

Portfolio Development Guide

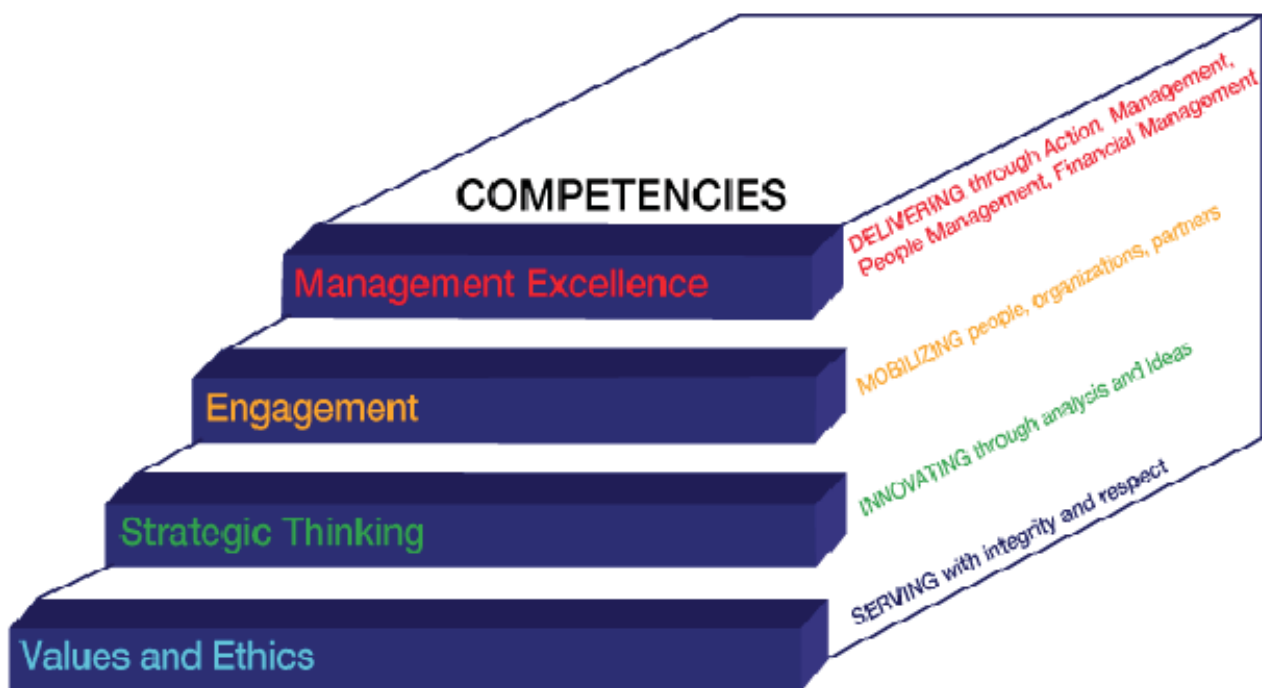
MPA Program
University of
Kansas

www.kupublicadministration.org

December 1st, 2008

The Model

“From a foundation of Values and Ethics, Public Service Leaders deliver Results through Strategic Thinking, Engagement, and Management Excellence”¹.



1. Canadian Key Leadership Competencies Model. Retrieved December 1, 2008 from <http://www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/tal/kcl/def-eng.asp>

A Portfolio Presentation Guide

Outcomes based education has replaced the precept that “the teacher knows best.” This movement in all educational fields encourages students and faculty to document learning. It is intended as a more sophisticated method of assessment—across a curriculum or subject area-- than the grades a student receives in individual classes or other evaluations.

In the MPA program at the University of Kansas we have focused attention on outcomes in two ways that are unique. First, we intend the portfolio and our competencies matrix to primarily serve students as a self-assessment and professional development tool. While it is important for the faculty and the university to attest to student learning, it is equally, if not more important, for students themselves to acknowledge their progress in ways that cut across classes and work experiences. Second, we envision the portfolio and competencies rubric to serve MPA students while in school and as their careers develop. The competencies matrix associated with the portfolio project at KU, clearly encompasses more than what any student could accomplish during graduate education alone.

1) Portfolio Purpose and Process

- a) The KU MPA portfolio is an electronic file cabinet for documents and other sources of information that can be used to trace academic progress and professional development within the framework of a competencies rubric.
- b) The portfolio belongs to the person creating it. Many people may make suggestions about the uses and content of the portfolio, but primary responsibility for these decisions belongs to the owner. That person should craft the portfolio to meet personal needs and goals.
- c) Several processes are involved in building one’s portfolio. They are:
 - i) collecting artifacts,
 - (1) artifacts describe noteworthy activities, projects, or milestones and should be carefully selected
 - (2) artifacts may include class papers or projects, work related documents or projects.
 - (3) artifacts should be seen as evidence of whatever it is that the portfolio owner is attempting to convey. The notion of evidence is very important, especially when an artifact is used in conjunction with the competencies matrix below. If associated with the matrix, artifacts will be placed in the appropriate box and be considered illustrative work associated with a particular box.
 - ii) reflecting on the meaning of the artifacts,
 - (1) Evidence does not speak by itself; it must be given meaning by the portfolio creator. What does the artifact mean to the portfolio owner? What information does the portfolio owner have that substantiates the meaning attributed to the artifact?
 - (2) Reflective essays may focus on one artifact or on a group of artifacts.

- iii) seeking feedback on your reflections and the meaning you attribute to the artifacts,
 - (1) Asking a colleague, a supervisor, a faculty member, or a friend to review specific aspects of one's portfolio can be very useful in grounding the individual's assessment of the meaning and importance of a particular artifact or group of artifacts
 - (2) Reviewer comments also can become part of the portfolio, and may be useful in engaging a discussion of goals.
- iv) considering the feedback, making changes, and setting goals.
 - (1) Goal setting is an important part of the portfolio process and project. Ask yourself: "What challenge do I face next?" "What experiences should I seek out?" "Whose assistance do I need?" "What plan do I have?"

2) The Competencies Matrix

- a) Many, many student and faculty hours have gone into developing the matrix and considering its uses. The competencies themselves are the result of sifting through as many as 20 similar lists of competencies to identify common elements.
- b) The four key organizing categories of Values and Ethics (serving with integrity and respect); Strategic Thinking (innovating through analysis and ideas); Engagement (mobilizing people, organizations, and partners); and, Management Excellence (delivering through action management, people management, and financial management) were taken from the Canadian Key Leadership Competencies, (2006), retrieved 11 October 2006, from http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/leadership/klc-ccl/model_e.asp.
- c) The competencies matrix should be included in your portfolio, but it does not have to be the exclusive focus of the portfolio.
- d) The matrix is intended to be flexible. While we believe the core is common to managerial professionalism, there may be specialized interests and skills that are not included and should be accounted for. The portfolio owner is responsible for including those specialized competencies in the portfolio.
- e) The matrix appears as a flat screen portrayal of competencies, and that is misleading. Competencies are built with repeated activities in a variety of contexts. Look at each box in the matrix in three dimensional terms with depth conveying a variety of contexts. At some point, a depth of understanding gained through repeated activities in different contexts will signify a shift in level of competence.

Prepared by: John Nalbandian
September 25, 2008

What I know and
What I Need to
Know

Transformation

Collection

The Portfolio Process

Presentation and
Reviews

Review, Selection,
Recording

Reflection



**I. Values and Ethics (serving with integrity and respect)1
University of Kansas**

Sep 11, 2007 JN edits Public Administration Dept,

1	Diversity Management	1	2	3	4	5
	Individual Differences	Little experience in working with people from a different background.	Aware of the importance of individual differences.	Demonstrates respect for difference in people in own personal and professional actions.	Encourages others to respect and provide fair and equitable treatment for all people. Arrticularates benefits of individual difference to others.	Inculcates organization wide recognition of the benefits differences bring to the organization and the community. a
	Diversity	Unaware of differences between cultures, ethnicities and groups	Aware of the importance of diversity.	Demonstrates sensitivity toward and appreciation of diversity in own personal and professional actions.	Encourages others to value diversity in the workplace.	Strenghtens organization by integrating diversity into operating culture.
	Employment Law	Little knowledge of employment law.	Understanding the basics of employment law.	Applies principles employment law in personal and professional actions.	Encourages others to understand and fairly apply provision of employment law.	Promotes organizational culture that adheres to the letter of the law, and also values the spirit of the law.
2	Professionalism	1	2	3	4	5
	Public Service	Does not distinguish between commitment to public service and working in the public sector	Grasps the meaning of commitment to public service	Demonstrates commitment to public service in personal and professional actions.	Instills in others a commitment to public service.	Inspires an organizational commitment to public service.
	Integrity & Ethics	Minimal understanding of the role that ethics and integrity play in effective public service.	Respects importance of integrity and ethical reasoning in public service and is informed of related laws, rules and regulations.	Demonstrates integrity and ethical reasoning in personal and professional actions and complies with related requirements	Encourages others to act with integrity, to employ ethical reasoning, and to respect related rules, regulations, and laws	Elevates integrity and ethical reasoning as defining organizational characteristics.

II. Strategic Thinking (innovating through analysis and ideas)1 Sep 11, 2007 JN edits Public Administration Dept, University of Kansas

1	Administrative Policy Making	1	2	3	4	5
	Policy formulation	Has a limited knowledge of policy formulation processes..	Aware of how policy processes work.	Participates effectively in policy making initiatives.	Has led an effective policy making team or effort.	Set overall organizational policy direction and serves as overarching policy entrepreneur.
	Policy implementation	Simplistic understanding of how policy gets implemented.	Basic and sound understanding of the importance of policy implementation strategy.	Plays a role in the implementation of adopted policy	Leads policy implementation effort or team.	Responsible for realization of organization's policy goals.
	Policy trends	Unaware of policy trends that may impact organization.	Aware of policy trends that may impact the organization.	Is mindful of the impact of policy trends in personal and professional actions	Encourages work group to consider broader policy trends.	Integrates trends into organization's policy making and strategic planning.
2	Innovation	1	2	3	4	5
	Creativity & Innovation	Unaware of the need creativity or innovation	Appreciates value of creativity in the workplace.	Demonstrates creativity in personal and professional actions.	Encourages creativity among co-workers and staff.	Develops a work environment that encourages creative solutions that lead to organizational improvements. l
3	Strategic Management	1	2	3	4	5
	Long-term outlook	Limited awareness of long-term issues or needs.	Develops long-term perspective on organizational issues and needs.	Factors long-term consequences and objectives into personal and professional actions.	Responsible for a conducting strategic planning team or activities.	Articulates an organizational vision that frames strategic plans.
	Capacity Building	Unaware of organizational capacities	Aware of organizational capacities.C	Participates in efforts to define and expand needed organizational capacities.	Leads a team effort to define and expand needed organizational capacities	Aligns vision, strategic planning and capacity development. Sufficient capacity is realized to achieve organizational vision and plans. c

III. Engagement (mobilizing people, organizations, and partners)1 Sep 11, 2007 JN edits Public Administration Dept, Kansas Univ.

1	Communication	1	2	3	4	5
	Verbal	Basic verbal communication skills	College levels speaking skills	Effectively communicates regarding own personal and professional actions. (e.g. conferring with colleagues and reporting to superiors.)	Effectively communicates within department or workgroup. (e.g. staff meetings, departmental briefings.)	Effective at public communication and clearly and responsibly articulates organization's mission and activities. (e.g. gives effective speeches, testimony, is comfortable in public discourse.)
	Written	Basic writing skills	College level writing ability	Effectively writes for personal and professional needs (e.g. internal memos, letters, staff reports).	Ensure effective writing from unit/workgroup. (i.e. includes ability to edit.) (e.g. Budget narratives, departmental reports, policy statements.)	Ensures effective organizational written communication (including editing). (e.g. Press releases, annual reports, legislative testimony, strategic plans)
2	Conflict	1	2	3	4	5
	Resolution	Inexperience in conflict resolution	Aware of different processes for conflict resolution	Working familiarity with at least one ADR technique	Involved in the formal resolution of a conflict and skills sought by others	Creates organizational culture that recognizes and resolves conflicts as they arise.d
	Prevention	Unaware of how to prevent conflict in the workplace	Understands and uses proper protocol to prevent escalation of work related conflicts.	Anticipates and takes appropriate actions to avoid detrimental conflicts in the work place.	Provides counsel to individuals in early stages of work place conflict and encourage individuals to take appropriate preventive action.	Creates organizational culture, where conflict is recognized in earliest stages and has systematic means for early resolution.
3	External Awareness	1	2	3	4	5
	Working in a political environment	Unaware of inextricable link between policy and politics.	Recognizes the democratic values that politics adds to policy making	Is mindful of appropriate political considerations in their personal and professional policy making actions.	Helps workgroup appreciate how politics informs policymaking and vice versa.	Works to maintain alignment between organization's policy goals and political support.
	External policy impact	Not aware of external stakeholders	Aware of external stakeholders and their interests	Effectively considers external stakeholders and their interests in personal and professional actions.	Encourages workgroup to understand and address external stakeholders and their interests.	Ensures that external stakeholders are viewed as legitimate partners and have an appropriate voice in the organization.

	Citizen engagement	Does not understand that public service exists to serve the interests and needs of citizens.	Appreciates that public service exists to serve the needs of citizens and is familiar with basic techniques of citizen engagement.	Serving needs of citizens is at the heart of personal and professional actions and is skilled planning and conducting citizen engagement.	Helps workgroup understand the public service exists to serve the public's needs and develops in others effectiveness in citizen engagement	Fosters an organizational culture that is skilled and committed to utilizing citizen engagement as an essential component of policy planning and implementation.
4	Group Dynamics	1	2	3	4	5
	Interpersonal	Has basic self awareness and sensitive to needs of others in group setting.	Has used formal instruments (e.g. Meyers-Briggs, NBTI, SDI or other) to assess interpersonal skills.	Information from formal assessment informs personal and professional behavior.	Effectively manages group's interpersonal skills and dynamics promoting group effectiveness.	Ensures development of organization's interpersonal skills sufficient to engage the needs of employees, citizens, and stakeholders.
	Collaboration	Inexperienced in collaborative efforts	Some experience in collaborative efforts and aware of costs and benefits of collaboration/competition.	Required to work in a collaborative fashion in personal and professional activities.	Leads collaborative efforts within workgroup/unit. (e.g. policy development team or annual planning retreats.)	Ensures effective collaboration both within the organization and among the organization's stakeholders.

**IV. Management Excellence (delivering through action management, people management, and financial management)1
Sep 11, 2007 JN edits Public Administration Dept, Kansas Univ.**

1	Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5
	Timliness	Aware only of personal deadlines	Understands value of timelines and deadlines associated with the decision making processes	Effectively establishes timelines, and works effectively with competing deadlines associated with decision making processes	Aligns group activities with timing of decision making processes and is seen as a resource in time management and decision making processes	Recognizes moments of opportunity and acts to advance the organization's goals
	Evidence based practice	Limited understanding of links between information, analytical tools, and decision making	Sees the need link information and analytical thinking and tools to decision making.	Effectively links information, analytical thinking and tools to decision making in personal and professional actions.	Aware of information and information gaps needed to support the decision making process within a unit or department and effectively communicates needs and gaps to others. Able to guide others in systematic collectively of information and application of information to decision making.	Develops and implements a strategic plan to gather information needed to support decision making within the organization.
	Decision Analysis	Act on decisions made elsewhere.	Recognizes that decision making arises from choosing among available options.	Develops, considers, and evaluates different options in personal and professional actions.	Encourages workgroup to generate and consider various options for agency decisions	Creates an organizational culture where options are cultivated and considered; but holds decision making responsibility.
2	Financial Resource Management	1	2	3	4	5
	Resource Allocation	Little exposure to basic budget processes	Understanding of basic budget principles, practices, and processes	Proficiency in basic budget preparation.	Prepares budget and integrates audit and other performance information for an entire unit, workgroup or department.	Designs and guides budget process to reach desired organizational outcomes.
	Financial Management	Little exposure to core financial documents (Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and the Activity Statement)	Reads and interprets basic financial documents.	Effectively uses financial documents to guide resource management decisions in personal and professional actions.	Uses financial documents to guide resource management decisions and operations in unit or department	Uses financial documents to guide organization's management and operational decisions.
3	Information Management and Technical Understanding	1	2	3	4	5

	Information System Management	Has basic computer skills.	General computers skills in addition to awareness of systems content plus capacity	Utilizes system contents and capacities in personal and professional actions	Understands system's contents, capacities, and deficiencies and enables group to take advantage of available resources	Develops a strategy to build, maintain, and introduce a system that supports the organization's activities
	Continuous technological improvement	Unaware of basic technology	Understands state of art advancements	Maintains current technological proficiencies in personal and professional actions.	Anticipates and articulates technological needs and adapts to technological changes that affect the work group.	Develops a strategy to ensure that the organization stays current in needed technological competencies.
4	Service Management	1	2	3	4	5
	Service standards and delivery	Unaware of organization's basic service standards.	Aware of organization's basic service standards.	Participates in the development and implementation of performance management initiatives	Leads group effort to continuously improve service standards and service delivery.	Creates organization that is continuously seeking to better understand and meet the public's expectations and needs and to measure results.
	Productivity/Efficiency	Unaware of either public needs or organizational capacities.	Aware of public needs, organizational capacities and the relationship between the two.	Considers public needs and organizational capacities in personal and professional actions and is able to communicate the relationship to others.	Works within a team to increase team's capacity to address defined public needs and to articulate the relationship between needs and resources.	Creates organization wide understanding of elements involved in balancing needs and resources and effectively develops organizational methods that systematically convey the relationship to others.

Framework for Reflective Essays about Competencies

Assuming an electronic posting of the competencies rubric, students using the rubric for self-assessment and career planning should post an “artifact” in the appropriate place on the rubric. An artifact is evidence that justifies the student’s decision about where he/she is on the rubric. It can be used by others to converse with the student about his/her progression. There will be guidelines to help students determine what kinds of artifacts will be appropriate, but student should not feel limited to the guidelines. Creativity is encouraged.

Accompanying the artifact will be a reflective essay that conveys the relevance of the artifact. The following guidelines can be used to craft the student’s essay which may be as short as a paragraph. The intent of the essay is to communicate to others the meaning the artifact has to the student.

Make the reflective essay read like a story: past, present, future in terms of the rubric. Personalize the impact of the artifact.

Why do you think this artifact places you in the rubric spot you have chosen?

What responsibility did you have regarding the artifact that you have posted?

Show how the artifact represents a progression from a previous place on the rubric?

Express the importance of the artifact for you and your career.

How does the artifact reflect growing strengths?

What improvements do you plan for the future? Goals?

Portfolio Highlights by Nolan Klouda, May 2009

**Presented to the University of Kansas,
Department of Public Administration**

Artifact: Final MPA Essay

Competency: Written Communication, Practitioner

Reflection:

I was excited to learn that my final essay for the MPA program received the grade of “honors.” I had put considerable thought into the essay, and worked to construct it in an original fashion that satisfied the assignment requirements. The thrust of the paper concerned the use of stories to understand and explain the public service motivation.

As an artifact, it illustrates my proficiency in “writing for personal and professional needs,” because it has met with a degree of praise. Clarifying, streamlining, and otherwise improving my writing style has been a continuous goal of mine since high school. My clarity as a writer contributed greatly to my success in college and graduate school, and has proven an asset in my internship as well, as I am often relied upon to compose memoranda, reports, and press releases.

At the present time, I rank myself within the “practitioner” grouping, because of my ability to integrate this skill into my professional life. Although I am confident in my abilities, I cannot justify classifying myself as a “role model,” since I have not had the opportunity to encourage the development of written communication skills in others

Artifact: “Talkin' Trash” Information Sessions, December 1st, 8th, 15th (Photo above)

Competency: Citizen Engagement, Apprentice

Reflection:

When the City implemented a new trash and recycling contract, city hall began to receive a large volume of complaints about new restrictions in the service and higher costs. In response, the City Administrator put me in charge of arranging a series of information sessions to answer questions and give residents a better understanding of the policy. The results of these sessions (which I called “Talkin' Trash”) as they relate to my professional development, surprised me. I found that many of the residents who attended had a surprisingly sophisticated understanding of the city government in general and the waste policies in particular.

Some asked questions that embarrassed city staff. “Did you solicit multiple bids for the service?” one asked. The answer was no. “If you knew there would be rate increases and new restrictions four months ago, why didn't you tell us then?” Others expressed the view that they wished they had been involved in the decision-making process. I had to admit it to myself: they brought up excellent points.

Other staff members who participated in the question and answer portion commented privately on how difficult city residents could be. I agreed that such pointed questions were uncomfortable, but also felt that the city had failed in several key areas. We had assumed that citizens lacked the knowledge or interest to participate in the formulating of trash policy—clearly this was not the case. We also underestimated the political will necessary to implement such changes. Although garbage may seem like a mundane matter, it affects all homeowners and constitutes possibly the most frequent type of citizen-city government interaction.

These thoughts continued to percolate in my thoughts until January, when I read Leighninger's *The Next Form of Democracy* and attended the January seminar. This led to a powerful realization. The model of representative government that existed in my head, whereby voters elected council members to worry about policy, needed substantial revision. *Political will must be expanded through citizen engagement.* Prior to Talkin' Trash and the January seminar, I had virtually no understanding of the importance of citizen engagement. Upon seeing its importance, I rate myself as an apprentice.

Artifact: ICMA Performance Measures Report

Competency: Evidence-based practice, Apprentice

Reflection:

The city joined the ICMA Center for Performance Measurement (CPM) a year before I started working there, but still had little understanding of performance measures or their usefulness. The assistant city administrator bluntly told me that the city collected the information only to fulfill a requirement to receive the GFOAA budget presentation award. Nonetheless, I was put in charge of coordinating the data collection among the city departments.

I quickly became the organization's expert on performance measures, and gained a deeper understanding of each department's priorities, culture, and measurable units of service delivery. Some data I compiled proved to be an embarrassment for one or more departments. For instance, I found that our police department had more officers per 1,000 population than any of the other 200 cities in the CPM. This, despite the police chief's loud bloviations about being chronically—*dangerously*—understaffed.

As the intern, and one of the youngest people in the office with the least seniority, I learned to handle such information with sensitivity. My experience with performance measures provided me with my first exposure to evidence-based practice. Prior to this I had little concept of what it meant to use analytics to inform organizational decision-making. Now, I have a richer understanding of ways to use quantitative data to achieve goals.

EXAMPLES OF PORTFOLIO ARTIFACTS

Academic

Application Essays
Class Syllabi
Class Projects
Writing Samples
PUAD 831 Seminars
Individual contact with faculty
Grades
Final Essay
Diploma

Work

Job Descriptions
Evaluations
Supervisors
Peer/Co-workers
External
Work Products
Written Communications/Memos/Letters
Policies
Commendations/Awards/Certificates
Self Assessments

Professional

KU MPA Competency Rubric
Other Competency Models
Certificates/Awards
Resume
Published Articles
Memberships
Reference Letters

Presentations

Governing Bodies
Legislative Bodies
Community Groups
Peer Groups
Professional Organizations

Media

Media Releases
Media Articles
Printed
Audio
Broadcast
Letters to the Editor

Other

Photographs
Historical/Famous Quotes
Antidotal Stories
Hobbies
Heroes and Role Models
Mentors

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