

Introduction

What are Competencies and how are they used?

A competency is an ability, skill, knowledge or trait that is needed for the successful performance of a job. It is often defined in terms of behaviours.

Overall, competencies are a set of behaviours that an individual must possess in order to perform to the optimum level within that role.

When used properly, and in conjunction with other working practices and procedures, competencies can ensure fairness, openness and equality in the way we recruit staff, select people for training, identify clear development paths and promote people.

The University recognises two separate types of competency to evaluate an individual's ability to do a job – Technical and Core.

Technical Competencies are the experience and knowledge required to carry out the role. As technical competencies are diverse in their nature, the person specification in the job purpose itself will determine these. For example, in order to carry out a role in finance it would be imperative that the individual had some prior financial experience, knowledge and qualifications.

Core Competencies are far broader in their application and can apply to many different jobs. This document details the Core Competencies which the University recognises as necessary.

Core Competency Descriptors

Communication
Demonstrates an understanding of the views of others and communicates in a realistic and practical manner using appropriate language. Listens attentively to views and issues of others. Selects appropriate methods of communication for each situation. Conveys and receives information effectively and builds positive working relationships.
Level 1 Is able to exchange basic information in a courteous and effective manner to peers, line managers and customers.
Level 2 Is able to exchange detailed and more complex information to a broader range of staff.
Level 3 Is able to effectively transfer key and complex information to all levels of staff, adapting the style of communication as necessary and ensuring that this information is understood. Excellent and accurate standard of written and verbal communication.

Adaptability/Flexibility
Adapts and works effectively in different situations, in order to carry out a variety of tasks and remains calm and level headed under pressure. Remains positive and puts difficulties in perspective.
Level 1 Is reliable and flexible in response to work priorities and issues.
Level 2 Is receptive or contributes to new ideas and approaches and adapts accordingly. Ability to handle conflicting priorities, and deal with unusual incidents.
Level 3 Generation of new ideas and suggestions for change. Ability to flex approach to difficult needs of several concurrent workstreams. Remains resilient whilst working under adverse or conflicting demands.

Customer/Client Service and Support
Provides an excellent service to meet internal and external customer/client needs. Understands the needs of the customer/client and looks for ways to provide added value.
Level 1 Receives customer/client feedback and responds positively, reviewing own performance.
Level 2 Understands customer/client needs and provides customer/clients satisfaction. Is able to give timely advice in response to enquiries from customers/clients.
Level 3 Actively seeks customer/client feedback. Gives advice which leads to valuable outcomes. Looks to continuously review and improve performance standards of self and team.

Planning and Organising

Is able to organise own time effectively, creates own work schedules, prioritises, prepares in advance and sets realistic timescales. Has the ability to visualise a sequence of actions needed to achieve a specific goal and how to estimate the resources required.

Level 1

Provides work on time and to required standard. Planning a wide range of simple tasks, or a small number of complex ones.

Level 2

Workload delivered within deadlines and to agreed standards. Making medium plans for a whole specialist function or project.

Level 3

Completion of work within area for which responsible within deadlines and to agreed standards. Making long term plans which impacts a function or the wider University.

Teamwork

Works co-operatively and flexibly with other members of the team with a full understanding of the role to be played as a team member, to achieve a common goal.

Level 1

Has the ability to work effectively as part of a team. Covers others and has consideration of others needs and skills. Acts in a supportive manner to the team.

Level 2

Effective delegation, performance monitoring and motivation of the team. Seeks ideas and input of colleagues in own and other teams to make best use of team expertise and improve team performance.

Level 3

Ensures team is appropriately skilled, managed and resourced. Discusses problems/issues with team members that could impact on results. Communicates expectations for teamwork and collaboration. Gives credit and acknowledges contributions and efforts of individuals to team effectiveness.

Continuous Improvement

Is able to set and meet challenging goals, creating own measures and consistently seeks ways of improving performance. Is aware of own shortfalls and takes charge of personal development.

Level 1

Makes suggestions for improvements to current working methods. Shows a willingness to learn.

Level 2

Looks to improve efficiency and quality of service of own area via input to procedures and processes. Keeps own skills up-to-date and develops a depth or breadth of knowledge in a particular area through learning.

Level 3

Revise or develop procedure and policy and contributes to their successful implementation. Keeps up-to-date with developments in own field and keeps abreast of issues internally and externally.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Is able to analyse situations, diagnose problems, identify the key issues, establish and evaluate alternative courses of action and produce a logical, practical and acceptable solution.

Is able to make effective decisions on a day-to-day basis, taking ownership of decisions, demonstrating sound judgement in escalating issues where necessary.

Level 1

Ability to interpret basic rules and guidelines and know when something needs to be referred to supervisor.

Level 2

Understands and is aware of the range of options available in new or unfamiliar situations and is able to select the appropriate course of action to produce a logical, practical and acceptable solution. Is responsible for decisions of a relatively uniform nature.

Level 3

Ability to analyse situations and to make more complex decisions, where problem solving is not straight forward.

Leadership/Management

Is able to inspire individuals to give their best to achieve a desired result and maintains effective relationships with individuals and the team as a whole, to ensure that the team is equipped to achieve objectives set according to the overall business need. Manages the development and performance of staff through coaching, mentoring and peer support. Has the ability to understand how individuals (at all levels) operate and how best to use that understanding to achieve objectives in the most efficient and effective way. Employs an individual and supportive approach when dealing with staff issues and problems. Promotes a trusting and empathetic environment and equality of opportunity.

Level 1

Ability to organise own and others activities. Has operational planning for a particular area. Provides professional management of a team with a well defined staff group which deals mainly with issues which occur regularly.

Level 2

Ability to motivate and lead team to ensure effective performance against goals. Provides effective leadership and values to the team, passing on own skills and knowledge where possible. Leading and planning the work of the team which deals with more diverse issues.

Level 3

Effective development, management and motivation of staff within area. Providing leadership and planning the work of a dispersed Faculty or University wide team. Securing and directing resources for wide area with diverse staff with clear risks attached to decisions

Creative and Analytical Thinking

Identifies issues and takes a proactive approach to dealing with them. Seeks ways to provide added value. Formulates distinctive strategies emphasising high levels of creative thinking. Can demonstrate recognition and development of new ideas and market opportunities.

Demonstrates innovation. Is able to understand, link and analyse information to understand issues, identify options and support sound decision making.

Level 1

Understands core University issues and proactively suggests new ideas or processes with the aim of adding value.

Level 2

Combines fairly complex ideas or processes or rapidly evolving ideas and situations. Adapts others ideas and makes them relevant to the University.

Level 3

Combines complex ideas and situations with many stands or layers. Identifies key components of ambiguous and interwoven problems. Thinks creatively to produce brand new workable ideas and novel solutions. Good quality of innovative contribution.

Influencing, Persuasion and Negotiation Skills

Gains support for ideas and motivates others to advance the objectives of the organisation and influence outcomes.

Builds relationships with others and shows consideration. Is able to present key points of an argument persuasively, negotiate and convince others.

Level 1

Capacity to advise and put the case across in relatively straightforward, non-contentious situations, negotiating agreement. Is able to influence or persuade immediate departmental or functional colleagues.

Level 2

Capacity to advise others and deal with sensitive issues in difficult situations inside and outside own area, negotiating riskier demands. Negotiates difficult agreements with wide impact. Is able to influence or persuade Faculty or Department stakeholders and other members of staff who are not in team.

Level 3

Negotiates more complex agreements with University wide impact. Is able to influence and persuade key University decision makers. Is able to motivate others through building effective relationships and gaining their full support for achieving outcomes.

Strategic Thinking

Takes an overview and identifies patterns, trends and long term possibilities. Creates and shapes a vision of the future that fits in with the University's long term objectives. Is able to articulate strategy to a wider audience.

Level 1

Has awareness and generates ideas which contribute to the Department or Functional strategy.

Level 2

Identifies best practice and applies to area. Analyses ideas and develops ideas for the strategy of the Department or functional area. Has an awareness of the University strategy and own place within it.

Level 3

Excellent quality of planning and links to strategy. Proposals for policy which meet both internal and external requirements. Develops Department or functional strategy and contributes actively to University strategy.

Technical Competency

The technical competencies are specific to the role and will be detailed in Section B of the Job Purpose.

Level 1

Has a basic level of understanding/experience of the technical competency and is able to apply it with guidance.

Level 2

Has a good level of understanding/experience of the technical competency and is able to apply it with little or no guidance.

Level 3

Has an expert level of understanding/experience of the technical competency and is able to apply and develop it. Guides others.