



OACUHO COMPETENCY MODEL

Companion Guide

Detailed developmental descriptors for professional growth in housing and residence life.

EMERGING → BEGINNER → INTERMEDIATE → LEADING

The competency model can support reflection, professional development, goal setting, supervision, training, and career conversations.

EMERGING

Build foundations

BEGINNER

Apply knowledge

INTERMEDIATE

Lead practice

LEADING

Shape systems

Occupancy Management

EMERGING

- Understand the purpose and impact of occupancy management in residence life.
- Recognize the basic processes of room assignments and housing applications.
- Communicate housing policies and deadlines clearly to peers.
- Support move-in/move-out logistics and occupancy transitions.

BEGINNER

- Assist in managing housing applications and room assignments.
- Apply institutional policies when responding to student inquiries.
- Use basic data tools (e.g., spreadsheets, housing software) to track occupancy.
- Communicate effectively with students about housing options and timelines.
- Identify trends or issues in occupancy and escalate appropriately.

INTERMEDIATE

- Lead the coordination of room assignments, reassignments, and waitlists.
- Analyze occupancy data to forecast trends and inform planning.
- Collaborate with campus partners (e.g., Admissions, Registrar) to align housing capacity with enrollment.
- Develop strategies to optimize occupancy while supporting student needs.
- Train and supervise staff involved in occupancy processes.

LEADING

- Provide strategic leadership in occupancy planning and forecasting.
- Utilize advanced data analytics to inform long-term housing strategies.
- Align occupancy management with institutional goals (e.g., retention, diversity).
- Lead policy development related to housing assignments and eligibility.
- Represent housing in institutional planning and enrollment discussions.

Student Learning & Development

EMERGING

- Understand the basics of student development theory.
- Identify the importance of the student life cycle.
- Reflect on personal experiences and how they can support student growth, while situated within student development theory.

BEGINNER

- Develop strategies to create inclusive and supportive learning environments.
- Implement programs/learning experiences that support the holistic development of students.
- Reflect on the impact of the residence experience on student learning and development.
- Apply student development theories to enhance residence programs/initiatives.
- Assess the effectiveness of initiatives on learning and development.

INTERMEDIATE

- Mentor entry-level professionals in fostering student growth.
- Lead the development of comprehensive student learning and development strategies.
- Collaborate with campus stakeholders to integrate learning opportunities.
- Evaluate and refine education plans and programs based on student feedback and retention metrics.

LEADING

- Master advanced student development theories and practices to inform department-wide decision making.
- Provide strategic leadership in student learning and development initiatives.
- Lead professionals and guide the overall direction of residence mission, vision and goals.

Assessment, Evaluation & Research

EMERGING

- Develop foundational knowledge of the assessment cycle.
- Understand the role of a student staff member in the assessment cycle process.
- Provide feedback to departments on assessment strategy.

BEGINNER

- Develop opportunities to assess student learning at the programmatic level.
- Identify and utilize assessment tools for student learning and engagement.
- Interpret programmatic assessment results.

INTERMEDIATE

- Analyze and interpret programmatic and system-wide assessment data.
- Interpret assessment results to inform decision-making.
- Create recommendations based on data-informed decision making.

LEADING

- Utilize storytelling practices to inform decision-making at the departmental level.
- Facilitate storytelling in the showcasing of the impact of housing in student lives.
- Seek continuous improvement utilizing assessment data.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusions & Indigeneity

EMERGING

- Demonstrate awareness of personal identity, privilege, and bias.
- Utilize inclusive language and behavior in peer interactions.
- Recognize and respect diverse lived experiences and perspectives.
- Support inclusive programming and community-building efforts.

BEGINNER

- Apply EDII principles in daily decision-making and student interactions.
- Facilitate inclusive programs and conversations that reflect diverse identities.
- Identify and challenge exclusionary practices or microaggressions.
- Understand the historical and contemporary context of Indigeneity in Canada.

INTERMEDIATE

- Mentor staff in inclusive practices and cultural humility.
- Collaborate with campus partners to support equity-seeking student populations.
- Assess residence policies and programs for equity and accessibility.
- Advocate for systemic changes that promote inclusion and reconciliation.

LEADING

- Provide strategic leadership in embedding EDII into departmental vision and operations.
- Lead the development and implementation of inclusive policies and frameworks.
- Foster a culture of accountability and continuous learning around EDII.
- Build and sustain partnerships with Indigenous communities and equity-focused organizations.

Strategic Planning & Project Management

EMERGING

- Understand the basic elements of project planning as a student employee in Housing.

BEGINNER

- Identify the elements of a project management cycle.
- Support the creation of clear and measurable goals for prioritized projects in the housing department.
- Effectively communicate priorities with key stakeholders.

INTERMEDIATE

- Measure and maintain the success of project management deadlines and KPIs.
- Lead the development of key projects and innovations.
- Effectively plan, execute and oversee projects that enhance the student housing experience.
- Provide clear reasoning of the 'why' behind key projects and innovations in a program.
- Identify any 'threats' or challenges posed in completing projects.
- Identify key stakeholders that impact the project management cycle.

LEADING

- Provide clear vision and goals that support the strategic plans of a housing operation.
- Coach professionals in working towards the shared vision of the program.
- Train and direct staff to deepen knowledge and understanding of strategic planning and project management.

Ancillary Services & Partnerships

EMERGING

- Understand the role of campus and external partners in delivering housing services.
- Communicate effectively with service providers (e.g., dining, maintenance) during daily operations.
- Support the implementation of partnership-based programs or services.
- Report service-related concerns or feedback from students.

BEGINNER

- Collaborate with campus departments (e.g., Facilities, Food Services) to support student needs.
- Understand the basics of service agreements and vendor relationships.
- Assist in monitoring service delivery and gathering student feedback.
- Communicate partnership goals and expectations clearly to stakeholders.

INTERMEDIATE

- Lead coordination with internal and external partners to deliver integrated services.
- Participate in contract development and renewal processes.
- Allocate resources effectively to support partnership initiatives.
- Evaluate service effectiveness using student feedback and operational data.
- Train staff on partnership protocols and service standards.

LEADING

- Develop and sustain strategic partnerships aligned with institutional goals.
- Lead contract negotiations and ensure compliance with legal and financial standards.
- Oversee resource planning and budgeting for partnership initiatives.
- Advocate for student-centered service enhancements across partnerships.
- Represent housing in cross-campus and external partnership planning.

Policy & Ethical Foundations

EMERGING

- Understand and follow residence policies and procedures.
- Demonstrate integrity and fairness in peer interactions and decision-making.
- Recognize the importance of confidentiality and professional boundaries.
- Report policy violations or ethical concerns appropriately.

BEGINNER

- Apply institutional and departmental policies in daily operations.
- Support policy education and enforcement with students.
- Identify ethical dilemmas and seek guidance when needed.
- Understand relevant legislation (e.g., human rights, privacy, housing standards).

INTERMEDIATE

- Participate in the development and revision of residence policies.
- Provide training and guidance to staff on ethical decision-making.
- Analyze the impact of policies on diverse student populations.
- Ensure compliance with legal and institutional standards in housing operations.

LEADING

- Lead the creation and implementation of policy frameworks aligned with institutional values.
- Champion ethical leadership and accountability across the department.
- Evaluate and revise policies to reflect evolving legal, social, and student needs.
- Represent housing in institutional policy and compliance discussions.

Organizational & Human Resources

EMERGING

- Understand the basic elements of student staff hiring practices.
- Understand the roles and structure within the housing staff structure.
- Participate in team activities and contribute to a positive work environment.
- Follow established policies and procedures in daily responsibilities.
- Build foundational knowledge for applying to entry-level professional roles in Student Affairs.

BEGINNER

- Assist in the recruitment, onboarding, and training of students.
- Apply human resources policies consistently and fairly.
- Provide informal feedback and support to peers and junior staff.
- Understand the basics of conflict resolution with students and peers, using mediation skills to maintain a harmonious environment.

INTERMEDIATE

- Effectively lead and motivate a diverse team, ensuring alignment with organizational goals.
- Develop strategies for hiring and retaining qualified staff, fostering a positive work environment.
- Conduct evaluations and provides feedback to enhance staff performance and professional growth.
- Lead recruitment, hiring, and training processes for student and entry-level staff.
- Manage conflict resolution processes and support staff wellness.
- Ensure compliance with institutional HR policies and employment standards.

LEADING

- Provide strategic leadership in workforce planning and organizational development.
- Develop and oversee HR policies and procedures aligned with institutional goals.
- Foster a culture of equity, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Lead change management initiatives and succession planning.
- Represent housing in institutional HR and labor relations discussions.

Facilities & Infrastructure Management

EMERGING

- Understand the importance of maintaining clean, safe, and functional living spaces.
- Report maintenance issues and safety concerns promptly.
- Educate peers on responsible use of facilities and sustainability practices.
- Support key control and security protocols (e.g., lockouts, lost keys).

BEGINNER

- Coordinate with facilities staff to address maintenance and custodial needs.
- Understand basic building systems and housing infrastructure.
- Support sustainability initiatives (e.g., waste reduction, energy conservation).
- Assist in key and access management processes.
- Communicate facility-related updates and expectations to students.

INTERMEDIATE

- Oversee daily operations and maintenance schedules for residence buildings.
- Manage vendor relationships and service contracts.
- Monitor and manage budgets related to facilities and infrastructure.
- Lead sustainability programming and infrastructure improvements.
- Develop and implement emergency preparedness plans for residence facilities.

LEADING

- Provide strategic leadership in facilities planning and infrastructure renewal.
- Lead capital project planning and liaise with campus planning and construction teams.
- Develop long-term sustainability strategies aligned with institutional goals.
- Oversee departmental risk management and emergency response systems.
- Advocate for inclusive, accessible, and future-ready housing infrastructure.

Marketing & Communications

EMERGING

- Understand the value of the post-secondary residence experience and communicate it to peers.
- Promote housing events and initiatives through word-of-mouth and peer networks.
- Support social media and digital campaigns by contributing content or ideas.
- Represent the housing brand positively in all student interactions.

BEGINNER

- Assist in the development and delivery of marketing materials (e.g., posters, newsletters, social media posts).
- Communicate housing information clearly to students and families.
- Understand the basics of brand consistency and visual identity.
- Support recruitment events and campus tours for prospective residents.

INTERMEDIATE

- Develop and implement marketing strategies to promote housing services.
- Manage digital engagement platforms (e.g., social media, email campaigns, websites).
- Coordinate events that showcase housing offerings and build community.
- Analyze communication effectiveness using engagement metrics and feedback.
- Collaborate with campus partners (e.g., Recruitment, Communications) to align messaging.

LEADING

- Provide strategic leadership in housing marketing and communications planning.
- Oversee brand management and ensure alignment with institutional identity.
- Lead initiatives that connect housing communications to student retention strategies.
- Evaluate and refine marketing approaches based on data and institutional goals.
- Represent housing in campus-wide communications and recruitment planning.

Student Behaviour & Crisis Management

EMERGING

- Develop foundational understanding of the purpose of standard operating procedures and policies in housing.
- Refer students to appropriate members of the management team or campus resources.

BEGINNER

- Develop strategies for effective conflict management.
- Facilitate low-level student support conversations.
- Respond effectively to crises and emergencies, ensuring safety and well-being of students.
- Provide guidance and support to students in need, connecting them with appropriate resources.

INTERMEDIATE

- Develop tools and strategies for professionals and student staff to utilize in student support conversations.
- Utilize mediation and negotiation skills to resolve conflict.
- Review and update policies and procedures in response to standard operating procedures, crisis response and student needs.
- Represent housing departments on campus-wide committees (I.e. Behaviour Intervention Teams)

LEADING

- Develop and enforce policies related to student behavior, promoting a respectful and inclusive community.
- Develop and implement emergency response plans, coordinating with campus and community stakeholders.

Fiscal Responsibility

EMERGING

- Understand the basic elements of managing a program budget.
- Practice responsible use of resources (e.g., supplies, time, space).
- Support budget-conscious programming and event planning.
- Track spending of programmatic budgets at the individual level.

BEGINNER

- Ability to set and manage budgets at the programmatic level.
- Reconcile student staff budgets at the programmatic level.
- Use basic fiscal tools (e.g., Excel, budget templates) to monitor spending.
- Understand institutional financial policies and procedures.

INTERMEDIATE

- Develop and manage operational budgets for residence areas or initiatives.
- Forecast financial needs and adjust plans based on trends and data.
- Understand the differences between operational and capital budgets.
- Manage contracts and vendor payments in alignment with budget goals.
- Train staff on financial procedures and responsible resource use.

LEADING

- Lead the development of large-scale, system-wide housing budgets.
- Provide strategic financial oversight and long-term planning.
- Analyze financial performance and recommend improvements.
- Ensure compliance with institutional, provincial, and federal financial regulations.
- Advocate for funding and resource allocation to support housing priorities.

Leadership

EMERGING

- Reflect on strengths and areas of development as a student staff member.
- Understand how one's leadership style intersects with a diverse team.
- Set stretch goals for becoming an entry-level professional in the housing field.
- Identify the fundamentals of teamwork.

BEGINNER

- Develop an understanding of inclusive leadership.
- Reflect on personal leadership style.
- Understand how to apply one's leadership style to the management of student staff.
- Create a professional development plan based on goals.

INTERMEDIATE

- Understand basic leadership theory for the development of self and teams.
- Reflect on how one's leadership style impacts team dynamics.
- Identify opportunities for team development and leadership reflection of professional staff.

LEADING

- Apply personal leadership style for problem-solving and the development of teams.
- Apply coaching and development principles in supporting the developing of leaders.