

Typical Competencies – Staff Job Description Database

Functional Skills

Technical Skills

Possesses the technical skills and knowledge required to perform essential tasks in an efficient and effective manner. Demonstrates the willingness and ability to train or coach others in the technical arena. This is quite different than those individuals who lack technical skills or knowledge and/or have failed to demonstrate a willingness and ability to train others to perform well in technical assignments.

Serving as a Functional Expert

When needed, serves as an advisor regarding technical aspects of a project. Makes recommendations related to procedures and resources that may be needed. Has gained the respect and confidence of the people he/she advises. This is distinctly different from those whose advice fails to result in improving efficiency or avoiding pitfalls on projects and/or whose track record or ability to persuade others creates a lack of credibility and a lack of confidence in following any advice offered.

Implementing New Technologies

Tends to identify and apply the steps and approaches needed to implement and integrate new technology in a manner that gains quick acceptance from stakeholders while minimizing disruptions to day-to-day work requirements. This is in distinct contrast to those who fail to anticipate and foster the level of planning, coordination and communication that is needed to ensure that transitions to new technology are relatively seamless and widely accepted by stakeholders.

Constituent Management

Manages accounts in a manner that ensures that constituent needs are understood and met. Builds relationships with key decision makers while showing respect for each and every person inside and outside the University. Expands reach within existing accounts and keeps track of account activities in order to respond to new developments and changes. This is in contrast to those who are unaware of constituent needs; are unsuccessful at building relationships with key decision-makers; treat some individuals in a discourteous or disrespectful manner; are unsuccessful at expanding reach within existing accounts; and/or are frequently unaware of account activity that could trigger contact and, consequently, miss opportunities.

Equipment Skills

Demonstrates the essential skills related to the use of all equipment connected to job responsibilities. Displays an appropriate level of concern for various safety factors when using equipment. This contrasts with individuals who are clearly unfamiliar with how to make the best use of job-essential equipment or who take shortcuts and/or make decisions that increase the risk of injury or damage to equipment.

Cost Awareness

Demonstrates an ongoing awareness of budget levels and the ramifications of exceeding them. Regularly tracks expenses against budget projections to ensure that spending levels can be adjusted as necessary. Cost-conscious and tends to stay within budget. This contrasts with individuals who lose sight of ongoing costs, allow expenses to exceed projected amounts and place far too little emphasis on cost-containment or on giving others timely warnings about budget issues.

Obtain Constituent Commitments

Demonstrates ability to prospect and qualify leads, identify constituent needs, translate features to benefits, deliver effective demos, negotiate, and close commitments. This contrasts with individuals who are unsuccessful at prospecting or qualifying leads, who neglect to identify constituent needs, who have been unable to translate features to benefits, who conduct ineffective demos, and/or who miss opportunities to negotiate or otherwise do what else is necessary to close an adequate number of commitments.

Budgeting

Creates and adheres to realistic budgets in a manner that helps achieve the organization's objectives. Tracks expenses against the budget frequently enough to make adjustments at the optimum time. Communicates budget concerns and adjustments to all appropriate stakeholders so that they can adapt their plans and expectations. This contrasts with the behavior of individuals who either fail to create budgets or fail to stick to them; who let too much time go by before comparing actual expenses to budget projections; and/or who neglect to notify important stakeholders about budget concerns or adjustments. Such individuals frequently allow expenses to spin out of control.

Writing Skills

Produces clear and complete written reports that meet the needs of the requestor. Written communications (reports, email, etc.) use words and tone that are appropriate for the intended audience and are produced and distributed in a timely manner. This differs from reports that use jargon or other words that may not be understood by the intended audience, reflect an inappropriate tone and/or are distributed too late to meet the needs and expectations of various stakeholders.

Project Management

Manages each stage of a project to ensure that commitments are met in a manner that is timely and within budget. Clearly defines roles and responsibilities, determines necessary resources, and monitors project performance through appropriate systems and procedures. This is distinctly different from individuals who fail to assess and define roles needed to complete a project, do not secure adequate resources, do not monitor ongoing progress or spend too much time on one project and not enough on each of multiple projects.

Evaluating New Technologies

Identifies the need for new technology, thoroughly assesses features, risks and benefits of alternatives, and matches new technologies to existing organizational skills and practices. This is in distinct contrast to those who fail to see technology needs or who recommend approaches or products without properly assessing features, risks and benefits and/or how well they fit existing skills and business practices.

Planning

Develops the steps necessary to accomplish long-term goals. Identifies long and short-term goals and establishes realistic plans to reach them. Allocates required resources, allows for contingencies and ensures that plans fit with the larger needs of the organization. Sets milestones to measure progress along the way. This is distinctly different from individuals who ignore long-term or short-term goals, fail to link their goals to broader initiatives, have not set realistic plans that allow for contingencies, and/or ignore the importance of milestones that could enhance motivation in the pursuit of long-term plans.

Safety

Makes sure to understand every safety practice expected by the organization. Takes no shortcuts that increase the risks of accidents, personal injuries or equipment failures. Looks for unsafe practices in the workplace and takes responsibility to ensure that others are aware of the potential impact. This is distinctly different from those who are unaware of many safety expectations, take shortcuts that increase safety risks, and/or fail to recognize and take timely action to increase safe practices by others.

Operating Skills

Priority and Time Management

Prioritizes tasks and manages time to ensure that deadlines are met. Plans his or her time and sticks to those plans. Prevents or manages interruptions until the highest priority tasks are accomplished. This is in contrast to those individuals who fail to prioritize tasks or are not tenacious or disciplined enough to stay focused on the highest priority aspects of the job. This tendency to lack focus or discipline results in unmet deadlines and frustrated stakeholders.

Decisiveness

Investigates all viable options, along with the potential consequences of each, and then makes timely and good decisions. Can direct a group through this process and does not hesitate to make difficult decisions. Can speed up the decision-making process when time is of the essence, yet can also slow it down when there is time to do so. This differs from those who make quick decisions even when there is little time pressure or too few options have been explored, who struggle to make decisions when they are difficult or controversial, who fail to take charge when a group is struggling to move forward; and/or who miss "windows of opportunity" by delaying decisions when timing is truly a critical factor.

People Management**Building Team Environment**

Establishes an environment that creates incentives for, and eliminates barriers to, a team environment. For example, articulates common goals, communicates how individual roles contribute to team success, provides both clear direction and sufficient resources while removing or reducing obstacles to team success. This contrasts with those who reward competitive behavior within the team, fail to connect individual roles to team goals, talk/write about the importance of teamwork without providing adequate resources or fail to play a key role in neutralizing any other obstacles to team success.

Encouraging Constituent Focus

Consistently conveys that internal and external constituents are the highest priority. Respects constituent needs and expectations and lets them know if their expectations cannot be met. Refrains from complaining about (or speaking negatively about) constituent behavior or expectations. Communicates in a manner that promotes and sustains constituent satisfaction and encourages others to do the same. Achieves these outcomes by ensuring that constituent's needs and deadlines are realistic and that they are met. Publicly recognizes those who deliver excellent service. This is markedly different than those who speak unkindly about constituents, fail to inform constituents about any unrealistic expectations, complain about constituents expectations, and fail to recognize or reward those who think and behave otherwise.

Managing and Evaluating Performance

Ensures that performance appraisals are fair, objective and timely. When rating performance, considers each employee's role and experience along with any circumstances that affected performance. Rates on the basis of fair and realistic expectations regarding both results expected and competencies demonstrated. Understands the competencies required by those being assessed and can describe gaps in a clear and effective manner. Ensures that feedback is ongoing and that appraisal documentation is submitted for review on time. This compares favorably to being unclear or unrealistic, failing to provide ongoing feedback, being unable to explain the connection between competencies and results, demonstrating bias in ratings or written documentation, or failing to complete documentation or meetings in a timely manner.

Training and Development

Ensures that staff members get a sufficient amount of orientation, training and developmental opportunities to maximize their chances of being successful in their assignments. Views training and development as an investment in employees and uses mentoring, cross- functional assignments, job rotation or other on-the-job learning opportunities to enhance the depth and breadth of skills and experience. Also encourages self-development activities. This is in contrast to those who provide little or no orientation to the organization, view training as an expense and something to be rationed on a selective basis, and tend to focus almost entirely on today's needs and demands instead of ensuring that employees are being prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Takes action required to ensure that employees understand their roles and responsibilities and that these are carried out as expected. This includes putting these expectations in writing, having two-way conversations to verify understanding and monitoring actual performance to ensure that roles and responsibilities are carried out. This compares with those who leave expectations vague or unstated, fail to ensure understanding or refrain from taking steps to ensure that expectations are actually being met.

Personal Attribute**Creativity**

Applies creativity and originality in the work setting, when appropriate. Suggests or applies new ways of addressing ongoing work issues and challenges. Sees possibilities that others have not yet seen, or combines ideas and approaches suggested by others in a unique manner that results in breakthroughs and improvements. Understands when to be creative and when to stick with what exists now. This behavior contrasts with those who tend to focus exclusively on how things have been or how they are now and who tend to stick with traditional ways of doing things.

Results Oriented

Achieves results within established timelines. Understands and demonstrates that intentions, activities and results are not the same. Expects that obstacles will occur and refuses to use them as an excuse for not achieving results. This compares favorably to those who seek to justify poor results by describing intentions or activities, who get derailed by obstacles and fail to take effective steps to avoid or overcome them, and/or who frequently miss deadlines without giving a prior warning.

Versatility

Is able to take on a variety of different tasks and roles in the organization. Can move in a relatively seamless manner from one task or focus to another and can fill in for other team members when they are absent or are experiencing work overload. This contrasts distinctly with individuals who have a limited number of skills or who convey a strong preference to work in narrowly defined arenas. In these circumstances, the individual's actual (or preferred) lack of range and flexibility typically reduces his/her value in a team environment.

Personal Development**Learning and Application of New Skills**

Makes it a point to put new skills and knowledge to use on the job in a timely and effective manner. Applies new skills on the job before forgetting what was learned, and ensures that these skills are used to create a positive impact on a day-to-day basis. This is in direct contrast to those who delay efforts to apply new skills or knowledge or who allow themselves to get discouraged when new skills feel awkward or when they do not achieve immediate results. Such individuals typically fail to achieve the benefit of new skills and knowledge back on the job and frequently go back to their old ways of doing things.

Relationship Skills**Conflict Resolution**

Takes actions that resolve conflicts in a manner that is best for both the organization and the individuals involved. Addresses complaints and problems quickly and effectively, keeps all parties informed of the status of any negotiations required, encourages employees to report problems or concerns and negotiates outcomes that are viewed as fair and even-handed. This is quite different from those who tend to ignore conflicts or complaints, do not keep interested parties abreast of the status for resolving issues, fail to make it comfortable for people to express concerns or appear unable or unwilling to facilitate a process that helps resolve conflicts.

Sharing Knowledge

Makes it a practice to share new skills or knowledge with others in the organization. Keeps his/her manager informed of newly-acquired skills and knowledge and offers to share information, demonstrate skills or summarize learning for others on the team. This clearly differs from those who tend to hoard knowledge or skills and fail to see to it that new capabilities are shared with others to expand the benefits for the organization.

Active Listening Skills

Tends to listen more than talk. Leaves others with the impression that their thoughts, opinions, feelings and needs are important. Helps others understand their feelings and their needs. This compares favorably with the behavior of individuals who talk more than they listen, leave others wondering whether perspective is important, and/or are not viewed as a potential "sounding board" that allows others to sort through and clarify their own feelings and needs.

Constituent Focus

Personally demonstrates that external (or internal) constituents are a high priority. Identifies constituent needs and expectations and responds to them in a timely and effective manner. Anticipates and prevents delays or other things that can adversely affect the constituent. Keeps constituents informed about the status of pending actions and inquires about constituent satisfaction with service. This is in sharp contrast to behavior patterns that tend to disappoint constituents, leave them feeling forgotten and unimportant or that otherwise result in unmet needs or expectations.

Relationship Building and Networking

Builds rapport and develops alliances with a broad range of people. Adjusts communication style to meet the needs of individuals at various organizational levels and to meet the needs of clients. Forms alliances by demonstrating concern and respect for others, as well as by highlighting common interests and aspirations. Leave others feeling that he/she will be a trusted ally and is careful to act in ways that reinforce that trust over time. This is in contrast with the behavior of individuals who tend to interact with a relatively narrow range of people or who fail to adjust their communication styles to accommodate others. It is also quite different than behavior that leaves the impression that the person is seeking to advance his/her own narrow agendas and interests.

Strategic Skills

Building Organizational Commitment

Demonstrates commitment, loyalty and appreciation for the organization. Conveys a high level of concern for the well-being of all employees, helping to ensure that both their needs and those of the organization are met. Consistently speaks highly of the organization, its employees and its mission. This is in distinct contrast to individuals who communicate a lack of pride or confidence in the organization, a lack of concern for the work/life balance of any of its employees, or a lack of loyalty or commitment to the continued success of the organization.

External Awareness

Keeps informed about market conditions, competitive information and political factors that may impact the goals and interests of the organization. Uses good judgment about when to share external information as well as who should be informed. Stays up-to-date on trends and projections and sees what is on the horizon. Is seldom surprised by political or market factors that affect the organization. This is in contrast to those who stay focused on internal matters alone and get surprised when external factors change the landscape for the organization.

Negotiation Skills

Demonstrates the ability to negotiate compromises that leave various stakeholders feeling that their interests and positions have been understood and that the resulting solution is even-handed and fair to all parties. Accomplishes this through listening to differing points of view and taking each view into account. Looks for common interests and helps parties explore and reach middle-ground solutions. This contrasts favorably with negotiation tactics or strategies that seem to favor one party's interests or positions over another and leave one or more individuals feeling that they were not heard and that they gave up more than they gained in the process.

Advocate for Project

Promotes programs and projects, both within and outside the organization, in a manner that increases understanding and support for these initiatives. Communicates with others in a way that raises visibility for, and interest in, products or projects. Ensures that the benefits of programs and projects are clearly understood and that they are received with enthusiasm and high expectations. This is distinctly different than the impact of those who are unenthusiastic about new programs, come across as unconvincing or insincere about the advantages of products or programs, or communicate about them in a negative manner that casts doubt on the value or benefits to be expected.

Organizational Awareness

Understands the internal climate of the organization, including the most productive channels of communication, and makes use of the appropriate communication channels to achieve goals and objectives. Has learned about both formal and informal communication channels and understands when to stick to the formal hierarchy of reporting relationships. Understands unwritten protocols and the political aspects of how communication takes place. Avoids errors in judgment when selecting strategies for accomplishing tasks. This is distinctly different than those who fail to understand formal and informal channels of communication, misread organizational dynamics and are left scratching their heads about why their efforts to achieve support and results fall short of their expectations.

Analytical Thinking

Breaks down problems and issues into sub-components and then assesses the costs, benefits and risks of various options prior to selecting a particular approach. This contrasts with the behavior of individuals who tend to attack problems without a thorough examination of all important components and ramifications; who fail to weigh the costs, benefits and risks associated with various alternatives; and/or who are unable to explain or justify their decisions in a logical and systematic fashion.

Strategic Thinking

Can analyze organizational strengths and weaknesses and then combine these with knowledge of the industry, market and organization to develop long-term strategy. This is distinctly different from being unaware of organizational strengths and weaknesses and/or are being unable to combine a knowledge of the industry, market and organization in a fashion that results in a viable long-term strategy.

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Takes an active role in identifying new business opportunities, assessing the risks involved and comparing these to the potential advantages of taking action. Influences decisions by examining financial costs and potential benefits and by providing realistic risk- assessments. This is in contrast to those who fail to look for new business opportunities or do an inadequate assessment of risks and benefits and/or either tend to avoid opportunities or embrace ventures that fail to produce the expected payback on the resources invested.