MMU’s Leadership and Management Competency Framework
The University’s leadership and management framework describes the key competencies that all leaders and managers should be working towards within our University. These competencies have been grouped into 7 areas:

- Leadership integrity
- Champions student and service focus
- Translates and communicates direction
- Manages others
- Achieves results
- Fosters teamwork
- Develops self and others

None of the competencies stand in isolation; they are all intrinsically linked and each has an impact on the others.

Each area of the framework contains descriptions of generic behaviours that would be apparent if someone is demonstrating the competency and development indicators to signal where improvement is required.

A large-scale consultation with managers and staff across MMU was carried out to gather views on what should be present in a framework for management competencies. These views were taken into account in formulating the framework. Workshops were held on all sites with 161 staff members attending.

The intention is for the framework to be reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to be appropriate and relevant for our managers and our University.
The Framework

Leadership Integrity

- Champions student and service focus
- Translates and communicates direction
- Manages others
- Develops self and others
- Fosters teamwork
- Achieves results
Leadership integrity

Why it matters to us

What staff said consistently in all sessions:

“Lead by personal example”

During the consultation, this competency was discussed more regularly than any other area. It was the most difficult to name, but was commonly described as “leading by example”.

We are looking for managers and leaders who are able to build and instil trust by being open and honest in their communication and decision making and showing honesty and integrity in their approach.

We need managers and leaders who clearly demonstrate our values by being respectful of others and acknowledging and responding to different opinions.

We need leaders and managers who are willing to use their judgement, take responsibility and see things through. This means that they will not always be able to take the easy option, but will ensure that decisions made are made with the best intentions.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

- Open and transparent in their decision making and communication
- Listens to others and accepts that they are not always right
- Makes fair and balanced decisions
- Takes the right decision, even if it is not the easiest
- Recognises the impact of their behaviour on others
- Reflects on their own actions and learns from their experiences and mistakes
- Respects confidentiality
- Treats employees fairly by applying consistent management principles
- Respectful of others by acknowledging different opinions
- Takes their social responsibility seriously
- Considers whether results have been achieved ethically

Development indicators

- Holds onto information, does not explain decisions or update others
- Makes decisions for personal gain
- Does not reflect on and review their actions
- Gossips about staff
- Dismisses different opinions
- Uncaring about staff, students and the University
- Does not consider the impact of results
Champions student and service focus

Why it matters to us

What staff said consistently in all sessions:

“Put your heart in it.”

During the consultation, there was a lot of discussion about the use of the term ‘customer’. What was clear, however, was that staff knew that they wanted managers and leaders who could facilitate a focus on providing an excellent experience for our students and others who use our services.

We are looking for managers and leaders who are committed to delivering the best for our students with the services that we offer, and are able to communicate this clearly and inspire action in others. To do this, our leaders and managers need to know and understand their customer base, consider the needs of other services/departments/external partners and enable forward thinking and planning. They need to allow space and time to develop the service, allowing themselves and others to be creative and innovate for the benefit of our students, colleagues and the University as a whole.

When bringing about change, our leaders and managers need to allow time for changes to be established, set up systems to evaluate changes that have been introduced and ensure that these meet the needs of our customer base.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

Understanding context
• Recognises the local/regional/national/international context
• Considers external and internal stakeholders when planning any changes
• Aware of best practice, whether internally or externally
• Has some knowledge of the detail and awareness of student needs

Managing change
• Adapts to and anticipates change
• Prepares in advance for changes, so avoidable problems can be foreseen
• Invites feedback from customers/students so the team have something to focus on and aim for
• Makes things happen on time for customers

Building relationships
• Able to build relationships, show empathy and build rapport
• Communicates with staff about what our customers are told/systems that they use, so that staff are in the best position to help
• Talks to staff and asks what they think to be able to deliver the best results in a timely way

Development indicators
• Has limited knowledge about what is happening beyond their own team/department
• Does not consider others when planning changes
• Struggles to build relationships with our customers
• Resistant to changes in existing practice or technologies
• Unaware of the work of their team and what students are looking for day to day
• Is constantly fire-fighting
Translates and communicates direction

Why it matters to us

What staff said consistently in all the sessions:

“Clear and simple communication - I want to know what I should be doing and why.”

During the consultation, staff discussed the need for managers and leaders to help them see where they fit in, otherwise they “feel rudderless and lack confidence or identity”.

We need leaders and managers who understand and can explain clearly the direction of their area of responsibility in relation to the direction of the University. We need leaders and managers who will encourage ownership of plans and actions at the appropriate level, by explaining individual roles and responsibilities. In sharing information, we need leaders and managers who can select the right approach for both straightforward and difficult situations.

We need leaders and managers who are not frightened to take decisions and set direction. Our leaders and managers have a central role in helping people to understand and identify what they can influence and inspire them to get involved. This means listening to and involving staff in decisions that they can have a real influence over.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

Communicating
- Communicates information clearly
- Explains how team members fit in the structure, vision and plans
- Provides clarity about roles and responsibilities where necessary
- Highlights the important elements for the team within wider strategies/plans
- Is proactive and positive
- Offers a definition of success and rewards it

Decision making
- Analyses situations and information to inform decisions and see links
- Realises the implications for other services or teams of any changes – and takes action accordingly
- Understands where decisions have to be made – and makes them
- Explains decisions made

Influencing
- Understands their own contribution to the University
- Uses opportunities to influence peers/senior managers/team/ service
- Involves others in decisions they can have influence over
- Is honest with staff about where they cannot influence decisions made

Planning
- Provides clear project management by setting clear goals and objectives and giving clear explanations of what is needed
- Prioritises work and takes the initiative
- Keeps up-to-date with University policies

Development indicators
- Allows their team to ‘drift’ and allocates resources on an ad hoc basis
- Does not consider the impact of what they are doing on other services or teams and/or does not take action to mitigate/help this
- Regurgitates the University strategy, without translating/making this relevant for their team
- Is reactive and negative
- Avoids involving others in areas that they could influence and help shape
- Does not keep up-to-date with university policies
Manages others

Why it matters to us

We need leaders and managers with the ability to manage staff effectively for the benefit of the service, department and University. We need leaders and managers who are able to manage the performance of their staff to ensure that they can be effective in their roles.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

- Sets and maintains high performance standards for self and others
- Holds self and other team members accountable for achieving results
- Motivates others to translate ideas into actions and results
- Recruits and manages individuals effectively to create a high performing team
- Provides leadership, direction and feedback on team and individual objectives
- Gives both positive and constructive feedback
- Has difficult conversations to confront any performance issues, providing support to enable improvement or taking appropriate formal action
- Meaningfully engages in the PDR process, probation processes and other people management systems and processes

Development indicators

- Avoids difficult conversations about poor performance
- Does not engage or pays lip service to the PDR process
Why it matters to us

We need leaders and managers who demonstrate concern for achieving or surpassing results against internal or external standards of excellence and who show a passion for improving the service they and their team offer. We need leaders and managers who are able to reflect upon results to make sure that they are offering real benefit to our students and the University, who will celebrate successes and learn from mistakes.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

• Identifies clear outcomes
• Sets appropriate targets and milestones
• Recognizes and capitalizes on opportunities
• Tries new things to reach challenging goals and persists until individual and team goals are achieved and commitments met
• Addresses challenges and manages change in support of corporate and local objectives
• Manages project and other workloads to meet timescales, budgets and deliverables
• Reviews progress
• Understands risk culture, including the taking of opportunities while managing risk. Puts measures in place to identify, manage and minimise risks (e.g. financial, business continuity, health & safety)
• Celebrates successes
• Learns from mistakes

Development indicators

• Lack of clarity about what they are looking for
• Over focused on the process at the expense of outcomes
Fosters teamwork

Why it matters to us

What staff said consistently in all sessions:

“Disguise the hierarchy, we’re all going in the same direction.”

During the consultation, some participants felt that fostering teamwork should be a given, and that as such it should not need to be a standalone competency. Others felt strongly that this should be focused upon given that the nature of our business requires team contribution rather than individual high fliers. On balance, it was felt overall that this should be included.

We are looking for managers and leaders who can work well collaboratively within and across teams. This includes initiating dialogue across teams, levels, departments and ‘the centre’ and recognising that we have a shared responsibility to provide the best experience for our students and others who use our services. We want leaders and managers who recognise the value of every contribution and area of expertise (e.g. teaching, research, admin, services). This includes recognising the value of different areas of the University, building links and networks across teams (internally and externally) and building back to the bigger picture.

We want managers and leaders who create a supportive team environment by listening and responding to others and creating opportunities for innovation and generation of ideas and actions.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

Within the team
• Engages staff, listening and responding to their views
• Is approachable; understands the challenges faced and works with the team to resolve problems
• Recognises staff as a resource for ideas and for achieving common goals
• Shares praise and recognition and celebrates team achievement and collective goals
• Is open to compromise/concede when others share their views
• Provides a good induction for new team members so that they know their role in the team
• Draws on the valuable knowledge of experienced staff to enable newer staff to work more effectively
• Aware of the team’s workload and provides support where necessary

Beyond the team
• Encourages dialogue within and between teams/departments/services/ ‘the centre’
• Recognises their role in knowledge sharing, in highlighting and sharing good practice from their team/area
• Is a conduit for 2-way communication between more senior managers and team members

Development indicators
• Does not encourage dialogue within and between teams
• Keeps good practice/approaches within the team
• Is unapproachable and out of touch with the day to day working of the team
• Is not open to making changes or amendments as a result of others’ views
Develops self and others

Why it matters to us

What staff said consistently in all sessions:

“Offer support but credit me with a bit of common sense.”

During the consultation, staff discussed the need for managers and leaders to continually develop themselves and others to ensure that the University does not stand still, particularly in today’s competitive market. The outcome of this will be the sustainability and growth of the University.

We need leaders and managers with the ability to empower others to develop and realise their potential. This means making time for staff, considering their development, delegating responsibilities and trusting their ability to deliver results. We need managers and leaders who will foster an environment where we can be innovative, with a degree of risk-taking to encourage creativity and enterprise.

Generic behaviours if someone is demonstrating this capability

Develops self

- Aware of own strengths and weaknesses
- Offers help in areas where their own expertise is relevant
- Recognises when support is needed and seeks it from others
- Recognises the need for continuous learning and acts as a role model in pursuing this
- Open to receiving feedback and acting on it to improve their own performance

Develops others

- Provides encouragement and support to their staff or other team members
- Demonstrates confidence in others to do the job/deal with the problem
- Able to delegate effectively, by delegating authority as well as responsibility
- Creates opportunities to be innovative and think about things differently
- Recognises that the same task can be done in different ways
- Provides development opportunities through various approaches, including training or giving new responsibilities (with appropriate support)
- Gives opportunities for others to step outside their comfort zone
- Encourages the sharing of skills

Development indicators

- Under or over estimates own strengths or weaknesses
- Does not develop and is ‘stuck in a rut’
- Micromanages
- Continues to do things in the same way, particularly using time pressures as an excuse not to think about things differently
- Takes a ‘one size fits all’ approach
- Avoids difficult conversations about poor performance
- Does not engage or pays lip service to the PDR process
- Thinks development is only achieved by sending people on a course
- Does not give staff tasks designed to put new skills into practice or provide opportunities to stretch staff
So what difference will this make to our students and staff?

If our leaders and managers lead by example and champion a student and service focus, this ensures a strong commitment to our students and the services that we provide. By translating this into meaningful actions and fostering teamwork across the University, we can ensure that we do the best for our students and our colleagues.

By creating a culture where developing ourselves and others is the norm, all of us will be working toward self-improvement along with improving our services for the benefit of both current and future students and staff.