



# Leadership competency framework rubric: Higher education

This rubric defines a set of competencies that are characteristically modeled by effective capacity-building leaders in a higher education setting. There are seven competencies arranged into three broad categories: leads self, leads others, and leads change. The rubric draws on the wealth of thinking on leadership that exists, but doesn't attempt a definitive summary. Pages 8 and 9 provide a worksheet for individual reflection.

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<b>Leads self</b>				
<b>1. Delivers results</b>  Does the individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrate a commitment to priority goals and reforms?</li> <li>■ Take ownership of the work?</li> <li>■ Manage and produce to deadlines?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Allows urgency to drive distribution of limited time and resources.</li> <li>■ Views own efforts as disconnected from campus priorities and blames others or external factors for failure.</li> <li>■ Fails to produce to deadlines; work produced is generally low-quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Focus on priorities is often diverted by crises.</li> <li>■ Assumes some responsibility for the work but lacks urgency around campus goals.</li> <li>■ Produces work of varying quality; frequently misses deadlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Generally focuses time and resources on priorities, but sometimes allows distractions to interfere.</li> <li>■ Takes responsibility for achieving campus goals, though may not be primary focus.</li> <li>■ Usually produces high-quality work in a timely fashion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prioritizes time and resources by asking what will be most likely to contribute to improvements in student outcomes.</li> <li>■ Takes responsibility for achieving clear objectives that contribute substantially to priority reforms and pursues them with proactivity and persistence.</li> <li>■ Consistently and reliably produces high-quality and timely work.</li> </ul>

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<p><b>2. Learns continuously</b></p> <p>Does the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrate a commitment to learning and improving?</li> <li>■ Demonstrate humility and reflect on his/her practice?</li> <li>■ Openly receive and act on feedback?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Approaches work and interactions as “the way I always do it” without regard to quality.</li> <li>■ Demands credit for all work and rarely accepts faults in own work or approach.</li> <li>■ Responds negatively or defensively to feedback and does not address opportunities for improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sometimes seeks ways to improve, but can revert to “the way I always do it”.</li> <li>■ Reflects, but focuses on justifying own approach at expense of learning insights.</li> <li>■ Open to occasional feedback on performance, though reluctant to act on it to improve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Generally looking to learn and improve but excellence is not yet a habit.</li> <li>■ More focused on learning and improving than on seeking recognition.</li> <li>■ Receptive to feedback and typically makes necessary adjustments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Seeks to understand and model excellence and attention to detail in every deliverable and interaction; always looking for ways to improve.</li> <li>■ Constantly reflects on own practice; shares credit fairly but is willing to forgo credit if that helps achieve the outcome or strengthen the team.</li> <li>■ Is willing and eager to receive feedback on all aspects of his/her work, accepts it graciously, and works actively to incorporate it into future work.</li> </ul>

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<b>Leads others</b>				
<p><b>3. Influences others</b></p> <p>Does the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lead – not just manage – his/her team?</li> <li>■ Collaborate effectively beyond his/her own team?</li> <li>■ Facilitate clear decision-making?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Struggles to influence behavior of team members, routinely falls back on authority to secure compliance.</li> <li>■ Sticks to own “silo” – engages with colleagues/stakeholders on a reactive or transactional basis.</li> <li>■ Largely makes decisions in isolation – quality of interactions is low.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Manages team competently, but relies on formal authority to do so – pays little attention to team culture.</li> <li>■ Has relationships outside own management chain, but does not always use these effectively.</li> <li>■ Consults when making decisions, but interactions/meetings can lack clarity/focus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Works to build team culture, but sometimes relies on authority to get things done.</li> <li>■ Uses a network of contacts to achieve tactical gains, but could leverage relationships in a more strategic way.</li> <li>■ Uses meetings to make decisions efficiently, but does not always facilitate joint ownerships of plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inspires confidence in his/her team and builds a culture of excellence – deploys a range of techniques to influence behavior without relying on authority.</li> <li>■ Builds a strong network of relationships, alliances, and partnerships across and beyond the college; aligns efforts and resources outside own management chain to implement priority reforms.</li> <li>■ Brings internal and external colleagues together to make decisions that drive the work forward; for every interaction/meeting, defines clear objectives, a plan for achieving them, and demonstrates strong facilitative leadership skills.</li> </ul>

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<p><b>4. Develops others</b></p> <p>Does the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrate a growth mindset?</li> <li>■ Coach and develop talent?</li> <li>■ Inspire others to excellence?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sets expectations as if talent is fixed – some people are innately better at certain things and cannot change.</li> <li>■ Takes no responsibility for the development of colleagues.</li> <li>■ Sets a low bar for performance of colleagues and shies away from difficult tasks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Only focuses on growing talent of some individuals.</li> <li>■ Rarely provides feedback and coaching, or only when convenient.</li> <li>■ Inconsistently holds colleagues to a high bar; discourages them from “stretch” assignments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supports the development of colleagues, though not in a strategic manner.</li> <li>■ Provides occasional feedback and coaching, though it may not be in the most effective manner.</li> <li>■ Holds colleagues accountable for high quality work, but does not encourage others to take on challenging assignments beyond their normal work level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrates commitment to growing talent and to the continuous professional development and success of all colleagues by actively creating opportunities for them to grow and develop through observed practice and reflection.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates strong skills in observation, feedback, and coaching; gives consistent, evidence-based feedback to supervisees, peers, and managers to build a strong team – the ongoing growth of which is apparent in the quality of its work.</li> <li>■ Insists on excellence and attention to detail in the work of colleagues, particularly supervisees, and inspires others to take on complex challenges.</li> </ul>

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<b>Leads change</b>				
<p><b>5. Understands the work</b></p> <p>Does the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Understand the details of priority reforms?</li> <li>■ Understand the campus-wide/national reform context?</li> <li>■ Build the necessary technical skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Operates with limited awareness of campus priorities, focusing narrowly on individual tasks without considering whether they align with the campus' strategic direction.</li> <li>■ Treats priority reforms as purely college-specific and doesn't leverage campus-wide, system, national and/or peer expertise.</li> <li>■ Does not seek opportunities to grow technical skills of self or team members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Shows awareness of priority reforms, their relationship to one another, and the campus' overarching goals, but does not consistently make decisions with them in mind.</li> <li>■ Focuses on college reform efforts with limited interest in the wider campus/system/national context and opportunities for collaboration.</li> <li>■ Shows awareness of necessary technical skills, but does not proactively seek opportunities for professional development of self or team members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Demonstrates knowledge of relevant laws and policies surrounding the campus' priority reforms and usually uses it to make decisions.</li> <li>■ Uses knowledge of campus-wide/system/national reform landscape to identify and draw on experts and resources to support priority reforms.</li> <li>■ Ensures his/her team has the necessary technical expertise by periodically seeking growth opportunities when needs arise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Deeply commits to the priority reforms by continuously building expertise in the relevant laws/policies, the connections between them, and their implications for implementation; uses this knowledge to anticipate and overcome challenges.</li> <li>■ Understands how all of the priority reforms are similar to and different from those across campus, the system, and in the national dialogue on reform; draws appropriately on expertise and resources from other campuses and nationally to support reforms.</li> <li>■ Understands what specific technical skills are necessary to play his/her assigned role, and does what it takes to develop these skills in his/her team (e.g. through designing and delivering high-quality professional development).</li> </ul>

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<p><b>6. Thinks strategically</b></p> <p>Does the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Set strategic direction?</li> <li>■ Bring logical and analytical rigor to decision-making?</li> <li>■ Synthesize information to solve problems?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Narrowly focuses on day-to-day tasks, prioritizing urgency without considering impact on long-term goals; does not set a vision.</li> <li>■ Makes decisions in a vacuum, basing them more often on a hunch than on evidence, and without consideration of potential implications.</li> <li>■ Relies on too narrow an evidence base, often resulting in flawed conclusions about how to solve the problem at hand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Occasionally communicates broad vision for the work, but inconsistently grounds efforts in campus priorities.</li> <li>■ Attempts to apply rigor to decision-making, but sometimes struggles to work through the whole process from identifying root causes of the problem to testing various hypotheses.</li> <li>■ Considers all available evidence when trying to solve problems or make decisions, but frequently does not distill the information into coherent options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Emphasizes the “long view” in planning and implementation, but occasionally lets urgent “fires” derail focus from priorities.</li> <li>■ Applies logic and analytical rigor to most decisions, but when pressed for time, lets the need for an urgent decision compromise rigor.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates skill and ability to synthesize complex information and make cogent proposals, but applies these skills inconsistently, occasionally at the expense of fully informed decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creates a clear and compelling vision of what he/she is trying to do and how it connects to campus priorities.</li> <li>■ Breaks down complex, ambiguous challenges into manageable, coherent problems; generates hypotheses about the nature of each problem and conducts the necessary analyses to test them rigorously; uses best evidence obtainable in the timeframe.</li> <li>■ Quickly assimilates complex information from multiple sources (e.g. campus reform plans, interactions with colleagues/partners, quantitative/qualitative evidence); sees connections between different types of evidence and distills it to identify core issues and best solutions for addressing challenges; where appropriate, ventures beyond known facts to test innovative solutions.</li> </ul>

Competency	Not very much (1)	To some extent (2)	Mostly (3)	Role model (4)
<p><b>7. Communicates effectively</b></p> <p>Does the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Produce clear, well-structured communications?</li> <li>■ Ensure that communications are well-timed, well-placed, and appropriate to audience?</li> <li>■ Build strong relationships with key stakeholders?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Messages are disjointed, one-sided, have too much/too little detail, are confusing and error-filled; often appears unprepared and fails to connect with audiences when delivering oral presentations.</li> <li>■ Communicates rarely, or at the wrong time; does not choose an appropriate style or medium for the audience.</li> <li>■ Does not engage stakeholders, or has poor relationships with key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Messages are of uneven clarity; gets the main points across, but often not in the most organized fashion; oral presentations are generic, without thought to main takeaways for each specific audience.</li> <li>■ Pays attention to needs of audience, but often lets own preferences drive style, medium and timing.</li> <li>■ Strength and proactivity of engagement with stakeholders is inconsistent and not driven by strategic priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Applies principles of well-structured communication to most but not all messages; written and oral communication is generally effective, but final products could be more elegantly presented and better crafted to maximize impact.</li> <li>■ Usually chooses style, timing and medium to increase impact on audience.</li> <li>■ Relationships with stakeholders are generally good, but has not sufficiently prioritized and developed key relationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All communications are crystal clear, with a main point backed by supporting points and compelling evidence; ensures a tight logical relationship between a point being made, any supporting points, and supporting evidence; crafts high-quality written communications that reflect attention to detail; delivers engaging oral presentations that achieve the desired impact on audiences.</li> <li>■ Plans use of style, timing and media strategically to maximize the combined impact of communications on the target audiences.</li> <li>■ Demonstrates trustworthiness and judgment to lead high-stakes interactions with stakeholders; displays sensitivity to the context and needs of each stakeholder; generates constructive dialogue by balancing a clear point of view with listening, empathy, and responsiveness.</li> </ul>

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION WORKSHEET**

	<b>Competency</b>	<b>Rating (1-4)</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Changes I want to make</b>
Leads self	<b>1. Delivers results</b>			
	<b>2. Learns continuously</b>			
Leads others	<b>3. Influences others</b>			
	<b>4. Develops others</b>			
Leads change	<b>5. Understands the work</b>			
	<b>6. Thinks strategically</b>			
	<b>7. Communicates effectively</b>			

<b>Top 3 changes I want to make</b> (i.e. specific behaviors, critical moves)	<b>What's holding me back?</b> (Skill factors? Will factors? Structural/environmental factors?)	<b>Action steps/support needed</b> (e.g. formal learning, opportunities for practice, opportunities for reflection)