

# Competency framework 2019

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A photograph of a person wearing a light blue button-down shirt, sitting at a dark wooden desk. They are holding a black marker and writing on a white notebook. The background is a blurred orange wall.

**WEA**

Adult Learning  
Within Reach

# Welcome to the WEA competency framework

The WEA competency framework supports our overall goals and sets out how we want people in the WEA to work. It puts the WEA values of democratic, equal, inclusive, accessible and open at the heart of everything we do.

We have a clear vision to provide adult learning within reach that inspires individuals, communities and society. The framework also gives us a common language and a consistent approach to help us achieve this vision.

This is a really significant development that will help everyone understand what we need from them, help managers recognise and acknowledge those who are succeeding and help those who need further support.

I look forward to working with you to make this part of the way we work together.

Best Wishes



**Ruth Spellman OBE**  
Chief Executive and General Secretary



# About this framework

The framework is made up of five competencies that we believe will support successful performance across the WEA. They describe 'how' we want everyone to perform at work, whatever their role. The framework has been designed and developed with staff to make sure it is applicable to all core staff and is right for the WEA.

Our aim is to embed the framework into everything we do. It will be used to support recruitment, performance management and development.



# How it applies to you

**For each of the five competencies, we have developed a number of statements or 'behaviours' that explain how we want you to put them into practice at work.**

To ensure it reflects our structure and your differing responsibilities, we have split these into five levels. The table gives a guide to help you identify the appropriate level for you.

Once you have identified the appropriate level, you will know what behaviours apply to you. For instance if you are at Level 3 you will be expected to demonstrate the behaviours at that level.

The competencies have been designed to be cumulative so, if you are at Level 3, it is expected that you would naturally also be demonstrating Levels 1 and 2 behaviours.

## Guide to the Levels

The guide helps you to identify the level appropriate to you. If you are still unsure please speak to your line manager or HR. The level will also be identified in the person specification in your job description.

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Level 1</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to all trainee and apprentice roles</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Level 2</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to all staff who do not have line management responsibility</li> <li>Examples of roles at this level include HR Administrator, Education Support Assistants, Support Centre Assistants, Purchase Ledger/Sales &amp; General Ledger/Payroll Assistants</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Level 3</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to all staff who have line management responsibility or who manage projects or processes</li> <li>Additionally, this may apply to staff in professional or specialist roles</li> <li>Examples of roles at this level include Education Co-ordinators, HR Advisors, Payroll Team Leader, Financial Support Officer</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Level 4</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to all managers with operational responsibility for a number of teams</li> <li>Additionally, this applies to managers providing strategic or specialist advice to those at a more senior/strategic level</li> <li>Examples of roles at this level include Senior and Area Education Managers, Financial Business Partners, Support Centre Managers, Senior/Business Development Managers</li> </ul> |
| <b>Level 5</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies to all strategic and senior leads across the WEA</li> <li>At this level managers will be responsible for a large work area, department, region or function Examples of role includes all Executive Senior Members, Heads of business units and functions and REMs</li> </ul>  |

# Student and WEA Values Focused

Takes positive action to maximise success for students; is committed to and actively promotes the WEA's vision, mission and values to tutors, volunteers, branches, members, partners, internal colleagues and other relevant stakeholders (all referred to as 'stakeholders' below).

| Level 1   | Level 2   | Level 3   | Level 4   | Level 5   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demonstrates clear commitment to the WEA's vision, mission and values (including equality and diversity) in all aspects of work | Presents the organisation in a positive light by promoting and supporting the organisation's vision, mission and values                                       | Challenges others appropriately to ensure the focus is on the overall mission, vision and values of the WEA | Is aware of the changing needs of students, anticipating resulting changes for work agendas                             | Shows a deep motivation and commitment to improving adult and community learning and to making a real difference to students  |
| Understands how own role and contribution relates to the vision, mission and values of the WEA and the success of students      | Understands and manages stakeholder expectations  | Puts the student at the heart of decision-making  | Effectively translates and role models the WEA vision, mission and values to stakeholders                               | Develops and leads the meaningful communication of a compelling vision, mission and values to inspire, influence and motivate |
| Presents a credible and positive image, internally and externally   | Understands the bigger picture and the context of the WEA's work  | Influences internal and external perceptions of the WEA   | Proactively undertakes opportunities to promote the work of the WEA   | Acts as an ambassador for both the WEA, raising its profile internally and externally   |
| Proactively builds personal understanding of the WEA as an educational movement   | Identifies where processes and practices are not aligned to the WEA's vision, mission and values (including equality and diversity) and the needs of students | Helps stakeholders to understand how they fit in the overall picture of the WEA                             | Works with stakeholders to develop joined up strategies and plans to maintain the WEA as a vibrant educational movement | Inspires confidence in own leadership and the WEA when presenting to internal and external audiences                          |

## What it is not

Not role modelling WEA values  
 Unaware of WEA vision or mission  
 Negative and cynical of WEA work  
 Not defending or protecting the WEA's reputation

Failing to assert leadership  
 Not understanding the bigger picture  
 Not being influential or credible  
 Working in isolation of students' needs  
 Putting self before wider mission of WEA



# Achieves results

The planning and delivery of work, demonstrating personal drive to achieve the WEA’s vision and mission, making effective decisions and adapting and contributing to developing change agendas.

| Level 1   | Level 2   | Level 3   | Level 4  | Level 5   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Delivers multiple tasks to agreed standards and deadlines     | Plans and organises own work effectively  | Utilises resources and skills effectively, delegating appropriate responsibility and decision-making                  | Aligns and manages plans and resources effectively to deliver the WEA strategic priorities   | Uses strong internal and external insights to identify and drive the delivery of strategic priorities and plans                                     |
| Works with energy and pace to get the job done                | Takes ownership of activities, delivering tasks with minimal supervision                                  | Sets SMART objectives and monitors progress and delivery  | Proactively leads, motivates and achieves alignment across diverse groups of internal and external stakeholders to effectively deliver | Communicates and translates strategic priorities, setting clear metrics and deliverables to drive continuous improvement and high performance       |
| Re-prioritises work appropriately                             | Adopts a flexible and adaptable approach to work  | Supports the implementation of decisions, working positively and proactively to find the best ways to achieve results | Is agile to changing direction, adapting priorities, plans and resources accordingly   | Challenges the status quo and applies lessons learned to enhance future ways of working   |
| Is open-minded, deals well with new and unfamiliar situations | Uses sound judgement and initiative in the absence of complete information or guidance to progress a task | Shows persistence and resourcefulness, overcoming obstacles to achieve results  | Takes appropriate action to resolve issues, making the best possible decisions and being accountable for decisions made                | Makes informed, brave and relevant strategic decisions and finds solutions which will work effectively within the culture and capability of the WEA |

### What it is not

Giving up easily  
 Not taking responsibility  
 Accepting mediocrity  
 Failing to provide clarity & direction

Resisting change  
 Failing to stand by decisions  
 Losing sight of priorities  
 Missing deadlines  
 Setting unrealistic objectives/deliverables

# Works collaboratively with others

The ability to work effectively with others, building and maintaining positive relationships, being respectful of diversity and equality and taking actions which respect the needs and contributions of students, tutors, volunteers, branches, members, partners, internal colleagues and other relevant stakeholders (all referred to as 'stakeholders' below).

| Level 1                                       | Level 2  | Level 3  | Level 4  | Level 5   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Recognises and diverse views and perspectives | Ensures everyone is treated fairly and consistently                  | Understands and utilises diverse ideas, working styles, skills and backgrounds   | Respects and is committed to equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion  | Promotes an respects environment of trust, respect and integrity  |
| Responsive to stakeholder needs               | Demonstrates care and concern for stakeholders, proactively offering | Has a genuine interest in everyone's views, listens and responds appropriately   | Proactively works with stakeholders to identify common goals, valuing stakeholder contribution   | Fosters an environment of common focus and team spirit support  |
| Supports colleagues their day-to-day work     | Readily shares knowledge and information                             | Builds and maintains strong relationships and regular direct communication with relevant stakeholders a substantial area | Ensures effective collaboration with internal and external clear stakeholders which breaks down silo in thinking, identifies and manages potential sources of conflict | Promotes a culture in of transparent and open two-way communication   |
| Works cooperatively with others               | Builds stakeholder relationships outside immediate team              | Creates opportunities for cross-functional team working  | Uses internal connections to collaborate effectively to enhance the stakeholder experience   | Identifies, establishes and maintains strong of strategic stakeholder partnerships and alliances at an Association/national level |

## What it is not

Working in isolation (not collaboratively)  
Withholding information  
Set in own ways  
Dismissive of others' views  
Dominates conversations

Unapproachable  
Failing to consult (when necessary)  
Openly critical of others  
Uncooperative  
Not listening

# Manages Self, Learning and Personal Development

**Shows commitment to own and others' continuing professional development, undertaking development activities and acting on feedback to realise full potential and build individual and WEA's capability for the future.**

| Level 1  | Level 2   | Level 3   | Level 4   | Level 5   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Shows keenness to undertake activities identified in personal development plan   | Seeks learning activities to broaden experience, knowledge, skills and self-insight   | Understand connections between wider organisational issues and own role   | Reviews own and others' objectives and development plans to effectively deliver against WEA needs                     | Shows an on-going commitment to learning and self-improvement, evaluating own effectiveness, actioning learning accordingly |
| Shows curiosity about current WEA issues and developments  | Takes an active interest in what is happening more widely at the WEA  | Understands own and others' learning and wellbeing needs, working to build personal resilience  | Keeps up-to-date with professional area, bringing insights back to the WEA to evolve and improve advice and solutions | Actively keeps up-to-date with organisational wider sector issues and professional developments                             |
| Identifies and asks for help when needs recognising and drawing on the expertise and knowledge of others   | Seeks, listens, accepts and acts upon feedback, and learns from it  | Encourages shared learning and best practice  | Role models and reflects on own practice and performance and solicits feedback from others                            | Uses expertise and knowledge it, to innovate and continuously develop self, individuals and the WEA                         |
| Actively participates in team learning and development activities  | Engages in formal and informal learning and development activities. Commits to continuous personal development (CPD) of self and others |   | Engages with other professionals to reflect upon own personal and professional learning                               | Readily uses and shares knowledge and learning from own and others' experience to improve WEA performance                   |
| <b>What it is not</b>  |   |   |   |   |
| Not seeking feedback<br>Declining opportunities to learn<br>Being defensive<br>Lacking interest in own development<br>Not supporting others' development |   | Dismissive of feedback<br>Unaware of impact on others<br>Not transferring learning to work<br>Only focusing on others' weaknesses<br>Not sharing knowledge or expertise |   |   |



# Delivers excellent service

Consistently delivers and maintains high quality work and communication in all interactions with students, tutors, volunteers, branches, members, partners, internal colleagues and other relevant stakeholders (referred to as 'stakeholders' below).

| Level 1   | Level 2  | Level 3  | Level 4  | Level 5  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Consistently delivers work of highest quality in line with the WEA's service standards, conduct and processes   | Maintains clear communication and manages stakeholder expectations                         | Motivates and empowers others to deliver high service standards  | Establishes measures to identify strengths and shortfalls in service and acts on the information | Uses internal and external insights to determine and drive service outcomes and quality      |
| Provides a helpful, professional and friendly service   | Promptly responds and resolves verbal and written enquiries, requests and complaints       | Negotiates and manages conflicting views and priorities effectively  | Continuously looks to improve quality and service standards                                      | Champions and benchmarks high quality standards across all aspects of service delivery       |
| Goes the 'extra mile' to help meet stakeholder needs  | Proactively seeks ways to improve a stakeholder's experience                               | Proactively and creatively tailors approaches to meet the differing needs of stakeholders  | Re-shapes services in line with stakeholder needs to deliver significant improvements            | Sees the wider picture and understands the levels of service that are valued by stakeholders |
| Provides relevant information or advice   | Manages stakeholder issues with empathy and understanding, finding an appropriate solution | Listens to and sees things from stakeholders' perspective  | Understands the stakeholder context, developing new and innovative options to meet requirements  | Anticipates stakeholders' future needs and identifies their key priorities                   |
| <b>What it is not</b>   |  |  |  |  |
| Deferring responsibility<br>Reacting defensively to complaints<br>Short-term view<br>Unhelpfulness<br>Giving indirect or undermining feedback<br>Not responding to emails |  | Inconsistent quality of service<br>Making incorrect assumptions<br>Not keeping people informed<br>Unable/unwilling to understand the stakeholder perspective |  |  |

# Development hints and tips

These provide some useful prompts to support your development in each area and can apply at any level.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Student and WEA Values Focused</b></p>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seek opportunities to spend time with students and volunteers Proactively seek opportunities to promote the WEA</li> <li>● Develop understanding of effective communication styles and methods Reflect on practical ways to apply WEA values to the role</li> <li>● Attend internal briefings and events to develop understanding of the WEA's current work and priorities</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Achieves Results</b></p>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use time and project management techniques to manage tasks effectively Keep stakeholders /colleagues updated</li> <li>● Reflect and act on lessons learnt</li> <li>● Use internal communication mechanisms to engage and motivate others Apply internal and external best practice change management principles</li> <li>●</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Works Collaboratively With Others</b></p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify opportunities to work with other Business Units Attend meetings outside of immediate team</li> <li>● Identify internal and external networking opportunities</li> <li>● Consider the best communication methods to engage with relevant parties</li> <li>●</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Manages Self, Learning and Personal Development</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure development is discussed at one-to-ones</li> <li>● Set aside time for reading of internal communications Review your personal development plan on a quarterly basis</li> <li>● Proactively share and evaluate learning after undertaking development Ask peer and external colleagues for feedback on performance</li> <li>● Reflect on own performance</li> <li>●</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Delivers Excellent Services</b></p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shadow stakeholders to find out more about their priorities and issues Step back to see things from a stakeholder point of view</li> <li>● Reflect on own internal service standards and conduct</li> <li>● Continually review stakeholders needs and priorities</li> <li>● Involve stakeholders when defining and reviewing processes</li> <li>●</li> </ul>                          |

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