

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



University
of Windsor



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Introduction

Leaders throughout the institution play a critical role in advancing the mission and vision of the University, fostering innovation and change, shaping organizational culture, creating high-performing teams, achieving results and building collaborations and partnerships. The University of Windsor Leadership Competency Framework outlines the key competencies that when applied, makes an individual an effective leader. The framework creates a standard for leadership expectations across the University.

The framework:

- Is critical to ensure consistency of leadership behaviours across the institution that shape the workplace culture.
- Creates a common language/understanding that aligns the expectations and actions of leaders across the institution.

The framework is aligned with the University's Mission, Vision and Values ([Aspire Strategic Plan](#)) and informed by the Employee Engagement Survey results (2022), the Aspire Strategic Planning consultations, and the Employee Mental Health Strategy.

Who is this framework for?

This Leadership Competency Framework is based on a horizontal approach. This approach is grounded on the following:

- Effective leadership requires generic knowledge and skills that transcend disciplines/technical areas or positions.
- A general set of competencies is critical for effective leadership in any range of sectors, disciplines, or institutional settings or positions.

(Source: Ruben Brent D., Richard De Lisi, Ralph A. Gigliotti. (2021) A Guide for Leaders in Higher Education: Concepts, Competencies and Tools.)

Given this, the University of Windsor Leadership Competency Framework applies to all leaders, at every level of leadership regardless of their role at the University.

Leadership competencies can be defined as a cluster of specific knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSA) that when combined make an individual an effective leader and help define expectations and effective performance (Verlinden, n.d.).

Are there other competencies that leaders require to be effective in their roles?

This framework is not meant to be a comprehensive list of every possible competency needed to be an effective leader. It highlights those emerging as critical for success from the literature review, engagement processes and the review of the University's Strategic Plan, Employee Engagement Survey results (2022), and the Employee Mental Health Strategy (2023). It should be noted that technical competencies as well as role-specific competencies are also vital for success. These should be captured within an individual's role/job description.

For what purposes will the Leadership Competency Framework be used?

In order for the leadership competencies to be effective in shaping culture and driving success, they will be integrated into:

- Recruitment processes
- Performance management/goal setting
- Leadership development initiatives/programs
- Succession planning/career progression

University of Windsor Leadership Competency Framework Overview

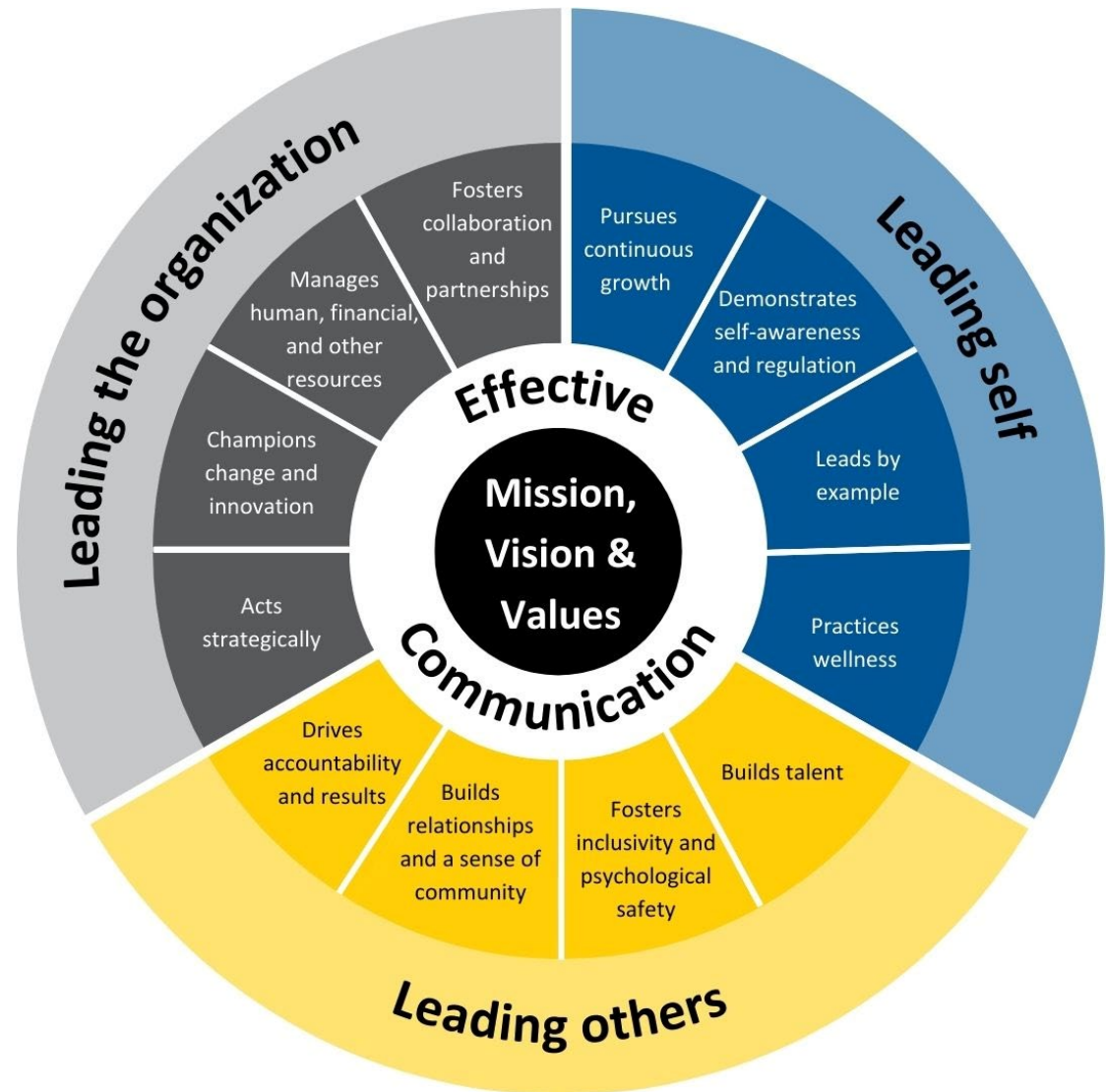
The following is a high-level overview of the framework:

University of Windsor Mission, Vision and Values

At the centre of the framework is the University's Mission, Vision and Values. The leadership competencies define the knowledge, skills and attributes that are core for leaders to live the University's Values, advance its Mission and realize the Vision outlined in the Aspire Strategic Plan.

Effective Communication

Communication is a fundamental competency of effective leadership. Communication is not only about sharing information, but also an essential skill to building trust and relationships, motivating and inspiring people, providing direction, resolving conflicts, navigating change, creating positive work environments, and much more. Communication underpins the core leadership competencies outlined in the model. For example, effective communication is essential for articulating a compelling vision that motivates and inspires others; clearly communicating expectations drives accountability and results.



Core Leadership Competencies

The framework outlines 12 competencies that are critical for leadership effectiveness and organizational success regardless of role. These core competencies emerge from the literature review and informed by the University's Strategic Plan (Aspire), Employee Engagement Survey results, and the Employee Mental Health Strategy.

These competencies have been organized into three broad categories:

1. Leading Self
2. Leading Others
3. Leading the Organization

Each competency within the 3 broad categories includes a list of general behavioural indicators. The behavioural indicators have been written to apply to all leaders within the organization (pages 7 – 10).

Leading Self

Effective leaders are authentic, curious, empathetic, reflective, ethical and resilient.

Competency	Behavioral Indicators
Pursues continuous growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopts a growth mindset and models curiosity and passion for learning. • Seeks feedback to support own growth and development. • Strives to learn, unlearn, and relearn to adapt and thrive. • Keeps up-to date with university/industry trends and standards.
Demonstrates self-awareness and regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is aware of own leadership strengths and blind spots; and prioritizes development. • Recognizes own emotions, privileges, biases and demonstrates self-control when interacting with others. • Reflects on own leadership style and the impact on self and others.
Leads by example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adheres to strong ethical principles, is authentic, and inspires trust. • Demonstrates humility by being open about own mistakes, limitations, and uncertainties. • Leads with calmness and is resourceful and optimistic in challenging times. • Demonstrates courage to challenge the status quo and achieve results. • Is open minded and flexible in thought and action. • Models civil and respectful interactions and shows genuine care and concern for others. • Cultivates a positive attitude/outlook even in challenging times.
Practices wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to stay calm and focused under pressure, sets boundaries and takes care of own mental health and wellbeing. • Adopts strategies to cope with stress, adversity, and prevent burnout. • Demonstrates ability to adapt quickly and effectively in a world where change is a constant. • Is able to bounce back from setbacks and learn from failures. • Models and encourages work/life balance. • Is not afraid to ask for help and support.

Leading Others

Effective leaders create positive work environments, motivate and influence others, drive accountability and results.

Competency	Behavioral Indicators
Builds talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages self-reflection and embraces mistakes as learning opportunities. • Supports the long-term growth of others through coaching conversations, mentoring, stretch assignments and other development opportunities. • Provides timely, constructive feedback to encourage and enable excellence. • Engages in regular conversations with direct reports grounded in mutual respect and collaboration. • Facilitates the strategic transfer of knowledge and succession planning.
Fosters inclusivity and psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates commitment to inclusivity, diversity, equity and decolonization through behaviour and actions, including listening to marginalized voices, acknowledging historical injustices, repairing harm and using anti-oppressive and trauma-informed approaches. • Leads with compassion and models behaviours that signal what is valued and acceptable in the work environment. • Encourages expression of and listening to diverse perspectives. • Ensures physical and psychological safety. • Actively addresses incivility, bullying, harassment and workplace violence.
Builds relationships and a sense of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters a sense of community and belonging within the team. • Fosters open dialogue, seeks feedback, communicates clearly, listens actively, and follows through on commitments. • Manages group dynamics and addresses interpersonal conflict early and effectively. • Recognizes efforts and celebrates successes.
Drives accountability and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds self and others accountable for performance and results. • Is decisive, sets clear goals and expectations, monitors progress and adapts plans to achieve results. • Provides employees with the tools/supports to succeed and proactively addresses performance issues. • Delegates effectively, provides appropriate level of autonomy and empowers others to identify solutions, make decisions and achieve goals. • Takes and encourages taking calculated risks to achieve results.

Leading the Organization

(Depending on the person’s role, reference to organization may be replaced with division, faculty and/or department.)

Effective leaders are visionary, challenge the status quo, drive innovation, and inspire others to reach new heights and achieve results.

Competency	Behavioral Indicators
Acts strategically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets a clear and compelling vision that inspires others to reach new heights. • Sets the strategic direction through proactive consultation and engagement. • Develops and implements operational plans to achieve overall organizational direction. • Monitors changes in the internal/external environment, anticipates challenges/risks and adjusts strategy accordingly. • Makes informed, timely and courageous decisions and follows sound governance processes. • Influences up and cascades the strategic vision through clear communication to inspire action. • Prioritizes high-value work and delegates effectively to enhance productivity and achieve goals.
Champions change and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads/facilitates change initiatives to meet priorities, inspiring and motivating others. • Conveys difficult messages, navigates complex situations, and identifies and manages risks. • Uses transparent and open communication to minimize resistance, build trust and support people through the transition. • Drives continuous improvement, challenges convention, and supports bold thinking, creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking. • Uses data to monitor change processes, measure success and inform decision-making. • Turns challenging/complex circumstances into opportunities for innovation and growth.
Manages human, financial and other resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates effective stewardship of resources and is fiscally responsible. • Allocates/mobilizes resources (financial, human, space, systems, etc.) to achieve strategic/operational priorities. • Manages human resources according to Collective Agreements, University policies, other relevant governance and operational policies and legislative requirements. • Ensures effective and efficient structures, systems, policies, procedures, etc. to achieve strategic/operational priorities. • Establishes and/or recommends policies and procedures.

Competency	Behavioral Indicators
Fosters collaboration & partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="562 240 1871 305">• Encourages and supports the inclusion of diverse perspectives/voices across the organization and removes systemic barriers to collaboration.<li data-bbox="562 318 1818 383">• Builds, maintains and leverages lasting and mutually beneficial relationships with internal and external stakeholders.<li data-bbox="562 396 1734 428">• Participates in community engagement as an ambassador of the University of Windsor.

Outcomes

When leaders develop and apply these competencies, it can lead to many positive outcomes. The following are some examples:

Leading Self	Leading Others	Leading the Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced skills and personal effectiveness to achieve desired goals.• Enhanced ability to inspire and motivate others.• Improved overall wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved morale.• A more positive and cohesive workplace culture that fosters employee engagement.• Increased accountability, performance and alignment with organizational goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive reputation and stronger relationships with stakeholders.• Increased organizational performance and impact.• Enhanced organizational agility and strategic alignment.• Stronger culture of innovation and organizational success.



Achievement of the University's Vision (Aspire Strategic Plan)

As a locally engaged, globally connected institution, the University of Windsor will enable people to transform their circumstances. As partners, leaders, and learners, we will engage in impactful research, relevant teaching, creative endeavours, and inclusive relationship building to foster positive change.

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The following is a list of the resources consulted to inspire and contribute to the development of UWindsor's Leadership Competency Framework:

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