

FIU Division of Student Affairs Professional Staff and Graduate Student Competency Model and Development Plan

Competency Model

As Florida International University continues to excel as a public research institution serving the South Florida area by providing students with a Worlds Ahead education, the Division of Student Affairs Staff Development Committee has implemented a core competency development model to formalize the expectations and education of our professional student affairs staff and graduate students in the Master of Science in Higher Education program. This model serves as a framework to outline competencies, knowledge, and behaviors exhibited by our graduate students and staff. This model also serves as a professional development guide and can be utilized to target areas of strength and improvement, thus choosing professional development opportunities accordingly.

Process

This model was designed specifically for FIU student affairs staff and graduate students after extensive benchmarking research was conducted to identify other colleges and universities currently utilizing a competency model. Models found to be the most comprehensive which were used in developing the FIU model include the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Bowling Green State University, University of South Carolina, University of Connecticut, University of Rhode Island, and Ball State University. The format of the development plan is derived from the Individual Development Plan and competency model used at the University of South Carolina.

Universities offering professional development programs to students and staff based on a competency model designed to fit the needs of the institution and its constituents report an increased ability to recruit and retain highly qualified students and staff. With dwindling funds affecting the ability to experience off-campus professional development opportunities, these institutions have found that creating a sustainable program at home aids in balancing the needs for cost effective staff development.

The core competency model proposed was first implemented in the Division of Student Affairs in August, 2009. Assessment of this model is an ongoing process and updates to the model will be made annually. If you have any feedback on the model or the development plan, please share this with the Staff Development Committee.

Utilizing the Model

The development of this model provides the tools necessary for each staff member to work with their supervisor and empower themselves to create ways to further their professional skills. Training sessions have been developed to help you fully understand the process and make the most of your work with the competency model. Please see the Frequently Asked Questions for more information on how to utilize this professional development tool.

According to our Vice President for Student Affairs, "I believe that this initiative is an important one that will underscore our commitment to continued professional growth and help us to better serve our students! Thank you for your participation."

We thank you in advance for completing the competency model, using it with those you supervise, and supporting the commitment to professional development. If there is anything that we can do to aid you in your use of this model, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Staff Development Committee
Division of Student Affairs
Florida International University
staffdev@fiu.edu

FIU Student Affairs Competency Model

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who verifies the completion of the competency model? To whom should completed competency models be submitted?

The FIU Division of Student Affairs will be expecting supervisors (Starting with the AVPs on down) to hold their own staff accountable for completing the self-assessment and development plan. The competency model development plan is not submitted.

2. If a staff member would like to go through the assessment and development plan with someone other than their supervisor (i.e. mentor, etc.), can they list this person on the form, or should they only review it with their supervisor and place their name on the plan?

Staff can certainly get feedback and review this process with mentors, but ultimately we expect supervisors to be familiar and have reviewed it with their staff, so that they can help support the developmental plan. Of course sharing it with peers or mentors, advisors, etc. is positive!

3. Should all A&P staff and GA staff in each area complete the forms? Are there any persons in any areas who fall into this category who would not need to complete this (e.g. some of the health services staff, rec staff, administrative staff, etc.)?

This competency model is for A&P and GA's in Higher Education (GAs in other programs could complete it, but this is not required). Individual supervisors can determine if someone is in a role where this may not be applicable. These would be exceptions, not the norm. Everyone in all student affairs areas should be completing this process and any exceptions for completing it should be shared with the Assistant or Associate Vice President overseeing that area.

4. Some areas have OPS/Workstudy staff who are treated the same as the A&P staff and were wondering if they could use the model with those staff members as well?

We would suggest it be used with this staff only if there is buy-in from the student to want to review or use part of it. The model is about competencies for Student Affairs professionals, and should be not viewed as being general for all types of positions or careers, including student positions. If a department chooses to use the model with student staff, we suggest making the model smaller or more manageable for these staff members. Student staff might not need as much experience with assessment, or might find a section on student development theory overwhelming or irrelevant. For example, provide students with the section on self-knowledge in the fall semester and the section on leadership development in the spring semester, and ask them to create one goal focused on one competency each semester. Setting smaller goals makes the model more manageable and might encourage get them into the habit of using it without turning them off to the process.

5. How is this process tied to PEP? The form says to connect it to the PEP goals, but the two processes do not appear to be connected?

The Competency Self-Assessment and Competency Development Plan should be completed annually at the same time as the PEP process. Also, part of PEP is identifying goals for the following year. If you like, goals from the Development Plan can included along with any other goals on your PEP.