

## **Penn7 Career Readiness Competencies**

For more information, see: [www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerdevelopment](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/careerdevelopment)

Being successful in your career is not necessarily specific to your program of study or the grades you earn. Employers from a wide variety of industries, hiring for all different kinds of jobs, cite many different qualities that help employees thrive. To guide students in their career next steps, Career Services has developed a series of career competencies to help all candidates - undergraduates through postdoctoral fellows - identify areas of strength and areas for growth for productive, lifelong career development.

### **1) Self-Management & Personal Wellness**

Build personal and professional development strategies and goals with a clear focus on effectively managing stress and balancing work/life commitments.

- Assess personal feelings and effectively keep emotions in perspective
- Showcase empathy and understanding with others
- Cultivate and foster habits of wellness to increase focus, productivity, and impact
- Develop and demonstrate resiliency within a professional setting and other stressful situations
- Gain awareness of available wellness resources and support and ask for help when needed

### **2) Active Listening & Effective Communication**

Accurately receive and interpret verbal and non-verbal messages from direct reports, peers, colleagues, and supervisors. Clearly and effectively articulate thoughts and to varied audiences in writing and in presentation.

- Adapt speaking approaches to suit different audiences
- Communicate effectively and professionally through diverse channels (social media, emails, verbal communication)
- Express ideas in a coherent manner
- Write/edit letters, position papers, proposals, web content, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively

### **3) Critical Thinking & Problem Solving**

Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, overcome problems, address ambiguity and find relevant information.

- Obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data to resolve problems
- Demonstrate creativity, originality and inventiveness
- Easily adapt new technologies and applications to address work challenges and apply computing skills to solve problems

### **4) Teamwork & Collaboration**

Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and clients representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, disciplines, and viewpoints.

- Assume various roles within a team structure
- Effectively manage and negotiate different personalities in order to reach a common goal
- Understand how to problem solve when encountering challenging workplace dynamics

## 5) Leadership & Project Management

Develop professional, working relationships with colleagues, peers, and supervisors/advisors, and leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals.

- Develop a strategically conceptualized plan to identify and achieve goals
- Utilize interpersonal skills to coach, develop, motivate, and gain buy-in from others
- Organize, prioritize, and delegate work
- Identify opportunity areas to more successfully achieve goals
- Leverage diverse talent pool to maximize team results

## 6) Professionalism & Work Ethic

Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits (e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time/workload management), and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional image.

- Demonstrate integrity and behave ethically
- Make responsible decisions that consider the interests of the larger community
- Assume responsibility when mistakes are made, and learn from them in future situations
- Communicate with colleagues in language appropriate for work and suitable for a diverse environment
- Go above and beyond to make positive impressions
- Understand data privacy and security issues particular to the workplace

## 7) Career Management

Identify and express one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to both the desired position and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth.

- Assess current role and how it will lead to future prospects
- Understand and take necessary steps to find and pursue opportunities
- Articulate impact on workplace by effectively communicating and illustrating skills, competencies, knowledge, and experiences
- Self-advocate for professional development and advancement
- Understand current industry's market and relationship to the overall economy

## Tips for gaining competencies:

- **Make campus connections:** Take every opportunity to connect with peers, student/postdoc associations, and the various student services on campus throughout your time at Penn.
- **Develop your communication skills:** Employers put a great deal of emphasis on these skills, and so use campus resources (e.g., speaking/writing centers), and look for opportunities to practice.
- **Ask for help:** Career development is a long and unpredictable road. It is OK to ask for help along the way, and getting support during stressful times will help you find a positive and confident perspective that is very helpful in career exploration.
- **Explore:** Explore your skills, interests, and goals, and your career options. Self-reflection will make the job of narrowing down possible career options much more manageable and satisfying.
- **Network with alumni:** Get advice from alumni. Leverage this fantastic network to develop professional relationships with people in career fields that interest you.
- **Engage:** Find opportunities to gain hands-on experience (e.g., shadowing, internships, student groups) for career fields of interest to you so that you can develop relevant skills.
- **Make career choices:** Actively seek roles in organizations that interest you. Be ready to negotiate offers you receive, and plan on how you will make decisions about which to accept.