

# Competencies

What are they?  
&  
What's the point?



Paul Deines, Selection Analyst

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## Overview

- What are competencies?
- How do competencies differ from KSAs?
- How are competencies used?
- Building a quick interview
- Putting it to work for you

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## What are Competencies?



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## Competencies Defined

- observable job performance dimensions
- clearly link to job tasks
- holistic, measurable, behavioral, contextual
- similar to KSAs
- contains groupings, levels, indicators
- organization-wide standardization of employee qualifications/expectations

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## Groups, Levels, Indicators

- Groups
  - Breaks down into similar units of competency types
  - Communication, Interpersonal, Occupational, Reasoning, etc.
- Levels
  - How basic or advanced is the competency?
  - 1-3, 1-5, (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced), (Entry, Journey, Expert)
- Indicators
  - Behavioral
  - Performance
- Consider the Organizations Core Competencies
  - Can serve as a start
  - Will influence the groups of competencies
- Number of groupings and levels may depend
  - How detailed do you want to make it
  - How detailed do you need it
  - May depend upon the jobs in your organization
  - What does your organization value in employees?

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## Developing Competencies

- Tie to Organization
  - Mission
  - Vision
  - Goals
  - Department Strategies & Objectives
- Tie to Job
  - Links to tasks
    - Possibly in task statements
  - List in Job Description
  - Links to performance standards
- Have available for public view
  - Keep visible – expectations should be communicated

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## Start with KSAs

- Use the KSAs that are already in the Job Description
- KSA's are pieces of competencies
- KSA's and task statements can be used to identify competencies, groupings, and levels
- Don't just toss your KSAs
- But begin to think how they might be lacking

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Example 1 – LA-COE		D. Communication
<b>Presentation Skill</b>		
<i>Formally delivering information to groups</i>		
Effective		Ineffective
Delivers clear, organized, and persuasive messages. Delivers the right amount of information in the time given. Varies style and tone to fit the purpose and audience. Conveys confidence, poise, and expertise. Reads the expressions and body language of the audience and adjusts or responds appropriately. Makes eye contact and interacts with the audience to maintain their attention and receive feedback. Uses presentation aids, slides, and/or props effectively.		May lack organization, focus, or clarity, ultimately confusing the audience. May lack the confidence and persuasiveness to engage an audience. May misread audience or lack the skill to adjust the presentation to appeal to various audiences. May underuse, misuse, or overuse presentation aids.
Behavior Levels		Context Levels
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver information to the audience in a one-way, scripted, or read manner.</li> <li>2. Engage and maintain the attention and interest of an audience. Make extemporaneous or prepared speeches and presentations.</li> <li>3. Engage and encourage the audience as participants. Make impromptu, unrehearsed, speeches and presentations.</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small group or meeting; material is highly structured, concrete and easy to understand; audience is receptive or informal. Presentations are repetitive in audience and content.</li> <li>2. Large group or assembly; material is moderately complex. Audience may be demographically and occupationally varied.</li> <li>3. Public mass media are involved; material is abstract, varied, complex, or controversial. Audience may be hostile or challenging.</li> </ol>

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LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY		Example 2 – Bassett USD	
The extent to which one recognizes the impact of technological advances and is willing to integrate technology in performing job tasks to achieve efficiency, quality and productivity.			
<b>Mastery Levels</b> – the complexity of the overall position function and the level of work autonomy require one to function at the following level of competency to perform job duties/responsibilities successfully:		<b>BEHAVIORAL SELECTION/DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS</b>	
Level 1	Engages in Basic Computer Operation	Understands the need for and uses basic technology as a tool to communicate with others and accomplish routinely assigned tasks as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Demonstrates knowledge of basic computer operation</li> <li>✓ Works to learn how to use new technology when assigned</li> <li>✓ Readily accepts changes in technology</li> </ul>
Level 2	Diverse Personal Application	Uses technology to communicate, research, input, and analyze data; understands the impact of new technology on operations; monopolizes the use of available computer applications to achieve greater efficiency and productivity in daily assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learns how to use new versions and advanced features of application software.</li> <li>✓ Readily integrates technology into job tasks</li> </ul>
Level 3	Shares Technology Expertise with Work Group	Assists in identifying technology advances for a single team/unit; differentiates and makes recommendations to team members on the use of appropriate software applications in performing varying work activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Proficient in using a wide range of software applications specific to one's job domain</li> <li>✓ Seeks opportunities to further proficiency in various new and existing software applications</li> </ul>
Level 4	Advances The Use Of Technology Across A Department	Initiates studies exploring technological advancement opportunities and implementation feasibility in a single program/unit/department's operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Encourages staff development and training in new IT applications.</li> <li>✓ Develops strategies using new technology to enhance decision making</li> </ul>
Level 5	Strategically Leverages Technology	Monopolizes the use of technology in achieving strategic goals and is creative and visionary in the application of technology to improve services and productivity; capitalizes on own diverse proficiency in technological equipments by identifying efficient and cost-effective technological applications to be integrated into the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Keeps current with industry related technological trends.</li> <li>✓ Requests organization-wide surveys to evaluate technological needs of departments and individuals</li> <li>✓ Involves key stakeholders to initiate progressive technological advancement</li> </ul>

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**MATHEMATICS** – Performs arithmetic or higher-level mathematical computations accurately.

**Example 3 – LA-City**

Level of Competency Required by Job:

Level 1: Perform arithmetic computations (add, subtract, multiply, divide, ratios, percentages).

Level 2: Use algebra (substitute numbers for letters in a formula), geometry (angles, distances, area), and/or descriptive statistics (mean/median/mode, standard deviation, range).

Level 3: Apply and interpret calculus, inferential statistics (t-tests, correlations, ANOVA, multiple regression) or other very high level mathematics.

Examples of Behavioral Indicators:

- Quickly and accurately performs arithmetic computations.
- Appropriately selects and applies formulas for stated purpose.
- Correctly identifies an appropriate analysis for a specific purpose and selects the appropriate computer program for computation.
- Accurately interprets and presents results of mathematical/statistical computations.

Performance Levels:

<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Superior</u>
Knows mathematical requirements of the job and performs them correctly. Verifies work to ensure accuracy.	Identifies additional opportunities for the application of mathematics in work. Answers questions/trains others to assist them in their use of mathematics.

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## Competencies or KSAs?

**False Dilemma**

A type of logical fallacy that involves a situation in which only two alternatives are considered, when in fact there are additional options (sometimes shades of grey between the extremes)

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## Better than KSAs?!

- Not better – Just different
- KSAs used in Competency level descriptions and behavioral indicators
- Can be used in conjunction
- Provides more behavioral expectation
- Allows for more standardization
  - Helping to develop stronger HR metrics and tools
  - Allows for easier linkages to tasks & performance standards
- Okay, maybe Competencies are little better
  - Let's pit them up for a Heavy Weight Title fight

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## KSAs vs. Competencies

- **KSA – The Veteran**
- **Weight** – light production time
- **Height** – short statements
- **Reach** – varied and broad
- **Age** – public familiarity - accepted
- **Record** – evolved through defeats to hold current championship belt

- **Kid Competency**
- **Weight** – heavy production time
- **Height** – lengthy descriptions
- **Reach** – consistent and standard
- **Age** – new but industry popularity
- **Record** – watched the defeats of KSAs and trained accordingly

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## Round 1

### Personnel Analyst

KSA	Competency (based on 5 levels)
<p><b>Knowledge of employment selection methods</b> including, recruitment, test development, &amp; item analysis.</p> <p><b>Ability to analyze &amp; interpret test statistics.</b></p> <p><b>Ability to communicate effectively both orally &amp; in writing.</b></p> <p><b>Education:</b> Undergraduate or graduate degree in Psychology, Business, Human Resources or a related field</p> <p><b>Experience:</b> At least 2 years working in Human Resources or a related field</p>	<p><b>Level 3 Industry Knowledge</b> - Subject to holding in-depth knowledge within employment selection, such that possession of an undergraduate or graduate degree in Psychology, Business, Human Resources or a related field, must be obtained to achieve such knowledge; applies current industry knowledge in performing a wide array of job-related activities, and serves as a point of reference for others; the extent of required prior practical application experience is job dependent, and a minimum of two years full-time work experience in Human Resources or a related field is necessary to perform job duties successfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains current industry knowledge by participating in meetings, training programs, and reading relevant publications as applicable</li> <li>• Demonstrates an awareness of new practices, approaches, technology and theories through application and information sharing</li> <li>• Keeps up to date with industry trends through specialist, magazines/books, industry web-sites and conferences</li> <li>• Applies current industry practices to job assignments</li> <li>• Seeks out opportunities to participate in projects outside of the immediate area of expertise and responsibility</li> </ul>

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## Round 2

### Personnel Analyst

KSA	Competency (based on 5 levels)
<p><b>Knowledge of organizational culture, industry trends &amp; research</b></p> <p><b>Ability to maintain professional interpersonal relationships</b></p> <p><b>Ability to communicate effectively both orally &amp; in writing.</b></p>	<p><b>Level 4 Organizational Awareness</b> - Subject to keeping current with the organization's formal and informal structure, internal and external politics, culture and climates; understanding the impact and implications of unit/department decisions on other departments, the organization, and the community; using political networks to initiate and garner support for necessary department change(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps up-to-date with goals of other units and takes into account organizational goals in making decisions with far-reaching consequences.</li> <li>• Proactively expands knowledge of what is going on in other parts of the organization.</li> <li>• Identifies potential stakeholders to involve in decision-making</li> <li>• Takes swift action to initiate department changes in climate and culture to achieve desired work place environment for department members</li> </ul>

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## Round 3

### Personnel Analyst

KSA	Competency (based on 5 levels)
<p><b>Knowledge</b> of project management strategies and techniques</p> <p><b>Ability</b> to work without supervision</p> <p><b>Ability</b> to manage work and find more efficient processes of work</p> <p><b>Ability</b> to multitask and organize work</p>	<p><b>Level 3 Process Improvement/Innovation</b>- Seeks out opportunities to create, streamline, and/or reinvent work processes, products, or services for a single and/or multiple work teams; formulates informal/formal proposals for change initiatives on behalf of a team; generally assists in formulating action plans for process-related changes, but may be entrusted to work independently in developing and implementing action plans that have fewer parameters and/or limited organizational consequences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers broad ideas for improving work process, and the means for achieving desired performance targets.</li> <li>Examines strengths and weaknesses of current approaches on the basis of elementary evaluative criteria</li> <li>Seeks information from multiple sources to formulate alternatives to conventional approaches</li> <li>Identifies relevant solutions that have been implemented in other departments, organizations and/or environments and applies them to the local function.</li> <li>Researches and capitalizes on solution shortcomings of others in formulating solutions in one's own work group and/or unit</li> </ul>

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## The Decision

### Score Card

KSAs	Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple to write, read, and understand</li> <li>Struggled with performance &amp; behavior standards</li> <li>Judges were familiar with them and knew what to look for</li> <li>Lacked detail</li> <li>Lacked standardization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Countered KSA well and added more value with detailed behavioral descriptors</li> <li>Performance standards identified</li> <li>Packed a lot of detail in each punch</li> <li>Left no question as to what was described</li> <li>Difficult to read quickly</li> </ul>

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## How are they implemented?



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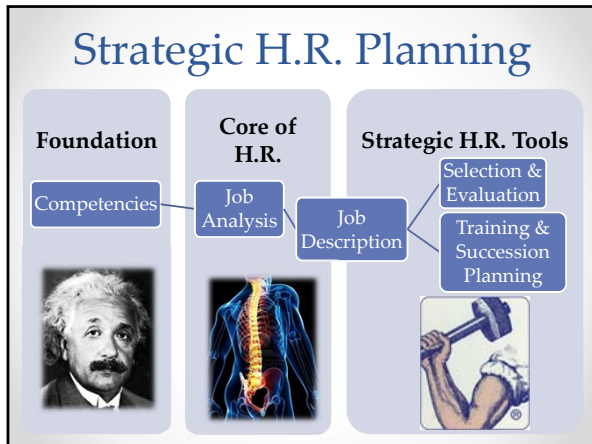
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### Candidate Perspective

- How much should candidates see?
- Who is using competencies?
- Are competencies included, listed, or detailed in the job descriptions?
- Are competencies used in job announcements – or are KSA more appropriate?
- Are competencies used in developing selection tools?
- Do competencies provide a more realistic job preview?

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### Unions and Incumbents

- Why should they be invested?
- Are competencies being used for performance standards?
- How do unions and job incumbents view competencies? - better/worse than KSAs
- How are people developing trainings with competencies?
- Are your competencies visible?
- How does upper management view competencies?
- Do competencies provide a better understanding of employee expectation?

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The screenshot shows the CODESP website's 'Job Description Glossaries' page. The page title is 'CODESP' and the main heading is 'Job Description Glossaries'. The content includes sections for 'Competencies', 'Mental Abilities', 'Physical Abilities', 'Task Action Verbs', and 'Working Conditions'. On the left side, there is a navigation menu with 'Agency Directory', 'CATS Request Form', and 'CATS Application'. Two blue arrows point from the text 'Link to all Competencies' and 'Operational Definitions' to the 'Competencies' and 'Working Conditions' sections, respectively.

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## Implementation

- Like anything, buy-in is key
  - Get support from top, middle, bottom, and candidates
- Set up to encompass the entire organization
- But they can evolve and grow with the organization
  - In fact – they should!
- Start Small
  - Start with one job as a trial
- Start in HR – you won't have to fight anyone
  - Except yourself!

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## Building a Quick Interview!

The illustration shows two 3D figures wearing hard hats and holding laptops, standing on a large 3D block that says 'UNDER CONSTRUCTION'. The scene is set against a light blue background.

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### Select a Job

Interviews

- Interview Instructions and Rating Forms
- Accounting & Business
- Admissions, Enrollment & Student Records
- Animal Care
- Appointed-Elected Positions
- Assessment - Student Testing
- Athletic
- Attendance
- Child & After School Care & Student Supervision
- Clerical (Secretary listed separately below)
- Community Worker
- Costodian
- Facilities
- Financial Aid
- Food Service
- Grounds
  - Athletic Grounds Worker
  - Chemicals and Pest Control
  - Grounds Equipment Operator
  - Grounds Equipment Operator / Lead
  - Grounds Equipment Operator / Lead CCD
  - Grounds Supervisor
  - Grounds Worker / Equipment Operator / Pavement / Fence
  - Grounds Worker / Gardener
  - Grounds Worker / Gardener - Lead
  - Laborer - Grounds
  - Lead Grounds Worker and Maintenance
  - Maintenance, Custodial & Grounds Site Supervisor
  - Refuse Equipment Operator
  - School Garden
  - Sprinkler & Irrigation Maintenance

Job Families

Specific Job Interviews

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### Select Questions

<p><b>Competency 1 – Industry Knowledge 1</b></p> <p>Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4 Question 5 Question 6</p> <p><b>Competency 2 – Industry Knowledge 2</b></p> <p>Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4</p> <p><b>Competency 3 – Soft Skill 1</b></p> <p>Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4 Question 5 Question 6</p>	<p><b>Competency 4 – Soft Skill 2</b></p> <p>Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4 Question 5</p> <p><b>Competency 5 – Org. Knowledge</b></p> <p>Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4</p> <p><b>Competency 6 – Ethics/Values</b></p> <p>Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4</p>
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### Develop Rating Guide

**Competency**

<p><b>Interview Questions:</b> For each question used from this area, have SMEs create behavioral benchmarks for candidate responses (see sample Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale below).</p>	<p>Questions selected (list)</p>										
<p><b>SCORING CRITERIA:</b></p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">5 = HIGHLY QUALIFIED</th> <th style="width: 25%;">4</th> <th style="width: 25%;">3 = QUALIFIED</th> <th style="width: 25%;">2</th> <th style="width: 25%;">1 = UNQUALIFIED</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="font-size: x-small;">□ Typical responses of a highly qualified candidate</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">□</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">□ Typical responses of a qualified candidate</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">□</td> <td style="font-size: x-small;">□ Typical responses of an unqualified candidate</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	5 = HIGHLY QUALIFIED	4	3 = QUALIFIED	2	1 = UNQUALIFIED	□ Typical responses of a highly qualified candidate	□	□ Typical responses of a qualified candidate	□	□ Typical responses of an unqualified candidate
5 = HIGHLY QUALIFIED	4	3 = QUALIFIED	2	1 = UNQUALIFIED							
□ Typical responses of a highly qualified candidate	□	□ Typical responses of a qualified candidate	□	□ Typical responses of an unqualified candidate							
<p><b>Notes:</b></p>											

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### Develop Scoring Sheet

SAMPLE BEHAVIORALLY-ANCHORED RATING SUMMARY SHEET  
Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

KSA	Criterion Weighting	Score
Competency 1 – Industry Knowledge 1		
Competency 2 – Industry Knowledge 2		
Competency 3 – Soft Skill 1		
Competency 4 – Soft Skill 2		
Competency 5 – Organizational Knowledge		
Competency 6 – Ethics/Values		
Final Score		

Rater's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Summary

- Consider the Organization's Values and Core Competencies
- Competencies arranged by Group and Level
  - Contain behavioral indicators and performance standards
- May provide more information than KSAs but do not have to be used as an either or
- When used properly, can become very strategic business tool with strong stakeholder buy-in

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### Time to Put it to Work!

The graphic features the words "Next Step" in a stylized font. The word "Next" is on the left and "Step" is on the right. Two footprints are shown: one at the bottom left and one at the top right, as if stepping on the letters. The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin blue border.

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