

Professional Competencies

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Future Forward

Information Professionals 2050: Educational Possibilities and Pathways



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What are Competencies?

- Skills
- Knowledge
- Abilities

The “Standard of the Best Performer”

Competency Development at the University of Alberta (2007-12)

Standards & Competencies

- Core Competencies
- Customer Service Standards & Competencies
- Public Service Standards & Competencies
- Research Competencies
- Supervisor Standards & Competencies
- Technology Competencies



Sample Competency for Customer Service

Standard: Staff member presents him/herself in a professional manner

Competencies: Approachability/Interest

Performance Statements (observable actions):

- On time for meetings, help desk shifts, and other scheduled activities
- Polite and positive
- Acknowledges clients who are waiting for a response and provides estimates for when a response or resolution can be expected.
- Responds to client queries in a timely manner according to set standards
- Can be relied upon to complete tasks without prompting
- Listens to others and is open minded about suggestions from others.

Piloting a Competency Model for Librarians at the University of Arizona

- Background/Context
- Competency Development (drawn from Faculty Bylaws)
- Job Descriptions
- Interview Questions
- Hiring Matrix Development



Sample Librarian Competency for Proactive/Creative Problem-Solving

Description/Rationale: Promotes new ideas, develops new insights, and uses resourceful means to improve or enhance performance. Demonstrates an open and active interest in, and comfort with, investigating and implementing new approaches that improve customer services or further organizational goals.

Behavioral Evidence/Indicators:

- Shows initiative (and success) in pinpointing problems and identifying solutions
- Displays creative problem solving that is structured through a systematic and logical approach
- Is proactive and takes risks, anticipating rather than solely reacting to changes in the environment or customer need
- Welcomes change and new situations as learning opportunities
- Demonstrates support for innovation and for organizational changes needed to improve the organization or help achieve organizational goals

Sample Librarian Competency for Proactive/Creative Problem-Solving

Mastery Level Behavioral Evidence/Indicators:

- Ensures proposed solutions focus on the requirements necessary for organizational success
- Endures in seeing ideas with value through to fruition, despite obstacles or red tape
- Fosters a work environment that encourages adaptability and embraces change
- Develops, plans, and follows through on change initiatives, accepting the ambiguity that accompanies them
- Inspires innovation in others

Why Use Competencies?

- Power Local Change
- Improve Climate/Communication
- Underpin processes of recruitment, training, and performance management

Why Use Competencies?

- Fill Strategic Gaps
- Succession Planning
- Empower Employees

How Can I Use Competencies?

Hiring Faculty or Staff

- Provides Shared Vocabulary & Expectations
- Improves Candidate Pools
- Improves “Fit” with Institution
- Improves & Facilitates Selection Team Decision-Making
- *Requires different “evidence” or indicators are developed, depending on available information

How Can I Use Competencies?

Performance Management

- Shared Vocabulary
- Aspirational
- Revelatory
- Coaching & Performance Plans

How Can I Use Competencies?

Performance Management

“Participate in the public service model by staffing the library’s service desk for two shifts per week & fulfilling duties in accordance with the UAL Standards and Competencies for Public Service”



Tips for Implementation

(in a Union, or similar, Environment)

Ensure:

- Collaboration amongst stakeholders
- Clear standards of performance for employees
- Clear expectations for supervisors
- Consistency of treatment
- Clear and comprehensible documentation

Tips for Implementation

(with Library Faculty)

- Understand that the nature of faculty work (non-iterative) may result in evidence or indicators being less concrete or easily evaluated
- Start with hiring or with strategic or succession planning (gaps)
- Focus on professional development/growth, rather than on deficiencies

Competencies & PhDs?

What are the expected benefits of recruiting PhDs as 'other' professionals?

- Discuss
- The competency perspective

Competencies & PhDs?

- Qualifications vs. Competencies
- Specialists vs. Generalists
- Other Professional vs. Library Professional

Questions?

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