Competencies Used in Staff Appraisal Programs

Competencies can be used in an appraisal process to describe the major skills, abilities, and attributes that a staff member needs to be successful in a job and/or organization. Supervisors can identify up to 5 competencies for a staff member to develop during the Introductory Review Period for newly hired staff, the 90 Day Evaluation Period for internal transfers and/or during the annual performance appraisal period.

Some management teams identify competencies that are required for all staff members who work in selected departments, schools, or centers. Competencies can also be identified for jobs in a certain field or category (e.g., administrative support or management staff). Managers can use the competency model to guide a staff member’s professional development and assist them in becoming proficient in their role.

The following outlines the competencies used in Penn’s staff appraisal programs and how they are defined.

For questions or additional information, you can contact your school/center Human Resources professional or Human Resources Staff and Labor Relations at 215-898-6093.

Competency Definitions for all Staff

**Accountability**: takes responsibility for all work activities and personal actions; follows through on commitments; implements decisions that have been agreed upon; maintains confidentiality with sensitive information; acknowledges and learns from mistakes without blaming others; recognizes the impact of one’s behavior on others.

**Adaptability**: responds to changing circumstances by being innovative and altering behavior to better fit different situations; consistently exhibits optimism and energy; learns new skills, performs work in different ways; successfully works with new colleagues; professionally deals with personal discomfort in a changing work environment; willing to be flexible; remains calm in stressful situations.

- Demonstrates tolerance for uncertainty
- Demonstrates adaptability through adopting a plan, behavior or approach

**Clear Communication**: expresses oneself clearly and effectively when speaking and/or writing to individuals or groups; listens attentively; ensures that information is understood by all parties; shares information in a timely manner using the most appropriate method; presents well-organized information in a group setting.

- Maintains a constructive, open dialogue with others and speaks with candor
- Presentation Skills: engages audience by presenting well-organized material in an understandable format
- Speaks persuasively and in a convincing manner
Proofreads documents to ensure proper language usage

**Initiative:** takes action to improve a situation without waiting for explicit instructions; understands how one's own actions relate to the University's and department's strategic goals; recognizes and responds to opportunities in order to reach a goal; seeks new and improved techniques, solutions, and approaches to completing assignments.

- Recognizes opportunities and uses them to reach a goal
- Seeks innovative approaches to completing assignments

**Managing Resources:** allocates time and resources efficiently and effectively; prioritizes work and delegate as appropriate; works to minimize institutional risk by acting as a responsible steward for the University.

- Manages time well
- Delegates assignments to appropriate teams and/or individuals and ensures that they have the proper power and authority to carry them out
- Uses resources efficiently and effectively to reach goals in the spirit of responsible stewardship
- Uses teams as a way of managing resources and selects team members with the necessary skills and personal characteristics required to achieve excellence

**Organization/Project Management:** organizes large amounts of information by creating and maintaining well organized systems; follows logical approaches to completing work; brings a project from inception to successful completion; translates strategies into step-by-step plans for action; monitors work progress to completion; effectively prioritizes; pays close attention to detail.

- Gets the right people involved in project planning and goal setting
- Completes projects successfully and on time
- Seeks innovative approaches to process management
- Acts quickly to implement plans/projects
- Delegates tasks appropriately

**Problem Solving:** generates creative approaches to addressing problems and opportunities; identifies and weighs options, makes sound decisions after reviewing all relevant information; anticipates and plans for potential problems; takes calculated risks; recognizes impact of solutions.

- Seeks out relevant information before making decisions
- Anticipates problems and thinks ahead about next steps
- Generates original ideas and develops creative approaches for addressing problems or opportunities

**Service Orientation:** acts professionally and calmly at all times when interacting with others; consistently demonstrates concern and courtesy towards colleagues and customers; treats all people respectfully; takes personal responsibility for correcting
problems; follows up with individuals to ensure satisfaction with the level of service they have received.

- Works well with members of the University community (e.g., students, faculty, staff)
- Remains calm in stressful situations
- Demonstrates pleasant disposition that puts people at ease

**Technology/Specialized Knowledge:** demonstrates ability to use technology effectively and productively; continually updates skills and knowledge; addresses problems as they arise or seeks help as appropriate.

- Is willing to learn about technology
- Explores and regularly uses technology to perform tasks more effectively
- Troubleshoots basic technology problems and knows where to find assistance for complex problems
- Follows advances in technology that are necessary to stay current in one’s field

**Valuing Diversity:** treats all individuals fairly and respectfully, works effectively with others, regardless of their background, position, or status; ensures that opportunities are equally available to all; respects different values and viewpoints.

- Consistently looks at issues from multiple perspectives, respecting the viewpoints and values of others
- Treats people with fairness, respect, and consideration without regard for their position, status or background
- Proactively minimizes barriers and ensures opportunities are equally available to all
- Understands multiple cultures (i.e. academic, administrative) and is able to work across boundaries

**Working Collaboratively:** works collegially with others, cooperating in both interpersonal and team relationships; fosters enthusiasm and maintains mutual trust, candor and respect. If applicable, manages groups effectively and builds partnerships with others.

- Fosters a sense of collegial partnership and teamwork
- Manages groups effectively by facilitating the participation and contributions of others and building shared goals
- Encourages cooperation and establishes common ground to achieve larger organization objectives
- Builds network of informal friendly relationships to get things done
- Works well as a member of a team
- Recognizes talented people and brings them together in unique ways to accomplish goals

**Additional Competencies for Supervisors**

The competencies below are provided as a guide to help measure management effectiveness. This includes the ability to lead, manage and develop others, articulate a vision that inspires commitment from others, all in a supportive environment.
Leadership: creates a vision or goal for one's work unit and communicates it in a way that motivates others to implement it; understands and leverages the organization's structure and relationships; pursues organization support and resources; develops strategies to include divergent opinions and overcome adversity; moves plans forward toward a specific course of action.

- Creates a compelling vision of the future and communicates it to others in a way that inspires their commitment
- Inspires others through energy, enthusiasm, and optimism
- Recognizes the potential impact of global, political, economic, and social changes on higher education and on the University
- Consistently demonstrates passion, enthusiasm and excitement about ideas, work, people, and/or his/her ability to succeed
- Translate visions into strategies and monitors progress

Managing Conflict: ensures productive resolution of conflict; recognizes different viewpoints; brings conflict into the open, and encourages those involved to find appropriate solutions.

- Recognizes and articulates differing opinions: brings conflict into the open and involves people in resolving it
- Encourages others to ask tough questions and disagree
- Recognizes the validity of opposing viewpoints and does not act defensively
- Mediates conflicts and finds solutions that are satisfactory to all parties
- Attacks the problem and not the person in conflict situations

Managing Performance: sets clear goals and expectations for staff; follows progress against goals; provides regular feedback; addresses performance issues promptly; fosters learning and development; provides public and private recognition of staff accomplishments.

- Ensures that staff members have clear goals and performance expectations
- Organizes assignments, tasks, and expectations in a way that fosters opportunities for learning and development
- Explicitly encourages others to achieve developmental goals and provides them with encouragement, support, time, and resources
- Deals firmly and promptly with performance problems; lets staff members know what is expected of them and when
- Provides specific performance feedback, both positive and constructive, as soon as possible after an event
- Stays informed about staff member's progress at meeting performance goals and expectations by providing regular, effective verbal and written feedback on performance, including the completion of annual written performance appraisals