

Human Resources Assistance Competency Model

U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of Human Capital

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Human Resources Assistance Competency Model

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Human Resources Assistance Competency Model Study Summary

The DOI Office of Human Capital (OHC) conducted a review of DOI's Department-wide human resources competency model study (published 2017). The goal of this review was to identify the critical competencies and tasks for successful performance of human resources assistance work across the Department. The occupations included in the review were:

- GS-0203 – Human Resources Assistance

The results of this study establish a common set of human resources assistance tasks and competencies across the Department, which can be used to create assessment and selection techniques and tools and establish common practices and terminology for recruitment, performance management, workforce planning, training, and employee development. This work provides DOI with current, validated information that can be used to ensure its workforce has the tools to meet future challenges.

The review involved human resources subject matter experts (SMEs) from throughout the Department. These SMEs reviewed the tasks and competencies previously identified from the human resources competency model and provided feedback to ensure the tasks and competencies were up-to-date, written at the appropriate level of work, and accurately depict the work performed and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully perform the work in the GS-0203 Human Resources Assistance occupational series. These SMEs also set required proficiency levels for the competencies at multiple grade levels within the series.

Please reference the Competency Model Interpretive Guidance for assistance in interpreting and applying the results of this study.

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Table 1: Competencies for Assessment and Selection by Grade¹

The following general competencies have been validated for assessment and selection purposes for the GS-0203 Human Resources Assistance occupational series at the grade levels listed below.

GS-3	GS-4	GS-5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Customer Service</i> • <i>Integrity/Honesty</i> • <i>Interpersonal Skills</i> • <i>Teamwork</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Integrity/Honesty • Interpersonal Skills • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attention to Detail</i> • Customer Service • Integrity/Honesty • Interpersonal Skills • Teamwork
GS-6	GS-7	GS-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accountability</i> • <i>Attention to Detail</i> • <i>Customer Service</i> • <i>Integrity/Honesty</i> • <i>Interpersonal Skills</i> • <i>Teamwork</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Attention to Detail • Customer Service • Integrity/Honesty • Interpersonal Skills • Teamwork • <i>Writing</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Attention to Detail • Customer Service • Integrity/Honesty • Interpersonal Skills • <i>Self-Management</i> • Teamwork • <i>Technical Competence</i> • Writing

¹ Italics represent the lowest grade at which the competency appears.

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Table 2: Required Proficiency Levels by Grade Level

Proficiency Level Scale Definitions		
Proficiency Level	General Competencies	Technical Competencies
5 = Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations • Serves as a key resource and advises others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations • Serves as a key resource and advises others • Demonstrates comprehensive expert understanding of concepts and processes
4 = Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations • Generally requires little or no guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations • Generally requires little or no guidance • Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes
3 = Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in difficult situations • Requires occasional guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in difficult situations • Requires occasional guidance • Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes
2 = Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations • Requires frequent guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations • Requires frequent guidance • Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes
1 = Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in simplest situations • Requires close and extensive guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies the competency in simplest situations • Requires close and extensive guidance • Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes

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Table 2: Required Proficiency Levels of General Competencies						
	GS-3	GS-4	GS-5	GS-6	GS-7	GS-8
Accountability	2	2	3	3	4	4
Attention to Detail	1	2	3	3	4	4
Customer Service	3	3	3	4	4	4
Integrity/Honesty	3	3	3	4	4	4
Interpersonal Skills	3	3	3	4	4	4
Self-Management	1	2	3	3	4	4
Teamwork	3	3	3	4	4	4
Technical Competence	1	1	2	3	3	4
Writing	1	2	3	3	4	4

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Table 3: Behavioral Examples for Competencies

Competency Name	Definitions
Accountability	<p>Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Takes responsibility for results and work products</i> • <i>Ensures work is completed on time and at the level of quality required</i> • <i>Understands the rules and regulations of the work performed and ensures compliance with them</i> • <i>Demonstrates responsibility with important materials, critical processes, or confidential information</i>
Attention to Detail	<p>Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attention to detail. Recalls information that has been presented previously.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sets the standards for the quality of the work completed for the organization</i> • <i>Leads others in attending to detail in difficult and/or high-pressure circumstances</i> • <i>Reviews and edits work completed by others to ensure that the quality of work meets acceptable work standards</i> • <i>Independently completes thorough and accurate work</i>
Customer Service	<p>Works with clients and customers (that is, any individuals who use or receive the services or products that your work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commits to serving the public and understands their advisory role</i> • <i>Utilizes outreach, needs assessment, evaluation, and other marketing skills to identify and anticipate customer needs and provide exemplary customer service</i> • <i>Understands diverse customer groups, their perspectives, issues and needs</i> • <i>Works to ensure customers' needs are met, even when those needs are outside of the typical role of the position</i> • <i>Identifies and develops metrics to assess customer service satisfaction</i> • <i>Continuously improves products and services</i> • <i>Works and plans strategically, using a systems perspective to anticipate developing customer issues and needs and to provide timely solutions that focus on long-term benefits</i>
Integrity/Honesty	<p>Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Takes pride in exhibiting personal and organizational integrity and honesty</i> • <i>Acts in a just, fair, and ethical manner and encourages ethical behavior among others, even when risky to do so</i> • <i>Inspires trust and confidence among stakeholders through reliability, authenticity, and accountability</i>

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Interpersonal Skills	<p>Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to [REDACTED], race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shows respect for the values and ideas of others, even when not agreeing with them</i> • <i>Empathizes with the concerns of others</i> • <i>Demonstrates tact and courtesy when interacting with associates</i> • <i>Is proactive in defusing arguments among peers</i> • <i>Seeks feedback from others to avoid blind-spots that can cause misunderstandings</i> • <i>Explores issues with the team; shares information; solicits ideas' uses participative decision-making processes</i>
Self-Management	<p>Sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sets own goals and priorities and coordinates activities and deadlines with others to ensure project goals are met.</i> • <i>Continually applies significant effort and persistence toward achievement of goals in all situations</i> • <i>Takes initiative and seeks out new or additional responsibilities and tasks</i> • <i>Completes work and meets objectives with minimal supervisory intervention</i>
Teamwork	<p>Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Volunteers to assist associates with projects</i> • <i>Commits to working toward team or group goals</i> • <i>Displays team pride and empowers team pride among other group members</i> • <i>Works effectively in group settings in order to achieve team objectives</i>
Writing	<p>Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Composes clear, concise, and logical documents or correspondence involving complex technical information</i> • <i>Consistently and effectively tailors written products to a wide range of audiences and for diverse purposes in order to achieve a desired outcome</i> • <i>Proofreads and edits the writing of others</i> • <i>Effectively explains complex technical material to a non-technical audience</i> • <i>Uses correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling</i> • <i>Writes in an organized fashion that is easy to understand</i>

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Table 4: General Competencies by Assessment Tool

Competency	Occupational Questionnaire	Structured Interview	Biodata	Cognitive Ability Test
Accountability	Low	High	High	Low
Attention to Detail	Low	Medium	Low	High
Customer Service	Low	High	Low	Low
Integrity/Honesty	Low	High	Medium	Low
Interpersonal Skills	Low	High	Low	Low
Self-Management	Low	High	Medium	Low
Teamwork	Low	High	Medium	Low
Technical Competence	High	High	Low	Low
Writing	Low	Low	Medium	Low

Competency	Job Knowledge Test	Personality Inventory	Situational Judgment Test	Work Sample
Accountability	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
Attention to Detail	Low	Low	Low	High
Customer Service	Low	Low	High	High
Integrity/Honesty	Low	Medium	High	Low
Interpersonal Skills	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Self-Management	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Teamwork	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Technical Competence	High	Low	Medium	High
Writing	Low	Low	Low	High

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Appendix A: Competency Definitions

Human Resources Assistance General Competencies

Accountability	Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.
Attention to Detail	Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attention to detail.
Customer Service	Works with clients and customers (that is, any individuals who use or receive the services or products that your work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.
Integrity/Honesty	Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.
Interpersonal Skills	Treats others with courtesy, sensitivity, and respect. Considers and responds appropriately to the needs and feelings of different people in different situations.
Self-Management	Sets well-defined and realistic goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.
Teamwork	Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.
Technical Competence	Uses knowledge that is acquired through formal training or extensive on-the-job experience to perform one's job; works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to the job; advises others on technical issues.

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Writing	Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.
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Human Resources Assistance Technical Competencies

Classification	Knowledge of classification concepts, principles, and practices related to structuring organizations and positions and determining the appropriate pay system, occupational grouping, title, and pay level of positions.
Compensation	Knowledge of compensation concepts, principles, and practices, including pay and leave administration and compensation flexibilities.
Data Interpretation	Skill in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data and policies, to determine actions and develop and propose guidance.
Employee Benefits	Knowledge of HR concepts, principles, and practices related to retirement, insurance, injury compensation, and other employee benefits programs.
Employee Development	Knowledge of employee development concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, evaluating, and administering training, organizational development, and career development initiatives.
Employee Relations	Knowledge of laws, rules, regulations, case law, principles, and practices related to employee conduct, performance, and dispute resolution.
HR Information Systems	Knowledge of HR management concepts, principles, and practices related to identifying and analyzing HR processes, translating functional requirements into technical requirements, and delivering, administering, and maintaining HR information systems.
Performance Management	Knowledge of performance management concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, monitoring, rating, and rewarding employee performance.
Personnel Assessment	Knowledge of the concepts, principles, practices, and tools related to the assessment, measurement, and rating of the knowledge, skills, abilities, or competencies required to perform a job.

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Recruitment/Placement	Knowledge of HR concepts, principles, and practices related to identifying, attracting, and selecting individuals and placing them into positions to address changing organizational needs.
Staffing	Knowledge of the legal, regulatory, and procedural requirements in the appointment, reinstatement, and promotion for all types of positions, including the application of special hiring authorities.

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Appendix B: Human Resources Assistance Tasks and Functional Areas

Customer Service

1	Assists others with preparation of materials (e.g., background investigation forms).
2	Directs individuals, problems, questions, or complaints to the proper person or place.
3	Identifies opportunities to improve customer service and satisfaction.
4	Responds to requests or resolves complaints from customers.

Information Management

5	Assists employees with resetting user passwords.
6	Enters or updates employee data using personnel management tools.
7	Gathers personnel records from other departments or employees

Laws, Regulations, Policies, Standards, and Procedures

8	Evaluates, monitors, or ensures compliance with laws, regulations, policies, standards, or procedures.
9	Explains or provides guidance on laws, regulations, policies, standards, or procedures to management, personnel, or clients.
10	Interprets and applies laws, regulations, policies, standards, or procedures to specific issues.
11	Obtains necessary documentation, certification, or approval in support of actions.
12	Assists with performing accountability reviews and program audits to identify and recommends actions to address findings.
13	Studies laws, regulations, policies, standards, or procedures.

Office Duties

14	Completes forms, documents, or routine reports.
15	Prepares information for entry into a database.
16	Searches for and extracts information from files, documents, reports, publications, recordings, or other materials.
17	Uses computer systems or applications to access, create, edit, print, send, retrieve, or manipulate data, files, or other information.
18	Reviews, verifies, and uploads documentation into a system or database.

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Technical and Specialized Duties

19	Archives and maintains HR files such as position descriptions or employee relations case files.
20	Creates tables, charts, graphs, or diagrams to organize or show information.
21	Devises and proposes methods or strategies to resolve HR issues.
22	Gathers and compiles data to prepare various reports.
23	Instructs classes or conducts training sessions, workshops, or seminars.
24	Keeps abreast of key organizational activities, policies, and priorities likely to affect operations or the program area.
25	Keeps abreast of latest technology, information, research, etc., to maintain knowledge in field of expertise.
26	Makes retirement coverage determinations and makes corrections when necessary.
27	Plans and conducts new employee orientation.
28	Prepares benefits forms and ensures that they are processed.
29	Prepares informational events for employees.
30	Prepares informational materials for employees.
31	Processes forms, records, documents, or other materials.
32	Processes or analyzes data using computer systems or applications.
33	Proposes new approaches, methods, and technologies.
34	Reviews reports, documents, records, data, or other materials to verify completeness, correctness, consistency, compliance, or authenticity.
35	Verifies that necessary employment termination paperwork is completed.
36	Processes classification actions.
37	Advises employees on family or medical leave.

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38	Assists with making compensation determinations, such as premium pay entitlements associated with overtime work or special salary rates.
39	Assists with contracting for services related to work-life balance programs (e.g., day care, gym memberships, health and wellness programs, and health screenings).
40	Computes employee benefit estimates (e.g., retirement, annuity, survivor benefits).
41	Counsels employees, managers, and beneficiaries on employee benefits and options, including telework.
42	Determines employee eligibility for health, dental, vision, life and long-term care insurance programs, retirement, thrift savings, flexible spending, or employee assistance programs.
43	Attends classroom training, workshops, or seminars.
44	Conducts on-the-job training.
45	Designs training courses or develops instructional materials or activities.
46	Assists with identifying developmental and training needs of employees.
47	Provides feedback on instructional programs and recommends revisions.
48	Maintains and updates human resources documents, such as organizational charts, employee handbooks or directories, or performance evaluation forms.
49	Participates in on-the-job training and developmental assignments.
50	Collects and processes award or recognition nomination packages.
51	Establishes and maintains relationships with labor organizations.
52	Processes recognition and rewards for effective or outstanding performance.
53	Reviews, tracks and distributes non-monetary awards to employees.
54	Assists with developing and posting job vacancies, including details such as duties and responsibilities, compensation, and promotion opportunities.
55	Evaluates selection criteria to ensure conformance to professional, statistical, or testing standards, recommending revisions.
56	Evaluates selection techniques by conducting follow-up activities and conferring with management.

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57	Informs job applicants of the status of their employment application.
58	Interprets applicant scores on assessment instruments.
59	Interprets results of assessment tools, such as crediting plans, questionnaires, or tests.
60	Processes and reviews employment applications to evaluate qualifications or eligibility of applicants.
61	Processes or codes personnel actions.

Written and Oral Communication

62	Conducts or leads briefings, meetings, or conferences.
63	Develops materials for briefings, meetings, or conferences.
64	Explains or justifies decisions, conclusions, findings, or recommendations.
65	Participates in or represents the organization or clients at briefings, meetings, or conferences.
66	Persuades others to take a particular course of action or to accept findings, recommendations, changes, or alternative viewpoints.
67	Reads charts, graphs, diagrams, or tables.