



Extension

University of Missouri

Core Competencies

This document lists the core competencies that apply to MU Extension faculty. These competencies should be reviewed annually at the time of performance evaluation to determine one's level of competence and their unique professional development needs. The Individual Plan of Work may include areas in need of strengthening.

Faculty members are encouraged to use this tool in partnership with their supervisors for reflection and self-assessment by comparing their past performance to the established competencies in order to identify their unique professional development needs. Once professional development goals have been identified, faculty and their supervisor(s) should create action plans to meet those goals and include it in their Individual Plan of Work.

Communication

Competency Definition: The ability to craft and deliver concise and informative messages to a variety of audiences using different mediums and technologies, and to listen to and address the concerns of others.

Competency Description: Extension professionals communicate with a wide variety of people and stakeholders both internally and externally to the organization. Audiences could include program learners or customers, local extension councils, state and local elected officials, community leaders, Extension employees, or university colleagues, just to name a few. In this capacity, Extension professionals must know how to deliver clear, accurate messages to audiences of all sizes with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Messages may be delivered in writing or orally and may also employ a variety of communication technologies and platforms such as email, direct messaging, videos, PowerPoint, social media, etc. The communication competency also requires Extension professionals to actively listen to others; engaging in active listening techniques, striving to understand the viewpoints of others, and seeking clarification of messages being conveyed by others.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators:

- Accurately identifies the needs of the audience with whom they will be communicating when crafting the content of messages.
- Presents only needed information to stakeholders.
- Delivers clear and respectful messages.
- Is intentional with nonverbal behavior that is congruent with the intended message.
- Creates clear and concise written communication.
- Chooses appropriate methods and communication technologies based on the needs of the audiences.
- Demonstrates effective listening skills by giving others their undivided attention, interprets others' messages, checks for understanding, and responds appropriately.
- Solicits and welcomes feedback from others.
- Displays empathy to others when engaged in dialogue.
- Creates persuasive and compelling arguments.
- Communicates difficult or negative messages in an honest, accurate, and respectful manner.
- Informs constituents about the mission of Extension and the impact Extension has throughout the community, state, and nation.
- Effectively publicizes programs offered in newspapers, television, radio, social media, etc.

Educational Programming Design

Competency Definition: The knowledge, skills, and unique abilities needed to analyze the viability of proposed extension programs, and to continuously improve the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of extension programs for maximum impact to ensure an improved quality of life for Missourians or other Extension learners.

Competency Description: Extension professionals who are skilled in this competency are able to identify the needs of their communities and design educational programs using evidence-based information and research to address those needs and improve the lives of their learners and the communities in which they live. This competency requires Extension faculty to analyze their communities' needs, potential learners and markets, and competitors to fully realize the viability and value of a proposed educational program. Using the science of learning, Extension professionals carefully and intentionally design educational experiences with their learners' needs in mind, making it easier for them to gain new knowledge and skills. Extension professionals develop curricula, tools, guide sheets, job aides, journal articles, or other learning resources using a peer review process. Educational programs are piloted and implemented using the principles of continuous improvement to refine and improve the learning experience for participants and program impact. Extension professionals engage in a system for evaluating educational programs to ensure learners have gained new knowledge, changed their behavior, and identify the broad impact of their programming efforts.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Conducts community needs assessments to identify educational needs.
- Collects and analyzes other data to determine needs of potential learning audiences.
- Conducts analysis to identify possible markets and/or competitors to define program value.
- Applies concepts of sound instructional design when creating new programs ensuring alignment with goals and objectives of program with authentic assessments and designs for learning transfer.
- Identifies performance indicators and evaluation plans to measure long- and short-term impacts and uses this information to continuously improve programs.
- Engages in extension scholarship that includes transferred or applied knowledge and applied research.
- Uses multiple modalities and technologies when designing and developing programs and ensures accessibility for all learners.
- Applies research currently being conducted by faculty and others in their designated program area. Engages partners and constituents to collaborate on educational programming.
- Evaluates current program data including instructor reflection, learner feedback, and other data to determine impact to continuously improve programs.
- Reports impact data in myExtension.

Information and Educational Delivery

Competency Definition: The ability to effectively deliver education programs and information in a way that engages and meets the learning styles of target audiences.

Competency Description: Extension professionals engage with diverse audiences through a variety of delivery modes including face-to-face instruction, synchronous and asynchronous on-line learning. Additionally, Extension professionals use a variety of learning technologies to deliver their educational programs. Educators who are skilled in this competency have the unique ability to empathize and engage with their learners through these multiple formats and technologies to support the behavioral change of Extension learners. Extension professionals who can warmly welcome their participants to a learning experience, command and maintain an audience's attention, engage their students with the material to be learned and support their growth, development, and transfer of learning to achieve pre-determined learning objectives meet the requirements of this competency.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Effectively delivers educational events to diverse audiences and through a wide variety of modalities including face-to face, synchronous and asynchronous on-line events.
- Uses new and existing technologies to deliver educational programming.
- Engages with Extension participants to maximize their learning experiences to meet specific learning objectives.
- Supports learners through the change process to adopt new behaviors.
- Demonstrates proficiency in instructional platform skills such as communicating content and lesson plans, listening, displaying empathy, asking questions, answering questions, debriefing, paraphrasing, summarizing, etc. that make it easy for participants to learn new information and apply it to their own lives.

Inclusivity

Competency Definition: The ability to promote, grow, and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning and working environment.

Competency Description: MU Extension professionals purposefully work to build a culture that ensures all who work, partner, volunteer with and participant in our programs exemplify the values embodied in *MU's Inclusive Excellence Framework* ([make this a hyperlink](#)). They are committed to intentionally growing and sustaining an equitable, diverse and inclusive learning, living, and working environment for all Missourians. Recognizing the competitive advantage of leveraging diversity, they demonstrate inclusion in their daily interactions with others. They create open and welcoming environments for all people, demonstrate appreciation of colleagues and learners from different cultures, experiences, and backgrounds, and adapt behavior to navigate different cultural conditions, situations, and people.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Models and builds a culture of respect and value for all people.
- Intentionally works to include and welcome all people to work, partner, volunteer and/or participate in Extension work and programs.
- Analyzes situations from multiple points of view and integrates diverse perspectives and values.
- Expands one's own awareness, learns about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to their roles in the organization.
- Recognizes one's lack of knowledge about differences and seeks information and/or support when needed.
- Ensures programmatic content reflects inclusive excellence and the value of all people.
- Incorporates demographic, economic, human services, and environmental data into educational programs and services to achieve equity.
- Demonstrates ability to work locally, statewide, nationally, and globally.

Interpersonal Relations

Competency Definition: The ability to build and maintain a network of professional relationships with individuals and groups within and outside the organization.

Competency Description: Effective Extensional professionals leverage their networks of relationships to advance the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Good interpersonal relationships foster collaboration and open communication among colleagues, customers, stakeholders, partners, and other constituents. These relationships promote the necessary organizational environment that promotes trust and teamwork. Positive relationships with others are associated with greater job satisfaction, increased employee retention and performance, employee commitment and feelings of belonging and inclusion in the workplace. Even during times of conflict, excellent Interpersonal relationships also allow for respectful compromise and collaboration.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Develops and maintains a network of professional relationships inside and outside the organization to advance the mission, vision, and values of MU Extension.
- Intentionally builds relationships by earning the trust of others and demonstrates care and concern for others.
- Promotes collaboration and teamwork within their networks.
- Supports a team-oriented culture; collaborates with faculty and staff located in county offices, across programmatic disciplines, regions and campuses.
- Keeps private or sensitive information about others confidential.
- Respectfully resolves conflict with others.

Knowledge of the Organization

Competency Definition: The ability to describe the mission, vision, and values of MU Extension, its programs and services to Missourians and beyond, its connection to UM System, its organizational structure on campus and in the field, its relationship with local Extension Councils, and to work effectively within its established organizational policies, processes, and procedures.

Competency Description: MU Extension has a long tradition of delivering practical benefits of education and scientific research to the people of Missouri to improve their economic prospects and quality of life. Extension professionals who can articulate this valued history and tradition in a positive manner are able to act as brand ambassadors, sharing this important story to existing or potential partners, stakeholders and other constituents. Competent Extension Professionals understand the connection of MU Extension to UM System, campus, regional, and local organizational structures, but are empowered to act within their own functional roles. Competent Extension professionals are also knowledgeable of established organizational policies, processes, and procedures, demonstrating proficiency in this area as they complete their work.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Articulates the land grant mission and University of Missouri Extension's role in that mission.
- Makes decisions and acts with an understanding of MU Extension's organizational structure at the system, campus and local levels and one's role in the organization.
- Describes the current programs, products and services, and can inform and refer clientele to available resources.
- Describes the importance of local, state, and national funding partners.
- Understands the role of the State Advisory Committee and local County Extension Councils to the mission of MU Extension.
- Portrays MU Extension, UM System, State Advisory Committee, and Local Extension Councils, and other partners in a positive way.
- Uses knowledge of the University System and MU Extension to meet the needs of both internal and external clients.
- Uses established policies, procedures, and processes to complete tasks.

Leadership

Competency Definition: The ability to positively motivate and influence diverse individuals and/or groups to achieve common goals.

Competency Description: Effective leaders set a direction and vision for others to achieve. They influence stakeholders to achieve collaboration and motivate and guide others to achieve organizational objectives. Leadership can occur at any level of the organization, not just the top. As Extension professionals, leadership is about affecting positive change through others to ensure the advancement of the organization's strategic direction, goals, and culture. To do this, leaders intentionally build their credibility, set the example for others to follow, communicate visions clearly, align people to use their unique talents and strengths, and guide the execution of a plan to achieve positive results. Competent leaders inspire others to act by creating empowering environments and recognizing their efforts and contributions.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Develops and communicates a shared, clear and comprehensive vision, strategy and purpose.
- Demonstrates self-awareness, understanding how their strengths and weaknesses may affect others and engages in their own self development.
- Intentionally builds credibility by maintaining their integrity, developing their competence, demonstrating care and concern for others.
- Intentionally develops cooperative and trusting relationships with those they lead.
- Promotes excellence and collaboratively works with faculty, staff, partners, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Identifies the unique strengths of others, aligning these strengths to achieve common goals.
- Mentors, develops, and coaches others.
- Makes sound decisions, using effective judgment.
- Frequently recognizes the contributions of others when achieving a goal.

Operational Management

Competency Definition: Executes the implementation, management, and continuous improvement of programs, projects, or other initiatives that support organizational objectives.

Competency Description: If leadership is about motivating and inspiring people to achieve common goals, operational management is about creating structure and work processes that produce desired results. Extension professionals skilled in this competency create, implement, and continuously improve work processes they and/or other team members use to achieve the goals of the program, project, or other organizational initiatives. Extension professionals must be able to prioritize their work effectively, set goals, create work processes and action plans, ensures progress milestones are achieved, and effectively manage and monitor budgets and other resources. Additionally, they must demonstrate agility and flexibility when program or project requirements, goals, or constraints change. MU Extension Professionals are entrepreneurial. They should be able to generate revenue through grants, contracts, fees, partnerships, and philanthropy. Some may even have responsibilities to manage and develop personnel (including volunteers), facilities, fiscal processes, and/or local Extension Councils.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Sets goals specific to their roles, functions, and responsibilities and steadfastly holds themselves and others accountable.
- Creates action plans, structures, or processes to effectively and efficiently accomplish work.
- Develops and implements solutions for overcoming obstacles or roadblocks to success.
- Continuously improves work processes for improved outputs, outcomes, and impact.
- Tracks and continuously monitors progress towards goal attainment.
- Manages time, budgets and other resources effectively.
- Generates revenue.
- Remains flexible and adaptable to changing requirements, goals, and constraints.

Professionalism

Competency Definition: The demonstration of behaviors that reflect high levels of scholarship and performance, a strong work ethic, and a commitment to self-awareness and continuing education to the mission, vision, and goals of extension.

Competency Description: Professionalism is reflected in the passion to pursue excellence. It is not just about achieving high standards of performance it is also about the way in which those results are achieved and the way in which you behave. MU Extension professionals demonstrate competence in the work they do, consistently achieve high standards of performance. They exhibit qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, and integrity when working with others; hold themselves accountable for their performance and their behavior; and engage in self-awareness for the purpose of continuous improvement, learning, and development. Professionals work cooperatively, collaboratively, and ethically with others and demonstrate passion and commitment for the work they do.

Examples of Proficiency Indicators

- Consistently achieves high performance in reaching their work-related goals.
- Demonstrates passion, commitment, loyalty, and discipline to the mission of the organization, the work they accomplish, and in their relationships with others.
- Demonstrates confidence in their knowledge, skills, and unique abilities.
- Communicates a positive attitude when working and engaging with others.
- Demonstrates honesty, integrity, trustworthiness in their relationships with colleagues, learners, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Consistently assumes personal and professional responsibility for their decisions, performance, and behavior.
- Works within a framework of professional ethics, promoting a positive working experience with colleagues, learners, and others.
- Demonstrates acts of self-awareness, recognizing how their emotions impact other people and situations.
- Actively seeks opportunities to grow, develop, and continuously improve; is a life-long learner.

Individual Development Plan

1 Name _____ For Period Covering _____
Supervisor's Name _____

2 **Long-term Career Development Goals**
Consider your long-term career goals and aspirations. It is important to think about what you would like to achieve in the next 3-5 years.

3 **Competency Assessment**
Consider your strengths and opportunities for improvement in each competency.

Competency Assessment Chart

Competency	Strengths	Opportunities for Growth
Communication		
Educational Programming Design		
Information/Educational Delivery		
Inclusivity		
Interpersonal Relations		
Organizational Knowledge		
Leadership		
Operational Management		
Professionalism		

Individual Development Action Plan

1. Identify two high-priority goals.
2. Develop detailed action steps to achieve them.

Development Goal:		
Action Steps	Evidence of Accomplishment	Due Date

Development Goal:		
Action Steps	Evidence of Accomplishment	Due Date

Employee Signature _____

Date _____

Supervisor Signature _____

Date _____