# Competence Framework



**What is a competency?**
'Competency' (competencies) describes the behaviour that lies behind competent performance, such as critical thinking or analytical skills, and describes what people bring to the job. A competency describes the characteristics of a successful UR employee i.e. Knowledge, Actions, Attitudes, & Behaviours.

**What is a competency framework?**
A 'competency framework' is a structure that sets out and defines each individual competency (such as problem-solving or people management) required by individuals working in an organisation or part of an organisation

**How do our values link to competencies?**
Our values reflect the way we behave and the standards and principles we apply in delivering our mission and vision. Competencies are areas of skills and personal behaviours that derive from our values. These behaviours (competencies) are required of every employee, regardless of their role and grade and drive overall organisational performance.

## Utility Regulator Competence Framework

| Value | Competence | Descriptor |
|---|---|---|
| **Be a best practice regulator: transparent, consistent, proportionate, accountable and targeted.** | Professional Knowledge/Skills | You understand the appropriate regulation/legislation framework within your work area and its impact on UR's over all purpose |
| | Analytical Rigour | You use analysis to find well founded and effective solutions within your area of work |
| **Be professional – listening, explaining and acting with integrity.** | Governance | Your behaviour contributes and conforms to the highest standards of UR's internal policy and governance |
| **Be a collaborative, co-operative and learning team.** | People | You contribute effectively and engage constructively with teams and individuals and share knowledge in order to enhance performance and facilitate learning and development. |
| | Relationship Management | You build and sustain internal and external relationships to foster a climate of openness, respect, cooperation and constructive challenge |
| **Be motivated and empowered to make a difference.** | Strategic thinking & Delivery | You contribute to shaping individual, team and organisational goals in order to deliver the Utility Regulator strategy and work-plan |
| | Managing Resources | You efficiently monitor and manage resources in your area of work to ensure quality deliverables and value for money |

## Professional Knowledge & Skills

Understands appropriate regulation/legislation framework within your work area and its impact on UR's over all purpose

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knows when to consult & seek advice & from whom<br><br>Takes active responsibility for developing professional knowledge, skills and continuing professional development<br><br>Is patient, approachable and courteous with all stakeholders<br><br>Is professional – in communications, listening, explaining and sharing knowledge<br><br>Is open, honest and transparent in carrying out duties in area of work | Understands the basics of UR's role & the issues affecting it within own area of work<br><br>Is willing to develop knowledge of UR's regulatory role<br><br>Is aware of the appropriate basic regulation or legislative policy within own directorate or area of work | Understands UR's role & issues affecting it within own directorate and area of work<br><br>Can describe UR's role to internal or external audiences as needed<br><br>Applies appropriate regulation or legislative policy within own directorate or area of work | Knows, and has experience of, relevant legislation, and regulatory issues within own area of expertise (including regulatory licence conditions)<br><br>Understands how regulatory or legal issues apply to area of expertise<br><br>Understands utility sectors & related issues such as pricing clearly<br><br>Understands appropriate UK legislative or regulatory principles (e.g. financial, economic, legal, public policy, statutory, equality)<br><br>Keeps up to date with appropriate developments in area of expertise & builds awareness of NI, UK & international best practice<br><br>Negotiates, and influences where appropriate | Comprehensive knowledge of relevant NI legislation in own area of expertise (including regulatory licences conditions)<br><br>Understands rationale & merits of national and international regulatory or statutory approaches including impact on UR's strategy & objectives<br><br>Knows legal & political background to UK legislation or regulation in area of expertise.<br><br>Understands UK legislation or regulation in area of expertise & its application to NI<br><br>Understands regulatory and statutory principles in area of expertise & application to UR<br><br>Identifies & articulates public policy & wider external issues relevant to UR<br><br>Balances professional expertise & mentoring team<br><br>Negotiates & influences on issues in area of expertise |

## Analytical Rigour

Uses analysis to find well founded and effective solutions within your area of work

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communicates clearly and accurately both verbally & in writing within appropriate time frames<br><br>Is prepared to stand over analysis and decisions in own area of work<br><br>Bases decisions on sound evidence | Collects & arranges information in a structured manner<br><br>Understands importance of accurate & robust information<br><br>Checks & validates information for accuracy<br><br>Highlights potential problems with information | Sifts information, determines what is relevant, checks for accuracy<br><br>Spots trends, patterns & anomalies in information<br><br>Recognises problems, identifies causes, evaluates options for problem solving & suggests workable solutions<br><br>Refers issues & decisions to line management as necessary | Analyses and researches complex information from diverse sources<br><br>Uses data selectively to identify & highlight areas of special focus<br><br>Interprets outputs meaningfully identifying trends, patterns & anomalies<br><br>Makes sound judgements on relevant data taking account of relevant best practice, technical, legal, statutory, financial and economic factors<br><br>Makes evidence based recommendations including creative or innovative solutions<br><br>Accepts & owns decisions made | Creates a culture that promotes analytical rigour & objectivity<br><br>Assesses policies, projects & risks as basis for informing decisions & making recommendations<br><br>Focuses on critical issues & longer term implications<br><br>Assimilates and makes sense of complex &/or conflicting information & perspectives<br><br>Thinks creatively & builds innovative solutions to problems<br><br>Communicates & structures outputs clearly, succinctly and in a manner appropriate to the circumstances<br><br>Ensures team decision-making based on sound evidence<br><br>Stands over team's actions and results |

## Governance

Behaviour contributes and conforms to the highest standards of UR's internal policy and governance

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognises and applies appropriate UR processes & procedures<br><br>Is aware and complies to standards of public sector governance and UR Governance Manual<br><br>Ensures own work complies to processes & procedures<br><br>Recognises impact of non compliance on UR<br><br>Works with integrity and high standard of personal conduct<br><br>Responds constructively to information requests and queries from all stakeholders in a timely manner<br><br>Understands and applies the principles of equality in relation to UR work and workplace | Is aware of UR risk management processes<br><br>Contributes administration of risk register as appropriate<br><br>Knows when to report a risk and to whom | Is aware of UR risk management processes<br><br>Maintains administration of risk register as appropriate<br><br>Knows when to report a risk and to whom | Understands & ensures compliance with governance requirements in own work area & in wider public sector context<br><br>Actively contributes towards delivery of highest standards of public sector governance<br><br>Implements, monitors and manages measures to mitigate identified risks<br><br>Understands legal risks and issues relating to own work area<br><br>Identifies risks for possible inclusion in risk registers and contributes to develop of mitigating actions or controls | Ensures governance and process requirements are met own work area & in wider public sector context in order to minimise risk of challenge to UR decisions<br><br>Has in depth knowledge of UR risk management procedures & develops risk register entries for own work area & wider directorate<br><br>Sets a positive example in timely adherence to internal & external compliance responsibilities and identifies and manages relevant legal and political risks.<br><br>Ensures transparency in governance procedures and supports others in upholding professional ethics<br><br>Ensures confidentiality and diplomacy in board business<br><br>Ensures all required approvals are obtained prior to committing to expenditure<br><br>Ensures high standards of conduct for the team |

## People

Contributes actively & engages with teams & individuals to collaborate & share knowledge in order to develop & enhance performance

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agrees objectives & development plan with line manager, reviewing at regular intervals<br><br>Undertakes training & development activities to achieve agreed objectives<br><br>Assesses current level of competence & identifies development needs<br><br>Seeks & accepts honest feedback<br><br>Engaging in team work & recognising contribution of others in their team<br><br>Shares knowledge & information with colleagues, is courteous & responsive | Aligns own SMART objectives to UR objectives<br><br>Gathers feedback & responds positively to it<br><br>Contributes to wider team & provides appropriate proactive support | Ensures objectives & deliverables are SMART and aligned to UR objectives<br><br>Gathers feedback & compares with own perceptions of performance to improve future performance<br><br>Aware of others' workloads, offers to help team members when required ensures delivery of team objectives<br><br>Actively contributes to wider team & provides appropriate proactive support | Takes personal responsibility for setting & achieving personal stretch objectives & contributing to team & UR objectives<br><br>Where appropriate supports/coaches manages junior members of staff to ensure objectives are met<br><br>Actively receives & seeks feedback on comparing with own perceptions of performance to improve future outputs<br><br>Promotes collaborative working to ensure delivery of team objectives<br><br>Builds effective & collaborative relationships across wider teams to share knowledge & information and deliver effective outcomes. | Leads & energises UR staff to meet UR objectives & strategy<br><br>Takes responsibility for own & team performance & career progression<br><br>Sets positive example with timely feedback to teams & individuals on progress & performance<br><br>Actively seeks feedback to strengthen effectiveness<br><br>Coaches & mentors to create a supportive, challenging environment to yield high standards of performance<br><br>Recognises performance & achievement, identifies issues & take remedial action<br><br>Identifies, discusses & addresses poor performance with staff<br><br>Participates in recruitment & promotion processes, supports assimilation of new staff<br><br>Fosters & promotes collaborative team working & engagement. |

## Relationship Management

Builds and sustain internal and external relationships to foster a climate of openness, respect, cooperation and positive challenge

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Builds and develops effective relationships both internally & externally | Understands needs & expectations of internal/external stakeholders | Understands needs & expectations of internal & external stakeholders | Builds & develops network of internal & external relations to ensure effective delivery of UR objectives | Generates and sustains a wide network of relationships internally & externally |
| Actively seeks & listens to others' views & opinions – values differences | Knows key stakeholders | Knows relevant players in own work area | Demonstrates importance of collaborative approach by working closely with internal & external partners | Seizes opportunities to develop long term & strategic alliances |
| Communicates clearly, concisely & at a level understood by audience | Works collaboratively with wider teams | Works collaboratively within own & across other directorates & key decision makers | Generates culture of openness & trust by actively seeking & listening to others | Builds & maintains bridges in areas of conflict or sensitivity to sustain credible/viable relationships |
| Understands the importance of and takes time to answer queries and speak directly to consumers and stakeholders | Demonstrates good listening skills | Builds rapport based on mutual trust & collaboration | Speaks confidently, positively & with integrity in dialogue with stakeholders | Promotes UR externally at senior level. |
| Acknowledges mistakes & works to put things right | Tailors work to provide appropriate proactive support | Connects with others by tailoring own work/behaviour to meet needs of others | Maintains positive relationships with interested parties during consultations and negotiations | Demonstrates pro-active understanding of others' agendas & handles sensitively |
| Discloses information appropriately to authorised people | Speaks up when things wrong or to check understanding | Contributes to open discussion on improvements to ways of working & speaks up to check understanding | Constructively challenges assumptions behind current ways of operating & prepares for counter arguments | Critically evaluates counter arguments & challenges as appropriate |
| Treats others with respect and seeks to build trust and confidence | | | Influences others to gain sponsorship or acceptance of own ideas and initiatives | Influences others to make decisions by presenting information persuasively |
| | | | | Influences at senior level to further UR's interests |

## Strategic Thinking & Delivery

Contributes to shaping individual, team and organisational goals in order to deliver the Utility Regulator strategy and work-plan

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demonstrates a positive commitment & understanding of UR mission, vision and values & corporate strategy

Seeks to improve existing processes & procedures

Where appropriate demonstrate a willingness to work autonomously, make decisions & take responsibility for own area of work | Understands how own work contributes & supports overall UR objectives & direction

Demonstrates strong commitment to support delivery of objectives & work plans

Develops understanding of current area of work

Plans & prioritises own work | Understands the link between area of work &UR's overall objectives  and direction

Demonstrates strong commitment to delivery of objectives/work plans

Demonstrates sound understanding of own work area & objectives of team

Is flexible to ensure both urgent priorities as well as planned activities are completed | Identifies factors & contributes to development of UR's policy & strategy

Develops detailed plans to support delivery of UR's policies & strategy

Considers alternatives in delivery of strategy/work plans

Obtains senior management agreement to plans & offers suggestions to resolve difficult issues

Ensures systems are in place to enable monitoring against plans

Willingness & ability to delegate responsibility for appropriate areas of work | Influences, reviews & analyses UR policy & strategy to determine required changes or development

Considers & contributes to succession planning & development need/plans

Takes corrective action where practices not in line with policies

Defines measurable & achievable strategic objectives

Implements strategy & policies in own work & team's work and plans accordingly.

Contributes effectively to the delivery of cross directorate projects and re-prioritises team work plans accordingly.

Takes responsibility for the teams delivery against objectives

Supports staff working autonomously & encourages decision making within appropriate areas of work |

## Managing Resources

Efficiently monitors and manages resources in area of work to ensure quality and value for money

| Everyone | Admin | Officer | Analyst | Manager |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Effectively uses equipment & resources<br><br>Understanding need to ensuring quality & value for money within own area of responsibility<br><br>Ensures adequate resource is committed to the delivery of organisational priorities and cross directorate projects.<br><br>Adheres to accurate file & information management within in the team<br><br>Ensures information held & shared securely and filed correctly<br><br>Looks for innovative ways to improve quality & effective working | Follows appropriate guidelines, procedures & legal requirements when managing/purchasing stock<br><br>Supports accurate file & information management within in the team<br><br>Supports the team in budget monitoring & recording | Adheres to appropriate guidelines & legal requirements & seeks to improve procedures & cost effective working<br><br>Monitors quality & value for money<br><br>Supports & promotes accurate file & information management within in the team<br><br>Contributes to budget monitoring & recording | Supports & contributes to resource planning (people, finance, technology etc)<br><br>Makes recommendations taking into consideration long term benefits, costs & activities<br><br>Produce & contribute to business cases, which anticipate future events & issues.<br><br>Ensure plans comply with appropriate guidelines, procedures & legal requirements.<br><br>Ensure appropriate resources are in place for unforeseen difficulties/issues.<br><br>Maintains secure, accurate & complete files, information & records of expenditure<br><br>Keeps budget within agreed limits | Uses own resources effectively (people, finance, technology etc)<br><br>Takes action to reduce costs ensure value for money & development of branch business plan<br><br>Makes recommendations for expenditure which are clearly linked to team/organisation objectives<br><br>Promotes & enforces appropriate guidelines, procedures & legal requirements<br><br>Identifies risks & manages resource implications<br><br>Redeploys resources where appropriate and prioritises the delivery of organizational priorities.<br><br>Deals with under & over spend promptly & effectively<br><br>Manages budget & delivers within its constraints. |