PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

For College and University Career Services Practitioners

NACE®

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Introduction

During the past several years, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has made significant progress in promoting excellence in professional practice for its members and their respective employers. Examples include developing professional standards and related evaluation protocols, and training of professional reviewers.

The majority of this work has focused on defining excellence in professional practice for work units rather than for individual practitioners. For example, the human resources section of both the NACE and Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) professional standards for career services include core competencies and knowledge domains linked to specific primary unit functions. However, these competencies are expected of the career services staff collectively, reflecting staff competencies and not individual practitioner competencies.

As career services practitioners reflect diverse institutional types, reporting structures, educational backgrounds, and experiences, NACE undertook the development of universally accepted individual practitioner competencies to better define what a career services professional should know and be able to do.

With this professional competency initiative, NACE has established an important member-service benchmark. More importantly, this list of competencies can be seen as a resource to help guide professional development initiatives of individual practitioners, career services units and supervisors, and NACE.

Purpose

Competence is the ability of an individual to do a job properly. Competencies should be thought of as a set of defined attributes, the mastery of which allows an individual to retain a position or earn a promotion. Therefore, competencies provide a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation, and development of the behaviors in individual employees.

The fundamental purpose of these professional competencies is to articulate for career services practitioners and other stakeholders the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in diverse roles as professional educators. Overall, the list of competencies will help define the broad nature of career services practices and the required proficiencies, regardless of the administrative models.

The focus of the professional competencies provided here is the individual career services practitioner. As practitioners seek to develop their skills and experience portfolios, these competencies—presented in three levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced)—will provide key progressive criteria for measuring progress and evaluating professional growth opportunities that remain for each person. These competencies can be the nucleus of a career and professional development plan for the individual career practitioner, a plan that others, including supervisors, can influence in positive ways.

In the future, as the need for specific knowledge and skills occurs, these competencies can be revised to reflect those changes and the continual emergence of the career services profession.

Process

The Career Services Professional Competencies Task Force was charged "to develop and define a list of professional competencies for career services practitioners at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels." Members of the task force represent an experienced and diverse group of individuals and institutions. They include Laura Melius, Eastern Kentucky University, Chair; Sam Ratcliffe, Virginia Military Institute, Board adviser; Jeff Garis, Pennsylvania State University; Mike Heuring, University of Montana - Missoula; Leslie Stevenson, University of Richmond; Chris Timm, University of Nebraska - Lincoln; Tom Wunderlich, Old Dominion University; and Kim Jamison, NACE staff adviser.

The task force determined that it would be most beneficial for the competencies to flow logically from the *NACE Professional Standards for College and University Career Services*. Thus, the development and organizational structure of the competencies are taken directly from the "Functions and Core Competencies" and "Knowledge" areas as outlined in the "Human Resources" section of the *Standards*.

In addition to the NACE Standards, key reference documents used by the task force included the CAS *Professional Standards for Career Services*; the ACPA/NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners*; and the *NACE Professional Standards Evaluation Workbook*. Also used as a basis for competency development were results of a 2008-09 NACE survey of the college membership on core competencies and areas of expertise. In addition, the task force referred to the *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*, the National Career Development Associations (NCDA) *Career Counseling Competencies*, and documents from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD).

Two separate processes were used to test the competencies beyond the task force: First, a draft of the competencies was presented at the NACE 2012 Conference & Expo. Second, a draft was distributed to a group of expert reviewers for comments and suggestions, along with a structured set of questions to ensure consistency among the reviews. (Note: These reviewers have undergone formal NACE training in the review of career services offices; further, care was taken to ensure the diversity of the reviewers in terms of size of school and geographic location.)

The competencies were refined based on feedback gathered at the conference and from the reviewers, and presented to and approved by the NACE Board of Directors Executive. Committee.

Intended Audiences

The development of professional competencies for career services practitioners has several significant potential applications. From the perspective of the individual practitioner, one can use

the competencies to better understand the complexities of the profession and develop professional development goals to support career advancement in the field.

Those involved in career services unit leadership roles can use the competencies to guide staff development initiatives for the enhancement of individual and group functionality, for individual professional development goals, and for better position definitions and alignment based on unit needs and goals. Division-level supervisors of career services units can use the competencies to be better educated regarding the required functionality levels for career services practitioners and professional development opportunities.

For NACE, these professional competencies provide a framework for developing topics for professional development events, including conferences, workshops, courses, and other initiatives to support knowledge and skill development of career services practitioners. Additionally, for future reviews and revisions of the NACE *Professional Standards*, the professional competencies will be an effective reference tool for human resource considerations. In a similar vein, revisions of the CAS standards for career services will also benefit from the availability of the professional competency information.

Multiple other career services stakeholders will be able to reference the professional competencies to identify what career services practitioners should know and be able to do at different levels of leadership and functionality.

Competency Area Levels

Each career services functional area begins with a definition of that specific area followed by a list of core competencies contained within that area.

Each core competency is divided into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, which represent the progressive levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities required to function successfully in roles of increasing responsibility within the profession.

Individuals holding mid- or upper-level management positions would be expected to be operating at intermediate or advanced competency levels, while new or entry-level practitioners would function at the basic level.

Typically, professionals with overall responsibility for a selected program or functional area would be expected to be operating at the advanced level within that area. That same professional could simultaneously be functioning at the basic or intermediate level in a different functional area for which he or she does not have overall responsibility.

Individuals functioning at a given competency area level should also be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the competency area levels below their current functioning level.

Competency Area "Threads"

Although some competencies are distinctly different, several threads are evident among most functional areas. Rather than establishing separate competencies for each, these threads are understood to underpin the competencies. These threads are:

- Legal and Ethical – following legal regulations as well as the ethical basis for regulations; demonstrating personal integrity to provide fair and professional services.

- Diversity and Inclusion – recognizing the value of diversity that celebrates differences among people; exhibiting cultural sensitivity; and including diverse individuals in staffing, services, and outreach activities.

- Global Issues – considering global (both international and cultural/inclusion perspectives) interactions and recognizing unique cultural matters.

- Interpersonal – using appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and written communication to effectively interact with colleagues and those served.

For example, there are a variety of personal, interpersonal, and soft skills embedded in, and affecting directly or indirectly, the development of one or more competencies. Although some interpersonal skills are addressed in limited instances, no attempt was made to articulate or define the wide range of possible personal, interpersonal, and soft skills inherent in career services professional practice. Instead, the practitioner should understand that these skills are integral to professional practice.

How Competencies May Be Applied

Following is a partial list of instances in which the competencies may be applied. The competencies can be used to:

- Develop position descriptions.

- Aid in the analysis of job performance and to recommend professional development opportunities.

- Design e-portfolios.

- Provide a framework for mentoring or coaching relationships.

- Provide guidance in educating other campus departments about the work that is done in career services.

- Aid in developing an agenda for staff retreats or staff professional development.

- Assist in the analysis of resources.

- Provide support for professional development expenses through linking to intended outcomes.

- Guide students interested in joining the profession.

- Provide a guide for creating internships in the department.

- Serve as a basis for interview questions in the recruitment process.

- Serve as a reference for graduate preparation programs.

Functional Area: Career Coaching, Advising, and Counseling

This area addresses a range of interventions to assist students and other designated clients at any stage of their career development.

Competency: Providing needs assessments and developing action plans
One should be able to:
Basic:
• Collaborate with clients in identifying needs and reasons for seeking services.
• Identify and understand clients' personal characteristics and life experiences related to career development.
• Identify and understand clients' career decision making processes.
• Develop action plans in support of client employability skills.
Intermediate:
• Identify clients' needs and develop action plans based on a theoretical model of career development and employability skills.
Advanced:
• Consider a range of career development theories and apply a theory for clients' needs based on individual client qualities.
• Present career issues including career planning and employability skills.

Competency: Intervention, design, and implementation

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify, select, and implement career coaching/advising/counseling interventions and techniques appropriate to client goals.

Intermediate:

- Identify, select, and implement interventions and techniques based on a theoretical approach to career development.
- Create individual learning plans (ILPs) with clients.

Advanced:

- Consider a range of theoretical approaches to career development in creating clients' ILPs.
- Create new interventions, models, or theories for career coaching/advising/counseling.

Competency: Test administration and interpretation

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify and use selected assessments, such as career thoughts, decision making, interests, aptitude/skills, values, and personality traits, to measure client qualities.
- Administer, score, interpret, report, and record findings from assessment instruments appropriately.

Intermediate:

- Consider and use a range of assessment measures based on individual clients' demographics, qualities, needs, and coaching/advising/counseling goals.

Advanced:

- Research, select, and receive training in using new assessments in career coaching/advising/counseling based on client qualities and goals.
- Evaluate clients' responses and the effectiveness of the assessments.
- Create/develop new assessment measures.

Competency: Counseling

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Develop client-centered relationships with clients using basic core counseling techniques such as listening, reflection, and empathic understanding.
- Base coaching/advising/counseling on an informational (assessment of progress) and relational (authentic client engagement) model.
- Evaluate effectiveness of coaching/advising/counseling through client satisfaction surveys.

Intermediate:

- Provide clients with behaviorally specific feedback.
- Base coaching/advising/counseling on goal-oriented (realization of career goals) and holistic (whole person) models.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of coaching/advising/counseling through the measurement of learning outcomes.

Advanced:

- Develop a therapeutic alliance with clients based on a professional partnership.
- Base coaching/advising/counseling on integrative (customized-informed referrals) and continuous (ongoing collaborative partnership) models.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of coaching/advising/counseling through empirically based outcome research and evidenced-based practice.

Competency: Working with individuals and groups

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Deliver career coaching/advising/counseling services through a range of approaches, including individual, drop-in, and group appointments; workshops; and other programs.

Intermediate:

- Lead in the delivery of career coaching/advising/counseling services, including group-based and instructional applications.

Advanced:

- Develop and evaluate new applications for the delivery of career coaching/advising/counseling services, i.e., create new group programs, drop-in/intake services, or credit career planning courses.

Competency: Use of career, occupations, and employment information

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Keep abreast of current sources and use of career, occupational, and employment information in providing clients with career coaching/advising/counseling services.

Intermediate:

- Use and refer clients to career, occupational, and employment information based on individual client's background, learning style, and service delivery goals.

Advanced:

- Research, evaluate, and recommend new sources and systems for providing clients with career, occupational, and employment information.

Functional Area: Brokering, Connecting, and Linking

This competency addresses the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the systems, procedures, and processes used in connecting the internal and external constituents in career services, including, but not limited to, students, alumni, employers, faculty, staff, administration, and community partners.

Competency: Organizing information, logistics, people, and processes toward desired outcomes

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Implement and explain established employer programs and policies, being aware of inclusiveness and following legal and ethical guidelines.
- Plan, organize, and implement projects involving multiple tasks and priorities in a fast-paced, diverse environment.

Intermediate:

- Design, execute, and interpret employer programs and policies, maintaining inclusiveness and following legal and ethical guidelines.
- Plan, organize, and implement projects with complex logistics involving multiple tasks and priorities in a fast-paced, diverse environment.

Advanced:

- Ensure that employer programs and policies meet the needs of the university, are inclusive, and follow legal and ethical guidelines.
- In collaboration with institutional legal counsel, establish and ensure compliance with formalized recruiting policies and procedures that govern campus recruiting activities and take into consideration federal and state laws, college/university policies, NACE *Principles for Professional Practice for Career Services & Employment Professionals,* and NACE's *A Faculty Guide to Ethical and Legal Standards in Student Hiring*.
- Ensure that career services has the human, financial, and technical resources necessary to organize information, projects, and processes to produce desired outcomes.

Competency: Consulting

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Maintain and communicate a knowledge base of occupational, career, and job information resources and technologies as well as an understanding of the labor market, employment trends, and recruiting strategies and techniques.

Intermediate:

- Be aware of economic, political, and global issues that affect higher education and major employment trends.

Advanced:

- Ensure that all staff have and can communicate an appropriate knowledge base of occupational, career, and job information resources and technologies as well as knowledge of the labor market, employment trends, and recruiting strategies and techniques.

- Monitor, understand, and disseminate, as needed, the impact that economic, political, scientific, technological, global, and other issues have on higher education and employment trends.

Competency: Consulting – students and alumni

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Provide basic consultation to students and/or alumni on job-search tools and strategies, including resume writing, developing cover letters and job-campaign correspondence, interviewing, networking, and making connections with employers.

Intermediate:

- Source, develop, adapt, design, and use resources to consult with students/alumni on job-search tools and strategies.

Advanced:

- Ensure staff is trained and appropriate resources are available to effectively consult with students and/or alumni on job-search tools and strategies, and making employer connections.

Competency: Consulting – employers

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Perform outreach to and assist employers with recruiting and enhancing their image on campus.

Intermediate:

- Facilitate and implement employer recruiting and marketing/branding strategies to gain appropriate visibility and connections on campus for the employer.

Advanced:

- Provide consultation for employers in devising effective, customized strategies for their campus relations and recruiting initiatives.

Competency: Consulting – faculty/campus community

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Serve as liaison to academic and nonacademic departments and organizations on campus, maintaining close ties to faculty and staff.
- Keep stakeholders abreast of trends and resources.
- Support efforts for collaboration and delivery of services.

Intermediate:

- Establish and develop relationships with appropriate academic and nonacademic areas and close ties to faculty and staff.
- Work with faculty and administrators to gain buy-in.
- Develop processes and systems to keep stakeholders abreast of trends and resources.
- Initiate efforts for collaboration and delivery of services.

Advanced:

- Enhance relationships and foster partnerships with a broad base of constituents, both academic and nonacademic, throughout campus.
- Ensure that collaborations are established and developed that support the mission of career services.

Competency: Consulting – external community

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Serve as a representative and liaison to community organizations, reporting on, collaborating with, and connecting campus and community resources.

Intermediate:

- Establish and develop relationships with community partners and organizations.

Advanced:

- Enhance relationships and foster partnerships with external constituencies.
- Ensure that collaborations are established and developed that support the mission of career services.

Competency: Consulting – parents/families

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Assist parents and families in understanding and supporting their students with the challenges students face in the career development and job-search processes.

Intermediate:

- Develop programming and resources to engage parents and families in the career development and job-search processes of their students.

Advanced:

- Enhance relationships and foster partnerships with parents and families of students in support of the mission of career services.

Competency: Building and managing advisory boards

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Assist with logistics of planning and implementing advisory board meetings.

Intermediate:

- Manage the planning, coordination, and logistics of advisory board meetings.

Advanced:

- Build and manage an effective, relevant, and inclusive advisory board that supports the mission of career services.

Competency: Interpersonal skills

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Develop and maintain relationships with diverse populations and organizations.
- Demonstrate verbal and written skills in communicating basic information to both internal and external audiences.

Intermediate:

- Manage, garner support from, and create mutual benefit from long-term relationships with diverse populations and organizations.
- Demonstrate verbal and written skills in communicating complex information to both internal and external audiences.
- Articulate the value of service to all audiences.

Advanced:

- Ensure that long-term relationships with appropriate internal and external constituents and diverse populations and organizations are developed and managed.

Competency: Job and experiential learning opportunity development

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Contact a variety of prospective employers to inquire about recruiting opportunities.

Intermediate:

- Identify and communicate with prospective employers.

Advanced:

- Analyze outreach efforts to determine if customized outreach yields impactful recruiting results for the institution.

Competency: Sourcing and planning for experiential learning

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Assist in the sourcing and planning of experiential education activities.
- Teach students appropriate search and application techniques.
- Provide information to students concerning financial resources/opportunities for obtaining academic credit.
- Help students identify employers.

Intermediate:

- Manage, source, and develop experiential education opportunities that meet the needs of the student population.
- Evaluate opportunities.
- Evaluate sites of experiences.
- Ensure students will be adequately supervised in experience and on site.
- Develop innovative programming and outreach to students to encourage experiential learning.
- Ensure that all involved parties are following appropriate guidelines/requirements to meet goals for the experience, e.g., achievement of academic credit.
- Assess student learning outcomes.

Advanced:

- Build, develop, and manage experiential learning programs that meet the needs and mission of the institution.
- Build, develop, and manage experiential learning programs that meet the needs of the student population.
- Disseminate and promote the use of aggregate student learning outcomes.

Competency: Civic and community engagement

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Assist students in identifying and engaging in service learning, volunteer, and other civic and community engagement experiences.

Intermediate:

- Coordinate a civic and community engagement program, engaging students in the process, connecting with academic and community partners, and assessing learning and service outcomes.

Advanced:

- Develop and manage a program of civic engagement and/or service learning, partnering with internal and external constituents to achieve student success and support the institution's mission.

Competency: Fostering global and diverse connections

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand and articulate the needs and concerns of diverse populations.
- Demonstrate a personal and professional commitment to diversity.
- Provide support and assistance to international students seeking jobs domestically and internationally.

Intermediate:

- Model and promote an environment that demonstrates a professional commitment to diversity and global awareness.
- Understand and articulate the logistical, legal, and ethical complexities of international employment.

Advanced:

- Ensure an environment that demonstrates a professional commitment to diversity and global awareness.
- Develop and manage an international employment program that meets the needs and fits the mission of the institution.

Functional Area: Information Management

This includes developing and implementing technology and related plans to manage both incoming and outgoing information securely. It also includes a consideration of the technology, equipment, software, and systems used to enter, store, and disseminate various forms of information such as student data, career outcomes, and employer information.

Competency: Organization and dissemination; storage and retrieval

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Collect data and present basic data.
- Record interactions and outcomes of constituents.
- Understand and apply laws and policies governing privacy of data.
- Review and evaluate incoming information and resources.

Intermediate:

- Suggest design and functionality for systems.
- Understand legal and ethical implications of data misuse.
- Evaluate and disseminate incoming information and resources.

Advanced:

- Implement design and functionality for data storage, organization, retrieval, and dissemination.
- Recommend and implement data retention and disposal policies.
- Review, evaluate, and prioritize incoming information for potential impact upon career services.

Competency: Computing systems and applications – standard software and equipment

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Demonstrate operational skills in common word processing, spreadsheet, and database software.
- Demonstrate operational knowledge of computing systems and peripherals.
- Abide by campus computing policies.
- Demonstrate adaptability and lifelong learning traits for ongoing enhancement.

Intermediate:

- Use multiple software packages to compile information into single report.
- Seek clarification on campus computing policies when considering systems and applications.

Advanced:

- Evaluate software and equipment options for applicability to career center needs.
- Interact with campus information systems staff to ensure career services systems are integrated, when applicable, into campus computing systems.

Competency: Computing systems and applications – career planning and information resources

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify common computerized career planning systems and information resources.

Intermediate:

- Discuss with constituents effective use of computerized career planning systems and information resources.

Advanced:

- Evaluate computerized career planning systems and information resources in terms of strengths and limitations, accessibility for clients, and applicability to clients.

Competency: Computing systems and applications – career services management systems

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Enter and retrieve data from career services management system.
- Demonstrate basic system components to clientele.

Intermediate:

- Understand interrelatedness of career services management system.
- Suggest system changes or improvements.
- Train other staff on component usage.
- Generate basic reports and usage data from system.

Advanced:

- Interact with campus information systems staff to ensure career services systems are integrated, when applicable, into campus computing systems.
- Make strategic decisions about systems components and their implementation.
- Work with vendors and campus contacts to implement and maintain systems.
- Provide training and support to staff in use of systems.

Competency: Data entry and analysis

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Enter data into appropriate systems.
- Retrieve data.
- Report summary of data.

Intermediate:

- Query data and interpret results.

Advanced:

- Query data from multiple systems.
- Integrate results into broad or specialized reports.
- Use results for ongoing service improvement.
- Provide and analyze data for external audiences.

Competency: Acquisition of appropriate career resources

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Maintain records of resources and their costs, and renew/replace as needed.

Intermediate:

- Evaluate resources for accessibility, reliability, and appropriateness with clients and in consideration of budget.
- Consult with others, as appropriate, regarding resource options.
- Work with vendors.

Advanced:

- Implement career resources.
- Conduct assessment as to applicability and usefulness for clients.
- Develop rubrics or evaluative tools to compare options and make strategic decisions.
- Work with vendors in negotiating price and allocating budget.

Competency: Web/social media design and management

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify common web or virtual engagement forums for information.
- Write text appropriate for the medium.

Intermediate:

- Create or update web or virtual engagement forums.
- Incorporate forums into overall marketing plans for office.
- Ensure consistency of message.
- Contribute to ongoing training on resources and systems.

Advanced:

- Manage strategic direction and integration of web and virtual engagement presence.
- Evaluate new technologies.
- Use project management skills from project conception through implementation.

Functional Area: Marketing, Promoting, and Performing Outreach

This competency area includes the tools and techniques that practitioners use to share information with a variety of stakeholders including students, employers, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and donors. It also involves a thorough understanding of the intended audience and the ability to formulate specific messages for each group.

Competency: Marketing principles and strategies

One should be able to:

Basic:
- Understand fundamental marketing techniques.
- Work in conjunction with the marketing/communications department to deliver messages in alignment with the institutional brand.

Intermediate:
- Suggest office and institutional marketing messages for diverse audiences, consistent with the institutional brand.

Advanced:
- Craft office and institutional marketing messages.
- Coach others to deliver messages to a variety of audiences.

Competency: Needs assessment and goal setting

One should be able to:

Basic:
- Design, administer, and compile results of marketing and communications needs assessments.
- Understand student needs.

Intermediate:
- Interpret results, and make and implement recommendations based on marketing needs assessments.

Advanced:
- Use marketing assessment results in determining the career center's accomplishment of its mission and to set direction.

Competency: Development/fundraising strategies

One should be able to:

Basic:
- Understand the development and fundraising philosophy of institution.
- Participate in fundraising activities as requested.
- Act in accordance with relevant legal and ethical guidelines

Intermediate:
- Identify prospects and share background information with development officers.
- Assist in developing fundraising proposals.

Advanced:
- Identify institutional needs and prospective donors.
- Coach others in legal and ethical guidelines relevant to fundraising and development.

Competency: Sales and closing techniques

One should be able to:

Basic/Intermediate:
- Promote career center services and be familiar with common objections/concerns of key stakeholders.
- Model appropriate interpersonal interactions.

Advanced:
- Coach others in appropriate interpersonal interactions.

Competency: Relationship development and management

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Steward and maintain existing relationships with key audiences, including employers, faculty, and students, through ongoing communication.

Intermediate:

- Identify opportunities to expand relationships with key audiences, including employers, faculty, and students.

Advanced:

- Through research and analysis, provide strategies customized to develop each specific relationship.

Competency: Written and interpersonal communication

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Create reports that are accurate, grammatically correct, and error-free.
- Interact appropriately with others.
- Write for the web, producing grammatically correct, error-free copy.
- Adhere to all laws and policies regarding communications, including copyright and libel laws.

Intermediate:

- Create succinct and impactful reports and other documents.
- Present ideas to small and large groups.

Advanced:

- Present ideas to a variety of stakeholders.
- Coach others in laws and policies regarding communications, including copyright and libel laws.

Competency: Public speaking

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Deliver presentations to diverse constituencies.

Intermediate:

- Research topics and audiences, draft content, and deliver customized presentations to diverse constituencies.

Advanced:

- Speak accurately and authoritatively on areas of expertise with little advance notice.

Competency: Effective use of print, web, and personal presentation methods

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Modify existing presentations and materials.

Intermediate:

- Create presentations.
- Use social media and video.

Advanced:

- Use and understand a variety of technology tools.

Functional Area: Program and Event Administration

This area addresses the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to implement systems, manage logistics, and develop procedures for effective project management.

Competency: Goal setting

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Establish goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely for programs and events.
- Establish and measure effective student learning outcomes for programs and events.

Intermediate:

- Assess student learning outcomes for programs and events, and implement changes based on assessments.

Advanced:

- Ensure that goals set for programming and events are in alignment with the mission of the unit, division, and institution, and meet the needs of a diverse population.
- Ensure that the unit effectively establishes and implements student learning outcomes as it relates to the overall mission and goals of the unit, division, and institution.

Competency: Program planning

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Provide assistance in the development and planning of programs and events.

Intermediate:

- Use needs assessments to develop creative and innovative programming to meet the needs of the students, faculty, alumni, and/or other stakeholders.

Advanced:

- Create buy-in for programming from supervisors and administration.

Competency: Program planning – needs assessments

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Design, administer, and compile results of needs assessments.

Intermediate:

- Interpret results, and make and implement recommendations for programming and events based on needs assessments.

Advanced:

- Use assessment results to determine if career services is meeting its mission and to set the direction for future programming.

Competency: Program planning – program/event marketing

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Develop a marketing strategy for each program and disseminate the information using all appropriate channels.

Intermediate:

- Measure marketing effectiveness and revise strategies/tactics based on results.

Advanced:

- Devise an overall marketing plan for departmental programs and events that aligns with the department's strategic plans.
- Evaluate program effectiveness and oversee changes based on results.

Competency: Program implementation

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Assist in the implementation of programs and events.

Intermediate:

- Effectively manage facilities, policies, and processes of programs and events.

Advanced:

- Ensure that programs and events are managed effectively and that appropriate resources are available for implementation.

Competency: Program evaluation

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Gather and compile data for evaluation of programming.

Intermediate:

- Design, implement, and compile reports on programs and events.

Advanced:

- Assess facilities and resources for programs and events in regard to institutional or divisional long-range planning and budgeting processes.

Competency: Budgets and budgeting

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Establish and follow basic budgets for programs and events.
- Understand and use basic accounting techniques for budgeting, monitoring, and processing expenditures and receipts.
- Demonstrate effective stewardship and use of fiscal resources.
- Understand and follow ethical and legal guidelines related to career services' financial resources.

Intermediate:

- Develop, evaluate, and adjust budgets to maximize use of and track the fiscal resources of programs and events.
- Implement advanced accounting techniques, e.g., forecasting, efficient use of fiscal resources, and interpretation of financial records.
- Manage fiscal resources.

Advanced:

- Develop long-range budgets to apply fiscal resources to the needs and priorities of the unit, division, or organization.
- Monitor advanced accounting techniques.
- Ensure that fiscally responsible, ethical, and legal guidelines are in place and followed to manage career services' financial resources.

Competency: Time management

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Develop and disseminate agendas for meetings.
- Set and follow timelines for programs and events.

Intermediate:

- Effectively manage and lead meetings through the use of agenda management strategies.
- Manage and assume accountability for timelines for programs and events, ensuring that all aspects are covered and results are accomplished in a timely fashion.

Advanced:

- Ensure that career services staff are being used responsibly and productively for programs and events.
- Assess the relationship between agenda management and the group dynamics that occur in meetings and how this relationship influences the realization of goals, the accomplishments of tasks, and any effects on participants.

Competency: Problem solving

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Think critically and creatively, and imagine possibilities for solutions that do not currently exist or are not apparent.
- Recognize how networks in organizations play a role in how work gets done and understand the role alliances play in the completion of projects and goals.
- Understand and recognize basic risks involved in programming and events, and be aware of protocols to follow.

Intermediate:

- Implement solutions to problems.
- Develop appropriate alliances with others to deliver programming and produce events efficiently and effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and minimize potential risks and follow appropriate protocols to ensure a safe environment.

Advanced:

- Create an environment that encourages critical and creative thought processes in relationship to programming and service delivery.
- Assess the level of complexity of networks established and use this information to determine the strengths of these networks and how they benefit or detract from career services' goals for its programs and events.
- Effectively assess the level of individual and institutional risk and liability associated with programs and events, and ensure that professionals are trained to deliver programming at the lowest level of risk possible.

Functional Area: Research, Assessment, and Evaluation

This area focuses on outcome-oriented programming and management with research-based evidence of its impact on student learning and development; the ability to design, use, analyze, and apply results of both qualitative and quantitative assessment strategies for effective program implementation and management; and the ability to use this information to educate and influence stakeholders on accountability issues.

Competency: Theoretical framework

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Articulate theories and models descriptive of the career development process of college students.

Intermediate:

- Design programs and services to promote student learning and development based on knowledge of career development theory.

Advanced:

- Analyze staff member knowledge of and ability to apply career development theory in promoting student learning and development.

Competency: Learning outcomes

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify and construct student learning outcomes.

Intermediate:

- Analyze data from research of student learning outcomes, and develop recommendations to guide improvement.

Advanced:

- Articulate the impact of programs/services for promoting student learning to campus stakeholders.

Competency: Outcome-oriented programming

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Articulate the significance of outcomes-based assessment for programming and the impact on programs and services.

Intermediate:

- Develop specific strategies to assess programs and services for desired outcomes.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate to stakeholders how programs and services contribute to student learning and development outcomes.

Competency: Evidence-based decision making

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Describe the significance of evidence-based decision making in guiding continuous improvement efforts.

Intermediate:

- Develop strategies to collect and analyze data that contribute to and guide evidence-based decision making.

Advanced:

- Educate stakeholders on career services' use of research to guide continuous improvement.

Competency: Needs assessment

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Demonstrate an understanding of needs assessment protocols, including multiple processes for data collection.

Intermediate:

- Demonstrate ability to collect and analyze data using a multi-modal needs assessment, and recommend action steps based on data.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate the ability to make complex decisions based on needs assessment data, ensure optimal scope and quality of programs and services based on available resources, and report that information to stakeholders.

Competency: Utilization assessment

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Define the elements of a plan for effectively collecting career services utilization data, and develop the initial framework for such a plan.

Intermediate:

- Plan and implement a utilization assessment plan, and analyze data to determine who is and who is not using career services.

Advanced:

- Conduct multi-year trend analysis, identify utilization patterns, develop strategies to reach underserved student population segments, and report that information to stakeholders.

Competency: Satisfaction assessment

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify specific satisfaction elements for career services activities.
- Construct a plan for data collection strategies.

Intermediate:

- Construct and implement a satisfaction assessment plan.
- Conduct data analysis to determine areas of success and opportunities for improvement.

Advanced:

- Develop comprehensive action plans for improvement opportunities, prioritize and allocate required resources, and report that information to stakeholders.

Competency: Measurement and analysis

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Demonstrate proficiency in fundamental qualitative and quantitative measurement and descriptive analysis techniques.
- Know which technique to apply to meet specific assessment requirements.

Intermediate:

- Define assessment information needed.
- Use higher-level qualitative and quantitative measurement and descriptive analysis techniques to gain sufficient information for decision making.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate proficiency in complex mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) measurement and both descriptive and predictive analysis techniques.
- Make improvement decisions using such evidence.
- Report that information to stakeholders.

Competency: Outcomes-based assessment

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify and describe the strategies and components of an outcomes-based assessment plan, including operational and learning goals and objectives.

Intermediate:

- Construct and implement components of an outcomes-based assessment plan, including operational and learning goals and objectives, and conduct analysis of findings.

Advanced:

- Synthesize information from multiple outcomes-based assessment initiatives to guide decisions for continuous improvement.
- Communicate with stakeholders about the successes of career services.

Competency: Use of technology

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Demonstrate understanding of current and emerging technology use in assessment initiatives for both data collection and analysis.

Intermediate:

- Use current technology proficiently for data collection and analysis.
- Plan for improvement of future assessment initiatives using emerging technologies.

Advanced:

- Bring together various technologies for data collection and analysis.
- Plan for optimal use of emerging technologies.

Competency: Research

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Articulate the key findings from research-based readings, and identify implications for professional practice.

Intermediate:

- Apply specific findings and recommendations from research-based readings to develop strategies for career services improvement initiatives.

Advanced:

- Apply research-based findings from multiple sources to guide decisions for continuous improvement.
- Communicate research-based findings to stakeholders.

Competency: Evaluation

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify and describe components of a typical career services operational plan, including goals, objectives, strategies, and success metrics.

Intermediate:

- Create a typical career services operational plan, including goals, objectives, strategies, and success metrics.

Advanced:

- Evaluate information from the operational plan to determine:
  - the level of success in meeting goals and objectives,
  - improvement opportunities, and
  - the implications for professional practice and resource allocation.
- Report to stakeholders on the efficiency and effectiveness of the career services operations.

Functional Area: Teaching, Training, and Educating

This area addresses knowledge, skills, and abilities related to student learning, decision making, and career development, including assessment, program development, coaching, mentoring, and instruction.

Competency: Needs Assessment

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Design, administer, and compile results of needs assessments and benchmarking for teaching, training, and educating initiatives.
- Ensure that assessments are designed in accordance with ethical and legal obligations.

Intermediate:

- Interpret results, and make and implement recommendations for teaching, training, and educating initiatives based on needs assessments and benchmarking.

Advanced:

- Lead departmental assessment efforts.
- Use results to determine the effectiveness of career services' programs and return on investment, and to set future direction.
- Communicate assessment results to relevant stakeholders.

Competency: Program/workshop design and delivery

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes.
- Review student evaluation of events.

Intermediate:

- Articulate learning objectives and design programs and workshops based on learning/ development theories and current research.

Advanced:

- Determine the effectiveness of program/workshop design and delivery, and use results to guide evidence-based decision making regarding future program budget, design, and delivery.

Competency: Researching, evaluating, and integrating information

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Keep abreast of current professional research, and use relevant results in the performance of job duties.

Intermediate:

- Design, conduct, and critique periodic and ongoing qualitative and quantitative data collection initiatives based on departmental goals.

Advanced:

- Interpret and use the results of research initiatives to evaluate effectiveness of career services' programs and return on investment, and to prioritize the allocation of fiscal and human resources in setting and achieving departmental goals.
- Communicate assessment results to relevant stakeholders.

Competency: Effective teaching strategies

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand the basics of student development theory, learning styles, and strategies of instruction.

Intermediate:

- Use learning and development theories to create learning opportunities.
- Assess learning outcomes based on effective teaching strategies and programmatic goals.

Advanced:

- Assess departmental learning opportunities related to teaching strategies.
- Implement changes as deemed necessary to improve program services.

Competency: Coaching

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the steps and processes involved in the career development continuum.

Intermediate:

- Identify where a person is in the career development process, and provide appropriate strategies to facilitate progress toward goals.

Advanced:

- Determine the efficacy of career coaching techniques used at different developmental stages.
- Implement any changes deemed necessary to advance student success.

Competency: Mentoring

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Provide information regarding the importance of career mentoring and networking.

Intermediate:

- Create an individualized career mentoring or networking process.

Advanced:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of career mentoring and networking activities, and implement strategies for programmatic improvements.

Competency: Working with individuals and groups

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand the basic dynamics of interpersonal relations that exist among and between individuals and groups.

Intermediate:

- Design effective educational programs.

Advanced:

- Provide professional development training, as needed, to ensure that career services staff have the requisite skills necessary to work effectively in both individual and group settings.
- Communicate relevant information to stakeholders.

Competency: Working with diverse populations

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Recognize the developmental needs of diverse populations.

Intermediate:

- Design relevant programs that take into consideration and accommodate needs of diverse populations.

Advanced:

- Mentor staff members in understanding the developmental needs of diverse populations.
- Ensure that departmental programs are inclusive and nondiscriminatory.

Competency: Use of technology for delivery of content

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Articulate the array of career-based technological applications that are in current use.

Intermediate:

- Use knowledge of technological applications and learning styles to make informed choices regarding the use of technology in teaching, training, and educating.
- Ensure that technological applications are inclusive and adhere to the accepted principles of accessibility and distance learning.

Advanced:

- Assess the effectiveness of career services' technology-based applications, and make informed decisions regarding their use based on the office's mission, budget, and staffing.

Functional Area: Management and Administration

This functional area addresses the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to management and administration of human resources, including mentoring and developing individual staff members, professional development of management skills, and the use of assessment information in management decisions.

Competency: Needs Assessment and satisfaction measures

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Administer and compile results of needs and satisfaction assessment instruments for programs and events, under direction of supervisor.

Intermediate:

- Design and interpret results of assessment instruments.
- Make and implement recommendations for programming and events based on needs assessments and benchmarks.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding and effective use of assessment results and benchmarks in determining that career services is meeting its mission and in setting future direction.
- Ensure assessment is part of career services' planning and operations.

Competency: Program design, implementation, and evaluation

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Create or update, deliver, and assess results of routine programs and events delivered in person, online, and via distance learning technology.

Intermediate:

- Coordinate scheduling of programs and presenters, ensure assessment data are collected and analyzed, and initiate follow up.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding and leadership of program design, implementation, and evaluation to meet goals of career center, division, and institution.

Competency: Strategic and operational planning

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand the difference between strategic and operational planning.
- Understand the relationship among career center goals and objectives, the goals and objectives of the division, and the institution's strategic plans.

Intermediate:

- Participate in the development and implementation of strategic plans and operational plans, and in developing programs and services to achieve them.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding and leadership of strategic and operational planning.
- Establish plans and objectives that meet the goals of career services, the division, and the institution.

Competency: Program integration and integrity

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand how programs relate to each other and to the operational plan of the career center.
- Develop competency in the use of all tools and technology resources provided by the career center.
- Comply with all institutional, state, and federal information security and privacy policies and laws.

Intermediate:

- Participate in planning and coordination to ensure programs and services are integrated across all career center areas and are functionally and theoretically sound.
- Use and instruct others in the use of tools and technologies provided.
- Seek and recommend emerging tools and technologies.
- Promote compliance with all institutional, state, and federal information security and privacy policies and laws.

Advanced:

- Lead in the development and integration of programs across all facets of career services.
- Lead in the selection and implementation of new tools, techniques, and technologies.
- Ensure compliance with all institutional, state, and federal information security and privacy policies and laws.

Competency: Staffing

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand the different types of staffing (i.e. student, hourly, classified, faculty administrator, faculty), the rules under which each type operates, and the expectations appropriate for each type.
- Identify and report staffing issues promptly.

Intermediate:

- Supervise staff as assigned.
- Ensure proper use of resources.
- Ensure proper training of staff.
- Ensure evaluation of staff performance.
- Take prompt action to identify and seek ways to rectify problems and issues involving staff members.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of human resources processes and procedures.
- Ensure that there is adequate and appropriately qualified staff to meet career services' operational needs.
- Resolve personnel issues in accordance with institution's rules and regulations.

Competency: Staff development and supervision

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Identify individual training needs and request training opportunities for self and assigned staff.
- Understand the basics of supervision, leadership, performance planning, and evaluation of personnel.

Intermediate:

- Seek out opportunities to expand personal professional knowledge, e.g., serve on committees of professional associations, attend and present at conferences, and explore advanced formal education opportunities.
- Seek opportunities to add to supervisory responsibilities.
- Provide mentoring and guidance to enhance staff performance.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of and leadership in the appropriate training of staff.
- Ensure that staff are mentored to enhance their professional development.
- Ensure the supervision and evaluation is in accordance with career center, division, and institutional policies and procedures.

Competency: Budget planning and administration

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand the standard budgetary and fiscal processes of the career center to request and purchase necessary supplies and services in a timely fashion.

Intermediate:

- Seek grant opportunities.
- Seek supervisory positions involving payroll and fiscal responsibility.
- Submit budgetary proposals in the proper form and format with appropriate justification, documentation, and assessment plans to support the proposal.
- Participate in development/fundraising activities as directed.

Advanced:

- Ensure adequate funding and financial support for career center operations while executing the fiduciary responsibilities of the office in accordance with institutional policy and procedures, by demonstrating comprehensive understanding of:
    - Division and institutional budgeting process,
    - Financial management policies and procedures,
    - Grant opportunities,
    - Development/fundraising opportunities, and
    - Other revenue generating initiatives.

Competency: Budget planning and administration

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand and act appropriately concerning the sensitivity of the following issues:
  - Personnel,
  - Student information, and
  - Financial information.
- Understand and adhere to regulations/laws governing the sharing of information within and outside of the institution.
- Negotiate with career center staff to share responsibilities and duties for events and center-wide activities.

Intermediate:

- Demonstrate political sensitivity and negotiating skills as a member of career services staff and as a member of division and/or institutional committees.
- Ensure that peer and junior staff adhere to laws and institutional policies and standards.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate the ability to negotiate in support of center/unit/division goals and objectives with institutional leadership and/or outside agencies, with a clear understanding of the impact of decisions and actions.
- Demonstrate the ability to represent the institution in public and address issues with a wide variety of interested parties.
- Ensure adequate funding and financial support for career center operations while executing the fiduciary responsibilities of the office in accordance with institutional policy and procedures, by demonstrating comprehensive understanding of:
  - Division and institutional budgeting process
  - Financial management policies and procedures
  - Grant opportunities
  - Development/fundraising opportunities
  - Other revenue generating initiatives.

Competency: Synthesis, interpretation, and reporting of current and longitudinal information

One should be able to:

Basic:

- Understand the background of how programs were developed (i.e., why we do what we do).
- Understand the importance of recording and evaluating results over time to determine what we do in the future.

Intermediate:

- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize, interpret, and use current and longitudinal information in creating programs and services.

Advanced:

- Demonstrate comprehensive use of assessment data to engage in strategic planning and in discussions to anticipate new opportunities.
- Demonstrate ability to align staff and resources based on data.
- Demonstrate the ability to modify the course of action and build upon success or terminate unproductive initiatives based on the data.

Professional Competencies
Practitioner Feedback Form

The *Professional Competencies for Career Services Practitioners* will be reviewed periodically and revised as needed to reflect the changes and emergence of the career services profession.

You can assist in this process by providing feedback about the existing competencies and suggestions/comments on additional areas that need consideration.

Please complete and return the form below to NACE, Attn: Professional Competencies, by fax (610.868.0208) or mail (62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085).

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Name/Title: _____

Office/School: _____

Date: _____

1. Overall, how useful are the competencies in helping you understand your role and responsibilities? (Circle one.)

1   2   3   4   5

(1=Not at all useful; 2=Not useful; 3=Somewhat useful; 4=Very useful; 5=Extremely useful)

2. In general, were you and your colleagues able to relate the competencies to your office and operation?

___ Yes   ___ No

If no, please explain. (Use a separate sheet if necessary.)

3. In your opinion, are there areas/topics that should be included in the competencies that are not represented here? If so, what are they? Please explain. (Use a separate sheet if necessary.)

4. Additional comments/suggestions: