# Washington University Core Competencies for Success

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<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS</th>
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| **Adaptability and Change**    | Adapts well to changes in work assignments and priorities. Adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Approaches change positively and adjusts behaviors accordingly. | - Understands changes in work tasks, situations, and environment as well as the logic or basis for change; actively seeks information about new work situations.  
- Approaches change and new situations as positive opportunities for learning or growth; focuses on the beneficial aspects of change; speaks positively about the change to others.  
- Modifies behavior to deal effectively with changes in the work environment; readily tries new approaches appropriate for new or changed situations; does not persist with ineffective behaviors. |
| **Communication**              | Clearly conveys information and ideas through a variety of media—written, verbal, and digital—to individuals and groups in a manner that engages the audience and helps them understand and retain the message. Demonstrates high level of professionalism. | - Demonstrates effective listening for accurate, empathetic understanding.  
- Informs others involved in a project or effort about developments and plans.  
- Shares important information from management with employees and others as appropriate.  
- Informs manager about progress and problems.  
- Initiates clear, continuous communication within area of responsibility.  
- Gives and receives constructive feedback. |
| **Collaboration and Teamwork** | Develops and uses collaborative relationships to facilitate the accomplishment of work goals. Identifies opportunities and takes action to build strategic relationships between one’s area and other areas, teams, departments, units, or organizations to help achieve business goals. | - Listens and responds appropriately to other team members’ ideas.  
- Offers support for others’ ideas and proposals.  
- Confers with other team members about their concerns.  
- Expresses disagreement constructively (e.g., by emphasizing points of agreement, suggesting alternatives that may be acceptable to the group).  
- Reinforces and gives credit to team members for their contributions.  
- Gives honest, constructive feedback to other team members.  
- Provides assistance to others when needed.  
- Works toward solutions that all team members can support. |
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| **Continuous Learning**            | Demonstrates commitment to professional development; attends professional conferences, focuses on best practices, values cutting-edge practices and approaches. Identifies new areas for learning, and takes advantage of a variety of learning activities and opportunities. Introduces new knowledge and skills on the job. | ▪ Targets learning needs through informed feedback.  
▪ Identifies and seeks appropriate learning activities (e.g., courses, reading, self-study, coaching, experiential learning) that help fulfill learning needs.  
▪ Maximizes learning and actively participates in learning activities (e.g., takes notes, asks questions, critically analyzes information, keeps on-the-job application in mind, does required tasks).  
▪ Applies new knowledge and skills to practical use on the job; furthers learning through trial and error.  
▪ Takes risks in learning, accepts unfamiliar or uncomfortable situation in order to learn, and asks questions. Accepts challenging and unfamiliar assignments. |
| **Creativity and Innovation**      | Looks at situations from multiple perspectives. Creates solutions to problems using novel methods and processes. Generates innovative solutions in work situations. Experiments and takes risks with different and novel approaches to address work problems and opportunities, or to create something new. | ▪ Challenges conventional models and identifies assumptions about defining and solving problems. Generates alternative approaches to problem solving.  
▪ Manages external constraints and approaches.  
▪ Draws upon multiple and diverse sources (individuals, disciplines, bodies of knowledge) for ideas and inspiration.  
▪ Thinks expansively and combines ideas in unique ways or makes connections between disparate ideas. Explores different lines of thought, views situations from multiple perspectives, and evaluates multiple solutions and approaches.  
▪ Ensures relevance by targeting important areas for innovation and developing solutions that address work priorities. |
| **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** | Identifies, evaluates, and challenges assumptions that frame thinking and behavior. Examines ideas—individual, organizational, social—from many perspectives. Analyzes issues and solves problems with accuracy, clarity, depth, breadth, logic, open-mindedness, and fairness. Takes informed action. | ▪ Undertakes a complex task by breaking it down into manageable parts in a systematic, detailed way.  
▪ Generates several possible explanations or alternatives, anticipates potential obstacles, and prepares contingency plans.  
▪ Identifies all information needed to solve a problem effectively.  
▪ Presents problem analysis and possible solutions rather than just identifying the problem.  
▪ Recognizes one’s own limitations and errors, and takes steps for more accurate understanding and corrective action. |
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<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Understands the structure, operations, culture, and context of the organization, including relevant political, social, and economic forces.</td>
<td>▪ Understands how organizational culture impacts how work gets done and takes this into account in planning and decision making.</td>
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<td>Awareness</td>
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<td>▪ Understands the goals and objectives of other departments and uses this information to build alliances and resolve issues.</td>
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<td>▪ Understands the interdependent nature of operations and the impact of various work units on workflow within the organization.</td>
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<td>▪ Understands how an individual’s decisions impact others across the organization and involves them appropriately.</td>
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<td>▪ Keeps up-to-date on what is happening across the organization.</td>
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<td>▪ Shares information with others across the organization based on an understanding of their priorities, goals, and objectives.</td>
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<td>▪ Understands how emotional responses to situations influence behavior and perception.</td>
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<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Understands and communicates, honestly, consistently, and effectively, concerning attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, values, interests, strengths, and feelings, all within a context of appropriate work behavior and performance, including periods of stress and adversity. Recognizes personal and professional strengths and limitations, areas for growth, and resources for improvement.</td>
<td>▪ Maintains awareness of emotions and uses this information to guide one’s thinking and actions in a constructive manner.</td>
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<td>▪ Learns and uses strategies and techniques for managing stress and challenge in work situations in order to maintain momentum and diffuse conflicts.</td>
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<td>▪ Identifies one’s own and others’ strengths, and leverages skills to manage uncertain situations.</td>
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<td>▪ Recognizes gaps in one’s own skill set, and takes advantage of growth opportunities to enhance personal and professional effectiveness.</td>
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<td>▪ Acknowledges being “out of one’s depth” and seeks appropriate training or coaching.</td>
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| **Service and Quality Focus** | Understands and maintains customer/client needs and relationships, internal and external, as the primary driver of work goals and activities. Values and earns customer trust and respect through meeting and exceeding customer expectations. | ▪ Solves customer problems quickly and effectively.  
▪ Communicates with customers to determine needs and level of satisfaction.  
▪ Asks well-formulated questions about needs and expectations.  
▪ Meets customer needs.  

▪ Takes personal responsibility for resolving service problems.  
▪ Measures and tracks student, patient, and customer satisfaction.  
▪ Presents in a positive manner with customers. |

| **Valuing Diversity and Inclusion** | Appreciates and incorporates the capabilities, perspectives, and contributions of all individuals. Works effectively with individuals of diverse style, ability, and motivation. | ▪ Seeks out and uses ideas, opinions, and talents from diverse and various sources and individuals to maximize on tasks or assignments.  
▪ Seeks understanding through building relationships with people from other cultures and backgrounds.  
▪ Champions the value of diversity through actions in the workplace (e.g., recruitment, professional development, promotion).  
▪ Confronts racist, sexist, and all other inappropriate behavior.  
▪ Challenges exclusionary organizational practices.  
▪ Examines own biases and behaviors to avoid stereotypical thoughts and actions. Plans and takes action that considers diversity-related implications. |