



Prospect competency framework

Incomes Data Services

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Final

Competency: Meeting the needs of the organisation, members and colleagues

Definition

Demonstrates an understanding of, and commitment to Prospect and trade union principles, and to serving and understanding the professional needs and interests of members and colleagues. Displays a positive approach to the organisation, produces quality work and understands the wider context of their role in providing services.

Level descriptors

1. Is prompt, accurate and efficient in responding to others, and effective in working within agreed timeframes.

Examples of the expected standard

- Timely in dealing with enquiries, such as telephone calls from Prospect members and queries from colleagues and others
- Actively responds within their own team and across other departments to assist with issues
- Good at housekeeping and ensuring information is up-to-date, including admin/files, case records, departmental databases
- Accurate, keeps a close eye on the detail and makes few mistakes, for example, when processing members' applications or dealing with staff expenses

Requires development

- Demonstrates inattention to detail, such as showing a lack of care in recording information
 - Tends to put off some of the more routine/day-to-day aspects of their role, such as keeping on top of general office duties
 - Is careless and disorganised with paperwork and filing, and does not keep their in-tray organised
 - Does not quality check own work, including basic proof-reading and confirming factual information
 - Does not get on with the job, such as spending too much time on personal business, or chatting to colleagues about non-work issues
 - Demonstrates an unwillingness to learn when there are no obvious barriers to development
2. Progresses operational issues and service provision, and understands the broader picture of how Prospect is organised.

Examples of the expected standard

- Shows a positive and professional attitude, takes a genuine interest in their work and members' cases, and more broadly in what is happening within Prospect
- Knows where to find the relevant information
- Provides general support to other colleagues as appropriate

- Deals objectively but sympathetically with sensitive telephone calls, in order to overcome difficulties
- Able to demonstrate competence and confidence in using, for example, more detailed IT systems, including the membership database, EIS etc.

Requires development

- Lacks confidence in dealing with others
 - May be unable to remain calm in certain situations
 - Fails to convey full and accurate information to colleagues from, for example, telephone enquiries
3. Offers more detailed advice and support to colleagues in their work to meet service needs. This includes on-going commitment to recruiting, retaining, involving and developing the membership.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to act calmly under pressure, for example, in negotiations
- Deals effectively with casework in a timely manner
- Understands how their role can contribute to building the membership
- Able to provide appropriate advice in their field of professional expertise

Requires development

- Does not fully utilise technology in their work to gain maximum benefit
 - Unable to deal with adversity e.g. in difficult or confrontational situations internally and externally
4. Demonstrates authority in their area of work and ensures effective outcomes. Keeps up-to-date with developments in areas of professional expertise and is able to build rapport with key stakeholders.

Examples of the expected standard

- Willing to get involved in wider national issues, for example, campaigning, lobbying
- Able to manage conflicting views in order to resolve issues
- Demonstrates flexibility and is able to adapt to a range of circumstances

Requires development

- Fails to give attention to important/national issues
- Unable to build rapport with key stakeholders

5. Influences and directs longer-term and strategic developments in their sectors and beyond. Acts with integrity and achieves high levels of credibility and respect.

Examples of the expected standard

- Achieves successful outcomes on important matters or key negotiations
- Develops and promotes new ways of working
- Is seen as a respected figure by both members and staff

Requires development

- Is inconsistent in their behaviour
- Does not always espouse and promote the values of Prospect, either internally or externally
- Does not always follow through on new developments

Competency: Leadership

Definition

Demonstrates an equitable and consistent approach to the leadership of staff and others, reflecting the values of Prospect. Acts as a role model and is willing to take ownership of difficult issues and situations.

Level descriptors

1. Is open with own manager, understands the need for leadership and is willing to share issues or concerns.

Examples of the expected standard

- Earns the trust of their line manager
- Establishes mutually respectful relationships with line manager and others

Requires development

- Uncooperative with colleagues and does not keep others up-to-date
- May be aggressive and confrontational

2. Demonstrates 'informal' leadership with colleagues, members and branches by taking ownership and finding a way through difficulties.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to take the lead with branch committees or other groups in making difficult decisions
- Willing to make recommendations in discussions such as providing advocacy, representation and clear advice

Requires development

- Has a tendency to be disproportionately led by others' agendas
- Timid, lacks confidence and may look elsewhere for leadership

3. Is committed to managing and developing own staff, using the PDR process and competency framework. Keeps staff up-to-date on a regular basis and maintains a positive working environment.

Examples of the expected standard

- Deals with staff in a consistent and timely manner
- Understands that people management is a fundamental part of their role, demonstrating an appropriate duty of care

- Fully utilises the skills of own staff
- Coaches, supports and empowers staff

Requires development

- Fails to support other members of the team and gain their confidence
- Inappropriate delegation of certain tasks to own staff
- Displays a lack of respect and care for staff
- Tolerates mediocre performance

4. Has credibility as a recognised leader in their area of expertise. Maintains visibility, inspires others and is willing to take responsibility to resolve sensitive issues in a prompt and appropriate manner.

Examples of the expected standard

- Understands the professional boundaries in undertaking their role
- Thinks laterally and is willing to work on cross-functional issues

Requires development

- Reluctant to take important decisions
- Ignores difficult issues
- Is not accessible or supportive to managerial colleagues

5. Takes a positive lead in dealing with broader organisational, political and international issues, including responding to change and opportunities for future growth and development.

Examples of the expected standard

- Prepared to find a way through the most sensitive or difficult situations
- Ready to deal with changing political circumstances
- Willing to contribute to organisation strategies that are based on synergy and cohesion

Requires development

- Is reluctant to take strategic decisions
- Does not consider the bigger picture
- Gets bogged down in inappropriate detail

Competency: Communication

Definition

Uses the full range of verbal and written skills to listen to, and understand the interests and needs of colleagues, members and others, and to communicate in an open, clear and honest manner.

Level descriptors

1. Listens, communicates and responds in an effective and consistent manner

Examples of the expected standard

- Confident and knows the right questions to ask
- Communicates according to laid-down organisational policies

Requires development

- Shows a lack of interest and is blunt or disengaged when dealing with enquiries from others
 - Lacks clarity and fails to provide a full or accurate account when relaying information to colleagues regarding a member or workplace issue
2. Shows a willingness to understand the more detailed requirements of others, by listening to their concerns in order to react and respond effectively. Develops positive relationships with colleagues, members and others.

Examples of the expected standard

- Is a patient listener and able to convey detailed information to others
- Shares information with others, where appropriate
- Able to communicate consistently with colleagues, members and others in a straightforward and honest way, with due discretion

Requires development

- Does not pick up others' telephone calls
 - Lacks confidence in dealing with members and colleagues
 - Fails to share appropriate information with others
 - Shows inattention to detail and produces careless and inaccurate work
3. Prepares relevant written communications, specialist reports and documents that meet appropriate standards of accuracy. Strives to build and maintain networks through effective verbal communication.

Examples of the expected standard

- Is able to tailor the style of presentation to different audiences
- Produces reports of appropriate tone and length
- Maintains regular contact with others to improve understanding
- Able to convey more detailed information to colleagues, members and others

Requires development

- Does not take on board suggestions for changes
- Is not very creative in promoting Prospect
- Unable to build and maintain networks

4. Communicates openly, consistently and with integrity, using a range of more complex communication methods to convey information to a wider audience.

Examples of the expected standard

- Takes account of all key stakeholders in communications
- Able to speak with authority on broader matters, for example, sectoral and policy issues
- Acts as a good internal resource for information

Requires development

- Is reluctant to communicate beyond own team
- Is too remote from colleagues
- Ignores the needs of stakeholders

5. Is accomplished in communicating at a high level, in order to build effective networks and rapport at a national and international level with other unions, employers, professional bodies and the media.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to project a strategy and vision to both internal and external stakeholders
- Able to use the full range of communication techniques at all levels, displaying sensitivity, respect and understanding

Requires development

- Misses opportunities to use the appropriate media
- Does not use sufficient channels to gather information

Competency: Influencing

Definition

Demonstrates an awareness of situations and has the ability to bring about favourable outcomes for Prospect, using the skills of negotiation, representation, persuasion, advocacy and logical argument.

Level descriptors

1. Is sufficiently knowledgeable and refers to established facts when dealing with colleagues and members.

Examples of the expected standard

- Develops positive relationships with others
- Able to interact confidently with individuals at all levels
- Is approachable, has an easy manner and encourages others to be open and share information

Requires development

- Unable to elicit the right information from colleagues, members and others
- Reticent, or reluctant to put one's point across

2. Uses different approaches to convey their message to others, to ensure understanding and gain acceptance.

Examples of the expected standard

- Remains objective and shows empathy when dealing with difficult individuals
- Able to engage with others to gain their co-operation

Requires development

- Is insensitive to others and ignores objections
- Has a tendency to take sides
- May become too emotionally attached

3. Is self assured and able to act with confidence and integrity on individual and collective matters and puts points across in a persuasive manner, whilst maintaining confidentiality, a flexible approach and managing confrontation.

Examples of the expected standard

- Is persuasive without being threatening or aggressive, but able to challenge where necessary
- Able to build relationships and win people over with sound arguments
- Uses negotiations as an opportunity to promote recruitment
- Is able to persuade representatives and branches to take on additional activities or responsibilities

Requires development

- Is timid and raises unrealistic expectations
- Is too familiar at times
- Is unable to persuade others to co-operate

4. Shows an awareness of complex and sensitive situations in dealing effectively with a range of stakeholders and issues across sectors, industries and specialisms.

Examples of the expected standard

- Builds networks with key internal and external stakeholders and other bodies
- Demonstrates strong powers of persuasion
- Has built an established reputation within own area of responsibility
- Uses both formal and informal channels of networking

Requires development

- Does not generate respect from others
- Ignores important feedback

5. Demonstrates a credible and highly persuasive approach with senior figures in other unions, major employers and other external bodies, both nationally and internationally.

Examples of the expected standard

- Earns a high level of respect both within and outside of the organisation
- Has a reputation for successfully influencing and networking with the most senior representatives from trade unions and industry

Requires development

- Over reliant on same stakeholders each time
- Remains out of touch with the real issues

Competency: Planning and organising

Definition

Adopts a structured and timely approach in the planning and delivery of services, in order to make the best use of time. Operates in an efficient, effective and professional manner, maintaining the ethos and principles of the union.

Level descriptors

1. Plans and manages own time effectively, and responds to requests from others. Keeps up-to-date with routine/general office work.

Examples of the expected standard

- Prepares a daily 'to do' list
- Aware of how actions impact on others

Requires development

- Poor time management
- Not prepared to be flexible over requests or tasks

2. Is able to multi-task and prioritise effectively

Examples of the expected standard

- Sufficiently organised to be able to work independently
- High priority tasks completed within deadlines
- Where able, to encourage their manager into letting go of certain tasks

Requires development

- Disorganised and fails to plan ahead with their workload
- Urgent deadlines not met.

3. Is a self-starter, anticipates issues and is proactive in developing plans and carrying out work/projects within agreed timeframes

Examples of the expected standard

- Demonstrates an ability to manage all aspects of their role in an organised manner, for example, keeping on top of paperwork or case management
- Shows an appreciation of how their role fits into the bigger picture

Requires development

- Tends to adopt a short-term perspective in carrying out their job
 - Fails to learn from mistakes and rectify problems in subsequent outputs
 - May off-load work on to colleagues at short notice and without warning
 - Willing to be flexible when dealing with change
4. Takes a broader view by developing more detailed plans within a wider context, taking account of medium to long-term considerations

Examples of the expected standard

- Is prepared for a range of situations by identifying relevant information and consulting with appropriate stakeholders
- Is able to look ahead and anticipate and plan for future developments

Requires development

- Tends to respond to events rather than driving issues forward
 - Fails to understand the wider implications of their own work plans
5. Develops and implements detailed plans for a wider area of the organisation over a longer timescale, through effective preparation and delegation.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to plan and lead on a number of specific activities or initiatives on behalf of Prospect, for example, through media representation, lobbying ministers and others
- Can deal effectively with wider internal issues and operational plans in line with organisational objectives
- Embraces a flexible approach to dealing with strategic change

Requires development

- Fails to grasp the importance of more 'process-oriented' tasks, such as PDR reviews
- Spends insufficient time on particular key tasks

Competency: Analytical thinking and problem solving

Definition

The ability to think through requests, proposals and problems, to analyse data and situations, seek relevant information and use judgements to develop practical and realistic solutions.

Level descriptors

1. Is able to make sense of job-related information and not afraid to ask for further clarity.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to find the necessary information
- Able to demonstrate common sense and a logical approach

Requires development

- Unable or unwilling to think through problems
- Does not find or consider relevant information

2. Is able to challenge, ask relevant questions and seek out further information in order to provide the appropriate response.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to draw on their relevant experience and anticipate problems and queries in advance
- Thinks in a structured way and is able to break problems down into different elements

Requires development

- Comes up with solutions without considering all of the issues
- Has a tendency to take things at face value and not challenge

3. Ability to analyse and evaluate a range of issues in order to identify possible options towards an agreed solution.

Examples of the expected standard

- Leaves a clear trail of their work that can be adopted by others for best practice
- Demonstrates developed analytical skills in dealing with often detailed data, and able to assimilate accordingly
- Thinks through the pros and cons of different options

Requires development

- Fails to identify the likely impact of problems
- Fails to engage sufficiently with their work and does not diagnose potential issues

4. Requires the ability to analyse and understand complex and detailed information, using a range of analytical techniques to break down issues into their component parts.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to see the bigger picture, both internally and externally, while still paying attention to detail and quality
- Demonstrates highly-developed thinking

Requires development

- Unable to identify more innovative solutions
- Does not always understand the subtleties of some of the more sensitive aspects of their job, and how to act accordingly
- Fails to understand the significance of complex and other data

5. Is able to understand and resolve the most challenging problems and situations at a strategic level.

Examples of the expected standard

- Is able to get to grips quickly with important issues, anticipate where problems may arise and formulate an appropriate solution
- Puts forward strong arguments to resolve difficult issues for the greater good of Prospect

Requires development

- Fails to identify high-level solutions
- Not on top of all the information and issues with other external bodies, including lobby groups, parliamentary committees etc.

Competency: Team working

Definition

Is able to work in a co-ordinated way, demonstrating respect towards colleagues, members and others, in striving for a common goal.

Level descriptors

1. Works positively with members of own team and co-operates with colleagues in other teams. Willing to seek guidance where necessary and offer help when required.

Examples of the expected standard

- Is a team player and assists others within and outside of their own team
- Recognises how their role fits in with the rest of the team
- Approachable and willing to take on other tasks when asked
- Understands the role of their own line manager

Requires development

- Refuses reasonable requests
- Demonstrates an uncooperative attitude
- Unwilling to find common ground
- Withholds information from other colleagues

2. Maintains an interest in working with other teams, internally and externally, and is prepared to contribute objectively to wider issues.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to manage personal autonomy whilst working across boundaries cooperatively
- Is able to adapt to different agendas and situations

Requires development

- Is not always visible to others within their team(s)
- Unable to work around wider issues
- Works strictly within limited boundaries

3. Takes the lead in promoting the importance of positive and collaborative working across the organisation and externally.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to inspire others and is perceived as a good role model
- Does not shy away from responsibility and is comfortable at promoting internal and external partnerships and networks at the highest levels

Requires development

- Too remote from their team and not willing to confront broader workplace issues
- Adopts a narrow perspective in undertaking their work

Competency: Initiative

Definition

The ability to initiate actions, or identify opportunities as appropriate, which may include coming up with a proposal or helping others without first being requested to do so.

Level descriptors

1. Prepared to seek out and act upon relevant information and come back with answers.

Examples of the expected standard

- Demonstrates a willing attitude
- Able to see a task through to completion

Requires development

- Not self-motivated
- Needs constant guidance and reassurance to perform in their own role

2. Is inquisitive and makes suggestions to progress issues.

Examples of the expected standard

- Prepared to question things
- Takes on tasks without being asked
- Is able to come up with suggestions for continuous improvement when dealing with queries
- Knows when to alert their manager to potential issues and problems

Requires development

- Unwilling to accept help
- Not proactive in working to find solutions

3. Is a self-starter, gets on with the job, and takes ownership by anticipating problems and acting on opportunities, for example in negotiations.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to work effectively with minimal supervision
- Flexible in approach to their own work
- Able to act quickly and on their feet
- Recognises opportunities and is effective at 'promoting' Prospect

- Able to act upon the ideas of others and put them into practice in order to achieve successful outcomes

Requires development

- Tends not to initiate tasks and acts in a reactive rather than proactive manner
- Unable to embrace change within the workplace and see the opportunities for individual and organisational growth

4. Is able to identify and act on significant opportunities, while working on more complex and wide-ranging issues.

Examples of the expected standard

- Able to turn round difficult situations and achieve a positive outcome, such as working to identify initiatives in sometimes hostile environments
- Able to embrace more detailed ideas and turn them into workable solutions

Requires development

- Tends not to drive things forward, and takes a back seat if things are not going to plan
- Does not initiate new ways to promote Prospect at every opportunity

5. Willing to proactively address and resolve new or the most complex issues across Prospect or externally, and to actively seek out solutions to overcome major obstacles.

Examples of the expected standard

- Identifies opportunities for Prospect that inspire others to perform to the best of their ability in their role
- Is proactive in decision making

Requires development

- Not forward-thinking around issues of managing change
- Is unable to seize opportunities for the longer-term benefit of Prospect

