

Generic competencies

*Generic competencies refer to what are known as transferable skills, or sometimes, as graduate attributes and they include life-long learning skills which allow individuals to function not only in disciplinary or subject domains but also in general employment and social situations. Hence they are applicable to all professions. The research from which this index emanates revealed that generic competencies are highly valued by employers and often in frequency counts of competency requirements appearing in LIS professional position job advertisements, they emerge right behind discipline-specific competencies and in some cases even surpass some of the latter in frequency distributions. Together with **discipline-specific/professional** knowledge and skill sets and **personal attributes, generic skills** make up the composite competency requirements for LIS professionals mediating a 21st century digital higher education information environment.*

General management skills

- Understand and apply principles, theories and techniques in the areas of:
 - Management of organisational resources, including human resources
 - Strategic management
 - Budget management
 - Building and safety management
 - Office management
 - Organisational quality management
 - Organisational assurance and evaluation
 - Performance management
 - Legal compliance (e.g. health and safety legislation, labour law, financial regulations, etc.)
 - Change and innovations management
 - Diversity management
 - Risk management

General computer proficiency

- Perform basic email applications (send, receive, open, forward, delete and compose emails; send, receive and save attachments; manage addresses and contacts; create folders and file messages for later retrieval)
- Perform basic electronic calendar and task management (create and set appointments; set reminders; schedule meetings and invite invitees; create and manage tasks lists)
- Understand and use basic computer hardware and peripherals
- Understand and use mobile devices (smart phones, ipads, e-readers, etc.)
- Understand and use the Internet
- Understand basic Internet-use security protocols
- Understand and perform basic operating system functions (log on/log off; use multiple open windows; file and folder management; virus checks, etc.)
- Understand and perform basic functions of common software programs
- Perform basic word processing (create, open, save and delete files; select, cut, copy and paste text; structure, format and spell-check documents)
- Execute basic printing operations from common applications
- Maintain awareness of core Web technologies and apply appropriately for effective learning and collaboration (e.g. social networks to share and communicate information; Web conferencing applications for virtual meetings; etc.).

Interpersonal skills

- **Communication**
 - Communicate effectively orally, in writing as well as in digital interactions
 - Present ideas in a clear and concise manner
 - Demonstrate proficient language and writing skills (correct grammar, sentence construction and spelling, logical development of ideas), for example, in report writing
 - Understand perceptions, perspectives and communication styles of each individual/audience one is engaging with
 - Demonstrate good/active listening skills
- **Presentation/Public speaking/Workshop facilitation**
 - Research, organise and present content relevant to the target audience
 - Demonstrate good articulation, effective delivery and appropriate gestures in public speaking
 - Create an environment for interactive engagement among participants
- **Social media skills**
 - Use Internet-based applications (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, blogs, wikis, etc.) to create and exchange user generated content
 - Observe relevant social media etiquette and protocols during such interaction

- **Negotiation/Conflict resolution**
 - Engage effectively to reach agreement, to persuade or to motivate
 - Understand diversity in behaviour patterns and develop responses appropriate to each
 - Use appropriate communication strategies to manage conflict constructively
 - Demonstrate good negotiation skills for achieving favourable outcomes
- **Collaboration**
 - Develop effective relationships with individuals/organisations towards achieving common goals
 - Contribute to a collaborative and collegial work environment
 - Understand and embrace individual and organisational diversity
 - Share with colleagues knowledge gained through conferences and other professional meetings and through formal and informal means
 - Provide constructive feedback to and receive it from colleagues, supervisors and other relevant stakeholders
- **Teamwork**
 - Contribute to the achievement of team objectives
 - Accept shared responsibility for the team's work
 - Value and acknowledge the contribution of individual team members
 - Contribute constructively to problem-solving in the team and strive for consensus in finding solutions to challenges
 - Participate actively in the team's information-gathering and decision-making towards attainment of the team's objectives
 - Provide to and receive from team members coaching and mentoring, as necessary
- **Networking**
 - Demonstrate ability to build mutually beneficial partnerships and alliances
 - Create and sustain intra-organisational linkages and working relationships, for example, with the IT Department, the Research Office within a university, for purposes of pursuing common goals
 - Mobilise resources from within the organisation, donors or the wider community towards meeting objectives
 - Harness available synergy within the organisation and beyond to fulfil targeted objectives
 - Organise events and programmes to enhance the visibility of the organisation and its services
- **Customer (learner) focus**
 - Foster quality service as required by users of the service, both online and in-person, ensuring application of customer service principles
 - Listen effectively to determine and address users'/learners' needs
 - Respond appropriately to diversity, cultural and disability differences among users/learners

- Respond effectively to difficult situations with users/learners, ensuring that users'/learners' concerns and complaints are appropriately addressed and in a professional manner.

Leadership skills

- Provide active and insight-led leadership at any level in an organisation, shaping and driving oneself, others and activity within the organisation
- Align efforts and activities with the mission and vision of the organisation
- Demonstrate ability to lead, positively influence, inspire and manage individuals, teams or organisations towards the achievement of targeted goals
- Identify strengths of individuals and leverage these to achieve common goals
- Foster a working environment of collegiality, integrity and ethical behaviour of the highest standards
- Act and take decisions in the interest of the team rather than oneself
- Empower colleagues to take ownership of challenges, to problem-solve and to take decisions accordingly
- Demonstrate initiative in seeking new opportunities and embracing challenges, applying critical, creative and innovative thinking as required
- Anticipate and adapt to change effectively, embracing new roles and changing priorities with enthusiasm, a positive attitude and also by exploring and adopting new technologies to deliver new ideas, products and services.

Planning and organising skills

- Demonstrate planning and organising ability to contribute to long and short term goals
 - Manage time and priorities when carrying out a task/s
 - Be resourceful in decision-making, for example, to efficiently eliminate wastage and avoid repetition or unnecessary delay
 - Establish clear project objectives and deliverables in collaboration with a supervisor and/or team members
 - Plan how to use workplace resources, including time, to effectively reduce wastage or avoid damage to resources
 - Participate in continuous improvement processes, for example, using feedback from a supervisor and/or team members to improve personal and professional presentation.

Teaching and training skills

- Select teaching and training approaches suitable for specific audiences (learners)
- Understand the variety of instructional methods and modes available, including online instructional methods
- Know, understand application of and use classroom instructional technologies and teaching media

- Understand and apply learning theories (e.g. behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism) appropriately to specific audiences (learners)
- Accommodate different learning styles in teaching delivery
- Understand and apply basic instructional design principles to training programmes
- Undertake assessment of learning activities and provide feedback to learners
- Evaluate learning experience for possible improvement of teaching or training design and delivery.

Supervisory skills

- Demonstrate effective communication skills, including being a good listener
- Plan work for a section and this includes setting realistic objectives for the team and managing priorities
- Recognise the need to train and develop members of the team through identification of each member's strengths and weaknesses
- Demonstrate the ability to problem solve in response to challenges that may interfere with teamwork or service delivery/productivity
- Practice fair and consistent supervision with all team members.

Research and development, and publication skills

- Understand and apply research principles, theories and methods to the workplace and professional environment
- Demonstrate ability to gather data to test new ideas for development of new products or services
- Demonstrate proficiency in basic research, applied research and their use in development for purposes of arriving at the best solutions to challenges and innovative efforts in an organisation
- Publish research conducted in peer-reviewed journals and other publications for purposes of disseminating research findings.

Record-keeping skills

- Select information to keep a recorded account of in either hand-written, printed, photographic or computer-readable format, for purposes of future reference or preservation
- Understand, and be able to select as appropriate, different methods of organising recorded accounts of processes, discussions, events, participation, etc. for legal or historical purposes.

Problem-solving skills

- Demonstrate ability to accurately identify causes of problems, apply problem-solving methodologies effectively and make a decision on the best possible solution based on a careful analysis of the various available courses of action

- **Problem identification skills:** detect and recognise that there is a problem, identify the nature of the problem and define the problem
- **Analytical skills:** break down the problem situation into key components or sub-issues to identify the cause of the problem
- **Critical thinking skills:** engage in reflective and independent thinking about the matter at hand, systematically clarify different points of view relating to the problem, and understand the logical connection between ideas for purposes of constructing a coherent argument towards resolution of the problem
- **Lateral/Creative thinking skills:** use lateral or creative thinking to come up with fresh approaches to solve the problem, that is, look beyond the obvious and traditional modes of thought, search for new insights, novel approaches and new ways of understanding and conceiving of things
- **Decision-making skills:** select the best solution for implementation based on an analysis of the different courses of action that are possible.

Mentoring and coaching skills

- Support colleagues in their career development by sharing the benefits of experience and knowledge, and providing confidence-building and encouragement
- Demonstrate patience and understanding
- Demonstrate good listening skills
- Create an open and supportive environment for discussion and engagement
- Provide constructive feedback and advice.

Statistical analysis skills

- Describe the nature of the data to be analysed
- Demonstrate ability to use statistical analysis software (e.g. *SPSS*, *Excel*, etc.)
- Explain the relationship of the data to the population it relates to
- Summarise understanding of how the data relates to the population by using, for example, graphs such as bar charts and line charts.

Multi-tasking skills

- Demonstrate ability to balance competing demands on one's time and energy and the ability to handle multiple priorities in the workplace.

Academic writing and editing skills

- Demonstrate ability to use an academic style of writing for preparing formal reports, conference papers and presentations, and research papers for publication which generally require: a formal tone and style; use of a third-person rather than a first-person perspective; a clear focus on the topic/issue rather than on the author's opinion; and, employs precise word choice and a high standard of language usage

- Demonstrate proficiency in reading and correcting language usage in formal academic writing for enhancement of quality of academic writing, logical flow of ideas and general readability.

Health and safety competencies

- Know and understand health and safety regulations applicable to the workplace and the implications of non-compliance with laws, rules, policies and guidelines designed to protect employees, the public and the environment from harm.

Marketing and advocacy skills

- Understand and apply marketing and advocacy theory and practice to promote the organisation and its services using the latest available communication tools and media sources
- Develop, implement and evaluate on an ongoing basis a marketing plan and branding strategy targeted at the organisation's stakeholders
- Maintain positive public relations via consistent and highly professional communication and promotion of the organisation's values, services and achievements to all its stakeholders.

Multilingual skills

- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of multiple languages prevalent in a particular work environment.

Knowledge of trends in higher education

- Know and understand the current trends prevailing in the higher education sector within which the institution/university is located e.g. social, political and economic issues impacting higher education
- Know and understand the latest trends in curriculum development in higher education e.g. calls for decolonisation of the curriculum in South African higher education following the 2015 and 2016 #RhodesMust Fall and #FeesMustFall student protests, respectively
- Know and understand funders' requirements of researchers in the higher education sector - for example in the case of South Africa, funding requirements of the National Research Foundation (NRF), Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET) or the Department of Science and Technology (DST) e.g. research impact measurements required of researchers for funding proposals and research rating applications; publication in journals on specified accredited lists for subsidy earnings from government; etc.

Results orientation skills

- Focus on achieving results as per goals set

- Utilise tools and approaches to ensure that the project remains on target and on budget.

Time management skills

- Demonstrate ability to plan and exercise control over the amount of time spent on specific tasks with the objective of increasing effectiveness, efficiency and productivity in the accomplishment of these tasks.

Project management skills

- Understand and apply project management principles and procedures in the planning and implementation of programmes, projects and services
- Employ relevant technology tools to enhance efficiency of project management
- Use available resources efficiently to manage projects effectively within assigned budgets
- Lead project teams with clear work plans, timelines, realistic deadlines and effective communication
- Monitor project progress and evaluate project performance for quality and quantity standards
- Demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, creativity, and patience and understanding with team members throughout the life cycle of the project
- Compile and disseminate project reports to relevant stakeholders.

Website development and maintenance skills

- Understand and apply basic principles for designing and hosting a website and for writing for the Web
- Apply principles of usability and accessibility when designing the user interface
- Edit and organise website content
- Verify website links and update content regularly
- Demonstrate proficiency with Web content management systems (that is, software applications for website authoring by users with little knowledge of programming languages to create and manage website content)
- Understand and edit HTML (HyperText Markup Language) tags – HTML is the standard markup language for creating webpages where ‘markup language’ refers to the way the tags are used to define the page layout and ‘hypertext’ refers to the hyperlinks that an HTML page may contain.

Numeracy skills

- Demonstrate ability to understand and apply in the work environment basic numerical concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as well as calculate numerical measurements such as percentages, area and averages.

Personal and professional development skills

- Demonstrate commitment to life-long learning
- Pursue personal and professional development through continuing education, formal or informal
- Set personal career goals, identify learning needs and devise a learning plan to address these needs
- Demonstrate initiative and responsibility for own learning
- Pursue learning in multiple formats, including online learning, and practice self-directed learning
- Engage in professional networking and active participation in professional associations
- Keep abreast with new ideas and technologies, seek opportunities to apply new knowledge in the workplace and to share best practices and new experiences with colleagues.

Reading comprehension skills

- Demonstrate ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning.

Co-ordinating skills

- Demonstrate ability to organise individuals or groups of individuals for a particular task so that they work effectively together to accomplish a goal.

