Supervisor Guide for Creating the Career Progression Framework

The purpose of this guide is to provide Supervisors with information on how to create the Career Progression Framework that accurately reflects the behaviors, capabilities, understanding and/or expertise for an employee’s position that is essential to determine an employee’s Career Progression Rank.

An effective Career Progression Framework will:

1. List all competencies that are required for the employee’s classification.
2. Provide a competency statement for each rank within each competency, detailing what is required to achieve that rank.
3. Provide a clear and defined path of progression from Proficient, to Advanced, to Expert within that classification.

It is important to understand that the Career Progression Framework should NOT be:

- A performance evaluation. Career Progression is not a means to formally assess the employee's performance. In this regard, it does not replace the performance evaluation process.
- A way to clarify or revise a job specification or template. If a job specification or template does not accurately describe the duties performed, this is a matter for the manager and Human Resources to discuss.
- A guarantee of a reclassification to a higher classification. Career Progression can help prepare an employee to become qualified for a higher classification but does not guarantee advancement.

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF RANKS

The Career Progression Program is a process by which managers can nominate employees to progress within their current position, due to increased job proficiency and/or relevant professional development.

Employees can be nominated to progress through three ranks:

Proficient → Advanced → Expert

In order for Supervisors to determine if an employee should be nominated to the next rank, it is important to understand how each rank can apply to an employee and to a competency.

Proficient is an employee that:

- Able to perform the duties of the position effectively.
- May need assistance in developing the competencies to advance to next rank.
- Applies the competency in routine situations and requires guidance in unique and difficult situations.
- Focuses on development through on-the-job experience.
- Understands and can discuss terminology, concepts, principles, and issues related to the competency.

Advanced is an employee that:

- Can usually develop the competency independently.
- Applies the competency in unique and difficult situations.
- Focuses on broad unit/department issues.
- Understands and can discuss the competency and implication of changes to processes, policies, and procedures in the unit/department.
- Provides practical/relevant ideas and perspectives on process or policy improvements which may easily be implemented.

Expert is an employee that:

- Has developed and demonstrated all the actions associated with this competency.
- Applies the competency in considerably unique and difficult situations.
- Has a strategic focus.
- Is considered the subject matter expert in the unit/department for that competency.
- Provides guidance, troubleshooting, and answers questions related to their area of expertise and/or the field where the competency is used.
SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF COMPETENCIES

Competencies are the behaviors, capabilities, understanding, and expertise that contribute to growth within a classification.

- **Behavior** is the observable reaction of an individual to a certain situation.
- **Capability** is an innate potential to perform mental and physical actions or tasks.
- **Understanding** is information developed or learned through experience, study, or investigation.
- **Expertise** is the result of repeatedly applying understanding or capability.

Examples of competencies include: Critical Thinking, Teamwork or Time Management. A full list of all required and available competencies can be found on the Competency Library on the Career Progression website.

Why are competencies used to evaluate an employee’s progression within their classification?

Employees are hired with a clear understanding of the minimum qualifications to perform their position but may not know how or what actions can be taken to increase their proficiency in their current position.

Competencies are tangible and enable and encourage employees to have a clear roadmap for progression.

**Competencies help employees to:**

1. **Reflect** - They empower employees to discuss with their supervisors their strengths, areas for growth, and goals for their position.
2. **Discover** - They give employees a clear understanding of what is expected of them in their position at each rank.
3. **Assess** - They help employees identify their competency gaps and the steps needed to remove the gaps to increase their proficiency.
4. **Develop** - They enable employees to determine what specific training, knowledge or development activities are needed for their progression.
5. **Evaluate** - They give the employee an opportunity to review their behaviors, capabilities, understanding and expertise to determine if they have closed the gaps or to pursue additional development activities.

**Competencies help Supervisors to:**

1. Distribute work more efficiently by using the knowledge of employee’s career progression rank.
2. Acquire training and development opportunities systematically and efficiently.
3. Set goals and planning for Career Progression to meet the needs of the department.

Competencies additionally empower employees to clearly visualize the skills and experience they currently hold against those behaviors, capabilities, understandings, and expertise required to meet their career progression objectives. In turn, employees and Supervisors can now clearly observe any gaps, training, and development they may require to advance professionally.
SECTION 3: DETERMINING COMPETENCIES

The Career Progression Framework will consist of Universal Competencies related to the University’s Mission, Occupational Group Competencies based on the classification as well as the selection of Professional or Manager Competencies. A list of all competencies can be found in the Competency Library on the Career Progression website.

Universal Competencies:

Universal Competencies are competencies that are related to the University’s mission. These competencies are required for all employees, regardless of classification. More information regarding the University’s mission statement can be found at https://boardoftrustees.uconn.edu/university-mission-statement/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Innovation/Creativity</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
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</table>

Core Competencies per Occupational Group:

Core Competencies per Occupational Group are competencies that are related to the Occupational Group that the position’s classification falls under. Each Occupational Group has a list of competencies that all classifications under that group will be required to be used on the Career Progression Framework.

The required competencies for each Occupational Group can be found on the Career Progression website.

If you do not know what Occupational Group your employee’s classification falls under, please refer to the Job Template Library on the Career Paths website for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Programs/Services</th>
<th>Administrative Services</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Curatorial Services</th>
<th>Communication &amp; Marketing</th>
<th>Information Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Planning and Organization</td>
<td>Attention to Detail</td>
<td>Analytical/Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Teamwork/ Collaboration</td>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Operations</th>
<th>Laboratory &amp; Research Operations</th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Student/Program Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliability/Dependability</td>
<td>Analytical/Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Organization</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Professional Competencies:

In addition to the Core Competencies per Occupational Group, Supervisors will also select Additional Professional Competencies for those classifications in a Professional Category (P1-P7). The Professional Competencies should be related to the employee’s job specification and/or specific discipline for their classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptability/Flexibility</th>
<th>Analytical/Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Attention to Detail</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Practice</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Interpersonal Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasiveness/Facilitation</td>
<td>Planning &amp; Organization</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Reliability/Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Manager Competencies:

For classifications that are in a Manager Category (M5-M8), Supervisors will select Additional Manager Competencies in addition to the Core Competencies per Occupational Group. Manager Competencies should be related to the employee’s role of providing a combination of supervision/management over a department charged with providing a variety of cross-disciplinary services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Management</th>
<th>Conflict Resolution</th>
<th>Developing &amp; Leading Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When determining what competencies to select, Supervisor should:

- Review the job template and job specification for the classification. The job template and job specification provide an indication of skills necessary for an employee to be effective in a position. Look first at the most critical duties and functions of a position. In addition to the tasks performed on the job, the qualifications give an indication of the competencies required.
- Ask what are the specific competencies needed for an employee to achieve each rank? What would a Manager look for in a new hire; or what competencies do current employees in this classification possess?
- Select competencies that are effective and align with the mission, vision and goals of the position as well as the unit/department.
- Ensure the employee can demonstrate all of the competencies determined in their day-to-day tasks and job responsibilities.
- Keep the framework manageable. While it can be easy to include many Professional or Manager Competencies, only include the ones that are essential to describing what success looks like in the position.
- Ensure the competency can be verified and assessed through observable and measurable behaviors, capabilities, understanding, and/or expertise.
SECTION 4: WRITING COMPETENCY STATEMENTS

One of the most important parts of the Career Progression Framework is the competency statement. Competency statements detail the specific behaviors, capabilities, expertise and/or understanding that is required to achieve the designated rank of Proficient, Advanced and Expert for each competency. Each competency statement should provide a clear and defined path of progression from Proficient, to Advanced, to Expert for each rank.

How to Write a Competency Statement:

1. **Determine the scope of the position that the competency pertains to.** Focus on the behaviors, capabilities, understanding, and/or expertise rather than tasks, which can change frequently over time.

2. **Build from the lowest rank of Proficient up to the highest rank of Expert.** Ensure that each rank is distinguishable and demonstrates a clear progression from Proficient to Advanced to Expert.

3. **Use specific and active verbs.** Describe what the employee is doing to achieve this rank. Each action requires an object. Do not use vague, inactive verbs like “responsible for procedures”; instead, use specific and active verbs like “writes procedures.”

4. **Ensure the competency can be verified and assessed through observable and/or measurable behaviors.** Use words like “perform, identify, or list”. Not words like “familiar with, appreciate, or learn” as these are difficult to observe or measure.

5. **Remove unnecessary qualifiers** (e.g. “considerable” or “basic”). These types of qualifiers do not help clearly distinguish examples of behaviors, capabilities, understanding and/or expertise; instead, they often cause employees to second-guess their rank.

6. **Be clear and direct.** Give specific tasks or examples and give context for your statements, rather than vague descriptions. The statement should say why the behavior, capabilities, expertise and/or understanding is done, or what is supposed to be accomplished by the completion. (e.g. “writes procedures on how to maintain and calibrate laboratory equipment”)

Remember, you will be reviewing the Framework with the employee so that they understand what each competency “looks like” on a regular basis and how it is being assessed at each rank. It is important the competency statements are obtainable within the employee’s current position.
SECTION 5: COMPETENCY STATEMENT EXAMPLES

Human Resources has developed broad definitions of each competency and measurable and observable competency statements for each competency across all three ranks assist with the development of the competency statements. These should be used to aid in the development of drafting the competency statements, to generate thought about how the competency can be displayed within a classification and/or assist in describing the desired behaviors, capabilities, understanding and/or expertise required for the position.

EXAMPLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPED COMPETENCY STATEMENTS

Communication

Definition: Establishes supportive and collaborative relationships with staff by keeping people informed, adapting communication to the audience, practicing focused listening, responding to the feelings and concerns of others and uses a range of effective communication techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Responds to questions within policy and procedure guidelines in assigned area(s) timely.</td>
<td>• Uses method of communication most appropriate to situation and/or audience; adapts delivery based on appropriateness of situation/audience.</td>
<td>• Presents difficult and convoluted information articulately to explain to colleagues and/or key stakeholders regarding issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses concepts and language that are easy for others to understand.</td>
<td>• Conveys ideas on difficult or sensitive subjects clearly.</td>
<td>• Explains and clarifies policies and procedures to affected parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses appropriate language and grammar when speaking or writing to others.</td>
<td>• Provides consultation to customers or peers related to position and/or unit/department.</td>
<td>• Regularly follows-up to ensure understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrates patience and respect with customers and peers.</td>
<td>• Accurately judges most audience needs</td>
<td>• Breaks down difficult processes to communicate effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listens to instructions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks necessary questions to complete assigned tasks.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMPLE OF COMPETENCY STATEMENTS FOR GRANTS AND CONTRACTS SPECIALIST

Below provides an example of what competency statements could look like for Communication competency for the position of a Grants and Contracts Specialist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicates the grant terms with PI and provides them with guidance to submit a complete and timely application.</td>
<td>• Collaborate with PI, SPS, and other relevant stakeholders to develop proposals.</td>
<td>• Incorporates perspective of all stakeholders in the grant process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Translate the technical and grant information into clear and concise content.</td>
<td>• Provides information and knows about available products and services for customers without having to seek out guidance.</td>
<td>• Provides regular communication and follow up so customers are aware of progress and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks necessary questions to complete the proposal.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Breaks down denials to provide guidance on steps forward.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Considers the audience and nature of the information to respond appropriately for grant assistance.

These are intended to be useful as a reference and are not an exhaustive list and are not inclusive of all behaviors, capabilities, understanding or expertise that can be demonstrated. The competency statements are intended to be tailored to individual positions.

The full competency list with competency statements can be found in the Competency Library on the Career Progression website. In addition, Human Resources has created sample Frameworks to use as guidance in creating your own.
Appendix 1: Action Verbs

Below is a list of measurable or observable action verbs that can be used when writing a competency statement to describe the behaviors, capabilities, understanding and/or expertise for an employee’s position at each rank.

add  
analyze  
apply  
appraise  
arrange  
assess  
associate  
breakdown  
calculate  
categorize  
change  
classify  
combine  
compare  
compile  
complete  
compose  
compute  
conclude  
contrast  
convert  
discuss  
distinguish  
divide  
draw  
estimate  
examine  
extend  
extrapolate  
distinguish  
draw  
estimate  
examine  
extend  
extrapolate  
judge  
justify  
labels  
list  
manipulate  
match  
measure  
modify  
name  
operate  
order  
examples  
detect  
determine  
develop  
device  
diagram  
differentiate  
discover  
discriminate  
discuss  
distinguish  
divide  
draw  
estimate  
examine  
extend  
extrapolate  
generalize  
generate  
give  
grade  
graph  
group  
identify  
illustrate  
infer  
integrate  
interpolate  
interpret  
prepare  
prescribe  
produce  
propose  
quote  
rank  
rate  
read  
rearrange  
rearrange  
rearrange  
rearrange  
restructure  
read  
recite  
recognize  
support  
reconstruct  
record  
relate  
restructure  
restructure  
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restructure  
restructure  
test  
transform  
interpret  
prepare  
prescribe  
produce  
propose  
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restructure  
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recognize  
support  
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recognize  
support  
reconstruct  
record  
relate  
restructure  
restructure  
restructure  
restructure  
restructure  
test  
transform
Watch Out for Verbs that are not Observable and Measurable!

In order for a competency statement to be observable and measurable, it should be free of vague or ambiguous words or phrases. The following lists ambiguous words or phrases which should be avoided so that the statement is clear and direct.

### Words to Avoid
- Believe
- Hear
- Realize
- Capacity
- Intelligence
- Comprehend
- Know
- Conceptualize
- Memorize
- Perceive
- Feel

### Phrases to Avoid
- Appreciation for
- Acquainted with
- Capable of
- Comprehension of
- Cognizant of
- Conscious of
- Familiar with
- Interest in
- Interested in
- Knowledge of
- Knowledgeable about