



COMPETENCY GUIDE



Office of Human Resources
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN



University of New Haven

THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Competency Guide

Competencies are a collection of key behaviors, qualities, talents, and abilities that contribute to an employee's successful performance in the workplace. For our institution to be successful, fundamental core competencies must be understood, encouraged, and measured. They address "how" our university's employees must function in their roles to be successful.

Core competencies are those behaviors and attributes that the organization expects to see demonstrated by everyone who is employed, regardless of position or level. Job specific competencies apply to roles within the organization. This guide will define and clarify the agreed upon core skills, as well as provide additional capabilities that employees and managers may use to aid in the performance management and career development processes. Calibrating university competencies will help everyone elevate their professional ability and foster a culture of growth and learning.

The core competencies emerge in various employee life cycle documents, such as [interviewing](#) and recruiting, employee onboarding, development, evaluation, and recognition/rewards.



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University Core Competencies

1 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION/VALUES DIFFERENCES

Manages and/or treats all kinds of people in an equal fashion; deals fairly and effectively with all races, nationalities, cultures, abilities, ages, genders, and sexual orientation; equal and fair treatment for all; see and appreciates the importance of diversity and inclusion.

Examples of valuing diversity and inclusion:

- Has an unwavering commitment to showing respect for colleagues by creating a culture that encourages the team to show its full potential.
- Acts as an ally for disenfranchised communities: seek input from the “silenced” by having a more diverse perspectives at the table during decision making times.
- Develops strategies for enlisting and actively engaging individuals from underrepresented groups into programs and events.

2 COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY

Conveys information clearly and succinctly through writing, speaking and social/technology platforms; articulates thoughts and expresses ideas effectively using oral, written, visual and non-verbal communication skills; possesses and uses listening skills to gain understanding.

Examples of communicating effectively:

- Exudes a supportive and authentic attitude during constructive conversations amongst peers to foster a more effective working relationship.
- Practices being intentional with their words, delivery, and body language.
- Organizes presentations and discussion to share pertinent and urgent information in a concise manner.

3 CUSTOMER FOCUS

Dedicated to meeting expectations of internal and external customers, acting with customers in mind. Develops deep understanding of customer needs and advances the University's reputation for excellence. Gains customer trust and respect; solicits and follows up on feedback.

Examples of customer focus:

- Communicates the organization's mission, vision, and values to all customers; acknowledges and aligns with customer needs through active listening and effective communication.
- Honors peer-to-peer collaboration to cultivate a more consistent, and overall better experience.
- Regularly asks for feedback to understand and develop areas of opportunity.
- Approaches customer data with empathy to gain insight on the customers' expectations and adjust the customer journey accordingly.



4 PROBLEM SOLVING/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Looks deep into solutions; seeks out information; in a short time does analysis; looks beyond the first answer for effective solutions. Aligns processes with organizational priorities and can design and implement workflows that move work forward through resources. Can establish appropriate metrics for measurement, creates synergies and integrations where necessary, and can simplify processes and maximize resource allocations.

Examples problem solving/continuous improvement:

- Promotes self-awareness; tracks journey for recurring tasks; records areas of opportunity and brainstorms ways to optimize workflows.
- Evaluates the problem from the team's perspective and the impacted individual's perspective. Understands the impact on the entire organization, if appropriate.
- Provides detailed notes for annual performance review, and references those to enhance the following performance cycle.

5 DEVELOPMENT FOR SELF AND OTHERS

A person who is a people builder of themselves and others; provides and takes challenging assignments/tasks; pushes self and others to acquire knowledge for individual and organizational growth. Is self-aware of individual strengths and development opportunities and seeks insights for balanced performance and career conversations to design development plans. Holds development conversations with direct reports and manager; seeks out training and development opportunities for self and others.

Examples of developing self and others:

- Frequently records achievements, setbacks, and "misses" to analyze for opportunities for improvement.
- Accesses the UNH LinkedLearning portal and myCharger for supplemental training and development resources specific to current role, or role of future interest.
- Cross-trains others and provides mentoring to those looking to gain additional functional knowledge.

6 TRUST AND INTEGRITY

Demonstrates high ethical standards and behaviors and is widely trusted and is sought after for his/her opinion and advice. Does not misrepresent self; admits mistakes; take ownership of work; delivers on time, quality solutions while meeting most goals; known to be dependable.

Examples of trust and integrity:

- Respects and maintains confidentiality amongst peers
- Keep promises and commitments made to others. Do the right thing, even when it is difficult.
- Does not give in to pressure by being biased or influencing others.

7 HIRING AND STAFFING (MANAGERS ONLY)

Recruits the best people from inside or out of the organization; not afraid to get strong people; seeks out effective staffing models in both structure and size of staff. Understands organizational strategies, job structures, what it takes to be successful in roles and can translate that in selecting the right talent for the organization.



Examples of Hiring and Staffing:

- Asks scenario-based interview questions that allows the applicant to speak to examples from work history demonstrating strengths and areas for opportunity.
- Provides detailed descriptions and expectations of role on job listing, for transparency and strategic hiring.
- Hires with intention by promoting inclusion and diversity in hiring practices and uses inclusive language to foster a sense of belonging and positivity within the team.
- Gathers the feedback of others to make a holistic decision on behalf of the university.



Competencies

8 CULTIVATES INNOVATION

Adept at new and unique solutions and ideas; understands, appreciates, values, and encourages this in others and how it inspires organizational growth; seen as a valued contributor in brainstorming settings.

Examples of cultivating innovation:

- Creates or contributes to a working environment that encourages open discussion by welcoming diverse perspectives.
- Encourages productive brainstorming settings by celebrating colleagues and ideas with authentic appreciation. Shows camaraderie by attending and contributing to faculty/staff collaborative efforts.
- Empowers peers to take charge in the solution creating and decision-making process.

9 ACTION ORIENTED

Enjoys working hard and is action orientated; energetic for things one sees as challenging; not fearful of acting with minimal planning. Spends the right time on what is important and quickly focuses on the critical elements of work rather than focusing on what may not be adding significant value to a project or objective.

Examples of being action-oriented:

- Enthusiastic to take initiative with current tasks and newly assigned projects.
- Practices flexibility when unexpected issues arise, demonstrating the ability to change direction at any moment, without losing momentum or composure.
- Hones time management skills: planning and aligning with colleagues and leadership to ensure a quick turn around on thoroughly completed tasks.

10 ENSURES ACCOUNTABILITY

Resourceful and self-starting, developing ideas and methods collaboratively or independently to enhance the department, work unit, or University. Proactively and passionately goes beyond what is expected by taking ownership for challenges, liable for accomplishing results, and following through on commitments. Recognizes and takes responsibility for solving problems while taking initiative.

Examples of ensuring accountability:

- Sets clear, measurable, and achievable goals to track progress and accomplishments.
- Acknowledges and asks for feedback from leaders and peers, helping to curate opportunities for growth and success in current and future role(s).
- Promotes individual responsibility, creating more onus and decision making amongst fellow peers.
- Speaks up when something is wrong; demonstrates managerial courage tactfully to mitigate undesirable behaviors/occurrences.

11 MANAGES CONFLICT

Approaches conflict and sees it as an opportunity to listen effectively and mitigate challenges while helping others reach equitable agreements; quick read on situations; can resolve tough agreements with minimum struggles. Remains



controlled under pressure and when times are difficult, handles challenging situations with a calm and practical approach.

Examples of managing conflict:

- Maintains composure during difficult and uncomfortable situations by addressing the conflict with rationale, understanding, and compromise.
- Identifies the source of the conflict, then gather all relevant information and perspectives to find a suitable, well-informed solution.
- Practices active listening to better understand the issue before deciding the appropriate steps to finding a resolution; seeks appropriate support as needed.

12 LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The ability to guide and develop while getting results; skills and behaviors that contribute to superior performance of both self and the team with a targeted outcome serving the organization; treats others fairly; has candid discussions; enjoys directing the work of others; comfortable with tough debates; sets clear directions; can measure outcomes; delegates effectively; is poised and can handle stress; settles others in troubled times.

Examples of leadership skills:

- Unifies team members around a common vision, and shared goals by nurturing communication and respect within the organization.
- Sees the potential in others and takes opportunities to apply and develop that potential.
- Delegates fairly and gives recognition to the team's efforts along the way.

13 RESOURCEFULNESS

Finds quick and clever ways to overcome difficulties; figures out how to break through those tough barriers; easily spots opportunities that most others cannot; overcomes problems; ability to make do with what is available to create a positive solution. A creative and innovative self-started that can develop new ideas and methods collaboratively or independently to enhance the department, work unit, or University. Proactively and passionately goes beyond what is expected by taking on new challenges, accomplishing results, and following through on commitments.

Examples of Resourcefulness:

- Coordinates with teams and colleague to organize and analyze project aspects and day to day tasks to optimize workflows.
- Observes experienced employees in the workplace - evaluating how others work in relation to peers, leaders, and subordinates, along with how core strengths are demonstrated.
- Aware of internal, external, and technical resources available to move work forward. Uses network appropriately.

14 TEAMBUILDING

Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals. Can quickly find common ground and solve problems for the good of all; can represent his/her own interests and yet be fair to other groups; can solve problems with peers with a minimum of noise; is seen as a team player and is cooperative; easily gains trust and support of peers; encourages collaboration; can be candid with peers

Examples of teambuilding:

- Facilitates team building exercises and attends extracurricular team events to promote more collaboration, team morale, and rapport amongst colleagues.



- Practices active listening to better understand your colleague's point of view and respond with empathy. This also lends itself to understanding problems that require collaboration to develop solutions.
- Introduces self to others in and outside department to establish a positive working relationship. Promotes positivity; gives recognition to encourage peer engagement and increased productivity.

15 COURAGE

Has the fortitude to confront people and problems; not afraid to state their point of view, if even in opposition. Will not hold back when needed, demonstrating the greater value from sharing perspective; provides timely and necessary positive and constructive feedback; willing to express the unpopular truths and opinions.

Examples of courage:

- Leads by example and speaks up during adverse events, encouraging others to be fair, honest, respectful, and solutions oriented. Promotes accountability and honesty amongst peers and leadership.
- Thinks big by setting clear goals and showing others what is achievable even when facing adversity. Balances realism with "big" thinking.

16 COMPASSION

Genuinely cares about people; is concerned about their difficulties in and outside of work. Available and ready to provide guidance or support. Is empathetic.

Examples of compassion:

- Mindful of others through nonverbal cues and/or behaviors (wellbeing and mental health awareness)
- Offers to help with workload when imbalance is shown or a looming deadline or project is identified.
- Shows empathy by aligning with sentiments of colleagues.

17 TECHNICAL SAVVY

Possesses the right skills and intuitive knowledge to operate modern devices effectively; understands technical concepts and knows how to apply them in different contexts. Anticipates and remains up to date on new and emerging technologies; not afraid to learn and develop in this space.

Examples of technical savvy:

- Refresh knowledge through available resources for role-related software through LinkdLearning and myCharger.
- Attempt to troubleshoot a technical concern impacting department, project work, or area before inquiring with the IT department.
- Enroll into a certificate or class available through the University (or other means).

18 INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Considers the entire organization when conducting tasks and projects; understands the needs of not only their own unit but other units as well; considers the strategic planning and overall needs when considering alternatives and methods. Takes a long-term view to recognize opportunities, impact, and to set priorities for a broad organizational perspective.

Examples of institutional perspectives:



- Assess the needs of the organization and evaluate how one's contribution to both short-term and long-term goals impact organizational success.
- Seeks to understand other programs within the organization, including responsibilities, services, and measures.
- Stay informed by attending Town Halls and being aware of announcements and publications from the University, along with university mission, vision, values, strategic plan, and how to demonstrate the core competencies.

19 PLANNING, MANAGING, AND MEASURING

Applies knowledge, planning, coordination, and execution of critical operational, “business” and technical functions to investigate the future to formulate effective approaches that drive the objectives, vision, and competitive strategy of the organization. Allocates the appropriate number of resources needed to get things done and uses them effectively and efficiently.

Examples of Planning, Managing and Strategic Agility:

- Ensures the project's goals, purpose, and criteria for success are clearly defined. Clarifies the related roles, responsibilities, milestones, limits for independent decision-making, and needs of the primary audience.
- Responds positively to change, embracing and uses new practices or values to accomplish goals and solve problems.
- Integrates the ideas and needs of others in developing feasible strategies to achieve goals. Obtains stakeholder acceptance of and support for those strategies.

20 MOTIVATION OF SELF AND OTHERS

Stays interested and encourages others; creates a climate where others want to succeed. Can identify key drivers for themselves and others; encourages and creates a culture where work input is valued and recognized.

Examples of motivating self and others:

- Encourages team unity through sharing information or expertise, working together to solve problems, and putting team success first.
- Ensures joint ownership of goal setting, commitments, and accomplishments. Involves everyone on the team.
- Acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of teammates. Praises the team and its achievement to others.

21 TIMELY DECISION MAKING/QUALITY DECISION MAKING

Accurately setting the scope and direction of a project or task; considers the duration and level of work and effectively sets schedules which include tasks, time, and resources. Has the ability to adjust as needed and will measure the progress and outcomes against goals; evaluates and reports results. Allocates the appropriate number of resources needed to get things done and uses them effectively and efficiently.

Examples of Timely Decision Making/Quality Decision Making:

- Handles ambiguity and makes necessary decisions even when information is limited or unclear.
- Gathers data and others' input when making decisions. Considers lessons learned from experience, differing needs, and the impact of the decision on others.
- Finds solutions that are acceptable to diverse groups with conflicting interests and needs.



22 NEGOTIATING

Confers effectively inside and outside of the organization; can be direct as well as diplomatic; gains trust quickly. Comes to agreement by effectively communicating and representing the university appropriately.

Examples of Negotiating

- Presents interests in ways that foster both understanding and resolution of problems. Seeks to understand others' interests.
- Questions and counters proposals without damaging relationships. Explains ideas or positions that gain acceptance or agreement. Works with facts and presents a credible and strong knowledge base.
- Seeks common interests and win/win solutions or mutually agreeable trade-offs.

23 MANAGING VISION AND PURPOSE

Talks about future possibilities in a positive way. Communicates an inspired sense of vision and intention, creating milestones and celebrations to keep support and morale going; talks about possibilities; has a positive attitude.

Examples:

- Forms and articulates a clear picture of the future the organization should strive for. Explains why that future is important and how current decisions impact the chance to reach it.
- Translates the vision for a program or department into clear strategies and demonstrate personal commitment to that vision.
- Create insightful documentation for annual reviews; compare to the previous year to reflect and celebrate growth.

24 PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Gains trust and support with others; relates to all kinds of people; builds rapport; can represent self-interest and be fair to others. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of all constituents - peers, subordinates, and leaders. Gains cooperation across the organization to obtain information and accomplish goals, including managing disagreements in a constructive way to bring issues to positive resolve. Works diligently to relate well to all individuals both in and out of the organization.

Examples of peer relationships:

- Maintains an open, approachable manner, and treats others fairly and courteously.
- Preserves confidence and pride of others and shows regard for their respective values.
- Demonstrates a balance between building rapport and getting the work done.

25 PERSEVERANCE AND RESILIENCE

Can handle and recover from setbacks; has drive, and enthusiasm; Infrequently gives up. Accepts that change is constant and seeks to harness its positive effects.

Examples of perseverance and resilience:

- Maintains an optimistic outlook in the face of change, adversity, or hardships.



- Learns from previous experiences and adjusts the approach to future endeavors, and becomes more efficient and successful in one's role.

26 STRATEGIC AGILITY

Applies knowledge, planning, coordination, and execution of critical operational, “business” and technical functions to investigate the future to formulate effective approaches that drive the objectives, vision, resources, and competitive strategy of the organization. Can examine issues and priorities rapidly based on knowledge, keeping the future and its trends and consequences in mind.

Examples of strategic agility:

- Shifts focus to look beyond the immediate needs of the organization and forecasts the potential pivot in plans, and short- or long-term goals
- Be flexible and open to reworking business processes and procedures as new data unfolds, demands occur, or as “business” changes.



^{i i} Reference: Adapted from Korn Ferry, *The Leadership Architect*, as well as the Society for Human Resource Management (www.shrm.org).

*Definitions adapted from:

FYI For Your Improvement, A Guide for Development and Coaching (4th edition) by Michael M. Lombardo; Robert W. Eichinger ISBN 13: 9780974589237 ISBN 10: 0974589233 Paperback; Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.s.a.: Lominger Ltd Inc, January 2004; ISBN-13: 978-0974589237

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