Civil Service Competency Framework By Grade – SMS 1

Setting Direction

Seeing the Big Picture
Changing and Improving
Making Effective Decisions

Delivering Results

Achieving Commercial Outcomes
Delivering Value for Money
Managing a Quality Service
Delivering at Pace

Civil Service Values

Engaging People

Leading and Communicating
Collaborating and Partnering
Building Capability for All
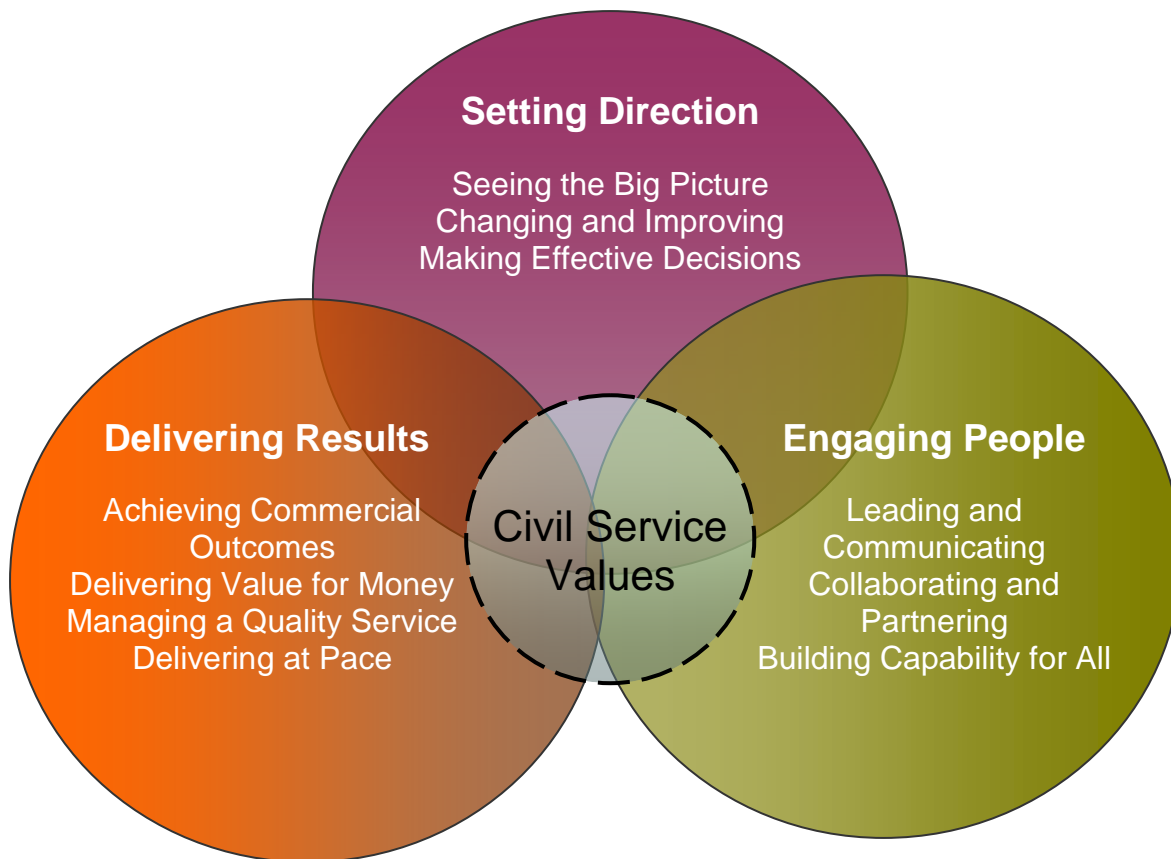
About this framework

We are introducing a new competency framework to support the Civil Service Reform Plan and the new performance management system. The competency framework sets out how we want people in the Civil Service to work. It puts the Civil Service values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity at the heart of everything we do and it aligns to the three high level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results. Civil servants work in a huge range of jobs across the country and overseas but one thing we have in common is that we are here to support the elected Government, providing advice to help shape its policies and ensuring seamless and practical implementation in line with those policies.

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines 10 competencies, which are grouped into 3 clusters as set out above. For each competency there is a description of what it means in practice and some examples of effective and ineffective behaviours at all levels. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course. These indicators of behaviour are not designed to be comprehensive, but provide a clear sense of and greater understanding and consistency about what is expected from individuals in the Civil Service.

What does it mean for me?

The framework will be used for recruitment, performance management and development discussions and for decisions about progression. Some Departments introduced it in April 2012 with the rest of Government doing so from April 2013. In these new arrangements your business objectives will set out "what" you need to achieve over the year and this competency framework will set out "how" you need to work to achieve those objectives.

Most of you will need to focus on a number of competencies, usually around six, identified with your manager as being essential to your role. You are encouraged to discuss the framework with your line manager to identify the competencies that apply most to your job role.

This framework has been developed in partnership with Civil Service professions. If you work as part of a profession with a separate framework this will complement your professional framework and should be used alongside it.

The framework is made up of ten competencies. Below is a list of all the competencies with a high-level summary of each one.

Strategic Cluster – Setting Direction

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with and supports organisational objectives and the wider public needs. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Civil Service goals and deliver the greatest value. At senior levels, it is about scanning the political context and taking account of wider impacts to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen and support economic, sustainable growth.

2. Changing and Improving

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it's about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. At senior levels, this is about creating and contributing to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy implementation and build a leaner, more flexible and responsive Civil Service. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches wherever possible.

3. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective; using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. For all staff, it means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well reasoned justifiable decisions. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and balancing social, political, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

People Cluster - Engaging People

4. Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It's about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision; managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the Civil Service.

5. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the Civil Service to help get business done. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions. At senior levels, it's about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration and building effective partnerships including relationships with Ministers.

6. Building Capability for All

Effectiveness in this area is having a strong focus on continuous learning for oneself, others and the organisation. For all staff, it's being open to learning, about keeping one's own knowledge and skill set

current and evolving. At senior levels, it's about talent management and ensuring a diverse blend of capability and skills is identified and developed to meet current and future business needs. It's also about creating a learning and knowledge culture across the organisation to inform future plans and transformational change.

Performance Cluster - Delivering Results

7. Achieving Commercial Outcomes

Being effective in this area is about maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities. For all, it's about having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are delivering added value and working to stimulate economic growth. At senior levels, it's about identifying economic, market and customer issues and using these to promote innovative business models, commercial partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value; and ensuring tight commercial controls of finances, resources and contracts to meet strategic priorities.

8. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money. At senior levels, effective people embed a culture of value for money within their area/function. They work collaboratively across boundaries to ensure that the Civil Service maximises its strategic outcomes within the resources available.

9. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches to support service delivery. At senior levels, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services.

10. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it's about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way. At senior levels, it is about building a performance culture to deliver outcomes with a firm focus on prioritisation and addressing performance issues resolutely, fairly and promptly. It is also about leaders providing the focus and energy to drive activities forward through others and encourage staff to perform effectively during challenging and changing times.

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Effective Behaviour People who are effective are likely to…	Ineffective Behaviour People who are less effective are likely to…
Anticipate and predict the long term impact of national and international developments, including economic, political, environmental, social and technological, on own area	Have limited insight into the changes and developments surrounding own area
Identify and shape how own area fits within and supports the work of the Department	Give limited attention to the bigger issues and interactions across departments and outside the Civil Service when defining strategy
Develop an in-depth insight into customers, citizens, services, communities and markets affected by their area and the wider public sector context	Lack insight into the wider context for own area – take a simplistic perspective on the issues and concerns of stakeholders
Create joined up strategies and plans that have positive impact and add value for stakeholders, citizens and communities	Develop strategies and plans with limited reference to the impact and value they will bring to the key stakeholders and to citizens now and in the future
Shape strategies and plans which help put into practice and support the Department's vision and long-term direction, including those shared with other departments	Maintain a narrow perspective – allow own area to become out of step or work against the overall objectives of the Department

2. Changing and Improving

Seek and encourage ideas, improvements and measured risk taking within own area to deliver better approaches and services	Restrict changes to own portfolio – do not integrate or align with change in other areas
Encourage a culture of imaginative thinking, seek to expand mindsets and genuinely listen to ideas from employees and stakeholders	Create a punitive environment for risk taking and responsive decision making – show intolerance of mistakes
Identify step changes that quickly transform flexibility, responsiveness and quality of service	Allow own area to become outdated and out of step with evolving changes and wider service requirements
Challenge the status quo in own and related areas to achieve value-adding improvements and change	Contribute to a culture of inertia across own portfolio of activities by focusing managers on delivering things as they always have
Lead the transformation of services to users, moving to a digital approach whenever possible	Miss opportunities to use alternative delivery models
Create effective plans, systems and governance to manage change and respond promptly to critical events	Adopt an unsystematic approach to change management – cause confusion about priorities and timelines

3. Making Effective Decisions

Interpret a wide range of political and national pressures and influences to develop strategies	Give limited consideration to long-term sustainability or diversity impacts when shaping strategies and plans
Weigh up competing views to generate ways forward which will meet organisational goals	Have to continually revisit decisions due to lack of or poor quality analysis and evidence
Ensure involvement and consultation where necessary and take decisive action when required	Fail to follow a broad consultation process when coming to key decisions
Articulate options and large-scale reputational risks and impacts, including economic, environmental, political and social, and recommend plans to manage and mitigate	Provide advice without full consideration of risk, scenarios and options
Take quick, confident decisions at a strategic level to move things forward	Constantly change decisions based on new opinions, information or challenge
Outline direction of travel, recommendations and decisions for their area, taking account of financial and implementation issues	Overlook key information relating to cost and implementation issues

4. Leading and Communicating

Lead from the front, communicating and motivating people towards stretching goals	Unable to translate, articulate and inspire people around vision and goals
Actively promote the Department's reputation externally and internally – publicise successes widely	Avoid activities to build profile within or outside the Department
Inspire staff and delivery partners to engage fully with long term vision and purpose of the Department, supporting them to make sense of change	Make limited effort to create clarity for others around strategy or purpose, leave staff to work through changes on their own
Actively promote diversity and equality of opportunity inside and outside the Civil Service	Disregard the need to consistently promote good diversity practice
Communicate with conviction and clarity in the face of tough negotiations or challenges	Back down readily in the face of challenge or tough negotiations
Influence external partners, stakeholders and customers successfully – secure mutually beneficial outcomes	Lose focus under pressure and neglect the need to agree joint outcomes

5. Collaborating and Partnering

Proactively create, maintain and promote a strong network of connections with colleagues across the Department, wider Civil Service and externally	Focus on delivery at the expense of building networks and effective relationships across and beyond their area
Actively promote knowledge and resource sharing with peers and across functions	Consistently protect resources and interests of own area at the expense of Departmental priorities
Encourage and establish principles of working effectively across boundaries to support the business	Act selfishly to protect own area and resist involvement from external colleagues or experts
Encourage teams to engage with a variety of delivery partners and stakeholders and listen to their feedback	Give teams limited support about how to work collaboratively with delivery partners, discourage early engagement
Build high performing teams within own area, aligned around common goals	Struggle to address low morale or de-motivation within teams; create boundary or resource tensions between the teams
Set out clear expectations that bullying, harassment and discrimination are unacceptable	Permit unacceptable or disrespectful behaviour to persist in own area and with other teams

6. Building Capability for All

Champion development, talent and career management for all staff and make learning a reality by encouraging and providing a range of development experiences	Allow delivery to dominate to the exclusion of learning and development activities, missing out on longer term business benefits and ignoring the organisational learning dimension
Create an inclusive environment, one from which all staff, including under-represented groups, can benefit	Tolerate discriminatory thinking and practices when building capability in the organisation
Encourage work-place based learning, ensure colleagues take responsibility for their own learning and share it to build organisational capability	Fail to ensure colleagues practise and share new learning of benefit to the business
Devote dedicated time to supporting and empowering people through coaching and mentoring and sharing expertise/knowledge	Focus resources on technical knowledge/ skills gaps at the expense of leadership skills or development of future talent
Identify capability requirements to deliver Departmental 3-5 year strategy and grow sustainable capability across all groups including those identified as having high potential	Allow ineffective performance management which fails to narrow capability gaps for the organisation or grow available talent
Role model continuous learning and self development, evaluating own effectiveness and growth and planning next learning steps accordingly	Seldom seek feedback and fail to seize opportunities for personal development

7. Achieving Commercial Outcomes	
Identify and implement different ways of working deployed in other sectors e.g. using resources, assets and commercial arrangements	Overlook opportunities for collaboration with commercial partners to deliver more sustainable outcomes
Promote a strong focus on the needs of customers, suppliers and other delivery partners to develop new commercial models for the delivery of policy and business goals	Define success too narrowly and focus mostly on own concerns, ignoring opportunities to form commercial alliances which could support delivery
Manage strategic commercial relationships and delivery arrangements actively and effectively to provide ongoing value for money to the tax payer	Show limited active management of commercial arrangements associated with delivery of policy and business outcomes
Develop and apply market and economic understanding and insights, working with commercial experts, to support sound commercial decision-making and recommendations	Rarely approach or see limited value in working proactively with commercial experts to support commercial activities
Take a wide view, successfully achieving common goals with organisations that have different priorities	Do little to manage the strategic commercial relationship with delivery partners resulting in little or no longer term information sharing or planning
Ensure teams appreciate how market demands, investment decisions and other commercial considerations such as funding and pricing models influence suppliers and the delivery of services	Allow teams to be unaware of important commercial considerations for suppliers and other delivery partners

8. Delivering Value for Money	
Understand the financial position of own area, the organisation and the wider economy and recognise impacts of this when delivering services	Overlook opportunities to gather and make use of financial information in development of policy and plans
Make and encourage strategic choices on spend, challenge high risk costly projects and forgo non-priority expenditure	Take narrow view that low cost equates to good value
Promote and visibly demonstrate a culture of value for money in own area/function in order to focus managers on getting a good return for taxpayers' money	Adopt a short-term, incremental view of resource thus compromising sustainability of resource savings
Interpret a wide range of financial and management information and use financial data effectively in decisions	Rarely use financial or management information to support analysis and decision making
Develop robust business cases, with fully costed options identifying clear policy advantages and/or returns on investment to assist decision making	Recommend investment or cost not justified by the likely return
Understand and manage the risks and cost-drivers for own areas of responsibility in the context of strategic priority	Take a narrow approach to costs and cost-drivers

9. Managing a Quality Service

Facilitate flexible use of resources across grades through innovative structuring of teams and resources within own area	Maintain status quo in organisational structures and lack a flexible approach to manage resources and services
Clarify and articulate the diverse requirements of customers and delivery partners to support effective delivery	Spend limited time on seeking out and clarifying customer requirements of the Department
Use customer insight to determine and drive customer service outcomes and quality throughout own area	Not involve delivery partners sufficiently in delivering quality and customer service outcomes
Translate complex aims into clear and manageable plans and determine resource requirements to support implementation	Be unclear about overall service deliverables and resources required for implementation
Maintain and improve service by managing risks to ensure own area and partners deliver against defined outcomes	Establish unrealistic or confusing priorities and plans, leading to inefficiency in service/overlaps between activities
Work collaboratively with customers or service delivery partners to manage, monitor and deliver against service level agreements	Set service level agreements which cannot be delivered and fail to engage effectively or manage expectations with delivery partners

10. Delivering at Pace

Translate strategic priorities into clear outcome-focused objectives for managers and provide the energy and drive in achievement of these objectives	Set unrealistic, vague or uninspiring goals and lack clarity around expected outcomes
Take ownership of delivery against outcomes and give credit for others' delivery	Present delivery as someone else's issue
Maintain a strong focus on priorities, holding others to account for priorities and swiftly respond to changing requirements	Constantly revisit and revise priorities
Drive a performance culture within own area and support and encourage a focus on performance and priorities	Give limited personal support for delivery and allow the focus to drift away from critical priorities
Act as a role model for delivery by injecting enthusiasm and energy to achieve results	Put an overly strong focus on achieving tasks without efforts to motivate and energise people to perform
Promote resilience and responsiveness in the organisation by being open and honest about challenges, and the actions required to address unexpected developments	Overlook the impact of challenges and the impact on team and organisational resilience