

# UMMS Core Competencies Workbook

# ACCOUNTABILITY



**Holds self and others accountable for measurable, high-quality, timely, and cost effective results**

**Consistently demonstrates energy, enthusiasm, and maximum effort in completing responsibilities**

**Demonstrates flexibility in response to changing priorities**

**Accepts personal responsibility for own actions, including errors**

**Supports other team members by prioritizing and altering daily routines to complete assignments**

**Complies with established policies, procedures, and rules**

**Participates in cross-functional teams and works effectively with employees from diverse backgrounds**

# DEMONSTRATING ACCOUNTABILITY SKILLS



## Accountability is Mutual, Not One-way:

- Mutual accountability occurs where the leaders are accountable to the employees and the employees are in turn accountable to the leaders
- Managers need to “walk the talk.” Employees need to in turn hold up their side of the deal

## Accountability and Trust:

- Trust links to accountability. If you keep your promises, admit to your mistakes and take responsibility, both trust and accountability increase
- Not every promise can be kept, nor every commitment met, but the willingness to confront reality and make adjustments can create a mutually accountable relationship between manager and employee

## Collaboration:

- Collaboration is a difficult skill to achieve in an institution. Are you cooperating or competing with others in your group?
- Columbia University did a series of studies on this issue that showed that teams who collaborate and are cooperative are far more successful than those who compete. Cooperation breeds accountability.

## Accountability Requires Involvement:

- You will have targets imposed on you from leadership where you don't have a say in them or a chance to argue about it, and then may suffer the consequences when you fall short
- Sometimes our consent is implied because we are an employee of an institution. In the same way as you must follow the laws of the country in which you live without signing a document saying you agree to do so
- The key in these situations where targets are imposed, and not negotiated, is get the explanation of “why” – the importance of what is being asked will provide you the freedom to figure out how to best meet the goal

# ACCOUNTABILITY SKILLS EXAMPLE



- You have been juggling multiple projects and realize that you will not be able to meet a deadline for one of the projects which you previously told your manager that you would meet. Take accountability by calling a meeting with your manager and discussing the current status and what options may exist (i.e. reprioritize, move out deadline, etc.) for you to best move forward and complete the project.

# INITIATIVE



Takes prompt action to accomplish tasks and meet goals and objectives

Completes assignments with minimal direct oversight

Utilizes equipment, supplies, and technology to achieve maximum efficiency

Recommends process improvements within department and organization

Collaborates with other employees and departments as needed

Actively participates in the development and achievement of team goals

# DEMONSTRATING INITIATIVE SKILLS



## Do More Than is Required Of You:

- Ability to perfectly implement the delegated tasks is, of course, an important quality for being effective at work. However, this won't give you the opportunity to stand out. There may be plenty of people in your institution who succeed in that.
- Do you want to be exceptional? Then act exceptional. Try to do something extra all the time. One important rule is to concentrate on areas where you can generate the most visible and remarkable results.

## Think as a Team Member, Not An Employee:

- You can't care and devote yourself fully to something that you don't consider as yours. We have the same concept in the workplace too. If you decided to take initiative at work, then think about yourself as a team member.
- This means that each success, each achievement of the institution is yours as well. Institution prosperity will lead to your personal prosperity too. As soon as you establish this mindset you will start caring about each detail and dedicating all your efforts to achieving profound outcomes.

## Speak Up And Share Your Ideas:

- Do you have a brilliant idea? Then go ahead and speak about it. A million wonderful ideas haven't meant anything to this world just because they were not told; no one knew about them.
- There is always need for fresh, powerful concepts. If your suggestions are based on broad research and adequate facts, then you have a great chance to see them being realized in the near future.

## Never Stand Still:

- People who do the things the way they have always been done will in the best case get the same results all over again
- To stand out you need to be creative. You should constantly search for new solutions and more effective approaches
- Ideas are the most expensive matters nowadays and potentially the best contribution you can offer to your institution

## INITIATIVE SKILLS EXAMPLE

- You have been working in your department for just over a year and are very familiar with all of the processes and procedures for your group and see an opportunity to improve one of the processes. Take the initiative and be proactive by recommending a process improvement to your manager.

# PROBLEM SOLVING/ DECISION MAKING

Identifies and analyzes problems weighing the relevance and accuracy of available information and recognizing one's filters, privileges, biases, and cultural preferences

Generates and evaluates alternative solutions and makes effective and timely decisions

Reviews the effects and implications of decisions and takes appropriate follow up actions



# DEMONSTRATING PROBLEM SOLVING/ DECISION MAKING SKILLS

## A Solution At The End Of The Process:

- The most common mistake in problem solving is trying to find a solution right away. That's a mistake because it tries to put the solution at the beginning of the process, when what we need is a solution at the end of the process.

## Seven Step Effective Problem Solving Process:

- 1. Identify the issues 2. Understand everyone's interests 3. List the possible solutions 4. Evaluate the options 5. Select an option or options 6. Document the agreement (s) 7. Agree on contingencies, monitoring, and evaluation

## Willingness To Slow Down:

- Effective problem solving does take some time and attention more of the latter than the former. But less time and attention than is required by a problem not well solved. What it really takes is a willingness to slow down.

## Don't Delay:

- Don't delay difficult decisions because it's difficult. Dedicate a focused block of time each day to work through the pros, cons, risks and realistic outcomes of your decision. Consider the second and third order effects of your decision during this session.

## Shelve Ego and Emotion:

- Decision making can be difficult because you become too personally invested in how a decision will make you look and feel. Can you objectively solve the problem? Yes! List potential causes and put your emotion and ego on the back-burner.

## Ask An Expert:

- The decision you're making has likely been made in the past. While the problems you're trying to solve are unique to you, it's highly probable that someone else has solved the same issue at a larger scale. Research the influencers in the area that you need help with, then send three of them a quick note to ask for their help.
- Serve up the facts, your thoughts and the options you are considering. A neutral third-party to help you make decisions will keep you objective. Work from a proven playbook instead of trying to reinvent the wheel.

# PROBLEM SOLVING/DECISION MAKING SKILLS EXAMPLE

- You are currently leading a project team and quickly realize that a number of issues have come up that will not only change the initial scope of the project, but could impact the deadline. Demonstrate problem solving and decision making skills by identifying the issue(s), evaluating your options and making the best decision for the good of the team and overall project.

# QUANTITY/QUALITY of WORK

**Pays close attention to detail**

**Strives to achieve accuracy and consistency in all tasks**

**Organizes work to achieve maximum productivity**

**Actively applies strategies and tactics that routinely deliver results**

**Follows all safety rules, proactively works to prevent accidents, and encourages the use of sound judgment in order to comply with departmental and UMMS safety policies and procedures**

**Produces a consistently high volume of work that also meets quality standards**

# DEMONSTRATING QUANTITY/QUALITY of WORK SKILLS

## Organize and Prioritize:

- Create a daily schedule and follow it. Identify the top three or four critical projects that need to be completed. Ensure your task list is manageable, adds value, and benefits your institution.

## Stop Trying to Multi-task:

- In 2009, a group of Stanford researchers released a study that showed how people who do heavy multitasking, keeping up several email conversations at once while texting, jumping from one website to the next and trying to work at the same time, do not pay attention as well as those who maintain a more streamlined work flow.

## Avoid Distractions:

- Focus is a fundamental quality of productive people. Our brains are wired to work best when we focus on a single task. Practice staying focused and strive to complete one task before diving into another.

## Set Milestones:

- The road to completing a big project may seem overwhelming. Don't let that stop you from taking time to celebrate interim achievement. Break large projects into blocks of mini-tasks and set individual success metrics to keep your morale and energy levels high.
- Record your progress, reward yourself, and share your progression with the team.

## QUANTITY/QUALITY SKILLS EXAMPLE

- You have multiple projects you are currently working on, each with different deadlines. It can be challenging to organize and prioritize your work so that you are able to produce optimal results. Prioritize each project by deadline, and take the time focus on each one individually so that your work is accurate and consistent.

# SERVICE ORIENTATION

Applies effective interpersonal and problem-solving skills when responding to clients

Treats all of our diverse internal and external clients with respect and courtesy

Understands the needs and expectations of diverse clients and anticipates how to fulfill them

Demonstrates cultural sensitivity and competence when interacting with clients, fellow employees, and guests

Takes personal responsibility applying proactive, solution focused approaches in responding to client needs

# DEMONSTRATING SERVICE ORIENTATION SKILLS

## Effective Listening:

- Listening is the key to effective communication. Without the ability to listen carefully to what a person is saying, a message could be easily misunderstood and misinterpreted. As a result, communication breaks down leaving a person frustrated.
- Listening isn't just about hearing. A good listener will not only listen to what is being said, but also what is left unsaid or partially said.

## Attentiveness:

- Attentiveness should run through every service experience – during the interaction and after it's over. How often have you contacted by a person and been subjected to obviously scripted responses? It gives you the feeling that the person didn't really pay attention to what you were saying.
- There's nothing wrong with using canned responses, as long as they are personalized, used wisely and appropriately to the situation. That's why attentiveness is crucial.

## Clear Communication:

- An ability to communicate clearly and effectively verbally (no mumbling) and written (strong typing, spelling and grammar skills) is essential. It also involves avoiding miscommunications that might lead to misunderstandings and unwanted consequences.
- Especially when it comes to important points, you need to communicate things clearly, simply and leave nothing to doubt.

## Patience:

- Patience is a real virtue and the way you respond to people will either calm them down or hype them up.
- Learning to be always patient with people is as easy as learning to separate your feelings from the situation and understand that in most cases a person is upset with something that has nothing to do with you personally.

## Self Control:

- Maintaining self-control is paramount in being service orientated. Apart from the ability to handle surprises and deal with angry people without losing your temper, it also goes to treating each individual interaction separately regardless of how bad the previous one was.
- You need to always keep in mind that each new interaction presents a completely new issue and that the frustrated interaction from the previous situation or call bears no relation to the next interaction with someone who needs your help.

## SERVICE ORIENTATION SKILLS EXAMPLE

- You received a request from an internal business partner to review content which will be posted to the department's website. While you are busy with your own projects, it is important to demonstrate your service skills by listening to their request, understanding their needs and responding in a timely manner. Remember to treat all internal clients with the same level of attention as you would external clients.



# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Understands how social group identities shape the settings in which we work

Demonstrates self-awareness and the ability to see other points of view, valuing diverse experiences and ways of knowing

Negotiates conflict and facilitates discussions with culture competence and cultural humility

Shows commitment to continuous learning/improvement in managing diversity

# DEMONSTRATING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SKILLS

- Demonstrate the ability to honor, and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviors of individuals (e.g. assuming individual has acknowledged, challenged, adapted and managed their internal biases)
- Recognize and acknowledge diversity mixtures when engaging others; adjusts behaviors and perspectives to accommodate the cultural context of interactions to ensure all have active and meaningful roles (e.g. cross representation in strategy, policy and decision making processes)
- Align and enact personal D&I principles and behaviors in accordance with the organization's policy and philosophy toward diversity and inclusion
- Create and encourage open feedback and communication opportunities that cultivate positive working/client/team relationships (e.g. assure all perspectives, ideas, recommendations are equally considered)
- Encourage and include D&I professional development opportunities within individual/staff development plans and performance reviews

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SKILLS EXAMPLE

- You currently work in a department with employees from different backgrounds and experiences. You can demonstrate diversity and inclusion skills by engaging with these employees and encouraging feedback so that all have the opportunity to contribute equally.

# Leadership/Management



**Sets clear priorities, goals and expectations and provides timely, constructive, and balanced feedback in holding staff members accountable**

**Delegates effectively and empowers team members and flexes style when faced with diverse teams understanding and effectively managing complex group dynamics and diverse perspectives**

**Manages performance problems and team conflicts skillfully**

**Demonstrates effective mentoring, developing and motivating skills**

**Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride and trust and is attentive to the well-being of her/his staff**

**Takes a long-term view building a shared vision with staff in planning, decision making, and process improvement**

**Acts as a positive role model**

**Ensures that diverse, talented employees are appropriately recruited, selected, oriented, and acclimated to the organization**

# Demonstrating Leadership/Management Skills

## Have a Clear Vision:

- Take the time to share your vision, your mission and your goals with your team. Your job as a leader is to provide a clear path that your team can follow.
- Your team also must understand why the goals you have set are valuable to them. Take the time to explain to them, in detail, why and how your vision will not only improve the business, but how it will benefit them in return.
- Include your team in your strategic planning sessions, ask for feedback.

## Be a People's Person:

- An integral part of developing leadership skills is to learn to respect your team's capabilities. Let the team members take decisions on certain issues.
- Trust them with their work; don't be a watchdog.

## Serve as a Role Model:

- The best leaders walk the walk and talk the talk. As a result, group members admire these leaders and work to emulate these behaviors.
- If you want to become a better leader, work on modeling the qualities that you would like to see in your team members.

## Set Definitive Goals and Follow Concrete Action Plans:

- You have to know where your destination is before you can map out a plan to get there.
- To improve your leadership skills, first set specific life goals with appropriate timelines. Design your goals by moving backwards from the end of your life to the present week. Then, formulate action plans you can commit to that will get you to where you want to be.

## Motivate Others to Greatness:

- The greatest leaders are those who include everyone in their sphere of influence by recognizing each person's greatest value.
- To be one of these leaders, look beyond the obvious and see others with insight and compassion. Many of history's greatest leaders have admitted that they rose to the top because another leader recognized and harnessed their potential.

# LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT SKILLS EXAMPLE

- You recently accepted a new position where you will be managing a small group of employees. To demonstrate effective leadership/management skills, you will want to make sure you set clear goals with your team members and provide them with consistent feedback. It is also important to act as a positive role model and recognize each person's strengths and areas where they can improve.

# DEMONSTRATING CORE COMPETENCIES - EXAMPLES

# Additional Resources



- **Compensation Website:** <https://www.umassmed.edu/hr/compensation/>
  - Competency-based Performance Appraisal Tool Template
  - Competency-based Job Descriptions Tool Template
  - Guide to Preparing Competency-based Job Descriptions
  - UMMS Core Competencies List
  
- **Compensation Contacts:**
  - **New Person Name** - Supporting Commonwealth Medicine and MassBiologics departments **John Roy** ext. 6-3950
  
  - **Denise Raskett** - Supporting Medical School departments ext: 6-3143 or [denise.raskett@umassmed.edu](mailto:denise.raskett@umassmed.edu)