



United Nations

TAKING CONTROL OF
YOUR CAREER

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Table of Contents

Part 2: Career Tools

ACTIVITY 1: Transferable Skills	3
Your Professional Survival Toolbox	3
Presenting Your Transferable Skills	3
What's in Your Toolbox?	5
Develop Your Core Competencies	6
Building Competencies	7
Communication	7
Teamwork	7
Planning & Organizing	7
Accountability	8
Client Orientation	8
Creativity	8
Technological Awareness	8
Commitment to Continuous Learning	9
Rate Your Competencies	10

ACTIVITY 1: Transferable Skills



Transferable skills are key capabilities and behaviours which are used throughout the Organization and readily applied regardless of location. The stronger and more varied your transferable skill set, the better your chance for mobility and long-term employability. Enhancing transferable skills is a key ingredient of most personal development plans (PDPs).

Your Professional Survival Toolbox

Transferable skills serve as a toolbox which you can carry with you throughout your career. Highly valued skills include:

- ◆ Meeting deadlines
- ◆ Implementing agreed goals and expectations
- ◆ Managing projects
- ◆ Facilitating meetings
- ◆ Building team spirit and being a cooperative team player
- ◆ Getting along with others
- ◆ Building lasting relationships
- ◆ Being results oriented
- ◆ Having a desire to learn and improve
- ◆ Being punctual
- ◆ Attending to details
- ◆ Enlisting help when needed
- ◆ Accepting responsibility
- ◆ Managing your time
- ◆ Recognizing and reorganizing priorities
- ◆ Working well under pressure
- ◆ Speaking effectively, writing concisely, and listening attentively
- ◆ Identifying, analysing, and creatively solving problems
- ◆ Developing rapport with, being sensitive to, and providing support for others
- ◆ Taking initiative
- ◆ Being able to quickly adapt to changing circumstances
- ◆ Multi-tasking
- ◆ Identifying and resolving ethical issues
- ◆ Tolerating ambiguity
- ◆ Managing resources

Presenting Your Transferable Skills

Developing transferable skills is not enough—you must be able to use them to become a highly attractive job candidate as well as a valued member of a team. Here are a few effective strategies to try:

- ◆ Pinpoint the match between your skills and the Organization's needs
- ◆ Describe how your experience is applicable to a department or mission's goals

- ◆ Group your skills to create a stronger impression, especially for a move to a new field
- ◆ Provide specific examples of how you have used your skills, especially as related to your achievements

What's in Your Toolbox?



Instructions: Review the list of transferable skills on the previous page. Identify up to three skills which are already in your toolbox. Then, list up to three skills which you need to develop or improve. Finally, write a five-minute script you could use to verbally describe your transferable skills to a potential new manager.

Note: This may also be a good time to contact a coach through OHR's career coaching programme. Send an email message to uncareercoaching@gmail.com to get started.

Skills You Already Have in Your Toolbox	Skills You Need to Add to Your Toolbox
Skill you have	Skill you need
Skill you have	Skill you need
Skill you have	Skill you need

Pretend you just met someone new at a conference. If you have five minutes to tell the person about your professional self, what would you say?

Enter your script here.

Develop Your Core Competencies

Competencies include skills, attributes, and behaviours to develop and strengthen throughout your career with the UN. Managerial competencies are the additional skills, attributes, and behaviours required of those who oversee other staff.

The UN competencies evolved out of interviews and focus groups with a cross-section of staff at all levels throughout the Secretariat, including the Deputy Secretary-General, all heads of Departments and Offices, and several hundred staff in Offices Away from Headquarters (OAHs).

Acquiring or developing a competency is not the result of a one-time event but of an ongoing process. While participating in training courses is one important way to develop competencies, experience, coaching, feedback, and a blend of individual learning activities are also necessary.

The eight UN Core Competencies are:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Teamwork
- ◆ Planning & organizing
- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Client orientation
- ◆ Creativity
- ◆ Technological awareness
- ◆ Commitment to continuous learning



Building Competencies

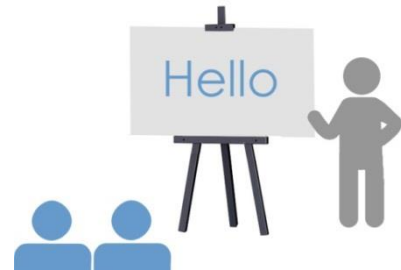
Identifying and pursuing developmental and learning-oriented assignments which build UN competencies is crucial if you want to enhance and expand your career opportunities in the Organization.

- ◆ Volunteering
- ◆ Job shadowing
- ◆ Part time assignments
- ◆ Further education
- ◆ Training programmes
- ◆ Mentoring programmes
- ◆ Self-reading

Here are some examples to consider:

Communication

- ◆ Write a proposal for a new policy, process, or mission
- ◆ Write a speech for someone higher up in the Organization
- ◆ Give speeches or presentations about the Organization on the outside
- ◆ Handle a tough negotiation with an internal or external client
- ◆ Prepare and present a proposal to top management
- ◆ Sell something to a tough audience
- ◆ Persuade someone to do something when you do not have sufficient formal authority to make it happen
- ◆ Offer to represent your work group on a task force
- ◆ Prepare talking points
- ◆ Present a report or briefing after completing a mission or training
- ◆ Organizing a brownbag lunch on an interesting and relevant topic for your team



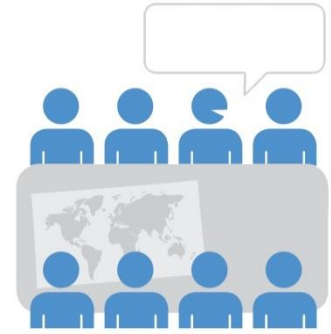
Teamwork

- ◆ Help manage a group through a crisis
- ◆ Build a multifunctional team to tackle a common organizational issue
- ◆ Manage a project team of people who are older and more experienced than you are
- ◆ Assemble an *ad hoc* team of diverse people to accomplish a difficult task
- ◆ Work on a crisis management team



Planning & Organizing

- ◆ Plan and start something
- ◆ Launch a new process
- ◆ Plan an offsite meeting or conference
- ◆ Organize and manage the renovation of an office, floor, or meeting room
- ◆ Assemble an *ad hoc* team of diverse people
- ◆ Plan and organize others to accomplish a difficult task
- ◆ Produce a scenario for a high-level event



Accountability

- ◆ Deliver on your work plan goals
- ◆ Set a 100% attendance and on-time record
- ◆ Meet or beat deadlines
- ◆ Work with colleagues toward a common goal



Client Orientation

- ◆ Conduct a customer satisfaction survey
- ◆ Handle a tough negotiation with an internal or external client
- ◆ Manage a dissatisfied internal or external client
- ◆ Spend time with internal or external clients, write a report of their observations and present it to people involved with them
- ◆ Train customers and clients in the use of your Organization's products or services

Creativity

- ◆ Prepare a proposal for improving an existing programme and present it to senior management
- ◆ Summarize and sell a new idea to a key stakeholder
- ◆ Prepare and offer ideas for reducing administrative costs in your department
- ◆ Organize and summarize a brainstorming session on steps to create a more inclusive work environment



Technological Awareness

- ◆ Find an in-house "expert" to help you learn new technology
- ◆ Join a professional association
- ◆ Read journals and online newsletters
- ◆ Take weekend courses at a local college
- ◆ Take courses online¹



¹ Check out [UN Learning opportunities here](#).

Commitment to Continuous Learning

- ◆ Work short rotations in other units or functions
- ◆ Volunteer to fill an open job until it is filled
- ◆ Attend a self-awareness/assessment course
- ◆ Train someone in something you are an expert in
- ◆ Obtain feedback from a peer and act on it to further your job competence



Learning is a very important part of your career. Of course you have opportunities to learn from your job....You're learning by watching your colleagues.

*---Suren Shahinyan, Chief
Human Resources Services Section*

Rate Your Competencies

What are your strongest competencies? What are your weakest ones? Rank the following competencies from 1 to 8, with 1 being your strongest competency and 8 being your competency needing the most improvement.



Instructions: Enter a number in the box to the left of each competency. Be sure to use all the numbers without duplicates. When you are done, respond to each question. You can enter as much text as you want.

- ___ Communication
- ___ Teamwork
- ___ Planning and organization
- ___ Accountability
- ___ Client orientation
- ___ Creativity
- ___ Technological awareness
- ___ Commitment to continuous learning

1. How can you best promote your strongest competency?

Your response

2. What is one thing you can do to strengthen your weakest competency (#8)? By when do you plan to do this?

Your response and a date

3. What is one thing you can do to strengthen your next weakest competency (#7)? By when do you plan to do this?