

# **DoD CIVILIAN LEADER DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCY MODEL: COMPETENCY VALIDATION STUDY**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2007, the Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Leader Development Division (JLDD) partnered with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Center for Talent Services (CTS) to validate a competency model for leadership positions across the DoD. This DoD Civilian Leader Development Competency Model is intended for use as guidance for the professional development of DoD personnel in key leadership positions across all DoD components (Air Force, Army, Navy, and other DoD) and in four leadership levels, which are team leader, supervisor, manager, and member of the Senior Executive Service (SES).

The DoD Civilian Leader Development Competency Model is based heavily on OPM's Executive Core Qualifications and their supporting competencies. However, DoD-specific revisions to some competency definitions and the addition of three competencies necessitated further support for the unique aspects of the DoD model. This was accomplished using four strategies.

First, OPM psychologists cross walked DoD's Civilian Leader Development Competency Model with OPM's Executive Core Qualification (ECQ) model. Psychologists determined both areas where competencies overlap and areas where the models differ. This step resulted in the identification of ten competencies to be further validated for DoD's competency model: External Awareness, Decisiveness, Problem Solving, Technology Management, Computer Literacy, Influencing/Negotiating, Enterprise-wise Perspective, Joint Perspective, National Security, and Continual Learning.

Second, OPM analyzed data from a 2006 leadership survey of supervisors and managers in the Federal Government. This survey provides importance ratings for all OPM ECQs and core competencies. Approximately 300 DoD supervisors and managers were surveyed as part of this process, and these data were isolated and analyzed to provide additional support for DoD's leader development competency model.

Third, OPM and JLDD conducted three subject matter expert panels to collect additional validation data on the ten competencies that did not crosswalk to OPM's ECQ model. A total of 31 SMEs participated in the panels. The panels were comprised of GS-14 or equivalent, GS-15 or equivalent, and SES members representing various DoD components. SMEs were asked to rate each competency using a rating scale to assess current importance at each of the four leadership levels in terms of typical work assigned and performed.

Based on the results of the first three strategies, OPM and JLDD then conducted the fourth and most comprehensive strategy. To validate the DoD competency model using judgments from an agency-wide sample, OPM and JLDD conducted a competency validation survey in March, 2008. The online survey was sent by email to a stratified random sample of 17,340 DoD leaders across components at the four leadership levels. The sample includes all four National Security Personnel System (NSPS) pay bands and a range of grades from GS-9 or equivalent to SES.



Respondents were asked to provide ratings on the ten competencies using three separate rating scales: current importance, future importance, and required at entry. OPM received 6,380 usable responses, representing an overall survey response rate of approximately 42%, after accounting for undeliverable email addresses. Analyses of the survey data showed that all competencies met the quantitative criteria to be considered important at all leadership levels within DoD. Analyses also showed that a majority of the competencies are expected to remain as important, if not increase in importance, in the next three years. These results occurred across DoD components. The required at entry rating scale indicated the extent to which a competency is needed at the time an employee begins working at that level of leadership responsibility. Most, but not all, of the competencies were rated as being required at entry into each leadership level.

The results of the competency validation survey support the use of the ten competencies in the DoD Civilian Leader Development Competency Model. The resulting competency model is appropriate for development in all DoD components surveyed, and is relevant for each level of leadership. The validation of the DoD Civilian Leader Development Competency model was a critical step in making efforts to ensure that leaders at all levels are fully prepared to support the accomplishment of key Departmental goals and objectives. This model is planned as the framework to measure competency levels of the current leadership cadre and to perform a competency gap analysis in 2008 for development and succession planning purposes.

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