Civil Service Competency Framework by Grade – Band S1, S2 and S3

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

FCO Values

Engaging People

Communicating
Collaborating and
Partnering
Building Capability for All
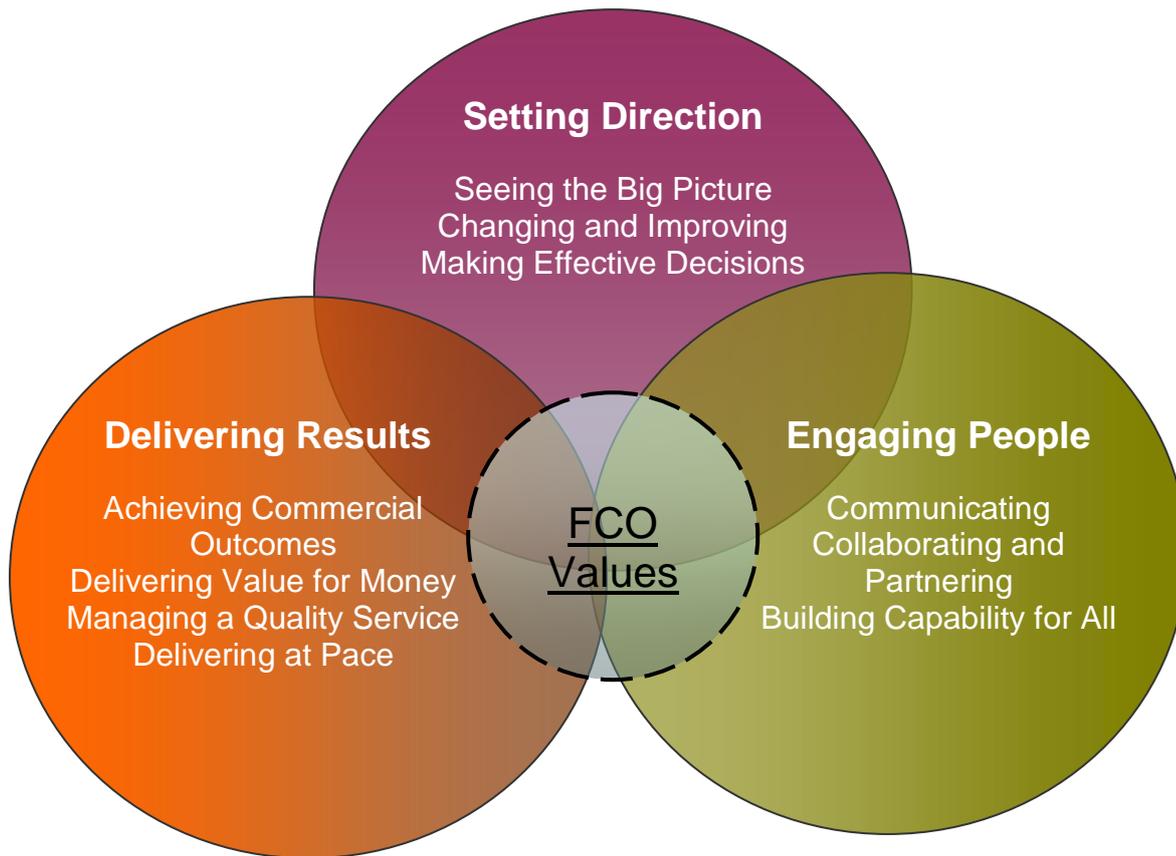
About this framework

We are introducing the revised S band competency framework to support the Civil Service Reform Plan, the FCO values and the new FCO performance management system. The competency framework sets out how we want our overseas staff in support roles to work. It reflects the values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity and is built around the themes of: Setting Direction; Engaging People and Delivering Results.

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance and help you to do your job better. 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 and some examples of effective and ineffective behaviours to provide a clear sense of direction and consistency about what is expected from our S band staff.

What does it mean for me?

The framework will be used for recruitment, performance management and personal development discussions. You will need to focus on six (6) competencies which should be identified with your supervisor or manager as being the most appropriate for your job. The summary below should help you select the most relevant *competencies for your role. There is a choice, but the 6 listed below are appropriate for most S band roles.

Changing and Improving
Communicating
Collaborating and Partnering
Building capability for all
Delivering value for money
Managing a quality service

Strategic Cluster – Setting Direction

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with and supports FCO objectives and delivery of Diplomatic Excellence. For S band staff, it is about understanding how your work fits into your team and Posts delivery of objectives. For example; the Residence is a representational platform used to deliver Public Diplomacy; staff working in a Residence would play an important part in this.

*2. Changing and Improving

To be effective in this area you will be open to change and might suggest ideas for improvements to the way things are done in your own work. This competence may be selected for jobs where there is a lot of change to routine or where improvements need to be made. For example; Drivers being responsive to circumstances requiring different routes or using different work methods at Residences to improve standards.

3. Making Effective Decisions

To be effective in this area you will know when to ask for advice and make decisions about your own work using previous experience of similar situations. For S band staff, work is often similar and opportunities to demonstrate this competence may be more limited. However, some roles; for example security guards, would need to know when to make routine decisions and report or respond immediately to incidents pertaining to security situations so this competence may well be relevant to some roles.

People Cluster - Engaging People

*4. Communicating

For S band staff, effectiveness in this area is about communicating well and with enthusiasm. It's about being mutually fair and respectful, using appropriate language and actions and contributing to team discussions. As most S band roles include working with others, this competence would be appropriate for all S band roles.

*5. Collaborating and Partnering

This is a key competence for all S band staff and supports "working with others". It's about having effective working relationships with people in your workplace. To get your job done it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with co-workers and teams.

*6. Building Capability for All

Effectiveness in this area is about having a focus on learning for oneself. For S band staff, it's about being open to learning; developing skills, experience and knowledge by learning from mistakes and wanting to improve performance. Most S band staff would find this competence relevant as all jobs can be improved by learning.

Performance Cluster - Delivering Results

7. Achieving Commercial Outcomes

This competence may be relevant to S band staff who may need to purchase food / items for Residences or fuel for vehicles, but as resources will generally be limited it may not always be the most appropriate competence to be selected as one of the six to assess performance against.

*8. Delivering Value for Money

Delivering results and value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of your job. For S band staff, it means following procedures, being careful with resources and making sure there is no waste. This would be especially relevant to S band roles where goods are purchased.

*9. Managing a Quality Service

Many S band roles are support roles and demand excellent customer service. This competence is very relevant to support roles and would normally feature in the six competences selected. Effectiveness in this area is about trying to improve the quality of service, taking account of customer needs and requirements in your work area. People who are effective organise their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service.

10. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility for your own actions. It's about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing well with set-backs

Strategic Cluster – Setting Direction

1. Seeing the Big Picture	
Effective Behaviour *People who are effective are likely to…*	*Ineffective Behaviour* *People who are less effective are likely to…*
Understand what is required of them in their role and how this contributes to team and Post when required	Show little interest in the work of the Department, not appreciating they have a role in delivering services and results that contribute to priority achievements
Consider how their own job links with and impacts on colleagues and others in the post	Work on own tasks in isolation showing little interest in the wider context and relevant developments outside their immediate area

2. Changing and Improving	
Co-operate with and be open to the possibilities of change and consider ways to implement and adapt to change in own work role	Unwilling to consider how change could help in own role
Be constructive in raising issues with managers about implemented changes and the impact these are having on the service	Be resistant to listening to ideas or plans for change, showing little interest in the reasons for change and how they can adapt their behaviour to thrive in the new environment
Respond effectively to emergencies and urgent priorities	Resistant to sudden changes to usual work routine

3. Making Effective Decisions	
Ask questions when unsure what to do	Fail to research or use relevant information or support to carry out tasks
Speak up to clarify decisions and query these constructively	Miss opportunities to take part in constructive conversations about decisions made
Think through the implications of own decisions before confirming how to approach a problem/issue	Give limited consideration to the impact of their decisions

People Cluster - Engaging People

4. Communicating	
Put forward their own views in a clear and constructive manner, choosing an appropriate communication method, e.g. email/ telephone/ face to face	Miss opportunities to contribute positively to discussions about the organisation or team
Act in a fair and respectful way in dealing with others	Show bias or a lack of respect and treat some groups more favourably than others
Ask open questions to appreciate others' point of view	Withhold work information and refuse to share knowledge that would help others do a better job

5. Collaborating and Partnering	
Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team	Focus on own objectives at the expense of supporting colleagues
Get to know fellow team members/colleagues and understand their viewpoints and preferences	Is overly critical and blaming of people who have different working styles or development needs
Seek help when needed in order to complete own work effectively	Miss opportunities to generate better outcomes for the customer through collaboration with others
Be open to taking on different roles	Assume specific, unvarying role responsibilities
Try to see issues from others' perspectives	Look at issues from own viewpoint only
Listen to the views of others and show sensitivity towards others	Not treat all colleagues fairly, equitably or with respect

6. Building Capability for All	
Recognise and take time to achieve own learning and development objectives	Lack interest in personal development, decline all opportunities to learn e.g. through attending programmes or engaging in work-place learning
Find ways to learn and personally improve in the completion of day-to-day tasks	Maintain a rigid view of daily tasks, missing opportunities to learn or to improve how they do things

6. Building Capability for All	
Improve own performance by taking on board feedback from colleagues from different backgrounds	Ignore or undervalue the contributions and views of others from different backgrounds
React constructively to developmental feedback and make changes as a result	Do little to follow through on constructive developmental feedback, ignore or dismiss its value

Performance Cluster - Delivering Results

7. Achieving Commercial Outcomes	
Understand the suppliers obligations to provide a service	Demonstrate little understanding of what suppliers are obliged to deliver, how or by when

8. Delivering Value for Money	
Challenge others appropriately where they see wastage	Be careless or wasteful with resources or see where resources are being wasted but not raise this with team or manager
Be careful with all types of resource (e.g. money, time, materials, fuel, energy) that they use	Frequently choose convenience over cost effectiveness
Keep track of spend and make sure work is approved and signed off as necessary	Not follow appropriate control or authorisation processes for work, services or resource use
Maintain recognised financial procedures and practices	Cut corners and not keep accurate financial records

9. Managing a Quality Service	
Actively seek information from customers to understand their needs and expectations	Act without thinking through the necessary steps and disregard the customer's circumstances
Act to prevent problems, reporting issues where necessary	Allow service levels to drop or problems to occur before reporting

9. Managing a Quality Service	
Gain the knowledge needed to follow the relevant legislation, policies, procedures and rules that apply to the job	Miss opportunities to learn or find out about relevant guidance and rules

10. Delivering at Pace	
Work in an organised manner using own knowledge and expertise to deliver on time and to standard	Show little interest in own work or in getting the job done properly
Work with energy and pace to get the job done	Wait to be told what to do and rely on others to sort out problems
Take responsibility for the quality of own work and keep manager informed of how the work is progressing	Ignore own part in ensuring their team can deliver and avoid supporting colleagues to get the job done even when the need is clear
Remain focused on delivery	Be easily discouraged or distracted
Maintain consistent performance	Give up quickly when things do not go smoothly

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