

# Competencies for 21st Century Extension Professionals

## Extension

## Assistant/Associates

Adopted September 13, 2005



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employer with a comprehensive plan for diversity.

### Extension Assistant/Associate Competencies for the 21st Century

**Core Competencies (skills)** - These are skills either present at hiring or are skills that the new hire has the capacity to develop soon after hiring

**Transformational skills** - These are skills that could be developed by individuals who wish to enhance their effectiveness in teaching or organizational roles. These skills would be negotiated between the unit administrator and the extension professional.

### Successful Teacher - plans, designs, implements and evaluates extension educational programs

Conducts proactive needs assessments

- Regularly uses informal needs assessment strategies such as verbal feedback from clientele, stakeholders, faculty and staff to identify educational opportunities.

Understands effective educational strategies

- Works with Educators or Specialists to prepare learner-based educational objectives and implements relevant educational programs
- Identifies and uses curricula already developed for the intended audience

Markets educational programs

- Uses appropriate media to market educational programs to target audience

Manages the logistical requirements of educational programs

- Provides appropriate logistical support to implement an effective educational environment (facility, audio-visual or other supportive educational resources, experiential learning resources, etc.) to facilitate effective educational programs.

Uses effective teaching skills, especially for one-on-one or small groups

- Employs a variety of teaching skills using one-on-one techniques, small group methods, experiential learning and larger group
- Works with Educators or Specialists to develop and deliver educational programs that match the learning style of the audience.

Employs KASA-level evaluation skills

- Implements evaluation tools. Reports evaluation results to supervisor for interpretation and program planning purposes.
- Routinely uses EARS system and is introduced to eARFA. Aware of Logic Model.
- Regularly reports impact of educational programs to administration and decision-makers.

Conducts formalized needs assessments

- Conducts formalized needs assessments such as focus groups, surveys and other strategies with guidance from Educators or Specialists.
- Establishes a customer/clientele network or group to provide regular feedback on program needs, direction and impact.

Implements innovative educational strategies

- Works with Educator/Specialists to devise innovative educational strategies

Implements marketing plans

- Assists Educators and Specialists in the delivery of advanced marketing plans.

Delivers large-scale educational programs

- Assists in the organization and delivery of large-scale educational programs such as conferences or workshops.

Employs advanced teaching methods

- Implements innovative teaching methods. Teaches innovative methods to others in the system.

Uses Logic Model for program evaluation

- Conducts program evaluation focused on behavior, practice, social or environmental change
- Routinely uses Logic Model in planning, delivering and evaluating extension education programs.
- Helps devise strategies to enhance the value of Cooperative Extension accomplishments for UNL administration and local decision-makers.

### Subject Matter Competent - mastery of discipline, understands research base, considered technically proficient and current

Functions as an expert in assigned focus area

- Seeks and uses research/science-based information. Uses educational resources and networks to find answers to questions or issues.
- Delivers educational programs relevant to local clientele. Teaches or demonstrates technology relevant to focus area.
- Recognizes and selects appropriate educational curricula.
- Carefully and fairly evaluates science-based information and societal values prior to taking an advocacy role on controversial issues. Recognize that competing viewpoints are valuable and respond to the educational needs of those who may not share our perspective.
- Delivers local media outputs (news columns, radio, etc.).
- Develops an effective professional development plan tied to assigned focus area and educational programming opportunities.

Functions as an expert on a regional basis

- Contributes expertise to regional or state-wide teams.
- Participates in the delivery of educational programs on a regional or state-wide basis.
- Contributes to curricula development led by Educators or Specialists.
- Views professional development as a long-term strategy to enhance educational effectiveness for clientele and to position program to adapt to change.

Contributes to applied/adaptive research projects

- Assists Educators or Specialists in the conduct of applied/adaptive research

### Skilled Communicator - excellent written and verbal skills and knowledge of supporting technology

Communicates effectively (written & verbal)

- Practices effective verbal and written communication with co-workers, clientele, stakeholders, commissioners and board members.

Uses technology to enhance communication

- Uses a variety of tools (email, blackboard, satellite, web, polycom) to communicate with coworkers and clientele.
- Becomes familiar with the latest communication modes (chat, blogging, etc.) to stay relevant to modern audience.

Explores and implements advanced technology as appropriate

- Uses advanced technology (including evolving web technologies such as NU Skills or Blackboard) to deliver educational programs and connect clientele to appropriate informational resources.

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**Inclusiveness** - aware of and committed to serving all members of community

Inclusive of all members of the community

- Uses all reasonable efforts to engage a diverse audience in educational programming and facilitation.

Responsive to needs of diverse groups

- Develops and delivers proactive programs to meet the educational needs of diverse groups.

**Entrepreneurial** - generates grants, fees, contracts to enhance programs

Acquires program enhancement resources

- Generates revenue through program fees, grants and contributions. Uses these funds to build a solid resource base for future
- Secures in-kind resources (financial, expert, hands-on) to facilitate effective educational programs.

Acquires resources from competitive sources

- Routinely applies for competitive grants or other funds to generate revenue or resources for program development and delivery.
- Competes for regional and/or national grants to generate significant resources.

**Collaborator/Team Player** - creates partnerships and contributes to teams in response to significant issues

Functions effectively in a program team environment

- Accepts responsibility for team roles and assignments and follows through.

Interacts effectively with clientele groups

- Understands networking and how to develop local partnerships.

Effective member of coalitions

- Participates in and contributes to local coalitions.

Works well with office staff and peers

- Develops professional relationships with office team and others. Contributes to Cooperative Extension teams.

Broadens team concept to enhance program impact

- Actively participates in multi-disciplinary teams to develop educational programs or curricula.

Interacts effectively with state-wide or national groups

- Works effectively with state-wide or national groups appropriate for focus area.

Builds coalitions

- Works with Educators or Specialists to build coalitions that enhance programming or funding opportunities.

Models effective teamwork

- Functions as a resource to enhance the effectiveness of office and peer teams.

**Leadership** - ability to engage a wide range of individuals and facilitate progress on projects or programs

Practices effective leadership with clientele, boards and volunteers

- Takes appropriate leadership role with clientele. Can communicate the mission of the organization.

Effectively manages volunteers

- Identifies helpful volunteers and delegates program responsibilities appropriately.

Embraces conflict as a growth process

- Acknowledges conflict and acts to help resolve.

Develops advanced leadership skills

- Provides leadership for Work Group, Action Team or team projects. Demonstrates ability to establish a shared vision for program direction.

Utilizes advanced volunteer development strategies

- Identifies, recruits and develops volunteers to assume leadership roles.

Uses conflict resolution skills and is certified

- Resolves conflict in a variety of settings.
- Resolves conflict, as the resource person.

Functions as a mentor

- Mentors newer employees or newly refocused employees.

**Balance** - optimizes work efficiency to balance professional/personal time

Invokes effective work habits

- Uses effective time management, is able to juggle multiple projects, is involved in the community and makes personal and family time a priority.

Manages time committed to service roles

- Contributes appropriate time to fairs, service functions and organizational committees

Plans and works proactively

- Works in the present with the future in mind, i.e., addresses current relevant issues with an eye on evolving issues

**Change Manager** - accepts change and is willing to deal with ambiguity

Willing risk-taker

- In collaboration with supervisor, takes calculated risks based on programmatic opportunities

Models change

- Accepts and adapts to change and is willing to deal with ambiguity. Functions as an effective change agent for clientele and our organization.
- Conducts educational programs that bring about constructive change for clientele

Adjusts assignment to benefit organization or clientele

- Makes career change in program focus when an emerging issue aligns with organizational opportunities. Participates in appropriate professional development.

Leads change

- Facilitates groups to implement visionary change to position themselves for the future

**Professionalism** - personal presentation and behavior appropriate to our role and responsibility

Behaves professionally

- Dresses appropriately for the situation (one level better than clientele/participants)
- Uses identifiers (pins, shirts, jackets, etc.) to acknowledge UNL Extension
- Maintains composure under all circumstances
- Loyal to peers and organization

**Citizenship** - contributes to the well-being of the organization

Knows UNL personnel and areas of expertise

- Refers clients to expert resources when appropriate.

Serves as an organizational citizen

- Gets involved in some aspect of the organization. Participates on local, district or state-wide/university committees.
- Promotes the university/organization.
- Promotes a positive office image.

Contributes to organizational strategic plan

- Helps identify key issues or strategies for the organization's strategic plan. Considers the role of personal and work team contributions to the organization's strategic plan.

Serves in leadership capacities

- Provides a leadership role on district or state-wide committees.
- Implements public relations plans.

Leads organizational strategic planning processes

- Leads planning committees, task forces and other strategic planning processes.