

GSFC Leadership Levels, Competencies, and Skills

| Levels, Competencies, and Skills |
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| SELF |
| 1. Cognitive Skills: Applies critical and appropriate judgment, decision-making, and thinking strategies to effectively contribute to organizational accomplishments |
| A. Critical Thinking |
| i) Distinguishes between relevant information and irrelevant information |
| ii) Distinguishes between assumptions/interpretations and factual information |
| iii) Keeps focused on the things that are most important |
| iv) Questions the rationale and value of prevailing ways of doing things |
| v) Thinks systemically, operating from the premise that everything is part of a larger system and every part of a system affects the other parts |
| vi) Recognizes that two or more apparently conflicting realities can exist, i.e., recognizes paradox |
| vii) Reflects on his/her own thinking process, to be aware of mental models and cognitive filters, and intentionally considers alternative explanations |
| B. Problem Solving and Decision Making |
| i) Obtains diverse opinions before making a decision |
| ii) Asks questions from a mindset of curiosity, openness, and learning, to understand problems and inform decisions |
| iii) Makes effective and timely decisions, including during times of ambiguity |
| iv) Makes decisions, even when solutions may produce unpleasant consequences or involve personal risk |
| v) Assesses the short-term and long-term implications of decisions, including unintended consequences |
| vi) Identifies and diagnoses potential or actual problems and offers alternative courses of action with associated pro's and con's to appropriate management in a timely manner |
| C. Strategic Thinking |
| i) Clearly delineates desired outcomes and goals and focuses energy and attention on achieving them |
| ii) Thinks strategically to get from the current situation to the desired future state effectively and efficiently |
| iii) Anticipates potential threats and opportunities |
| iv) Balances short-term with long-term needs and priorities |
| v) Devotes appropriate time and attention to strategic issues |

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vi) Understands the distinction between what she/he can and cannot control or influence and focuses his/her energy on what is within his/her influence and control

D. Creativity and Innovation

i) Constantly seeks new insights into situations and considers new possibilities and opportunities

ii) Experiments with novel ideas and approaches, taking considered risks

2. Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence

A. Manages emotions to maintain a high level of effectiveness, even when angry or frustrated

B. Is aware of his/her emotional triggers, recognizing feelings and emotions as they happen, and consciously chooses the behavior that will yield the desired result

C. Is aware of his/her beliefs and impact on behavior and consciously chooses to change those that no longer serve his/her leadership goals

D. Is aware of and consciously chooses his/her attitude, recognizing that attitude shapes behavior

E. Is aware of his/her own preferences, style, temperament, and strengths and chooses how best to work with and manifest them to enhance effectiveness

F. Understands why she/he behaves as she/he does and knows how others perceive him/her

G. Possesses clarity of who she/he is and the leader she/he wants to be

H. Knows the impact his/her behaviors have on others

3. Personal Capabilities and Characteristics: Manages self in a manner that fosters learning and high performance

A. Adaptability/Flexibility

i) Adjusts proactively and flexibly to multiple demands

ii) Adjusts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles

iii) Monitors and manages his/her internal response to organizational change efforts so as to facilitate his/her contribution to successful change

iv) Handles day-to-day challenges comfortably and confidently

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B. Integrity, Honesty, and Trustworthiness

- i) Demonstrates trustworthiness by being sincere, authentic, reliable, and competent
- ii) Earns and maintains credibility by demonstrating intense and consistent commitment to his/her beliefs and by taking personal accountability in the face of workplace realities that can erode credibility, e.g., do what she/he says she/he will do
- iii) Takes responsibility for the consequences of his/her actions, recognizing that commitments are fulfilled when the promised results are achieved
- iv) Holds self accountable to his/her commitments
- v) Operates with truthfulness, whether delivering good news or bad
- vi) Behaves congruently with his/her personal philosophy, values, and ethical standards
- vii) Takes immediate action when observing apparent unethical behavior

C. Resiliency

- i) Makes considered and well-informed decisions regarding balance of work, family, and self
- ii) Deals effectively with pressure and stress
- iii) Maintains focus, self-confidence, a positive attitude, energy, and persistence, even when set back
- iv) Builds and sustains energy by appreciating the “best of what is”

D. Self-Development

- i) Solicits and learns from feedback
- ii) Actively learns from experience, modifying thinking and behavior to be more effective
- iii) Seeks assignments and opportunities to broaden his/her experience base and enhance exposure to new ways of doing business
- iv) Makes time for reflection and learning in pursuit of his/her leadership and career goals
- v) Learns from mistakes

4. Leadership Presence: Consciously develops, practices, and embodies a powerful leadership presence

B. Able to be in the moment and effectively focus his/her attention on what is happening

C. Ensures that his/her thinking, feeling, and verbal messages are congruent

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D. Commands the attention of other, engenders trust, and inspires others to follow his/her lead

E. Speaks and behaves with authority, positively influencing others

F. Acts from and expresses his/her authentic self, while avoiding pretense

5. Diversity with Inclusion: Is aware of the impact of his/her own group identity on self; demonstrates commitment to fairness and inclusion of all

B. Appreciates what makes him/her different from others and the value these differences contribute to personal and organizational success

C. Is aware of own social and position power and privilege and their impact on beliefs, habits, and behavior

D. Engages in self-reflection (i.e., values, perspectives, assumptions, beliefs) related to diversity to enhance personal growth and development

E. Is aware of and acknowledges the difference, if any, between the intent and impact of his/her words and actions, especially if she/he is a member of an advantaged group

F. Speaks up when noticing power and privilege dynamics that negatively impact individual, group, and/or organizational performance

INTERPERSONAL

1. Relating to Others: Works to build trusting and supportive relationships

A. Communication

i) Powerfully and effectively uses language

ii) Seeks and provides clear and adequate context for all conversations

iii) Seeks to understand and appreciate others' points of view and feelings

iv) Is fully present during interactions with others

v) Listens actively, paying close attention to what is being said, rather than thinking about what to say in response

vi) Makes clear promises, declinations, requests, and offers

vii) Communicates what she/he needs and why

viii) Ensures that people are clear about the information communicated by testing them for understanding

ix) Has difficult conversations, when needed

x) Constructively and directly names problems to enable conversation, resolution, and alignment

B. Building Supportive Relationships

i) Takes time out to invest in building relationships

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ii) Seeks to understand and be responsive to the needs of others, e.g., customers, peers, team members

iii) Appreciates and encourages others

iv) Creates relationships built on mutual respect

v) Treats each person as the unique individual she/he is

vi) Demonstrates a positive and caring attitude toward others

vii) Maintains, utilizes, and benefits from a robust support network

viii) Creates mutually beneficial and collaborative partnerships

ix) Connects authentically with the thoughts and feelings of others in order to motivate and inspire them to achieve a desired outcome

x) Supports others in identifying and resolving their own challenges

xi) Coaches and mentors others, helping them leverage their strengths and maximize their contribution to the organization

C. Trust Building

i) Intentionally and rigorously builds trust as the foundation for relationships with co-workers, customers, and partners, e.g., by doing what she/he says she/he is going to do

ii) Admits mistakes to others

iii) Treats others' concerns and issues with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality

iv) Makes it safe for people to tell the truth and candidly talk about concerns, fears, and problems

D. Emotional Intelligence

i) Is socially aware, noticing and demonstrating empathy for others and their emotional states

ii) Expresses feelings and emotions appropriately by using all means of expression – words, voice, body, face – to deliver one congruent message

iii) Is aware of the impact of his/her emotions, thoughts, and biases when interacting with others

iv) Accurately reads the body language and non-verbal cues of others with whom they communicate

E. Influence and Negotiation

i) Keeps the desired outcome in mind when deciding when and how to influence others

ii) Carefully chooses the timing for making suggestions or requests to maximize the likelihood of their being adopted

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iii) Consciously chooses the mood she/he wants to create with others to enhance cooperation and maximize influence

iv) Creates “win-win” solutions by understanding and respecting the needs of both parties

v) Influences others by reasoning and negotiation, rather than using pressure tactics

vi) Gains cooperation from others through influence techniques

vii) Exercises independent choice in response to others’ attempts to influence him/her

F. Conflict Management

i) Confronts others from a mindset of learning and curiosity, and not judgment

ii) Manages conflict effectively, identifying key issues and areas of agreement, in an effort to constructively resolve conflict in a positive, win-win manner

iii) Encourages others to express openly their disagreements and objections

iv) Initiates and engages in the discussion of sensitive issues

2. Diversity with Inclusion: Establishes a relationship where both parties are fully engaged and able to effectively use their diverse talents

A. Practices inclusion and respect for all

B. Learns from and builds connections across a full range of differences

C. Is aware of the impact of each other’s social identity group (e.g., race, gender, generation, national origin) on their perceptions and workplace relationships

GROUP

1. Group Dynamics: Uses understanding of human behavior in groups to create and sustain an environment that enhances group and individual effectiveness (in formal, informal, one-time, and ongoing groups, including teams)

B. Facilitates inclusion, mutual influence, trust, support, and cooperation in the group

C. Understands and effectively manages overt and covert group dynamics

D. Effectively balances task and group maintenance behaviors in a group

E. Sustains a positive mood in the group, fostering collaborative spirit, pride, commitment, and excellence

F. Facilitates the establishment of and accountability to group norms and working agreements

G. Facilitates the discussion of sensitive issues in the group

H. Develops conflict management capacity in the group

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I. Enables a group to maintain focus on what is important and effectively coordinates action

J. Leads effective meetings, e.g., plans time effectively; clearly communicates expectations and desired outcomes, and ensures the group focuses on the matter at hand (e.g., no side conversations)

K. Creates a safe environment where people can discuss and learn from their mistakes

2. Diversity with Inclusion: Creates and sustains an environment where all group members are fully engaged, influential, and able to use their diverse talents

A. Promotes a group culture of inclusion, respect, and learning from differences

B. Identifies power dynamics within the group (e.g., who takes air space, whose expertise is sought) and ensures all group members are respected, included, and engaged

C. Enables the group to productively discuss and mitigate power and privilege dynamics that negatively impact individual or group performance

3. Facilitates Effective Decision-Making: Ensures that the group thoroughly considers a full range of data and contextual information before rendering decisions

A. Facilitates accurate, open, and transparent communication in group

B. Asks thought-provoking and challenging questions to stimulate open conversation

C. Balances inquiry and advocacy

D. Solicits appropriate information, opinions, and concerns from group members.

E. Facilitates open discussion of difficult or hidden issues

F. Encourages members to provide adequate context for their views and to distinguish judgments, feelings, and facts

G. Promotes use of clear requests, offers, declinations, and promises.

H. Elicits multiple and dissenting opinions, especially in high risk and ambiguous situations, avoiding “group think”

I. Encourages creative thinking in the group

J. Promotes a group atmosphere where mistakes are openly discussed

K. Creates a group environment that encourages sharing best practices and lessons learned

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4. Workgroup Leadership: Using group skills as a foundation, builds and leads effective workgroups, whose members are individually accountable to a single leader for separate work products

A. Attracts followers and inspires passion, optimism, commitment and effort among workgroup or team members

B. Ensures clarity of workgroup's purpose, in context of organization's mission and strategy

C. Ensures that workgroup members understand each other's roles and how they contribute to the workgroup's overall success

D. Builds and maintains an effective workgroup culture of collaboration, where information, resources, and assistance are shared to facilitate one another's success and achievement of workgroup's overall purpose

E. Ensures clarity about and effective use of decision-making processes, distinguishing which decisions are made by the single leader and which are made by the entire workgroup

F. Prioritizes the work of workgroup members, or helps them prioritize their own work.

G. Ensures clear conditions of satisfaction are established for assigned tasks

H. Balances the work among workgroup members

I. Monitors workgroup's work on a regular basis

J. Ensures accountability of workgroup members for their respective products and milestones

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5. Team Development: Using group and workgroup skills as a foundation, develops and participates in high-performing teams, whose members share accountability for collective work products produced interdependently

- A. Identifies conditions where working as a true team is usually more effective than a single-leader workgroup
- B. Effectively advocates for forming a true team, where appropriate, and enables the prospective members to clearly understand the distinction between the operations of a team and a workgroup
- C. Ensures the team develops and aligns around a common vision, goals, and objectives, ensuring a performance focus
- D. Ensures roles are clear and consistent with team purpose
- E. Builds and maintains an effective team culture of interdependence and mutual accountability
- F. Facilitates development of a shared set of operating principles/working agreements
- G. Promotes accountability to team goals and operating principles/working agreements and challenges team members who are behaving contrary to team excellence
- H. Shares or rotates leadership according to whose skill set is best matched to the task at hand
- I. Facilitates appreciative inquiry in the team to identify the best of “what is” and “what could be,” building energy and creativity for innovation and high performance
- J. Encourages the team to celebrate success and to acknowledge and reward individual and team contributions to this success
- K. Ensures team members have complementary skills required to produce the team’s intended outcomes
- L. Ensures team sets project plans
- M. Collaboratively determines who will do what work, aligning responsibilities with individual members’ strengths and talents

ORGANIZATION

1. Leading People: Elicits people’s commitment and fosters their capacity to achieve organizational goals

- A. Possesses and communicates a clear organizational vision and sense of purpose
- B. Attracts followers and inspires passion, commitment, and effort among a large and diverse group of people throughout the organization

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| C. Ensures all organizational members understand the results they are expected to deliver and how their work contributes to the accomplishment of the NASA Vision, Mission, and Strategy |
| D. Holds self and others accountable, at all organizational levels, for behaving consistent with shared organizational values |
| E. Displays and inspires optimism about the organization's future |
| F. Demonstrates personal concern for others' well being |
| G. Engages in situational leadership, applying the style with the greatest impact under the circumstances |
| H. Modifies influence style as needed to effectively lead up, down, or across |
| I. Understands the distinction between leadership and management behaviors, and consciously emphasizes leadership or management as needed to meet the needs of the situation in a powerful and effective way |
| J. Communicates decisions, strategies, and approaches and the rationale behind them |
| K. Communicates to the organization, regularly and in a timely manner, strategic issues, work progress, and other important information |
| L. Provides organizational members with timely feedback on their contribution |
| M. Seeks input from organizational members – including facts, opinions, and concerns about their work – and provides timely feedback on the decisions and actions taken |
| N. Emphasizes and models teamwork and collaboration throughout the organization |
| O. Involves people in decisions that effect them in all stages of the decision-making process |
| P. Promotes an organizational atmosphere where mistakes can be discussed openly |
| Q. Provides everyone the opportunity to express openly their disagreements or to voice objections |
| R. Provides opportunities for people to share and pursue their passions, values, and goals |
| S. Develops leadership talent in other leaders, e.g., supports them in making their own decisions |
| T. Attends to leadership succession planning for the organization |
| U. Provides coaching, mentoring, and other developmental support to sustain maximum employee engagement and mission contribution |

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2. Leading Change and Transition: Actively leads organizational change and transition to achieve the desired future state

- A. Takes a long-term view and provides a vision of the future that captures the commitment of people
- B. Creates a sense of urgency for desired change
- C. Participatively develops change and transition strategies
- D. Communicates what is necessary, providing context and explaining how it will impact the individual and the organization
- E. Helps people shift their perceptions and actions consistent with the desired change
- F. Listens to and addresses followers' concerns about change
- G. Understands culture at an organizational level and how to change it to improve organizational performance
- H. Builds coalitions based on mutual interest to facilitate organizational change
- I. Models behaviors needed to successfully implement change
- J. Tells stories to inspire and lead followers through the transition to a new organizational future
- K. Translates higher-level vision for change into concrete actions
- L. Identifies the risks associated with change and participatively develops risk mitigation strategies
- M. Understands and helps followers move through the psychological transition process associated with change
- N. Maintains oversight of the change process to ensure progress is achieved and keeps stakeholders informed of this progress
- O. Highlights short-term wins and visible progress

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3. Leading and Managing Work: Ensures that organization's people and processes work together to achieve organizational goals in a timely and effective manner

- A. Understands and can explain the major elements of: NASA Strategic Plan, mission directorate plans and Center implementation plans.
- B. Assures that all work activities are focused on attaining clearly articulated and desired outcomes on time
- C. Encourages the organization to meet or exceed the needs of customers
- D. Consistently demonstrates and requires of others a commitment to continuous improvement
- E. Realigns the work and work processes in response to changes in the external environment
- F. Helps organization members achieve clarity regarding their roles and performance expectations
- G. Delegates authority commensurate with responsibility
- H. Establishes organizational priorities (i.e., determines where limited resources and staff will be used)
- I. Reviews and adjusts organizational priorities on a regular basis
- J. Effectively uses rewards and consequences to ensure organizational performance goals are met
- K. Ensures organizational structure, systems, and processes align with organizational objectives

4. Organizational Awareness and Relationships: Understands organizational functions and structures and builds effective relationships within the organization

- A. Develops effective relationships, networks, and alliances with people in critical roles throughout the organization
- B. Understands the organization is an integrated and complex system and that decisions and actions in one part of the system also affects other parts
- C. Identifies and effectively deals with the internal politics that impact organizational performance
- D. Helps others identify the cultural and political issues behind the challenges they face
- E. Approaches each problem situation with a clear perception of organizational reality
- F. Engages in mutually supportive and interdependent relationships with other GSFC and NASA organizations to achieve outcomes that benefit the greater whole, even if tradeoffs are required at his/her own organizational level

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G. Establishes a standard of behavior for all employees that we succeed or fail as a Center and is intolerant of finger pointing or under-cutting behaviors

H. Understands and can explain the interdependent functions within the organization and their responsibilities, goals, and objectives

I. Understands the function, structure, roles, and communication channels of NASA Headquarters

5. Organizational Culture: Understands and leverages the impact of the informal organization and the organizational culture

A. Understands the impact of written and unwritten organizational rules on individual performance

B. Understands and evaluates the systemic impact of all levels of the organization's culture on organizational performance

C. Leverages what is positive, unique, and special about the NASA culture

D. Initiates conversations to achieve a shared understanding of the organization's values

E. Ensures norms and behaviors align with organizational values

F. Sustains a positive and optimistic mood in the organization that enables engagement, creativity, productivity, and innovation

G. Fosters balance between work and personal life, e.g., models balance and negotiates deadlines

H. Creates a culture that fosters high ethical standards

I. Creates a culture of appreciation, at all levels of the organization, where success is celebrated and rewarded

6. Diversity with Inclusion: Ensures organization cultivates diversity and practices inclusion

A. Is a proactive advocate for diversity, inclusion, and equitable treatment of all organization members

B. Ensures organizational systems, processes, and culture (e.g., hiring and awards) maintain fairness, accountability, and transparency and foster diversity and inclusion of all members

C. Creates an environment that values differences in the workplace as a source of learning, creativity, and enhanced performance

D. Intentionally maximizes organizational diversity, e.g., team and workforce composition

E. Ensures all employees have equal access to opportunities and proactively addresses barriers to inclusion and equity

F. Demonstrates a commitment to and compliance with EO laws and the Agency's related regulations, policies, and procedures to effect equal opportunity, affirmative employment, and diversity

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G. Promotes, encourages, and maintains an environment free of discrimination and harassment

H. Surfaces and addresses “invisible” cultural practices that perpetuate advantages for some groups and not others

7. Organizational Learning: Fosters organizational values, climate, and processes that facilitate continual creation and sharing of knowledge from organizational experience and other sources

A. Creates a climate that supports the open sharing of information and knowledge

B. Creates an environment that encourages capturing, storing, and sharing best practices and lessons learned from organizational activities within the organization

C. Ensures continuous learning and creates organization-wide development strategies to cultivate talent in others

D. Searches for and applies best practices from outside the organization

E. Ensures an assessment is conducted after completion of a major activity to discover what was supposed to happen, what happened, what accounts for the difference, and what to do next time

ENVIRONMENT

1. External Awareness: Understands and responds to the “big picture”; i.e., external policies, regulations, and other factors that impact the organization

A. Understands, anticipates, and effectively leverages or mitigates the impact of the “big picture” on organizational performance

B. Understands the impact that external customers and stakeholders (e.g., other Directorates, Congress, government agencies) have on the organization’s strategy and policies

C. Understands the statutory, regulatory, policy, and budgetary environment affecting the organization (e.g., how NASA gets funding) and can explain to others

D. Understands the political process and how it impacts NASA, including the roles of Congress, the White House, and other Executive Branch organizations

E. Monitors and keeps up to date on national and international policies and economic, political, and social trends that may affect his/her organization

2. Strategic Leadership: Develops organizational strategies to sustain future organizational viability and mission accomplishment

A. Studies external environment and evaluates future scenarios affecting the organization’s mission and health

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B. Develops organizational strategy to position organization for success in context of anticipated internal and external conditions, including potential threats and opportunities

C. Monitors results of strategy implementation and adjusts organizational performance and/or strategy, as necessary

3. Business Development: Anticipates the business needs of customers and fulfills them by marketing and delivering desired products and services

A. Gathers information on needs and wants of current and potential customers

B. Continually assesses the work performed in their organization to ensure it adds value to GSFC and NASA and takes action accordingly, e.g., advocating for the discontinuance of the work that adds little or minimal value

C. Explains to organizational unit who their customers are, as well as their needs and wants

D. Continually identifies opportunities to create and provide new products and services and to acquire new customers

E. Acquires work/projects relevant to the organization's goals and proportional to its resources

F. Uses knowledge of NASA products, services and capabilities to deliver solutions that match customer and stakeholder needs and wants

G. Understands how to promote organizational products and services in a government context

H. Regularly seeks, measures, and acts on customer feedback concerning the quality of products or services provided

4. Stakeholder and Partner Relationships: Builds and maintains relationships with external stakeholders and partners

A. Develops effective relationships and alliances with partners and stakeholders external to the organization

B. Balances the interest of a variety of external customers, stakeholders, and partners

C. In all external relationships, maintains awareness of the impact of differences of culture, power, and privilege, and works to maintain respectful and equitable relationships