

Charles Darwin
UNIVERSITY

**STAFF
COMPETENCY
FRAMEWORK**

July 2006



The Charles Darwin University Staff Competency Framework

This booklet contains the Staff Competency Framework for Charles Darwin University. The Competency Framework outlines the range of knowledge, skills and attributes required of employees of the University for proficient workplace performance. Application of the framework occurs in the context of an individual's role, and the recognition that different competencies, and different levels of competency, are necessary to perform a given set of activities.

DEFINITION

Competency is defined as the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in employment. A **competency standard** is an industry-determined specification of performance which sets out the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to operate effectively in employment. Standards are made up of units of competency, which are themselves made up of elements of competency, together with performance criteria, a range of variables, and an evidence guide¹.

A **competency framework** describes a set of competency standards for employees and makes the expected knowledge and capabilities of employees explicit for those within and outside of the University. This set of standards has been determined by the University through a process of consultation and benchmarking.

Competency frameworks are used by organisations to:

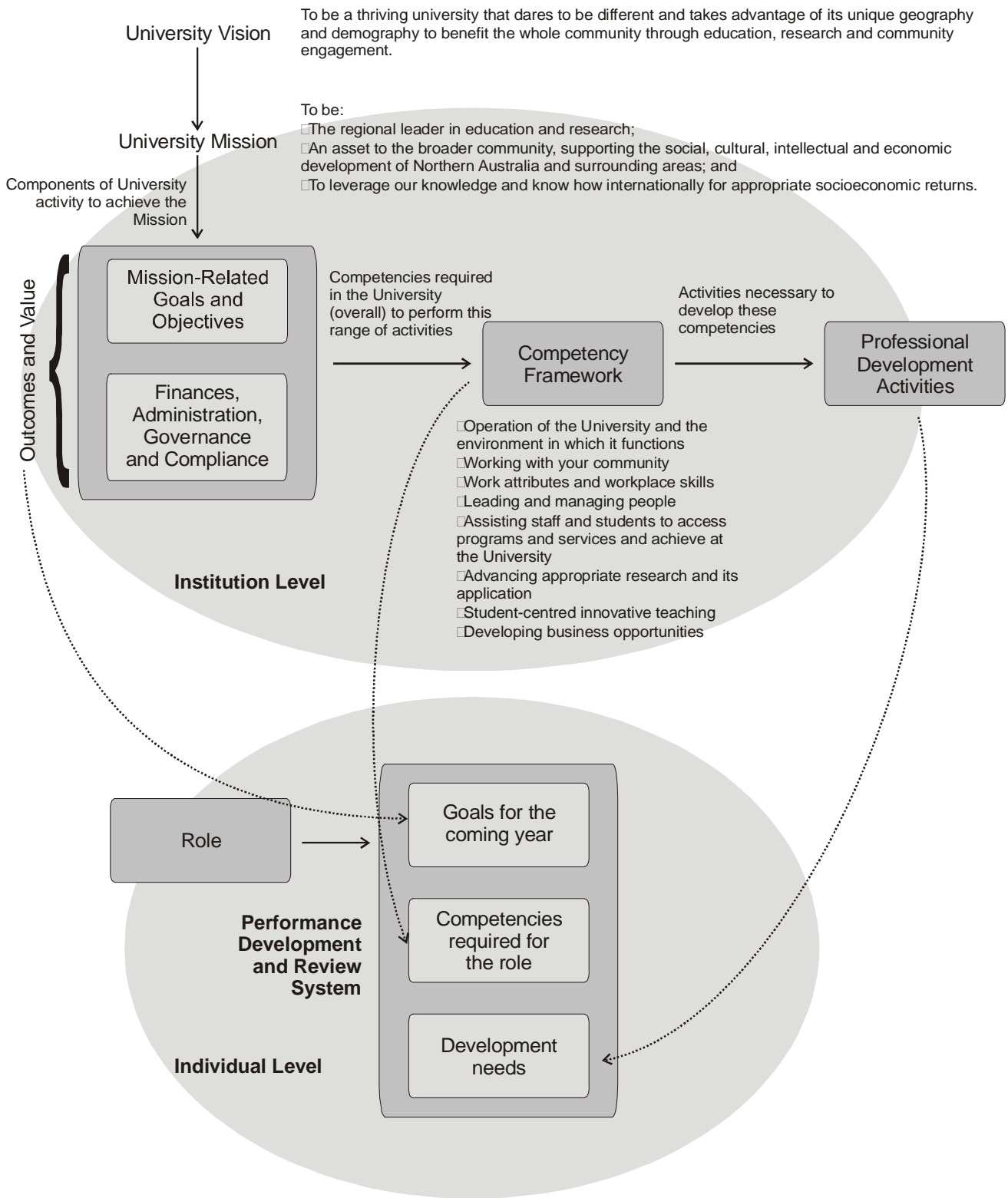
- Focus workplace performance on the organisation's vision and values
- Align workplace behaviours with organisational objectives
- Provide a benchmark against which all individuals or a broad band of individuals can be evaluated for recruitment and selection, performance management, succession planning or promotion
- Facilitate matching people to roles
- Focus Learning and Development strategies
- Allow organisations to establish a competency database, especially for critical roles. This database makes it possible for organisations to identify their staffing needs, ascertain their capability to respond to new challenges, and identify people who would benefit from secondments or placement in new roles.
- Enhance the organisation's ability to respond to change by supporting the broadening of staff competency sets.

The University will use this competency framework for all these purposes in due course but the immediate uses will be informing the Performance Development Review System (PDRS), the Staff Professional Development Strategy and professional development more broadly.

¹ National Training System. *Glossary*. Retrieved May 8, 2006 from http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/glo/atoe.htm#Glossary_-_C



COMPETENCIES IN THE BIGGER PICTURE





The Competency Framework has a direct relation to the Mission, Goals and Objectives of the University, and provides a link between what the University aims to achieve overall and the role of the individual in the organisation.

Referring to the preceding figure, the University has a formal Mission that underlies its establishment by the Northern Territory Government. A wide range of activities are necessary to support the organisation in fulfilling this aspiration, activities that can be organised in a framework with four dimensions:

- *Mission-related goals and objectives* - relating to how the University is achieving its Mission through adding value locally, regionally and nationally, the focus it is taking in its efforts to achieve its mission, and steps that would amplify the impact;
- *Finances* - relating to maintaining financial viability. "Finances" can be considered as comprised of three components: financial management, revenue raising and diversification including quasi-commercial units, and asset management/development and associated support services;
- *Administration* - relating to the capacity of the University to support its programmes and services; and
- *Governance and compliance* - relating to the capacity of the University to comply with Commonwealth and Territory legislative requirements, as well as measures to ensure that the organisation is fulfilling its Mission.

In order for the institution to undertake this range of activities, it must (overall) possess a range of competencies, and must have professional development programmes to ensure on-going development of these competencies.

For the individual in a specific role in the University, the Performance Development and Review process provides an opportunity to set individual goals that will support the University in achieving its overarching institutional goals and Mission. It also provides an opportunity to assess what competencies, at what level, are required to fulfil the specific role, and what development activities are necessary to instil and/or improve these competencies. At Charles Darwin University, the Performance Development and Review System is explicit in its consideration of these three components: goals, required competencies and associated development activities.



REVIEW 2006

The objective of establishing this revised set of competencies for the University evolved from the need to align the workforce development of employees with the University's Strategic Directions 2006-2008. This review identified 8 Core Competencies that reflect the University's core business areas and desired performance outcomes.

Charles Darwin University Core Competencies	
1	Operation of the University and the environment in which it functions
2	Working with your community
3	Work attributes and workplace skills
4	Leading and managing people
5	Assisting staff and students to access programmes and services and achieve at the University
6	Advancing appropriate research and its application
7	Student-centred innovative teaching
8	Developing business opportunities



USE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The framework provides a range of the competencies that may be utilised by University employees in the performance development of their role. Selected competencies from the framework can be used to provide consistent language for:

- Developing and conducting professional development programmes
- Describing competency requirements for employment positions
- Self-appraisal and career development.

The framework focuses on the generic University functions for employees of the University and do not address specific acts or regulations or specialist competencies required for some positions. Standards in these other areas are covered by other national competency frameworks. The selection criteria for University employment positions are related to these frameworks but are distinct in their wording and will reflect the specific needs of each position.

To be successful the competency framework must meet some minimum conditions

- The competencies must accurately reflect the real nature and content of the roles they describe
- There must be in place an accurate means of evaluating people against the competencies
- The whole system must have the support of management and the confidence of the staff affected.

The framework will be reviewed in 12 months time to incorporate feedback and reflect changes in the University's operational objectives.

ELEMENTS OF COMPETENCY

Each unit of competency is further defined in terms of **elements of competency** (e.g. Professionalism). Elements of competency are the distinct transferable qualities that underpin the units of competency that are needed for competent workplace performance.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Each element of competency is defined by a set of **performance criteria** to ensure that each element is properly understood, and **examples of evidence** are provided to give a further indication of the element's meaning and how it might be observed in the workplace.



EVALUATING COMPETENCIES

The success of implementation depends to a large degree on the rating system used to evaluate competencies. The goals of evaluation are reliability and accuracy, with evaluators clearly describing the observed behaviour, knowledge or motivation. Of the major scales available for human resources applications, the numerical, “Likert” scale is that chosen by the University.

A Likert-type Rating Scale is as below:

5	Much more than acceptable	Significantly above criteria required for successful role performance
4	More than acceptable	Generally exceeds criteria relative to quality and quantity of behaviour required
3	Acceptable	Meets criteria relative to quality and quantity of behaviour required
2	Less than acceptable	Generally does not meet criteria relative to quality and quantity of behaviour required
1	Much less than acceptable	Significantly below criteria required for successful role performance.

In this scale evaluations are directed at seeking information on how an individual performs relative to performance required on the role. The scale above is reliable and accurate in making these evaluations. The key to success is the definition of “acceptable”; it is not adequate or barely sufficient or average; it is fully functional, doing things well, successful. Users need to be trained in the definition of acceptable and in setting the standard for any particular competency and role. “Acceptable” can be replaced with “effective” or “successful” if appropriate.

THE WIDER USE OF COMPETENCIES

A competency framework is a useful and effective means of integrating all an organisation’s people systems to be mutually reinforcing and to provide robust information for human resources decisions. With a set of competencies developed for the University and appropriate selections of them applied to each role they can be used as a valid and reliable way of making decisions in all the human resources interventions or processes.

Recruitment, Selection and Promotion: The competencies, together with statements relating to mandatory qualifications, experience and motivation, inform or, in fact, become, the selection criteria. People can then be selected against criteria which accurately define success in the role.

Learning and Development: The same competencies become the basis for making decisions about staff professional development by facilitating the identification of strengths and development needs.

Performance Management: The competencies identified as necessary for success in the role are the natural and appropriate basis for discussions and decisions about the level of performance of an individual in that role and subsequent decisions about performance improvement and about the rewards that flow from success.

Succession Management: This is the process of identifying personnel needs at various levels in the organisation into the future and identifying pools of appropriate people within the organisation to fill those needs. It involves the definition of roles or role levels in terms of the competencies required for successful performance and the assessment of individuals against those competencies with the aim of planning their development in time to fill roles as they become available.



Competency Framework July 2006

Core Competency	Elements of Competency	Performance Criteria	
1 Operation of the University and the environment in which it functions	1.1 History of the University and its current role in society	1.1.1	Understand the history and background of the University
		1.1.2	Explore the current role and context of the University in this society
		1.1.3	Explore the aspirations of the University
	1.2 Financial information	1.2.1	Demonstrate knowledge of the University's funding arrangements
	1.3 Government regulations	1.3.1	Demonstrate knowledge of relevant legislation within which the University works
	1.4 World views	1.4.1	Demonstrate successful interactions across a culturally diverse environment
		1.4.2	Engage, involve and understand external influences and views
2 Working with relevant communities – what we do	2.1 Professionalism	2.1.1	Demonstrate effective professional interactions through engaging, respecting, involving, supporting and listening to clients
		2.1.2	Identify and engage stakeholders to deliver value to the University
		2.1.3	Maintain personal professional accreditation
		2.1.4	Provide a professional service
		2.1.5	Maintain compliance with the University Code of Ethics
	2.2 Liaison	2.2.1	Liaise with stakeholders to deliver a valued service at a global, national, state, regional and academic level
	2.3 Academic communities	2.3.1	Provide leadership in the community of scholars
3 Work attributes and workplace skills – how we do things	3.1 Initiative, creativity, innovation	3.1.1	Demonstrate initiative, creativity and innovation in work processes
	3.2 Customer focussed	3.2.1	Provide best practice customer focussed service to internal and external clients
		3.2.2	Implement continuous improvement practices
	3.3 Co-operative approach	3.3.1	Demonstrated ability to engage in effective and proactive team work recognising the abilities of others and utilising cooperative approaches



	3.4	Planning	3.4.1	Perform appropriate University and personal planning	
	3.5	Relevant administration in a timely manner	3.5.1	Demonstrate efficient administration duties	
	3.6	Contemporary knowledge	3.6.1	Maintain contemporary knowledge	
4 Leading and managing people	4.1	Motivating people	4.1.1	Recognise and reward achievement	
			4.1.2	Consider employee workloads, skills, abilities and potential when allocating work	
			4.1.3	Create an open and trusting environment where others are confident to raise, discuss and resolve issues, problems or ideas	
	4.2	Communicate direction for self and others	4.2.1	Develop practical work group plans and objectives aligned with the University Strategic Directions	
			4.2.2	Provide regular staff briefings on goals, plans and operational issues to minimise role ambiguity	
	4.3	Individual performance	4.3.1	Provide regular formal and informal constructive feedback to staff on performance	
			4.3.2	Address performance issues in a timely and professional manner	
			4.3.3	Develop staff professional development plans that ensure minimal impact on operational output of the work unit	
	4.4	Thinking and acting strategically	4.4.1	Develop succession management plans	
			4.4.2	Design and implement development plans for staff to fulfil succession plans	
	5 Assisting staff and students to access programmes and services and achieve at the University	5.1	Academic pathways	5.1.1	Demonstrate and apply knowledge of academic pathways and articulation in the University
		5.2	VET and HE within the University	5.2.1	Define VET and HE roles and practices in the context of the University
5.3		Functional structure of the University	5.3.1	Articulate the organisational structure and its application in the University	
5.4		Operating within the University systems	5.4.1	Demonstrate knowledge and competent usage of University processes and systems	
5.5		Internal pathways	5.5.1	Articulate professional development and personal development pathways	
5.6		Regulatory requirements	5.6.1	Demonstrate knowledge of the relevant regulatory requirements in your area of work	
5.7		Cultural diversity	5.7.1	Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and application of cultural diversity, especially Indigenous cultures in our region	



	5.8	University principles and processes of equity and access	5.8.1	Demonstrate knowledge of and promote University processes related to Equal Opportunities	
	5.9	Needs of identified equity groups	5.9.1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issues relating to access, participation, retention and success of students from the identified equity target groups	
	5.10	Supportive environments	5.10.1	Promote motivation for continual performance improvement	
	5.11	Mentor students and staff	5.11.1	Participate in University mentoring programmes for students and staff	
6	Advancing appropriate research and its application	6.1	Research opportunities and University research priorities	6.1.1	Understand University research priorities and develop networks among research users and funders
		6.2	Research capacity	6.2.1	Establish mentor-mentee relationships and participate in postgraduate supervisory panels
		6.3	Research findings	6.3.1	Maintain an active record of peer-reviewed publications
		6.4	Dissemination of applied research knowledge	6.4.1	Maintain a record of grant income, seek advice from other grant applicants and understand the priorities of granting bodies
		6.5	Best practice in application for research grants	6.5.1	Engage end-users in research design, provide progress reports and briefings, conduct public lectures and develop plain language reports
		6.6	Research skills and method	6.6.1	Demonstrate awareness of current methods and developments in the research sector of your discipline
7	Student-centred innovative teaching	7.1	Student-centred approach to teaching and learning	7.1.1	Demonstrate teaching and assessing programmes in order that all students, regardless of background or personal characteristics, have the opportunity to learn in accordance with the unit aims and their own abilities and aspirations
				7.1.2	Design programmes that deliver the University's graduate attributes
				7.1.3	Provide students with opportunities to be involved in structuring their own learning experiences and rewarding students for taking control of their own learning
				7.1.4	Structure teaching to allow for appropriate feedback to and from students
				7.1.5	Enable students to critically evaluate their own work



7 Student-centred innovative teaching	7.2 Flexible, innovative and resource based teaching and learning	7.2.1	Adopt technology mediated approaches and keep current with leading pedagogic practice
		7.2.2	Commit to pathways development
		7.2.3	Engage in workplace and other forms of flexible delivery
		7.2.4	Engage in cross-disciplinary approaches to education
	7.3 Quality and professionalism in teaching and learning	7.3.1	Participate in teaching and learning professional development programmes to ensure continuous quality improvement in teaching praxis
		7.3.2	Work with Course Advisory and Industry Engagement Groups to ensure that courses are current, innovative and responsive to industry needs
		7.3.3	Ensure that unit and course materials are current, accurate, and appropriate to the programme
		7.3.4	Adopt assessment strategies that are valid, fair, and congruent with course objectives and competencies
		7.3.5	Provide prompt, constructive, and regular feedback on students' assessments
		7.3.6	Preserve the confidentiality of information about students including any communications
		7.3.7	Maintain relationships with students that facilitate their development whilst avoiding exploitation or compromise of academic standards
		7.3.8	Demonstrate evidence-based, continuous quality improvement by engaging in University evaluation and feedback mechanisms at unit and course level
8 Developing business opportunities	8.1 Business and industry priorities and trends	8.1.1	Be proactive in developing knowledge through networking and research which may include areas of business development in Australia and overseas, maintain records of meetings and information and respond effectively to requests for information
	8.2 University's business capacity	8.2.1	Demonstrate (for example through responses to requests for information) a good understanding of the University's capabilities and capacity of staff to generate income from various non-traditional sources
	8.3 Resource opportunities	8.3.1	Demonstrate project management and budgeting skills
	8.4 Funded implementation of research	8.4.1	Demonstrate ability to seek opportunities for industry and government funding of research in areas of University expertise; demonstrate ability, negotiate and document agreements with clients and partners



8 Developing business opportunities	8.5	Risk assessment and risk management	8.5.1	Demonstrate capacity to develop and document risk assessment and risk management plans
	8.6	Resources and expertise	8.6.1	Demonstrate willingness to seek opportunities within and outside the University to pool resources in business development applications or projects
	8.7	Research commercialisation	8.7.1	Demonstrate understanding of legal and commercial issues relating to commercialisation and knowledge of policies and processes and ability to work with researchers to identify opportunities
	8.8	International student recruitment and management	8.8.1	Demonstrate understanding of the University's obligations under the ESOS Act
			8.8.2	Understand the responsibilities and functions of the University International Office
			8.8.3	Demonstrate knowledge of marketing for international student recruitment
			8.8.4	Understand the processes for admission and management of international students
			8.8.5	Understand issues and costs involved in offshore delivery
	8.9	Fundraising capability	8.9.1	Demonstrate capacity to contribute to and implement plans to raise funds for the University from individual donors including alumni, philanthropic trusts and foundations and corporate donors
	8.10	External Relations	8.10.1	Demonstrate ability to develop and promote relationships with external stakeholders
			8.10.2	Demonstrate event management capability
			8.10.3	Understand protocol in liaison with external parties



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USEFUL LINKS

CDU Annual Report
<http://www.cdu.edu.au/vc/docs/cdu-annual-rpt2005.pdf>

CDU Code of ethics
http://www.cdu.edu.au/governance/documents/CodeofEthics_000.pdf