elements are working. Set film for your countdown (ie the time between switching on the motor and switching on the lamp).	
6. If possible, test set up.	Before threading the scheduled film, test the set up using a short eg 200ft film. Thread the test film. Switch on motor. Switch on lamp. Check focus, frame and volume. Note volume setting.	Everything is confirmed ready for threading and screening the scheduled program.
Section 5. **Screen film**		
1. Commence screening.	(If relevant) Switch sound source from house music to projector.	Sound will come from projector when it is running.
	Start house lights fade.	Auditorium darkens.
	Switch motor on and start countdown.	Leader is running. Screening will start accurately.
	When countdown reaches 'zero' switch lamp on. Be alert for lamp blowing at startup. Have spare lamp nearby for fast replacement.	Film is running. Blown lamp can be replaced quickly, at minimum inconvenience to audience.
	Check focus and adjust as necessary.	Screen image is crisp and clear.
	Check frame and adjust as necessary.	Image is in frame, no frame lines are visible on screen and masking is sharp.
	Check volume and adjust as necessary.	Sound is adequate until fine-tuned later.
	Check projector is running normally. Check film is moving through projector and being taken up smoothly.	Projector is running properly, with no risk of damage to film.
	Check house lights are out.	Auditorium is dark.
	Fine-tune sound level. Go to rear of audience and check that volume and balance levels are satisfactory. Adjust as necessary.	Sound, particularly dialogue being heard by audience, is clear and audible.
2. During screening		
(a) Monitor continually.	Continue to monitor focus, frame and sound level and adjust as necessary.	Screen image and sound continue to be satisfactory.
	Monitor projector frequently. If a serious problem occurs, shut down without delay. Fix the problem quickly or switch	Any possibility of film being damaged is minimized. Screening continues with minimum inconvenience to audience.

	film to another projector.	
(b) (If relevant) Changeovers	For changeover procedures refer to details in 16 mm Manual.	Changeovers are achieved seamlessly.
3. Screening ends (a) Prepare for end of film	(If relevant) Start house music source.	House music is running and ready for switching when film sound ends.
	Ensure all external entrance, toilet and lobby lights are switched on.	Areas outside auditorium are lit for convenience and safety of exiting audience.
	Watch for cue indicating end of reel is near.	Shutting down starts at the correct time.
(b) Shutting down	Bring up house lights to half while credits are rolling. If there are no credits, bring lights up gently immediately after end title.	House is softly lit and credits can be read. Audience can exit safely.
	At end of credits, bring house lights up to full and shut down lamp. Leave motor running until film tail is clear of projector.	Screen goes dark. Lamp is protected from sudden temperature change.
	Reduce sound volume. (If relevant) Switch sound source from projector to house music. Raise volume to pre-set level.	Sound from projector is shut down. Music is running at comfortable volume level in house.
	Shut down projector when tail is clear.	Projector is shut down.
	When audience has cleared the auditorium, shut down house music.	Screening has ended satisfactorily.
Section 6 **After screening**	Do not move projector until at least 20 minutes after it has been shut down.	Lamp life is not prematurely shortened by movement while lamp is still hot.
	Disconnect power from all components.	Possibility of electrical accident is prevented.
	Remove both reels from projector and pack full reel in can after taping the tail.	Projector is clear; and after cooling can be prepared for storage.
	If it is to be dispatched, pack each reel in its can immediately it comes off the projector. Do not rewind unless requested by supplier.	Film is protected in its can, ready to be put into case for dispatch.
	When projector has cooled sufficiently, disassemble system as necessary and store in a clean, cool, dry place. If permanently set up, cover.	Projector is protected from dust and moisture.
	Disassemble speakers and stands. Store components in clean, cool, dry place.	Components are protected from dust and moisture.

	When all the cans are in the transit case, pack empty spaces with bubble wrap or a similar packing material.	Films are protected from possible damage resulting from cans moving inside case during transit.
	Before closing the transit case, complete your report and enclose it with the cans.	Supplier is informed of any problems.
	After closing and fastening the case, secure the ends of tapes that fasten the case with adhesive or masking tape.	Loose tape ends do not flap about during transit.
Section 7 **On the bench** (a) Rewinding	Put the empty take up reel on the right hand spindle. Secure and finger tighten the nut securing the take up reel on the spindle.	Take up reel is in place.
	Load the full reel to be rewound on the left hand spindle so the film comes off the top of the reel to the right (clockwise).	Film is in place and correctly positioned for rewinding.
	Attach the film tail to the empty take up reel so that it winds on at the top from the left (clockwise). The perforations will be on the far side of the film.	Film is ready to be rewound.
	Rewind smoothly over full length of film.	Film is rewound ready for its next screening.
(b) Splicing	Check ends to be joined are clean, cut square and accurately (not part way through a frame). Remove any old tape and adhesive.	Joins will be clean and tight.
	Butt the leading edges in splicer, ensuring there is no gap or overlap, and apply tape. Do not use ordinary adhesive tape.	Splice is made on one side.
	Flatten tape by rubbing with a finger. Trim and perforate tape then turn the film over and repeat procedure for the other side.	Double-sided splice ensures strength.
	Inspect result very carefully. Spliced film will curve and not collapse. If there is any gap, overlap, wrinkles or bubbles in the splice remove it and start again.	Film's smooth passage during screening is not impeded. The possibility of splice failing is minimised.
(c) Making up and breaking down.	Refer to detailed procedures in 16 mm Manual.	Two or more small reels are consolidated on one larger reel for ease of projection, smooth running and continuity. Breaking down reverses the process.