



## 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 position.
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 position.

### 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 job template.* Career Progression can help prepare an employee to become qualified for a higher job template 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 position.

- **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 in the [Competency Library](#) on the Career Progression website.

Why are competencies used to evaluate an employee's progression within their position?

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' 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 job template of the position 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 job template and position. More information regarding the University’s mission statement can be found at <https://boardoftrustees.uconn.edu/university-mission-statement/>.

Diversity	Innovation/Creativity	Leadership
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#### Core Competencies per Occupational Group:

Core Competencies per Occupational Group are competencies that are related to the Occupational Group that the position’s job template falls under. Each Occupational Group has a list of competencies that all job templates 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 the positions’ job template falls under, please refer to the [Job Template Library](#) on the Career Paths website for more information.

Academic Programs/Services	Administrative Services	Arts & Curatorial Services	Communication & Marketing	Information Technology
Customer Service	Customer Service	Planning and Organization	Attention to Detail	Analytical/Critical Thinking
Problem Solving	Problem Solving	Problem Solving	Communication	Planning & Organization
Time Management	Time Management	Teamwork/ Collaboration	Strategic Thinking	Problem Solving

Institutional Operations	Laboratory & Research Operations	Library	Student/Program Services
Reliability/Dependability	Analytical/Critical Thinking	Communication	Customer Service
Teamwork/Collaboration	Problem Solving	Customer Service	Strategic Thinking
Time Management	Time Management	Planning & Organization	Time Management

**Additional Professional Competencies:**

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

Adaptability/Flexibility	Analytical/Critical Thinking	Attention to Detail	Communication
Ethical Practice	Customer Service	Initiative	Interpersonal Interaction
Persuasiveness/Facilitation	Planning & Organization	Problem Solving	Reliability/Dependability
Strategic Thinking	Teamwork/Collaboration	Time Management	

**Additional Manager Competencies:**

For position with a job templates 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.

Change Management	Conflict Resolution	Developing & Leading Others
Diplomacy	Vision	

**When determining what competencies to select, Supervisor should:**

- Review the job template and job specification for the position. 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 position 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 position 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.

Proficient	Advanced	Expert
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to questions within policy and procedure guidelines in assigned area(s) timely.</li> <li>• Uses concepts and language that are easy for others to understand.</li> <li>• Uses appropriate language and grammar when speaking or writing to others.</li> <li>• Demonstrates patience and respect with customers and peers.</li> <li>• Listens to instructions.</li> <li>• Asks necessary questions to complete assigned tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses method of communication most appropriate to situation and/or audience; adapts delivery based on appropriateness of situation/audience.</li> <li>• Conveys ideas on difficult or sensitive subjects clearly.</li> <li>• Provides consultation to customers or peers related to position and/or unit/department.</li> <li>• Accurately judges most audience needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents difficult and convoluted information articulately to explain to colleagues and/or key stakeholders regarding issues.</li> <li>• Explains and clarifies policies and procedures to affected parties.</li> <li>• Regularly follows-up to ensure understanding.</li> <li>• Breaks down difficult processes to communicate effectively.</li> </ul>

### 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.

Proficient	Advanced	Expert
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates the grant terms with PI and provides them with guidance to submit a complete and timely application.</li> <li>• Translate the technical and grant information into clear and concise content.</li> <li>• Asks necessary questions to complete the proposal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with PI, SPS, and other relevant stakeholders to develop proposals.</li> <li>• Provides information and knows about available products and services for customers without having to seek out guidance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporates perspective of all stakeholders in the grant process.</li> <li>• Provides regular communication and follow up so customers are aware of progress and outcomes.</li> <li>• Breaks down denials to provide guidance on steps forward.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considers the audience and nature of the information to respond appropriately for grant assistance.</li></ul>	
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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	convert	discuss	interpret	prepare	rewrite
analyze	count	distinguish	judge	prescribe	select
apply	create	divide	justify	produce	selects
appraise	criticize	draw	labels	propose	separate
arrange	critique	estimate	list	quote	show
assess	defend	examine	manipulate	rank	solve
associate	define	explain	match	rate	specify
breakdown	demonstrate	extend	measure	read	state
calculate	derive	extrapolate	modify	rearrange	subdivide
categorize	describe	generalize	name	recall	subtract
change	design	generate	operate	recite	summarize
classify	design	give	order	recognize	support
		examples			
combine	detect	grade	organize	reconstruct	test
compare	determine	graph	outline	record	transform
compile	develop	group	outlines	relate	translate
complete	devise	identify	paraphrase	reorganize	use
compose	diagram	illustrate	plan	repeat	utilize
compute	differentiate	infer	point	reproduces	write
conclude	discover	integrate	point out	revise	
contrast	discriminate	interpolate	predict		

## Appendix 2: Verbs and Phrases to Avoid

### 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