



Competence Instrument
for the
Dutch Universities

Reading guide

Introduction

This document contains the *fourth* revised version of the Competence Instrument for the Dutch Universities. A team of experts from several universities reviewed with a focus on *Internationalization* and *Diversity* the latest version of the instrument which dates back to 2010. This has resulted in new definitions and/or behavioural indicators and/or competence-oriented questions of ten competences.

These are:

1. Vision
6. Environment orientation
7. Empathy
8. Persuasiveness
9. Cooperating
10. Networking skills
13. Verbal communication
26. Binding leadership
29. Flexibility
32. Self-reflection

Due to the changing demands being placed on this instrument, the first version of which dates from June 2005, the Heads of Personnel Services (*Hoofden Personele Diensten*, or HPD) in 2010 deemed it time for a re-evaluation. The competences described here are also utilised in the Digital Feedback Instrument (DiFI) and are linked to the job profiles in the University Job Classification (*Universitair Functie Ordenen*, or UFO) system.

The competence instrument was amended by NOA working in cooperation with HR staff and experts from various universities on behalf of the VSNU. NOA is a psychology consultancy agency closely affiliated with VU University Amsterdam. The competences were developed on the basis of extensive research, have broad application within the Dutch university sector and will remain stable over the long term.

When referring to the targeted development of competences, we use the term competence management. The instrument presented here is designed to develop specific competences that will contribute to achieving the targets set by the universities, and in particular those competences framed for the professional and personal development of individual university employees. The instrument further establishes a common language for discussing competences and behaviour.

What are competences

A competence is a unique combination of knowledge, skills and attitude, which find their expression in outward behaviour and are key to a person's success in their job and career.

How should the competence instrument be used?

The instrument describes the 32 unique competences that employees of the Dutch universities need to perform their jobs successfully. It can be used to inform recruitment and selection procedures, performance interviews, Result & Development Interviews, career advancement options and as part of career development and coaching schemes. The DiFI can be used to collect feedback regarding the competences to serve as input when addressing the development of competences.

For whom is the competence instrument intended?

The instrument is intended for all employees, supervisors, HR staff and career advisors who work at the Dutch universities and have an interest in competence management.

How is a competence structured?

The competence instrument uses the following structure for each competence:

- A **definition** of the competence. This definition is a concise description of what the competence means.
- A list of **behavioural indicators** used to describe the competence in terms of visible and therefore measurable behaviour.
- **Competence-focused questions** that are used during selection procedures and development interviews.
- **Development tips** that can be used to support the personal development and career planning of an individual employee.

Generic profiles

In order to support the mutual mobility and comparability of job requirements at the Dutch universities, four or five generic competences have been provided per job profile (UFO). These competences are often referred to in comparable jobs. These qualitative requirements supplement the job requirements and the knowledge level described in the UFO profiles. Universities are free, depending on the context, to set other competence requirements or supplementary requirements at their discretion. This contributes to the desired flexibility in successful competence management.

Competence clusters

The competences are divided into five clusters. On the one hand, these clusters are related to the cycle of problem solving that is important in all the activities (Analysing & Devising and Realising & Evaluating). On the other hand, the clusters also concern social and individual behaviour, specifically in the context of “people working and cooperating” to achieve goals (Communicating & Influencing, Managing & Supervising and Personal Effectiveness).

The clusters are sub-divided as follows:

Analysing and Devising

1. Vision
2. Conceptual capacity
3. Analytical capacity
4. Inventiveness
5. Capacity to learn
6. Environment orientation

Communicating and Influencing

7. Empathy
8. Persuasiveness
9. Cooperating
10. Networking skills
11. Organisational sensitivity
12. Written fluency
13. Verbal communication
14. Presenting
15. Negotiating

Realising and Evaluating

16. Planning and Organising
17. Monitoring
18. Result orientation
19. Cost-consciousness
20. Commitment to the client
21. Accuracy

- 22. Initiative
- 23. Entrepreneurship

Managing and Supervising

- 24. Managing for results
- 25. Coaching
- 26. Binding leadership
- 27. Delegating
- 28. Decisiveness

Personal Effectiveness

- 29. Flexibility
- 30. Integrity
- 31. Stress-resistance
- 32. Self-reflection

Analysing and Devising

1. Vision

Definition: Taking a step back from day-to-day practice. Concentrating instead on fundamentals and long-term policy.

Behavioural indicators:

- Takes the time to think ahead, concentrating on fundamentals.
- Identifies both national and international future opportunities and possibilities for the department and organisation.
- Looks for sources of inspiration, focuses on visions that relate to his or her area of responsibility and discipline.
- Paints a clear picture of the future of his or her own department or organisation and its environment.
- Has formulated his or her own objective or mission in the light of internal and external developments.
- Indicates how the strategy of the department or organisation must change in order to respond effectively to internal and external developments.

Competence-oriented questions

- Can you give an example of a situation in which you have clearly taken long-term developments into account? Which factors did you take into account?
- Can you give an example of a decision that you had to take which had a direct effect on the policy of your organisation unit? Do you feel it was the right decision?
- What issues arising outside your organisation unit will affect your organisation in the coming year? The next five years? How do you prepare for these expected changes?
- How do you set about developing a vision for your organisation unit?

Development tips

- Regularly set aside time to consider the long-term objectives of your department or organisational division.
- Ask yourself where you want to be with your team in two years' time. What do you need to do to get there? Write down the objectives and strategy. Discuss them with your colleagues on a regular basis.
- Watch developments in the market and the sector.
- Translate relevant trends and developments into concrete actions and plans.
- Read annual reports and other relevant documents from other organisations. Use this information to draw up a vision for your own organisation unit.
- Formulate ideas concerning the longer-term policy for your own organisation unit.
- Interpret the expected relevant social and political developments in terms of consequences for your own organisation unit.
- Formulate future problem areas or opportunities for your own organisation unit.
- Hold a presentation about the required long-term policy for your own organisation unit.
- Hold a brainstorming session in which you list the main developments and their influence on your own organisation unit.

2. Conceptual capacity

Definition:

Formulating views, ideas and concepts based upon complex information, and constructing conceptual frameworks or models.

Behavioural indicators:

- Sees similarities with previous issues and possible solutions.
- Identifies patterns and trends in information.
- Is able to find connections at an abstract level.
- Knows how to draw out the essential points from complex information and find new connections.
- Integrates ideas, themes and observations into clear, practical insights.

- Considers problems or situations in a more covering framework, leading to broader and deeper insights.

Competence-oriented questions

- What do you consider to be complex information?
- Use an example to show how you arrive at the formulation of concepts.
- What did you do with the various concepts?
- Have you recently arrived at new insights based on complex information which you have analysed? How did these insights come about?

Development tips

- Try making a diagram or drawing (mind map) of a problem or situation, putting on paper only what is truly important.
- Study innovations of competitors and think about how your own organization unit could improve these.
- Study problem solutions of other similar organizations and think about how they arrive at them.
- Try to be creative in your thinking and avoid standard thinking patterns at an early stage of the project.
- Hold a brainstorming session with colleagues about a problem, for example, and formulate different approaches, hypotheses. Explore how others came to their conclusions.

3. Analytical capacity

Definition:

Analysing situations or information and deciding what is of major and what is of lesser importance. Seeing interrelationships and getting to the core of the matter.

Behavioural indicators:

- Divides information into items of major and lesser importance.
- Analyses an issue or problematical situation to get to the core of the matter.
- Examines a problem from different viewpoints to see whether it is the actual problem.
- Describes the internal relationship between different perspectives of a problem or issue.
- Asks specific questions in order to uncover the possible causes of a complex problem or issue.
- States clearly what the implications of a particular choice will be.

Competence-oriented questions

- What major problem have you faced in the last year? Describe this situation. What steps did you take to analyse the problem? What do you think was the cause of the problem?
- What information do you need to be able to perform well? How have you acquired this information and what information sources did you use?
- What decision did you have to think long about in recent months? What aspects did you take into account and compare?
- Which of the decisions you took was the most important of the past year? Did you take any other possibilities into consideration? What were your reasons for taking this decision?

Development tips

- When dealing with an issue, order the information you have available in terms of importance. Consider why you have chosen this particular order of importance.
- Try to penetrate to the core of the problem by asking yourself the following questions: What is the problem exactly? Does the problem in fact conceal another problem? Whose problem is it?
- Search for similar problems that occurred in the past and use them as examples.
- Try to solve one or more (complex) problems. Discuss your results in the field of the problem analysis with those involved and ask for feedback
- In discussions, place the emphasis on asking open questions (i.e. questions which start with 'what', 'who', 'why', 'where', 'how' etc) and go into more depth. Ask (many) more questions than you normally do.
- Try working out alternative plans besides a favourite plan.
- Where there is a problem, try to use available figures to determine what consequences, problems and conclusions can be established.
- In the case of problem situations, use +/- diagrams to weigh up the pros and cons.

- Play an active role in the following questions when trying to reach a solution or opinion: How did I reach this opinion?
- What are the pros and cons of my opinion?
- Did I consider any other ideas?

4. Inventiveness

Synonym: creativity, resourcefulness

Definition:

Proposing new or original ideas, perspectives or solutions.

Behavioural indicators:

- Finds it easy to make associations and connections.
- Combines own ideas with those of others to create new solutions.
- Proposes ideas that are substantially different to anything previously proposed by others.
- Sees new ways of applying existing instruments.
- Breaks through the existing conceptual frameworks.
- Experiments with possibilities, tries different approaches.

Competence-oriented questions

- Have you recently been faced with a problem which could not be solved in the 'normal' way? What did you do?
- Has any change taken place in your organization which your colleagues feel was primarily achieved through inventiveness on your part? Can you give an example?
- An important condition for successful business seems to be innovative thinking. What kind of innovations do you think are desirable for the continuity of your organization unit?
- What useful ideas have you contributed to your work recently?
- Good ideas are usually generated in a small group of like-minded people and not just by one person. Have you ever experienced such a process? What was your contribution to that process?
- What research activities have you done up to now? Can you indicate what innovations this has produced?

Development tips

- Using a particular method, try brainstorming with a couple of colleagues to think up solutions to a problem.
- Ask about and read about innovative developments, experiments and form your own opinion about them. Watch out for new developments and trends.
- Look out for innovative solutions or creative approaches in your own organization unit.
- Do not take the easiest route, but see if there are any alternative routes to reach a solution.
- Look for new solutions or alternatives for certain problems or processes rather than improving existing procedures.
- Take part in brainstorming sessions about matters relating to work.
- Explore creative solutions for a certain problem.
- Look at yourself to see whether you have implemented any new ideas, which ones and how.
- During your meetings, try to respond to proposals for new ways of approaching something.

5. Capacity to learn

Definition:

Capable of absorbing new knowledge and information and applying it.

Behavioural indicators:

- Shows that he or she learns from previous errors.
- Shows that he or she wants to expand and deepen his or her knowledge and experience.
- Integrates newly acquired knowledge and experience into his or her own approach.
- Examines good ideas or programmes to see why they work
- Tests and appraisals his or her own way of working in order to learn from this.
- Shows he or she has learned from points mentioned in evaluations.

Competence-oriented questions

- How do you get new information? Can you give an example?
- If something doesn't work, do you find out why? Give an example.
- In what circumstances do you easily absorb new information? Can you give an example?
- During a probation period, have you ever had to change your usual approach because of new information? What was the result?
- You have attended a course. What did you learn in this course and how did you apply this knowledge in practice?
- Have you ever implemented a project and later thought: 'I would do things very differently if I had to start again'?
- What experience in your life has taught you the most? Can you say how you put into practice the knowledge acquired through this situation?

Development tips

- Find out what your preferred learning style is. What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- Form an opinion about the developments in similar organizations, about trends in the market, about technical developments in your field and how you think you can apply them in your own job.
- Think about your learning experiences in certain projects and the consequences of these experiences for your further performance.
- Explore the extent to which you convert feedback and suggestions from others into new ways of operating or working. Encourage yourself to actually apply suggestions and tips from others.
- Ask yourself how you can apply new information in your own job or organization unit.
- At the end of training courses or seminars, ask yourself what you have learned and what you wish to apply concretely in practice. Provide feedback in a discussion or department meeting, for example.

6. Environment orientation

Synonym: environmental awareness

Definition:

Showing that he or she is well informed about social, political and job-related developments both at home and abroad. Using this knowledge effectively for the benefit of his or her own job or organisation.

Behavioural indicators:

- Is well-informed about the current news issues relevant to his or her position.
- Keeps up to date with economic, social, job-related and other developments.
- Is up-to-date with important developments in disciplines which have interfaces with the own discipline.
- Handles cultural differences correctly.
- Relates developments in society to his or her own area of responsibility.
- Has external contacts that inform him or her about social trends and developments relevant to own position or discipline.

Competence-oriented questions

- How do you approach new developments which have occurred in your work? Can you give an example?
- How do you keep up to date with relevant developments inside and outside your field?
- How do you approach the start of job/project/research? What steps do you undertake?
- Can you indicate the risks which were involved and how you dealt with these risks, based on a concrete project?
- How would you arrive at a number of scenarios for dealing with a problem? Can you give a concrete example?

Development tips

- Keep yourself well informed of current developments that are relevant to your field. Read newspapers and professional journals, watch current affairs programmes, etc.
- Get in touch with people who can keep you abreast of social, political and professional developments.
- At the start of a job, project or research, try to think about the steps to be taken and their possible consequences.

- Consider which plans in your work might be thought difficult to implement and draw up an implementation plan. What do you think are the possible effects?
- Study the processes within your organization unit and describe them.
- Discuss the draft implementation plans and process descriptions with your manager or other experts.
- Think about the potential risks in a job, project or research. What is the probability that these risks will actually occur? And what can you do to limit or prevent them? Discuss this with your manager.

Communicating and Influencing

7. Empathy

Synonyms: listening, understanding

Definition:

Noticing the feelings and needs of others and responding to them.

Behavioural indicators:

- Notices quickly if 'something is the matter' with another person.
- Articulates another's feelings and needs.
- Also responds to non-verbal signals.
- Notices the effect of own behaviour on another and if need be adjusts behaviour accordingly.
- When in conversation, also takes the atmosphere and the importance of maintaining a good relationship with the other person into account.
- Can think from the perspective of another person's culture, position and circumstances, and takes others' wishes, interests and feelings into account.

Competence-oriented questions

- How do you show others that you are listening to them? Can you give an example?
- Do you think you have good listening skills? What makes you think that?
- Do you ever summarize what you have heard in a discussion?
- How do you ensure that you take sufficient time before arriving at a judgement about another person? Can you give an example?
- How do you respond when someone's non-verbal communication is at odds with what they are saying?
- Can you give examples of non-verbal behaviour and what you concluded from it?
- Give an example that demonstrates that you are able to take account of and acknowledge the cultural background of someone you are talking to.

Development tips

- When engaged in a conversation, pay attention both to the actual content of the conversation and the relational dynamics between yourself and your conversation partner.
- Pay attention to events in people's lives that are important to them: illness, accidents, additions to the family, etc. Show that you understand the other person's emotions by putting into words what the other person is feeling. Example: I can imagine that you find this annoying, exciting, difficult. Do not exaggerate. Only use expressions like these when you sense that the other person feels very emotional.
- Consider the effect your own behaviour has on other people.
- Find out what your conversation partner's underlying interests are and show respect for them (someone's interest and position are not the same thing).

8. Persuasiveness

Definition:

Succeeding in convincing others about ideas and plans.

Behavioural indicators:

- Puts forward his or her proposals with enthusiasm.
- Puts forward relevant arguments at precisely the right time.
- Discusses and addresses any questions or doubts in others.
- Deploys a range of arguments and behavioural styles in order to win others over, while taking account of their culture, position and background.

- Responds constructively to negative reactions by continuing to ask questions so as to uncover the underlying arguments.
- Utilises the right key figures in order to win people and groups over.

Competence-oriented questions

- When engaged in discussions, people assume they are right. How do you manage to get others to adopt your position?
- What do you think was your best proposal accepted by others? How did you present it to them?
- What was your best proposal which was not accepted? Why wasn't it accepted?
- Can you describe your most difficult experience with someone's plans being changed? What methods did you use try to reach your goal despite this setback?
- What characteristics are required to be able to convince someone? Why? (during the interview, behaviour indicators may be observed). How did you persuade other people last year in your work? Give an example.
- Give an example that demonstrates that when persuading someone else, you were able to adapt your behaviour to the cultural background and/or position of the other person.
- What do you think is the best approach to selling an unpopular view? How have you done this up till now? Can you remember a situation in which you had to do this? (during the interview behaviour indicators may be observed. Be particularly aware of the first impression and whether this changes during the interview. Describe this change).

Development tips

- Don't talk too much, but say what you have to say in an effective manner (clearly audible, short sentences). Avoid using qualifying language.
- Choose the right arguments (a maximum of three). Do not put forward too many arguments; your weakest argument will be targeted.
- During a meeting or work consultation, defend a certain opinion. Think up in advance as many relevant arguments as possible for your standpoints.
- Formulate a working method, procedure or rule which will probably meet opposition in the department. Think up possible reactions and arguments in advance.
- Now and then, discuss a particular work-related subject with colleagues and/or manager.
- Attend discussion meetings. Prepare the arguments together. At the end, see how much influence you had on conclusions which were drawn and decisions which were taken.
- Enter into discussion with others around you about various subjects. Let others say what they think are the goals, how these should be reached and what arguments they wish to use.

9. Cooperating

Definition:

Contributing with other persons or groups to a joint result, even when he or she has no personal interest in doing so.

Behavioural indicators:

- Shares information and experiences with others.
- Offers colleagues help when they need it.
- Contributes ideas, proposals and other input designed to achieve a group result, making use of the differences between the group members.
- Responds actively and constructively to the ideas of others.
- Adapts to the group and its goals when a joint result is needed.
- Bridges people's differences and their different viewpoints.

Competence-oriented questions

What is your demeanour in meetings? Give an example.

Have you ever worked in a team or group with a common task? What was your role in this task?

Can you remember a situation in which you could not agree with the team's approach? What did you do?

Give an example that demonstrates how you were able to use the differences between the people you work with to positive effect.

How do you experience the current way of working with people in your organization or department? Have problems ever arisen?

Have you had to deal with work which did not have your personal interest? Was it difficult for you to do it besides your normal work?

Have you ever been in a situation where the team disintegrated because they could not work with each other? What was your role?

Do you currently work together with colleagues? Do conflicts ever arise in this group and how do you deal with them?

Development tips

- Share your knowledge with others.
- Listen to others and build on their proposals or ideas. Think things through from the perspective of others.
- Actively involve others in the conversation.
- Volunteer to help colleagues from other departments or organization units.
- Address cooperation problems if there are any. Do so with respect for all involved. Together try to discover the causes and how the cooperation could be improved.
- In the case of a discussion point, make an inventory of the different opinions in the group and let the group reach an opinion in a democratic way. Try to prevent yourself imposing your opinion on the group.
- Regularly consult with other teams and/or organization units. Find out where the added value of cooperation lies. Do this in formal and informal meetings.
- Establish the people with whom you feel cooperation is successful. Give compliments to those involved.

10. Networking skills

Definition:

Establishing and maintaining national and international contacts both within and outside the organisation.

Behavioural indicators:

- Finds it easy to make contacts.
- Doesn't hesitate to approach people with questions or requests.
- Uses existing contacts effectively.
- Maintains good relationships with the relevant decision-makers.
- Makes contacts by raising own profile through presentations, publications etc.
- Takes the initiative to develop relationships outside the own department or organisation.

Competence-oriented questions

- Do you sometimes attend receptions? How do you find them?
- How do you become acquainted with the people in your organisation?
- What kinds of networks (formal and informal) do you belong to? Have you met new people recently? How do you approach making contacts?
- How do you look after your network? Can you give examples?
- Networking in an international environment involves other aspects. Are you experienced in international networking? If so, give an example.
- Do you need the collaboration of certain institutions (or other departments) to perform your work well? How do you go about this?
- Can you give a concrete example about what your network has recently done for you?

Development tips

- In consultation with your manager and/or colleagues, establish which people you could or should involve in your own network and with which relationships should reinforce.
- Discuss who are your current contacts among your customers. Decide who/what kinds of contacts you should seek to reinforce your position in the relevant sector. Make concrete plans regarding how, or with whose help, you are going to make and maintain contacts.
- Give others in your own organization access to your network(s).
- Introduce them to others and thus help them extend their networks. Do this particularly with people in your organization who have problems making contacts.
- Organize regular informal meetings in your own organization such as an 'open day', a presentation about an interesting subject or a meeting about a certain theme. Invite people from your own and other networks.

- Ensure that clients and other important external contacts are updated about current developments in your own organization, by sending them an external magazine, for example.
- Pass on commercial opportunities or useful information when your own organization cannot use it to people in your network.

11. Organisational sensitivity

Definition:

Recognising the influence and consequences that his or her own decisions or actions have on the organisation, and acting accordingly.

Behavioural indicators:

- Addresses the right person without passing over others.
- Takes others' interests into account.
- Recognises and takes into account the opinions and sensitivities that are presenting the organisation.
- When making proposals, takes into account the likelihood of acceptance within the organisation.
- Checks with the right person whether there is sufficient support for a proposal.
- Changes his or her approach if the culture prevalent within the organisational unit requires it.

Competence-oriented questions

- Which departments /services /facilities do you normally have to take into account when making decisions? Why?
- Has your organisation ever had to deal with the consequences of a political or administrative decision? How did you prepare for this?
- How have events within your own department impacted other departments?
- What does the organisational chart of your organisation look like?
- Have you ever been in a situation where a decision taken by you apparently created a 'problem' for another department? How did you handle the situation at the time?
- How do you keep abreast of what is going on elsewhere in the organisation?
- How do you take account of the various interests in your organisation? Give an example.
- How do you prevent a proposal from becoming stranded in internal politics? □

Development tips

- When taking decisions, always consider what the consequences will be for other departments in the organisation.
- When drawing up plans, talk at an early stage with the people involved about the expected effects and side-effects for other divisions of the organisation.
- Regularly examine the objectives and activities of the other organisational divisions as well as those of the organisation as a whole. Identify the various types of interests at play.
- Involve the right colleagues and/or organisational divisions in consultations and decision-making in good time.
- Ensure that you are involved in organisation-wide projects.
- When dealing with subjects that could be sensitive, find out what the interests are of the various parties involved.
- Take account of the culture of an organisation when taking action.

12. Written fluency

Synonym: written communication

Definition:

Setting out ideas and information clearly in writing, taking relevant target groups into account, and such that the message is received and understood.

Behavioural indicators:

- Uses correct language in letters, memos, e-mails etc.
- Uses short, clear sentences in texts.
- Uses form and structure to organise his or her written message clearly.
- His or her use of written language is consistent with the target group's specific needs and circumstances.

- Formulates complex issues clearly and precisely.
- Formulates sensitive issues tactfully, and adapts his or her choice of words to the objective and target group.

Competence-oriented questions

- How would you like to augment your written communication skills?
- What experience do you have with taking minutes? Do you ever get reactions to your reports? If so, what?
- Give an example of a difficult report you had to write. What did you find difficult? What were the readers' reactions?
- Do others ever point out spelling mistakes or badly written sentences?
- What experience do you have in writing documents? What kind of documents have you written and what was your target group?
- Do you enjoy writing? What reactions have you had? Give an example of a very positive and a very negative reaction.
- Do you think you communicate well? Why do you think that? What do find difficult?

Development tips

- Go on a course in effective writing
- Write a report of a meeting and evaluate that report with a colleague

13. Verbal communication

Synonym: oral fluency

Definition:

Making ideas and information clear to others verbally using comprehensible language and checking that the message has been understood.

Behavioural indicators:

- Speaks in comprehensible language and explains jargon.
- Checks that the person being spoken to has understood the message.
- Uses simple phrases to make his or her point of view clear to the other person.
- Keeps checking in order to fathom unclear statements or signals.
- Uses intonation or gestures to underline the message that he or she wishes to convey.
- Adapts the use of language to that of the person being spoken to and takes account of their cultural context.

Competence-oriented questions

- How do you check if the other person understands you?
- Do you ever receive feedback on how your message comes across others?
- How do you arrange your message receives others?
- Do you ever summarize what you have heard in a conversation?
- Do you sometimes have to give an instruction? How do you deal with this?

Development tips

- Adapt your language and rate of speech to your conversation partner. Look your conversation partner in the eye.
- Use intonation and pauses when speaking.
- Prepare discussions well. Think about the way in which you wish to convey your message. Do you know the head body tail structure? Can you write more concisely and more clearly? Practice in your own circle and assess how the messages are received.
- Make sure that you adapt your body language and speed of speech to that of your discussion partner. If you talk fast while your discussion partner speaks slowly and thoughtfully, for example, communication may be less effective. You may also communicate better by more or less 'following' the body language of your discussion partner.
- Ask the other person(s) if he/they have understood your intention and give examples to clarify. Find out if there are other ways of explaining something (e.g. by making comparisons)

- When preparing a discussion, it is important to obtain information about the background to their world.
- Practice communicating a message and evaluate this with a colleague or friend.

14. Presenting

Synonym: oral presentation, public performance

Definition:

Presenting ideas and information clearly, taking the target group into account.

Behavioural indicators:

- Briefly lists the essential points of a complicated matter.
- Pays attention to the form, individual parts and structure of a communicated message.
- Aligns the content of the presentation closely to the target group's expectations.
- During presentations, makes contact with the audience by inviting people to ask questions and respond.
- Varies his or her presentational approach.
- Uses attractive language and examples so that others listen attentively.

Competence-oriented questions

- Have you given any presentations over the last year? How often? What about? Did you find it easy?
- When do you feel a presentation has been successful?
- Has presenting been part of your job evaluations? What did the evaluation involve?
- Can you give a 2-3 minute presentation about your motivation for this job?
- How do you communicate knowledge in a lecture? Do you use specific techniques?

Development tips

- Take the opportunity to give a presentation occasionally, even if you are nervous. Start small and 'safe'. For example by giving a speech at internal events. Make no secret of the fact that you find it difficult. Ask for explicit feedback to your presentation.
- Look for literature relating to presentation techniques. Follow a course. Invite colleagues who have fewer problems to attend 'basic presentations', so that you can spend less energy on the contents and more on your presentation style.
- Find people who are good at giving presentations and consider what elements of their style you could copy.
- Ask an experienced colleague to watch one of your presentations and give you feedback. The following points are important:
 - Is the structure logical?
 - Do you make good use of aids?
 - Do you hold your audience's attention? For example by asking the audience (rhetorical) questions?
 - Could the presentation be shorter and more concise?
 - Does your personal presentation style appear natural to the audience and does it meet the expectations of the target group?
 - Could the presentation be livelier? For example by making more gestures, varying intonation, not reading from notes or including a bit of humour?
- Write a presentation and discuss it with your manager.
- When giving a presentation, look out for the following aspects:
 - Do you briefly summarize the aim of your presentation?
 - Does this correspond with the expectations of the target group? How can these expectations be managed?
 - Have you used a clear head body tail structure?
- Is your presentation the right length - not too long and not too short?
- Do you provide a stimulating start and an interesting end?
- What aids, e.g. an overhead projector, pc + beamer, slide projector, flip-over etc. do you need? Choose the most appropriate for the presentation.
- Practice beforehand in the room where the presentation will be held. Make sure that you can control all the technology and that all the connections work.
- Ensure that you arrive well in advance to install everything at your leisure and have time to call in help if a fault occurs.

- Do not fill sheets with too much information. Keep the lay-out simple.
- Provide hand-outs and distribute them in advance so that the audience can make notes on them.
- Record your presentation on video camera and analyse it with a colleague.

15. Negotiating

Definition:

Promoting and protecting his or her own department's or organisation's interests, such that favourable results are achieved whilst still maintaining mutual respect.

Behavioural indicators:

- In negotiations, determines how far he or she can go and what he or she can commit to.
- Finds out what the objectives, arguments and underlying interests are of the conversations partner.
- Puts forward arguments as to why the conversation partner's proposals are not acceptable.
- Remains committed to his or her own position whilst taking care to maintain a good relationship with other parties.
- Searches actively for win-win situations in the longer term.
- Puts forward arguments at just the right time; exerts pressure or releases tension instead.

Competence-oriented questions

- How would you describe your negotiation style? Give an example.
- Have you ever been in negotiations where the atmosphere was bad? What was the reason for the bad atmosphere? How did you act in this situation? Can you describe a situation in which the negotiations went smoothly? What happened? What did you do? What were the counter interests?
- Describe a situation in which you had problems negotiating. What happened? What were the problems? What was the result?
- Describe the common goals of a recent negotiation situation.
- Can you describe a situation in which you conducted detailed investigations in advance and what you did in concrete terms?

Development tips

- Make sure that you practice the discussion with your coach or one of your colleagues prior to a negotiation situation. Formulate a goal for yourself in advance, find a strategy and determine the maximum scope for negotiation. At the end, ask your discussion partner how he/she had experienced the discussion and evaluate your approach and its effectiveness together.
- Prepare a negotiation situation with your coach or a colleague. Analyse the position of the other party, his/her goals and in consultation guess the negotiation strategy which he/she might use. Try to anticipate the right arguments, attitude and possible concessions.
- Work together with a colleague who is skilled at negotiating. Ask him/her to observe your behaviour and discuss what behaviour contributed to the result of the negotiations and what behaviour definitely did not. Consider what behaviour you could copy from him/her.
- Try out negotiation behaviour that you have learned in situations which are similar to negotiation situations. These may occur both at work and at home. Study together the effect of the behaviour, modify the behaviour if necessary. By practicing, try and make the effective negotiation behaviour increasingly your own.

Realising & Evaluating

16. Planning and organising

Definition:

Surveying the work; setting goals and priorities. Planning the activities, time and resources needed.

Behavioural indicators:

- Creates priorities by classifying issues into matters of major and lesser importance.
- Considers carefully beforehand how to tackle an issue systematically.
- Formulates measurable objectives for self and others.
- Creates frameworks for completing tasks in an orderly and efficient way.
- Anticipates on unexpected events by adapting the plans accordingly.

- Realistically estimates the time, people and resources needed to achieve a goal.

Competence-oriented questions

- What are the critical steps in organising your current project-based work?
- How do you prepare for meetings and how do you keep them under control?
- Have you ever drawn up work procedures? How did you implement them?
- What were your objectives over the past year? Did you achieve these objectives?
- Have you a certain approach for keeping an eye on issues which must be tackled in the short term? What is this approach? Example?
- How did you determine which tasks had priority over the past year? Give a few examples.
- Have you ever actively been involved in a reorganization? What was the scenario for this reorganization and what was your contribution during the preparations for this reorganization?
- Are you ever been asked to organize something extra? Can you give an example?
- Describe an example of a situation in which you had to adjust the original planning.
- What resistance did you meet?
- What did you do about it?
- How did you organize your work?
- Can you give an example of a situation when you indicated that you didn't have time for an extra job?
- How do you ensure that you remain well informed about what happens in your environment/field?
- How do you plan your research and ensure that you meet the deadlines?

Development tips

- Plan fixed meeting dates for large projects.
- Allow room in the schedule for unforeseen events.
- Draw up action lists and check off/cross through items as soon as something has been completed.
- Make sure that you are given responsibility for planning and organising a certain research or service project.
- Then determine:
 - The exact objective of the project.
 - The required resources (time, people, budget etc.), required to reach the set goal.
 - The effort (in terms of time and contribution) of everyone involved.
- Draw up a schedule listing who does what on which day or week, with the required limiting conditions.
- When you have worked out the planning (on paper), tell everyone about the planning and organization of the project.
- Meanwhile consult a colleague or your manager to see whether your planning and organization fulfil the expectations and demands.

17. Monitoring

Synonym: progress checks

Definition:

Acting to monitor and check the progress made on activities or tasks.

Behavioural indicators:

- Makes clear agreements at the start of a project or work about the different points in time at which evaluation will take place.
- Maintains an overview of the work.
- Makes interim checks as to whether the work is progressing as agreed.
- Calls people to account if agreed deadlines are not met.
- Takes the initiative to get feedback or reports from staff.
- At the end of discussions, makes follow-up arrangements.

Competence-oriented questions

- What kind of controls do you build in your work?
- How do you manage to meet the appointments you make with people, both in time and quality?
- How do you manage to be well-informed about the progress of a project or activity?
- How do you manage to work according to plan or planning?
- Do you have any experience with a co-worker who didn't meet up to appointments? What did you do?

- How do you evaluate your activities? Example?

Development tips

- Draw up a project plan with mileposts and evaluation moments.
- Write down in your diary any agreements made regarding progress.
- Regularly hold evaluation meetings to check whether activities are on schedule.
- After a meeting, make specific and measurable follow-up agreements.
- Consider the activities for which it would be sensible to implement a (standardised) progress report and decide what the content of such a report should be.
- Evaluate each assignment or project.
- Take a course in project management.

18. Result orientation

Synonym: decisiveness

Definition:

Focusing on the achievement of goals and of quantitative and qualitative results.

Behavioural indicators:

- Translates goals into specific measurable or visible results.
- During a discussion, determines what the arrangements are (i.e. who does what when).
- Calls others to account when targets are not achieved or results are disappointing.
- If there is a setback, redoubles his or her efforts to ensure that the desired result is achieved after all.
- Makes efficient use of the time and resources available.
- Achieves objectives on schedule.

Competence-oriented questions

When are you satisfied with your work? Can you remember a situation in which the demands you imposed on yourself were too high or too low? In which situation were you unable to meet your own demands? What did you do? What attracts you in this job? What is your motivation to get this job? What have you done to acquire knowledge and experience for this job? How does this job fit into your career planning? Have you recently assessed someone on their performance? What did you feel was the distinction between a good and an average performance? What demands have you set yourself in your work? Do you set these demands for your colleagues too? When was the last time you gave your employees compliments? How did you do that? Have you ever functioned in a team? What did you expect from your team members in that situation? Did they meet your expectations?

Development tips

- Discuss the expected results of your tasks with your manager.
- Make the organization goals concrete for others, so that they know what they can contribute with their own work.
- Record the desired results and agree when you will (periodically) report progress and in the case of incidental projects when the project must be completed.
- Ensure that you are aware as far as possible of the actual costs of your own projects. Let yourself be informed. Ensure that you have enough information about the quality instructions, the standards and the procedures.
- Develop proposals in order to reduce the costs of projects/activities and/or raise the quality. Discuss this with your manager.
- Draw up assessment criteria in advance (e.g. for a year). Monitor progress and discuss the results achieved at set times.
- Regularly investigate the quality of projects/activities/services and also consult those involved.
- Learn to look more critically at quality by participating in a project group working on quality improvement, for example.

19. Cost-consciousness

Definition:

Being aware of the financial implications of his or her own actions and of the value of resources.

Behavioural indicators:

- Takes care with the resources that he or she is managing.
- Weighs up costs and returns carefully (cost-benefit analysis).
- Monitors the time taken for activities, with a view to keeping costs down.
- Is price-conscious when entering into financial transactions.
- Is business-like when considering the assignment of people and resources.
- Considers the financial implications of plans and actions.

Competence-oriented questions

- How could you cut costs in your current work activities?
- Can you give an example of a project for which you were responsible for the budget? How did you ensure that you stayed within the agreed budget?
- How do you handle budgeting?
- What cost reductions did you implement?
- How do you manage the financial side of activities?
- Have you ever had to deal with cost overruns? How did you deal with them at the time?
- Have you ever been tackled by your superior regarding budget overruns? Describe that situation.
- When working on projects, how do you keep costs under control? Give an example.

Development tips

- Make sure that you are as informed as possible of the actual costs of your projects.
- Work out proposals to lower the costs and/or raise the quality of projects/activities. Discuss these proposals with your superior.
- Read one of your organisational division's financial reports.
- When entering into agreements with suppliers of services or products, request multiple quotes and negotiate on the price.
- Engage the purchasing department when sourcing external agencies.
- Have project employees complete timesheets. Keep overall records up to date.
- Regularly compare actual costs with the adopted budget.

20. Commitment to the client

Synonym: client focus

Definition:

Recognising clients' needs and wishes and showing this in his or her actions.

Behavioural indicators:

- Adopts a 'happy to help' attitude.
- Takes the initiative in offering additional service.
- Keeps asking questions until a complete picture of the client's needs and wishes is obtained.
- Puts forward proposals that capitalise on the interests of or developments at the client (offers customised solutions).
- Translates product or service options into benefits for the client.
- Checks that the client's needs and wishes have been met.

Competence-oriented questions

- Describe the last time that you had to deal with a difficult customer. How did you deal with that situation?
- Have you ever been involved in a critical situation with a customer? Describe it. We have all had to deal with clients making unreasonable demand at one time or another. Give an example and say what you did. Why was this client difficult?
- Have you ever had to make an extra effort to satisfy a client?
- What characteristics do you think you need to get on well with clients? Can you describe a situation in which you used these characteristics? When did/didn't this work?
- When was the last time your manager criticized the way in which you deal with clients? Why did you receive this criticism?
- How do you know that your clients are satisfied?

Development tips

- Discuss the delivered services or products with customers and propose areas for improvement where necessary.
- Conduct a customer satisfaction survey for the activities you perform for customers.
- Be clear about what you can mean for your customers. Become familiar with the interests, wishes and requirements of your clients. The more background you know, the easier it is to anticipate wishes and requirements. Ask enough questions. Ask about your clients' objectives. Know which characteristics of your product or service are most important to the client. Know what your clients think about the products and services.
- Become familiar with the services and products which the organization has to offer. Describe your main services/products in five sentences.
- Take a colleague with you to a meeting with a client in order to respond better to the client's request. Agree a division of roles in advance, e.g. process controller and expert. ,Create a think tank to consider how the service can be improved for clients. Establish the financial pros and cons of the various proposals. Then only introduce improvements which are profitable.
- Make sure that you coordinate well with other teams and organization units. Agree to direct clients to the right person within the organization.

21. Accuracy

Synonym: care

Definition:

Acting precisely, carefully and impeccably when performing work.

Behavioural indicators:

- Takes care when performing tasks and providing products.
- Checks own work for errors.
- Works according to agreed procedures and guidelines.
- Rarely makes errors in his or her work.
- Sees things that others miss.
- Delivers impeccable work.

Competence-oriented questions

How do you check whether you have made errors? How do you organize your work? How do you make sure that you don't forget things? Do your colleagues find you accurate? Why/why not? Everyone makes a mistake sometimes. How do you find out that you have made a mistake? Give an example. What do you consider careless? What do you do if a colleague submits careless work? Do you ever get compliments from colleagues or clients about the quality of your work? What kind of compliments?

Development tips

- Select an archiving system that suits you and use it consistently! Take the time to plan and check your work.
- Organize your work; do things one at a time. Make sure that you have an overview and do not become distracted.
- Think up a logical classification for completed work and work which is still in progress. Discuss this with your manager.
- Always use the available resources to work accurately, such as spelling check, files in your computer.
- Ask a colleague who is very precise to check your document and discuss the result.
- Look out for details in documents, such as the right date, footnote etc.

22. Initiative

Definition:

Identifying problems and opportunities and taking appropriate action on own initiative.

Behavioural indicators:

- Takes the initiative to ask for additional information.
- Takes initiatives in his or her work.
- Takes the initiative in coming forward with own ideas, solutions or proposals for improvements.

- Takes the lead with new developments by taking on activities and responsibilities.
- Achieves breakthroughs in difficult situations by being the first to take up a position.
- Takes action in order to create an opportunity or prevent future problems.

Competence-oriented questions

- Which initiatives have you undertaken recently? Give an example.
- Are you someone that develops initiatives? How is that evidenced?
- What changes have recently been introduced in your organization/department on your initiative?
- Describe a recent project that you initiated? Why did you start that project?
- How did you determine what course(s) you were going to follow?
- What new ideas or suggestions have you discussed with your manager in recent months? Which have been implemented?

Development tips

- Introduce points at meetings and in work groups.
- Draw up a project plan for a new service or product and present it.
- Be aware of potential problems and try to prevent or limit these by acting quickly. Each week, write down what initiatives you have taken in which situation. Try to raise your 'score'.
- When you wish to stimulate others to take initiatives, make sure that you reward their action. Compliment employees who take initiatives and demonstrate their use and effect.
- Apply other people's creativity. You can do so by formulating a task in rather general terms. The other person can then use his/her own initiative in the further implementation of the work.

23. Entrepreneurship

Synonym: daring

Definition:

Identifying opportunities and possibilities for the development of new knowledge and areas of application or for new services. Acting accordingly and daring to take sensible risks when doing so.

Behavioural indicators:

- Looks for opportunities and possibilities.
- Dares to take up new things.
- Comes forward with new ideas for knowledge and areas of application, products and services.
- Does research in marketing and environment.
- Indicates which investments are needed in order to capitalise on market opportunities.
- Dares to take sensible risks in order to achieve specific advantages.

Competence-oriented questions

- Have you ever proposed supplying new services or exploring new markets for existing knowledge or products?
- What services or markets were they?
- Why did you make these proposals? How did you try to convince others?
- Have you ever launched a new product on the market (even if the original idea for the product was not your own)? What role did you play in this?
- Have you ever made proposals to the management for the development of new applications, services or products? What were these proposals?
- Have you ever been in a situation in which you as manager had the final responsibility and the results were not achieved? What did you do? What did you do to improve the results? Where did you get your ideas from?
- What developments have you noticed in your field recently, the application of that knowledge and the (commercial) possibilities? How have you made use of them?
- Have you ever had to take a risky business decision? Why was that? What was the risk?

Development tips

- Question colleagues about signals they pick up from their contacts regarding potential new services. Collect information from newspapers, professional literature and the Internet, for example, relating to

trends and market developments and establish what knowledge, products or services will be required in the short term.

- Take part in projects in which entrepreneurship is required; argue why an application, product or service has a chance of success regarding the market developments and formulate a plan to introduce it on the market.
- Formulate a number of new ideas. Then analyse what idea has the most chance of success. Develop that idea into a plan: how and by whom will the idea be further developed, what budget is required, what are the expectations, how will the application, product or service be launched and supplied, etc.
- Discuss with interested parties/clients their satisfaction with your services and products so far and explore what possible (new) desires or needs they may have.
- Talk to colleagues in the organization who seem to have entrepreneurial skills: learn from their ideas and thoughts. Discuss in particular the aspect daring and not daring.

Managing & Supervising

24. Managing for results

Definition:

Directing and steering staff or a project group in order to achieve the desired objectives and results.

Behavioural indicators:

- States the expected performance or results in clear, specific arrangements that include a time frame
- Ensures that within a team or working group tasks are allocated clearly in order to achieve results.
- Offers guidance and direction when people express doubt about the chosen approach.
- Monitors the progress made in achieving results and compares these to the original objectives.
- When performances disappoint, addresses the person(s) in question.
- Expresses his or her appreciation to staff who achieve the agreed goals and results.

Competence-oriented questions

- Have you ever been a project leader or chairman of a work group? How did you guide the employees toward the goal?
- How do you, as the superior, ensure that the goals are achieved?
- Ensure that any goals set are specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and time-bound (SMART).
- What goals do you want to attain with your work and how will you achieve them?
- What actions are you planning to undertake or have you already undertaken?
- What (possibly) went wrong and can you say why?
- Has a planning ever had to be adjusted due to unforeseen circumstances? What did you do?
- How do you determine where the priorities lie in your work? Can you give examples?
- Have you ever had an employee whose results were disappointing? What did you do?
- Have you ever been in a situation where one of your employees had a very different view of department tasks or his/her own tasks to yours? If so, describe this situation.
- What approach did you choose to convince this employee?
- Have you ever had an employee who you felt performed unsatisfactorily? What did you do/what measures did you take?
- Have you ever had to reprimand an employee? How exactly did you deal with the situation?

Development tips

- Assume the role of project leader or driver of an activity where you have to guide a group in order to achieve results.
- Communicate to employees the policy and the results you expect from them. Make time to explain and answer questions.
- Formulate clear objectives with each employee (concrete, measurable and feasible) for the coming period and record them.
- Allocate small and specific tasks to employees who are completely new to the job concerned.
- If the situation requires it, talk to an employee about his/her undesirable behaviour.
- Talk briefly to each employee twice a month about the progress of his/her work and the implementation. Choose the right style depending on the employee.
- 'Visit' your employees regularly; allow yourself time for informal chats.
- Think about how you wish to monitor and if necessary adjust the progress of results.

- Reward good results.

25. Coaching

Definition:

Assisting and encouraging staff or students so that they make the best possible use of their personal and professional qualities and develop their talents further in ways that benefit their careers.

Behavioural indicators:

- Supports less experienced colleagues with their work.
- Provides accurate feedback on a staff member's performance, positive or negative.
- Encourages staff or students to come up with solutions and action.
- Encourages staff or students to actively work on their career opportunities.
- Helps staff or students to develop their potential talents.
- Gives staff or students instructive and challenging tasks.

Competence-oriented questions

- How do you ensure that employees remain enthusiastic?
- How do you ensure that employees or students come up with initiatives and solutions themselves? How do you enhance their ability to act independently and with initiative? What do you understand by employee development?
- How do you approach this?
- Have you ever drawn up an individual development plan? How did you start?
- Have you ever encountered an over-ambitious or overworked employee or someone who was performing less well on account of personal problems? What concrete actions did you undertake to tackle the problem or satisfy the over-ambitious employee, for example?
- Have you ever acted as a mentor/coach? Describe what you did.
- How do you find out if an employee requires coaching? Can you give an example?
- Have you ever had to train or teach a new colleague? How did you approach this?
- Can you give an example of a situation, under your responsibility, involving 'training on the job'?
- Do you think that you are approachable for employees? If so, what makes you think that?

Development tips

- Make it your task to supervise a new employee. Discuss the experiences afterwards with your superior.
- Ask many questions and, at the very most, suggest solutions.
- Give compliments or put employees or students at ease regarding the work that has been done.
- Delegate tasks and allow employees to take the initiative and think up solutions. Together with the person you are coaching, draw up an overview of the development requirements with regard to the present and next job. Discuss potential future plans and the options.
- Determine together with this person what development activities are required. Record these in a personal development plan, formulating the actions as concretely as possible. Have regular progress meetings. Make notes.
- Make sure that the development budget for each employee is determined.
- Make sure that people feel capable and recognized.
- Make sure that a number of people (in the organization) can provide the following coaching skills. Skills for a coach are: listening, sensitivity and the ability to motivate others. A person's coach does not need to be the person's manager. It could also be an experienced colleague or even someone from another organization.
- Encourage feedback, e.g. by requesting a report of internal project or activity evaluations.

26. Binding leadership

Definition:

Creating synergy in a group of staff, encouraging mutual commitment and motivating staff to form effective alliances, while taking account of the diversity within the team.

Behavioural indicators:

- Invites staff to make their own contribution.
- Inspires staff.
- Ensures there is collaboration and cohesion.

- Ensures and maintains an open style of communication among others by setting a good example here.
- Knows how to encourage people to find solutions if others are getting in the way.
- Organises the decision-making process in such a way that everybody can make their own contribution, thus ensuring the decision is well-supported.

Competence-oriented questions

- What are your experiences with management?
- Have you ever led a project group whose members were not lower than you in hierarchical terms? How did you do it?
- Can you give an example of one of the most difficult groups whose cooperation you had to win? What was your formal position within that group? What did you do?
- Give an example of a change you introduced. Was your idea accepted? How did you prepare its introduction?
- How do you deal with any cultural differences within a team?
- Are you conscious of gender differences, cultural differences or other differences within a team and the impact they can have? Give examples of how you deal with such differences within a team.
- Are you conscious of any prejudices you may have when it comes to diversity, for example regarding gender or cultural differences? If so, how do you deal with that?
- What was the last important subject in which you involved your employees? How did you do that?
- Have you ever had to mediate in a work conflict between two employees? How did you manage to improve the way they work together?
- As a manager, you can use all kinds of motivation techniques. Can you give examples of methods you feel work well and say why?

Development tips

- Chair a project group or a meeting. Discuss the experiences afterwards with your superior or supervisor.
- Lead a group that is tasked with organising something, such as a theme afternoon, staff outing, etc.
- Make sure you are accessible and create short lines between manager and employees.
- Watch and encourage others to be aware of the following points during meetings:
 - Is everyone invited to give his/her opinion?
 - Are all the agenda items discussed?
 - Are all the team members given sufficient opportunity to give their opinion?
 - Is anything said about the results achieved? Are compliments given when appropriate? ,Are enough agreements reached to be able to solve problems?
- Coordinate with other organization units. You can thus prevent double work.
- Think about the team composition. Do the competences of the team and the individual employees correspond with the work to be done and with the affinities of the employees?
- List four successes.
- Organize (informal) meetings.
- Make sure that conflicts between team members and teams are solved. Plan a session with the team members/teams concerned. Give everyone the opportunity to give their vision on the conflict. Ask for mutual understanding and try to formulate a solution.

27. Delegating

Definition:

Assigning the own tasks and decision-making powers clearly to the right staff and monitoring the implementation and results.

Behavioural indicators:

- Finds it easy to assign tasks to another.
- Delegates matters to staff and does not get unnecessarily involved with tasks once delegated.
- Delegates assignments that fit in with the level of competence and circumstances of the staff members in question.
- Provides clear and accurate information when delegating the tasks.
- Monitors the progress made on the tasks he or she has delegated.
- Also delegates prestigious tasks and responsibilities.

Competence-oriented questions

What kind of decisions do you authorize your employees to take? Can you give examples? On what criteria do you base your decision to delegate work? At which moments and in which situations do you allow your employees to take decisions themselves? Can you give examples of the kind of work you delegate to others, how you do it and how you monitor the work? Do you delegate more to one employee than another? What considerations play a role here? When you delegate something, do you feel that you often need to intervene? Why? Have there been occasions when you were suddenly absent from work? How much of your work could be taken over by your employees? In your current job, have you told your employees what to do in such a situation? When you return from holiday, how do you find out what has happened during the holiday period? Can you give an example of a situation in which you were forced to withdraw an authorization? What happened?

Development tips

- Prepare the transfer of tasks well and be careful not to exercise either too much or too little controlling behaviour.
- Make agreements on feedback.
- Consider whether you can delegate more tasks to others. What keeps you from doing so? Consider what tasks could be delegated to one of your employees or colleagues, such as coaching new employees, drawing up a certain planning, acting as the 'representative' in certain consultative groups or networks, monitoring the budget.
- Think about the pitfalls of delegating:
 - It is not realistic to expect someone who has been delegated a task to do it at the same speed, in the same way or as well in terms of quality as the person delegating it.
 - Too much controlling behaviour is demotivating. Delegating means delegating both the task and the authority to take decisions. The person who has been delegated the task should therefore be given the opportunity to make independent decisions.
 - Be clear (e.g. towards clients or higher levels in the organization) about who is responsible for what. The person who has been delegated a task is responsible for the implementation of the task and the results achieved. However the person who has delegated the task continues to have the final responsibility. If the task is not implemented satisfactorily, he/she can always be held responsible for having chosen the wrong person or delegated at the wrong moment.

28. Decisiveness

Definition:

Making decisions by taking action, or taking up a position by expressing an opinion.

Behavioural indicators:

- Does not delay decision-making unnecessarily.
- Quickly assumes a reasoned position.
- Is able to make decisions when under time pressure.
- Dares to make decisions that have unfavourable consequences for others.
- Knows when there is enough information to make a sound decision.
- Acts decisively in unclear or uncertain situations, even if not all the consequences can be seen foreseen.

Competence-oriented questions

- What decision are you proud of and why?
- Have you ever taken an unpopular decision? If so, what? How did you experience that? Can you describe any recent problems in your work? What actions did you undertake to solve these problems?
- What important decisions did you take in the past month? Can you say why these were important decisions? How did you reach them?
- What decision did you find most difficult in the past period? What made it so difficult?
- What kind of decisions do you take fast and what decisions usually require more time? Can you give examples?
- When was it necessary to delay a decision in order to have more thinking time?
- Can you give an example of a situation in which you delayed a decision and subsequently missed an opportunity?

- When faced with the choice between current and future work/activities, how do you prioritize in your work?
- Do you sometimes take the lead even if this is not your formal role?

Development tips

Do not delay a decision for an unnecessarily long time. There are also consequences attached to not taking decisions. Remember that you can never take decisions that will be acceptable to everyone. If you have to take a difficult decision, make a list stating the grounds for taking decisions. Put these grounds in order of priority. If a decision was wrong, look at what went wrong. Think about how you could have taken a better decision at that time and on the basis of the available information. When taking difficult decisions, spend some time working with a colleague who is good at taking such decisions. Consult colleagues who are used to taking difficult decisions. Ask them how they reach their decisions. Write down how many and what decisions you took over a week, and which decisions you still doubt. If you are questioned about a decision, be ready to answer to both the positive and the negative consequences of the decision. Ask for concrete feedback. Discover what you find important and what you really wish to 'fight' for. If you know your own motivation, taking decisions becomes easier. Make sure that you can always defend your decisions, so that others know what considerations played a role in the decision.

Personal Effectiveness

29. Flexibility

Synonym: adaptability

Definition:

Adapting to and capitalising on different people and new or changing circumstances.

Behavioural indicators:

- Is open to changes in his or her tasks.
- Finds it easy to switch between different tasks.
- Adapts his or her approach to the person, culture or situation.
- Quickly masters the culture in a new organisation.
- Adjusts the own opinion based upon new information or persuasive arguments put forward by others.
- Is able to cooperate with a whole range of people.

Competence-oriented questions

- Do you consider yourself flexible? What do you base that on?
- Have you ever been busy and had to do something urgent in between?
- Organizations frequently change. Can you indicate a policy change which had consequences for your own job and say how you dealt with it?
- Can you indicate an important change in the organization which you initially opposed? When did you finally accept this change and what were your arguments? ,What are the specific cultural differences between your own organization/job/project and the last? How did that affect your attitude?
- What problems did you meet when changing manager, job or organization? Describe the process of adapting. ,In order to perform well, have you ever had to 'circumnavigate' obstacles which were in the way? How did you manage?
- What is the most important 'disruptive' change you have faced over the last six months? How were you able to achieve your goal despite the change?
- Do you ever deviate from a proposed plan or method? If so, when and why?
- Can you give examples of two totally different approaches you have used to reach one and the same goal?
- Have you ever faced a strike or extreme under manning, whereby the continuity of the work was seriously threatened? How did you deal with the situation?

Development tips

- Vary your conversation style (from making statements to asking questions, from making proposals to listening, etc.) If one style does not work, try another. Keep asking yourself what approach the other party is sensitive to.
- Adapt your style of influence to the level of work experience and motivation of the employee. In doing so, use the model of situational management.

- Take one of your current projects and consider whether you could choose another approach to reach your goal.
- Analyse a number of situations in which you showed insufficient adaptability.
- What were your objectives in these situations?
- Given the situation, do you think your objectives were realistic or had you set them too high?
- Did you persevere with your own objectives for a long time, or did you gradually modify them? In other words, did you add water to the wine?
- In what environment, with whom and with what work did you have difficulty adapting?
- Discuss the above examples with people you consider skilful in effectively adapting to a range of situations. Ask for tips.
- Reconsider your ideas and approach:
 - What did that situation actually require? What kind of ideas did the others have? What did they find important?
 - What options are there for adapting your approach and ideas? Motto: many roads lead to Rome.
- In the coming month, what two situations will certainly call on your ability to be adaptable? Explore how best to approach the situations and try to use these opportunities for 'adapting'.
- Abandon your own proposals if you find that others also have good ideas or suggestions. ,Adapt to the (reasonable) wishes of your discussion partner, even though you have different wishes. Think up some counter arguments for your own proposal.
- Try to introduce variety into your daily routines. This will facilitate adaptable behaviour.
- Be aware of what the other person thinks and consider how you can connect with the ideas of the other person. Add ideas ('yes and...') instead of ('yes but...')

30. Integrity

Definition:

Acts and complies with existing values, principles and rules to the best of one's knowledge. Can be tackled about this and tackles others about it too.

Behavioural indicators:

- Takes care when handling confidential information
- Supports previously agreed commitments and obligations.
- Does not misuse prior knowledge, personal information or his or her position.
- Does not withhold information that another person is entitled to.
- Propagates professional and organisational principles and values.
- Continues to act in an honest and trustworthy way in the face of temptation or pressure.

Competence-oriented questions

Can you refer to a recent situation in which your integrity was tested? Have you ever worked with people that did things that were unacceptable? What did you do at the time? Have you ever thrown your principles overboard to reach your goal? Can you give an example? Can you remember a work situation where you were not awarded the project or reach your goal because you kept to your principles? What are some of the principles you apply in your work? Sometimes we have to be a little less than honest when confronting a difficult or vulnerable person. Can you give an example from your own experience? Have you ever had to deal with a dismissal situation? When do you feel less bound to the norms applied in your company with regard to dismissal? Give an example. What do you do if bad things are being said about someone in your department? What does your approach depend on? Give an example. Have you ever been offered a gift? How did you react? What kinds of things did you consider? Have you ever accepted payment for transfer of university know-how to third parties? How did you deal with this internally? What is your opinion about the 'Code of conduct for research? Describe a situation in which these rules were very practical (for you)?

Development tips

- Be open and transparent about various interests. State them very clearly.
- Say exactly what you mean; use clear language.
- Find out what honourable behaviour is expected from you in a number specific situations and why.
- Use cases to assess whether you were honourable. If not, look for new opportunities.
- Find examples of difficult situations where integrity played a role. Discuss how you dealt with it.
- Discuss difficult situations before and afterwards, with special attention for the area of integrity.

- Look for examples in which your principles were different from the environment/others involved. Discuss why you chose to stand by your own principles or to go against them.
- Act as an example as much as possible; do not make false promises, meet agreements, do not withhold information wrongly, be honest, do not abuse your position, etc.
- Errors are made in every work situation. Be honest about errors made, take responsibility for them. Turn errors into opportunities to perform better in future.
- Check whether this point receives regular attention, also in general consultative meetings. Involve your employees and colleagues in discussions about honourable behaviour towards external clients.
- If possible, put integrity regularly on the agenda for work consultations, etc.
- Watch how people handle confidential information.

31. Stress-resistance

Definition:

Continuing to perform effectively when under time pressure and in the face of setbacks, disappointments or resistance.

Behavioural indicators:

- Continues to work systematically when a number of people simultaneously ask for his or her contribution and/or commitment.
- Continues to work calmly and effectively when deadlines approach.
- Continues to respond self-assuredly in the face of tension and emotion.
- Recovers quickly from a setback or disappointment.
- Doesn't take his eye off the ball during crises.
- Responds calmly in the face of resistance or personal reproach.

Competence-oriented questions

- How do you deal with tension in the workplace? Give an example.
- What has caused you the most stress recently?
- What circumstances prevent you from doing your work? What more can you say about such a situation?
- Describe a situation in which you faced strong opposition during a discussion.
- Have you ever had to deal with a stressful situation such as an accident, a sad situation at work, etc.? What did you do?
- Can you remember a difficult or stressful day? How did you relax at the end of that day?
- When was the last time you lost your patience? Why was that?
- We all become frustrated or impatient sometimes. When did you last feel this? What happened then?
- Can you mention an aspect of your work that is really time-related? How do you deal with this?
- Do you ever have the feeling that people are pressurizing you?
- Can you remember taking part in a fraught discussion? What was your attitude?
- Have you ever experienced injustice? What did you do?

Development tips

- Dare to say "no".
- Prepare interviews and meetings well.
- Ask for support from your environment and deal actively with issues that are annoying.
- Ask for time to reflect before taking decisions.
- Remember that good is often good enough.
- Avoid stress by planning and organising well. Oversight results in calmness.
- Plan moments of relaxation.
- Take a course in time management.

32. Self-reflection

Definition:

Showing that he or she critically evaluates his or her own behaviour, viewpoints and methods and is open to evaluation by others. Showing a willingness to learn from these evaluations by changing his or her behaviour, position or methods.

Behavioural indicators:

- Asks for personal feedback.
- Can be called to account on own behaviour and/or errors.
- Shows real understanding of own strengths and weaknesses.
- Regularly evaluates the own approach and considers ways of improving or modifying it.
- Tries to improve weaknesses by modifying own behaviour, position or methods.
- Shows he or she has an understanding of their own cultural background, standards and values and the effect these have on others.

Competence-oriented questions

- What do you consider to be your strong qualities? What do you consider to be your less strong qualities? Give examples. What qualities would you like to develop further?
- How would those around you describe you as a person?
- Can you describe a situation in the work situation/cooperation with colleagues in which you still feel: "I shouldn't have approached it like that"? What were the main learning points?
- Do you ever conduct 'difficult' discussions with colleagues? What do you find difficult?
- Do you ever wonder how others see you? How do you do this?
- How do you show your feelings in a "bad news interview"?
- Give an example that demonstrates that you have an understanding of your own standards and values and the effect they have on others.
- When did you last have your own personal development interview? What points came up and what agreements did you make?
- How do you continue to work on your development?
- Do you see yourself as others in your immediate working environment see you? Where does this differ? What is the reason?

Development tips

- Organise your own feedback, especially if you manage others in your job. Do not become defensive; keep asking questions and show appreciation for the person giving the feedback.
- View errors as opportunities to develop yourself.
- Ensure that your own development is regularly discussed.
- Organize your own feedback, particularly if you have a managerial position.
- Outline your own strengths and weaknesses.
- Do this on the basis of necessary behaviour and necessary skills for your present job. ,If there are aspects which you are not clear about for yourself, check this with your immediate work environment. Ask whether they will give examples to support their opinion.
- In your analysis, use all the information you already have. For example performance and appraisal interviews, people who have already mentioned plus and minus points, etc.
- Check your strength/weakness analysis with others for accuracy, completeness and recognisability.
- Draw up a plan to improve the poorer aspects based on the final output. Include what you are going to change and how you plan to do this. Indicate when and in which situations you plan to practice this.
- During discussions, try to find out how you perform by explicitly inviting people to give their opinion and allow criticism and/or a deviant opinion.
- Be prepared to think concretely about improvements and respond actively. Tell other people of your intention and let them know that they may address you on this. Allow yourself the time and space to look at your own performance more frequently.
- Be realistic about yourself. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses.