

Professional Expressions

Emerging Comparator v0.1

Same Practices. Different professional vantage points.

Test Analyst, Test Manager and Test Architect are presented together to make visible what appears common - and what changes as proximity to evidence, scope and professional responsibility change.

Why compare?

The purpose is not to define three testing roles. It is to test whether Observe -> Interpret -> Understand -> Judge -> Improve -> Steward remains recognisable across different professional perspectives. These are working propositions intended to stimulate use, challenge and contribution.

No role owns a Practice and there is no hierarchy implied. A Test Analyst can make the observation without which systemic interpretation is impossible; a Test Architect can expose relationships invisible from one execution; a Test Manager can help bring perspectives together for consequential judgement.

The three lenses

Test Analyst	Test Manager	Test Architect
Close to behaviour, evidence, journeys and discovery.	Close to collective understanding, judgement, people and delivery leadership.	Close to systems, systemic relationships, testability and longer-horizon quality strategy.

One Practice Model, three professional expressions

Practice	Test Analyst	Test Manager	Test Architect
Observe	What is actually happening?	What are we collectively seeing?	What systemic behaviour or constraint is emerging?
Interpret	What might this behaviour mean?	What explanations and perspectives need consideration?	What might this reveal about systems, architecture or our ability to test them?
Understand	What best explains the evidence I am examining?	What do we collectively understand sufficiently to support responsible decisions?	What systemic explanation connects the evidence across boundaries?
Judge	What is significant enough to investigate, challenge or surface?	What does our understanding mean for action and decision?	What does this mean for quality architecture, strategy and investment?
Improve	What can become better because of what I discovered?	What should become better because of what we learned?	What systemic conditions should change so quality becomes easier to understand and assure?
Steward	What should another practitioner benefit from discovering here?	What should survive this project, team or decision?	What architectural knowledge or pattern should influence future systems and quality approaches?

What the comparison is beginning to show

- The Practices can remain common while their expression changes with professional vantage point.
- Proximity to evidence changes emphasis: the Test Analyst often starts close to observed behaviour; the Test Architect often connects evidence across boundaries; the Test Manager often works across people, uncertainty and decision.
- The HCQ Record can provide a shared, durable place for attributed contributions without becoming a role-owned workflow.
- Difference is useful evidence. If a Practice has to be forced to fit a role, the emerging HCQ model should be challenged.

One record - multiple expressions

A Test Analyst may record: 'This is what I saw.' A Test Architect may add: 'This resembles a systemic relationship across services.' A Test Manager may help establish: 'This is what our current understanding means for the decision.' Other roles and disciplines may contribute at any point. The record belongs to the developing understanding, not to a job title.

Test Lead remains deliberately open

The absence of a Test Lead expression from this comparator is intentional. HCQ should not fill every box simply to make the model look complete. The visible gap is an invitation: what should remain common, and what changes when the professional lens is Test Lead?

How to use this comparator

1. Choose one real quality concern.
2. Look at it through one of the three working expressions.
3. Notice whether the six Practices help make the development of understanding more visible.
4. Compare what changes when another professional lens is applied.
5. Contribute what survives contact with practice - and what does not.

Contribution questions

Does this resemble the work you practise? What is missing? What is overstated? Which distinction becomes useful? Which becomes administration? What would you change before another practitioner tried it?

Working proposition: before assessing capability, make the Practice visible. Before declaring maturity, develop understanding of what is actually being practised.