

Measuring and Monitoring Performance Excellence

Identifying Competencies Guide

V1.0

Identifying Competencies Guide

What's the purpose of this guide?

The purpose of this guide is to provide some direction for identifying competencies within a specific role. It is written for Employees who possess a high level of knowledge regarding a specific position. The goal of the guide is to help direct you in determining what are the most important competencies for a particular position.

This guide includes:

- 1** What are competencies and what we hope to achieve? – a brief description of what a competency is and how they will benefit employees
- 2** Why identify competencies?
- 3** How do we put together a list of competencies?
- 4** What do we do first? – Step-by-step guide including several options and approaches
- 5** Sample Competencies
- 6** Competency Forms
- 7** Glossary of Terms
- 8** Notes

The goal of this guide is to identify competencies. By the end of this guide we will have created a competency model for the position identified, as well as the skills and abilities necessary to perform the job at the highest performance level. Also, we will identify ways for determining whether the competency has been successfully achieved.

1 What are competencies?

Competencies are the abilities needed to conduct a role in an organization. Identifying competencies for a role is a very useful exercise to really get one thinking about what's needed to carry out the role. Competency descriptions are usually worded in measurable terms, therefore they're useful for reference when identifying training.

Questions we will be attempting to answer throughout this process:

1. What are the ongoing and anticipated changes – in the organization, industry and marketplace – that are affecting the job;
2. What are the key responsibilities of the position?
3. What skills and/or knowledge are required to perform effectively?
4. Describe a recent problem you had in the position that was successfully resolved. Why did this end successfully?
5. Describe a recent problem you had in the position that was not successfully resolved. Why did this end unsuccessfully?
6. What behaviors distinguish the more successful from the less successful in the position?
7. What is the primary challenge the position faces? What are the skills, knowledge, and characteristics that need to be developed to meet that challenge?

2 Why identify competencies?

Helps to:

- Develop a model for high-performing teams. Select and train team members, used for team building.
- Expand hiring and succession pool. Models usually challenge assumptions about required competencies and identify alternative sources of talent, thus improving diversity.
- Retain key Employees. Target retention of top performers. Employees who see expanded opportunities for growth are more likely to stay (also impacts morale).
- Redesign jobs. Analysis of a job during model building can reveal ineffective job design plus suggested improvements from competency teams.
- Certify competence levels. Design certification programs to develop and reward competency development.
- Design feedback instruments and other developmental tools.
- Assess training needs and provide a conceptual framework for a curriculum with a common language and demonstrated impact on enhancing job performance.

3 How do we put together a list of competencies?

Competencies are the abilities needed to conduct a role in an organization. Identifying competencies for a role is a very useful exercise to really get one thinking about what's needed to carry out the role. Competencies descriptions are usually worded in measurable terms, therefore they're useful for reference when identifying training.

Below are some basic suggestions for developing a list of competencies needed for a role.

- When developing the list, try to think in terms of areas of knowledge and skills. Review some examples of lists of competencies to get an idea of how competencies are worded.
- Conduct a job analysis to understand the various tasks in the job and in what sequence.
- Think back to when you performed or observed yourself or an Employee perform a task or conduct the role. What areas of knowledge do you see the Employees using? What skills do you see the Employees performing?
- Describe certain practices and procedures to carry out the task or perform the role in the best way possible, e.g., for a managerial role, ask about the best way to conduct performance appraisals, conduct hiring procedures, etc.
- Describe the necessary areas of knowledge and skills for superior performance.
- From a customer's point of view, what knowledge and skills are useful in delivering the best quality products or services to them.
- What would the job description for all of the general responsibilities and duties of the role look like. Note that job descriptions may not describe the position in terms of needed areas of knowledge or skills.

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What do we do first?

Step One

Determine the **SKILLS**, **ABILITIES** and **PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS** required for the role.

Examples of skills and abilities:

- 1) Speaks effectively
- 2) Raises awareness
- 3) Develops good working relationships
- 4) Is a good team member
- 5) Manages Conflict.
- 6) Self-Aware

Step Two

Determine how the **SKILL IS BEING DEMONSTRATED** on the job.

For example:

- 1) Gets the message across, according to the needs of the Employees
- 2) Uses interviews to find out about people
- 3) Develops effective working relationships

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Step Three

Group the skills and abilities into separate competencies. We now need to group the Skills, Abilities and Personal Characteristics we've identified in *STEP 1* into competencies. Once we have organized our lists, a description defining the competency must be determined. These newly created lists will form our specific competencies for the identified role.

For example: An Office Supervisor competency model may include the following competencies (see pages 9 through 14 for skills and abilities to the following competencies):

- 1) Achieving results of high quality and value,
- 2) Demonstrating leadership and personal responsibility
- 3) Working in partnership with others
- 4) Valuing the people we work with and their diversity,
- 5) Managing resources
- 6) Being open and communicating well

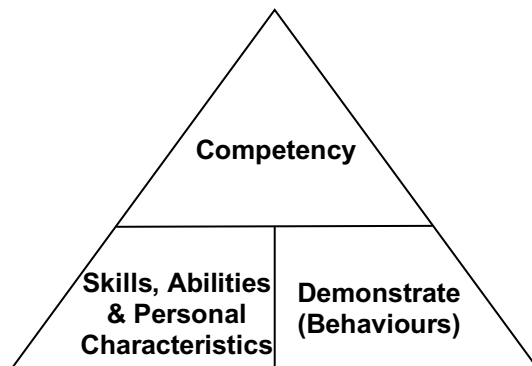
Step Four

Reading a competency for a specific role would look like:

(Role) Office Supervisor >>> **(Competency 1)** Being open and communicating well >>> **(Skills & Abilities)** Speaks effectively >>> **(Demonstration)** Gets the message across, according to the needs of the people.

and

(Role) Office Supervisor >>> **(Competency 2)** Achieving results of high value and quality >>> **(Skills & Abilities)** Creates Solutions >>> **(Demonstration)** Are creative and come up with fresh ideas to meet objectives.



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Here are some examples of terms that can be used to describe the skills and abilities of a role:

Achievement Focus	Design	Planning
Adaptability	Diversity Commitment	Problem Solving
Analytical Skills	Impact and Influence	Project Management
Attendance & Punctuality	Initiative	Quality Management
Business Acumen.	Innovation	Quality
Business Ethics	Job Knowledge	Quantity
Change Management	Judgment	Recruitment & Staffing
Communications	Leadership	Safety & Security
Conflict Resolution	Managing Customer	Sales Skills
Consultative Selling	Managing Expectations	Strategic Thinking
Continuous Learning	Focus	Team Leadership
Cooperation	Managing People	Teamwork
Cost Consciousness	Oral Communications	Use of Technology
Customer Service	Organization Support	Visionary Leadership
Delegation.	Performance Coaching	Written Communications
Dependability	Personal Appearance	

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5 Sample Competencies – Role: Office Supervisor

Step Three

Competency 1: Achieving results of high quality and value

Skills and abilities	The skills and abilities are demonstrated when.....
Gathers information	Find out what information is needed, and use appropriate sources.
Delivers	Achieve what was required, on time and to appropriate quality.
Concentrates energy	Make sure that effort is focused on meeting objectives, doing the most important ones first.
Analyses information	Organize information so that it is possible to find common themes. Draw conclusions from the evidence.
Creates solutions	Are creative and come up with fresh ideas to meet objectives.
Evaluates options	Consider the options that will achieve the objective, and select the best one.
Consults	Actively seek views of colleagues and others to discuss proposals. Revise ideas if appropriate.
Reviews performance	Compare interim and final outcomes with what was expected and are able to explain any differences between the two. Take corrective action where necessary.
Responds to feedback	Monitor the quality of service delivered, and act on it as necessary.

Step One

Step Two

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Competency 2: Demonstrating leadership and personal responsibility

Skills and abilities

The skills and abilities are demonstrated when.....

Manages own time

Organize work within time constraints and make productive use of time.

Manages own work

Work reliably with little or no supervision, but will seek guidance and direction when/if needed and take responsibility for own work.

Is adaptable

Respond positively and flexibly to change, and come up with practical ideas when faced with problems.

Is determined

Show initiative, drive and determination to get the work done.

Shows good judgment

Make the right decisions based on the evidence presented in a range of alternative options.

Raises awareness

Promote understanding of Home Office aims. Keep staff informed of developments.

Motivates

Motivate people to achieve their potential by, for instance: leading by example; encouraging people and ideas; and recognizing and valuing individuals' effort.

Fosters team building

Build and manage the team so that members support each other and have complementary skills. Treat everyone fairly.

Gets commitment

Build support and commitment to accept and implement plans.

Leads team

Set the direction for the team, and establish clear goals and objectives for individuals and groups. Ensure that everyone is clear what their role is and how it links into meeting the organization's objectives.

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Competency 3: Working in partnership with others

Skills and abilities

The skills and abilities are demonstrated when.....

Provides a service to others

Offer a helpful and effective service to others.

Develops good working relationships

Develop effective working relationships with others, including colleagues and outside contacts.

Actively participates

Contribute positively in a range of situations, seeking and giving ideas and feedback.

Is a good team member

Co-operate with and support others to achieve the aims and objectives of the team.

Informs others

Willingly share relevant knowledge, expertise and information with colleagues. Give sound advice.

Manages conflict

Handle differences of opinion, building consensus where possible. Develop an environment where conflict or problems can be addressed and resolved.

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Competency 4: Valuing the people we work with and their diversity

Skills and abilities

The skills and abilities are demonstrated when.....

Promotes equal opportunity

Treat people fairly and respond sensitively to differences.

Is self-aware

Understand our own strengths and weaknesses and their impact on others.

Allocates work

Assign work fairly to achieve the objectives of the team.

Appraises

Appraise the performance of staff fairly. Regularly review results, giving constructive feedback.

Develops

Ensure that training and development needs of staff are identified and addressed.

Delegates work

Delegate responsibility and authority to staff where appropriate, taking into account their abilities and workload. Retain ultimate accountability.

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Competency 5: Managing resources

Skills and abilities

The skills and abilities are demonstrated when.....

Follows procedures

Understand and apply Home Office operational procedures appropriately.

Is accurate

Check that information received or given out is accurate and up to date.

Gets best value from available resources

Use existing resources to improve efficiency of work. Allocate and prioritize resources as appropriate to achieve best value, moving resources to where they are needed most.

Is able to use IT

Use available computers effectively, for the work to be done.

Manages budget(s)

Set priorities for resources. Make cost-effective decisions within the constraints of the budget, evaluating financial choices.

Balances resources and demands

Work out what resources are needed to complete the job, and where necessary propose changes.

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Competency 6: Being open and communicating well

Skills and abilities

The skills and abilities are demonstrated when.....

Speaks effectively

Get the message across, according to the needs of different people.

Writes effectively

Write clearly and concisely and are easily understood, according to the needs of different readers.

Listens carefully

Listen actively to others and respond appropriately.

Represents the Home Office

Represent the work of the team and organization professionally in discussion with contacts inside or outside the Home Office. Deal with members of the public in an appropriately sensitive or courteous way.

Persuades and influences

Are able, when necessary, to influence others' views positively

Interviews fairly

Use interviews to find out about people. Probe to find out more and check what is said, where appropriate. Ask questions in a fair, objective and courteous manner.

Negotiates effectively

Work with others, dealing with any obstacles effectively, to obtain the best outcome.

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6 Competency Forms

Step One Identify the **SKILLS AND ABILITIES** for the position.

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Step One

Identify the **SKILLS AND ABILITIES** for the position.

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Step One

Identify the **SKILLS AND ABILITIES** for the position.

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Step One

Identify the **SKILLS AND ABILITIES** for the position.

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Step Two

Indicated how the Skills and Abilities will be demonstrated.

Skills & Abilities #	When we do this well, we.....
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Step Two

Indicated how the Skills and Abilities will be demonstrated.

Skills & Abilities #	When we do this well, we.....
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Step Two

Indicated how the Skills and Abilities will be demonstrated.

Skills & Abilities #	When we do this well, we.....
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Step Two

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Skills & Abilities #	When we do this well, we.....
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Step Three

Create a Competency Model – Up to 6 competencies per role.

Department:	Role:
Competency 1	
Competency 2	
Competency 3	
Competency 4	
Competency 5	
Competency 6	

7 Glossary of Terms

Behavioural competency: A competency that emphasizes the personal characteristics needed to influence and drive performance. This competency describes how a person acts as compared to what a person knows.

Competency: The knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for successful performance in a job. The demonstration of a competency includes the factors of observation, measurement, training and learning.

Competency gap: The measurable difference between a competency as described in the job competency requirements and the same competency as described by an individual

Competency model: The output of a competency study which lays out the set of competencies that are required to perform successfully in a job or role or position within an organization. The model can include definition of competencies, associated behavioural indicators and performance proficiency levels. A competency model may also be referred to as a competency profile.

Competency scale: A definition and description of a competency, with the indicative levels of how that competency can be demonstrated, arranged in ascending order of complexity or degree of proficiency, where each higher level is incremental to (and includes) the previous levels.

Competency: This term refers to the skills, behaviours and personal characteristics that all Employees are expected to demonstrate. Competencies are based on the values of the organization.

Job competency: A set of pre-defined competencies and proficiency levels required to perform successfully in a specific job or role.

Knowledge: The body of information that must be known in order to perform a job.

Proficiency: This refers to how much of a particular competency an individual must have to be successful in his/her work. It is a degree of mastery of a skill or area of knowledge.

Personal competency: The set of competencies that an individual possesses. This can be determined by various assessment methods that indicate an individual's level of competence.

Role: A generic set of work activities that relates to one or more specific jobs.

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Skill: The demonstration of a particular talent such as a technical skill needed for the operation of a computer or a verbal skill needed for making a presentation.

Technical competency: The technical knowledge or skill that is required for a specific job or role to be successful.

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