Building a Culture for Success

A guide for staff at the University of Nottingham on our expectations and behaviours for success
The University will spread the light of learning and knowledge.

Jesse Boot

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Introduction

Every member of staff at the University of Nottingham, irrespective of job role or level, has a critical role to play in the life and work of the University. We should never forget that ‘how’ we approach our work and each other is as important as ‘what’ we do. This guide helps make clear the core expectations and behaviours that each of us should be demonstrating in our work, and as ambassadors of the University’s strategy, vision and values.

Core values

Our University strategy sets out the mission and vision that we want to achieve at the University of Nottingham, with a number of supporting goals and enablers. Embedded within the strategy is a set of values that we have agreed will underpin everything we do. The values set the tone for the University and are translated into our framework to build a culture for success.

- Inclusivity: We are a community where everyone can contribute and be appreciated for who they are.
- Ambition: We set the highest standards for ourselves and our work and support each other to achieve them.
- Openness: We adopt a straightforward and transparent way of communicating with each other and with the world, championing the free exchange of ideas.
- Fairness: Our decisions and actions are consistent, impartial and ethical.
- Respect: We have regard for each other’s rights and feelings, and demonstrate this in our behaviour, treating each other with kindness.

Day-to-day DNA

Making this approach part of our everyday working lives is key to our future success. These expectations and behaviours are essential and will help us to create and sustain our culture, giving us a sense of shared connection.

This approach will help people to develop their personal responsibilities, consider how they can support others, and also be clear on how they contribute to the University as a whole.

Clarity and accessibility

By having a clear set of expectations and behaviours we give everyone in the University the clarity of what is expected of them every day. It provides a transparent framework of reference creating a sense of community and shared purpose. Everyone has access to the same framework. It applies across all levels, and all teams, departments, faculties and schools.

University application – aligning our values and behaviours

Our values, as set out above, are the principles that guide us in terms of how we operate as a University and how we interact together as individuals. These values can be brought to life through many different behaviours. Five core expectations and behaviours have been selected by staff as having most significance to us currently and as such provide us with a consistent framework through which we can ensure that our core values are evident in all that we do.
Using the approach for people management

This page gives some ideas for how this approach can be used in the workplace.

Day-to-day people development

Staff development
Bringing the expectations and behaviours into our day-to-day conversation (both formal and informal) is important. This means we can support our staff to be even better at what they do, building confidence and competence across the University.

Personal development
Having clarity on what is expected at each level, with clear examples of what is not acceptable, empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own actions, giving them confidence and being clear on their own contribution.

Career progression
This guide helps to define progression across the bands and how this matches to different job levels. This enables individuals to see what is required to move forward in their career, should a vacancy arise, following the standard application process.

Succession planning
Use this approach to identify people who are already operating at the next band across some or all of the expectation areas.

Peer to peer
Through using this approach it can help to engender better working relationships, allowing individuals to recognise each other for a job done well, and in turn to challenge unacceptable behaviour.

Performance management
The guide provides a set of required expectations and behaviours together with a set of unacceptable behaviours that is both equitable and accessible by all, which then through observation and evidence equips managers to address and improve performance.

Performance review conversations
Reflecting on expectations and behaviours can be helpful when preparing for performance reviews and development conversations as part of the performance review process, and throughout the year.

Recruitment and selection
To ensure we are bringing people in who support our vision and values and have both the desire and potential to succeed, the expectations and behaviours have been fully integrated into our attraction, screening and selection processes.

How the approach aligns to job families

You can then use this guide for the full expectations and behaviours for that level (pages 10-14). Some job levels span across two bands – if you are unsure, identify which band applies to you through discussions with your line manager.

If your role is aligned to Band B or above, you should also review the previous bands as you should be demonstrating the expectations and behaviours contained in each of these previous levels.

All job families map to the approach:

Refer to these pages when considering any management or development issues, either as an employee or a manager.

Band A
Leads self

Band B
Leads others*

Band C
Operational leader

Band D
Senior leader

Band E
Executive leader

* Leads others includes experts who may not have direct reports.
The expectation and behaviour areas

Expectation and behaviour areas

Valuing people
The personal characteristics around valuing people are a fundamental expectation and behaviour for anyone working for the University. This aligns with the values and principles of the University.

Taking ownership
Creates a structure where people can care for and nurture others.

Forward thinking
When looking to ensure the University stands out from others, the theme of innovation and drive to be better is key. To be pioneering and a leader in its field is an essential area for the University.

Professional pride
At the heart of the University is a desire to be proud of its heritage and its achievements – whatever the speciality or expertise. This professionalism and pride is a significant competitor differentiator.

Always inclusive
Whatever the team, department, faculty or school, there is a need to think beyond your own area and consider the bigger picture, always being inclusive, valuing diversity, promoting equality and remembering the wider context.

The expectation and behaviour areas within the context of three perspectives, showing how these are described for each band.

Self

- Has a deep understanding that it starts with own personal signals and behaviours.
- Values all staff and supports them to excel.
- Always puts people at the heart of the University.
- Encourages others to be accountable and politely challenges if they are not.
- Represents the brand and heritage and understands the responsibilities that come with this.

Others

- Is willing to take responsibility for own actions and areas.
- Encourages others to improve and the curiosity to learn.
- Pioneering and innovative – underpinned by solid research, knowledge and learning.
- Consistently delivers with a keen eye for detail.
- Values diversity and promotes equality.

University

- Anticipates equality and diversity impact and works hard to involve others.
- International outlook – think globally, embrace diversity and equality, engage personally.
- Strives to build and maintain a centre of excellence.
- Values diversity and promotes equality.

These pages summarise the five expectation and behaviour areas within the context of three perspectives, showing how these are described for each band.

Band A
Leads self

- Welcomes all: open and honest relationships.
- Positivity: takes personal responsibility for own actions.
- Responds positively to change and actively shares any learning.
- Consistently delivers with a keen eye for detail.
- Values diversity and promotes equality.

Band B
Leads others

- Engaging and receptive; makes others comfortable.
- Provides clarity and direction through timely decisions and actions.
- Looks for solutions to problems, turning ideas into action.
- Takes pride in doing high standard work, observing guidelines for health and safety, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Strives to be sensitive to the needs of others, adapting to a more inclusive work practice.

Band C
Operational leader

- Collegiate and approachable; acts with integrity.
- Empowering and challenging; ensures people to be accountable and responsible.
- Encourages curiosity, diversity of thought and drive to improve.
- Ensures knowledge and learning are spread effectively.
- Networker, actively engaging with and valuing other areas and diverse groups.

Band D
Senior leader

- Equitable and trustworthy; ensures people are equipped to support each other.
- Builds infrastructure for teams to work in partnership both externally and internally.
- Creates ambition to be pioneering and supports experimentation.
- Inspires a focus on excellence; an ambassador both internally and externally.
- Builds strong partnerships both within and outside the University.

Band E
Executive leader

- Creates a structure where people can care for and nurture others.
- Fosters a culture where people feel supported to own and take action for their area.
- Stimulates forward thinking, encompassing diverse viewpoints with a structure to act on ideas.
- Inspires a focus on excellence; an ambassador both internally and externally.
- Maximises strategic benefits with due regard for the whole community, fostering a culture of inclusivity.

* Leads others includes experts who may not have direct reports.
# Building a Culture for Success

## The details: Band A – Leads self

**Self**
- Valuing people: Polite, courteous and honest at all times.
- Taking ownership: Positive and takes responsibility for own actions, acts as say what they think.
- Forward thinking: Keen to learn and upskill, responds positively to change.
- Professional pride: Self-appraising with awareness of the details, does what is expected well, first time.
- Always inclusive: Aware of and sensitive to needs relating to different cultures, disabilities and other protected characteristics.

**Others**
- Valuing people: Open, welcoming and caring to others, making time to meet.
- Taking ownership: Shows initiative, acts and responds to needs of others, tactfully offers practical guidance and advice.
- Forward thinking: Comfortable sharing ideas with others and receiving feedback on new ideas for how to improve.
- Professional pride: Seeks feedback from others and contributes to the team.
- Always inclusive: Recognises that someone has an important role, irrespective of age, and the importance of equality and diversity.

**University**
- Valuing people: Always respects and considers the students’ point of view as well as those of colleagues.
- Taking ownership: Understands how their role fits into the wider University.
- Forward thinking: Passionate about University’s ambition to improve and clear about own role to help achieve this.
- Professional pride: Demonstrates professionalism, great role-model for the University observing policies at all times eg health and safety and equality and diversity.
- Always inclusive: Considers the wider implications across the whole community.

**Contra-indicators**
- Tends not to listen.
- Voices negative judgements about others.
- Rarely offers encouragement.
- Neglects to keep.
- Voices negative about others or their values or identities.
- Doesn’t consider the big picture.

## The details: Band B – Leads others

**Self**
- Valuing people: Friendly, engaging and receptive.
- Taking ownership: Makes timely decisions, takes necessary action, and implements aspects of all plans, including health and safety, relevant to own area.
- Forward thinking: Effective planner, goes about things methodically, sets the example of fairness, appropriate and high standards establishes.
- Professional pride: Supports University drive to improve through actions, acting in the opportunity to learn when it goes wrong.
- Always inclusive: Positive about diversity and equality for all people, flexible and adapting style as necessary.

**Others**
- Valuing people: Makes timely decisions, takes necessary action, and implements aspects of all plans, including health and safety, relevant to own area.
- Taking ownership: Is clear about what is required, encouraging others to accountable, adapting style as necessary.
- Forward thinking: Proactively shares learning and experience to develop others, helping them to turn ideas into action and in turn actively seeks feedback from others.
- Professional pride: Is clear about what is required, encouraging others to accountable, adapting style as necessary.
- Always inclusive: Welcomes contribution from others, invites comments and input to decisions and in turn is willing to put forward own ideas.

**University**
- Valuing people: Goes out of way to ensure students feel cared for and comfortable.
- Taking ownership: Supports University drive to improve through actions, acting in the opportunity to learn when it goes wrong.
- Forward thinking: Through own standards establishes a quality foundation in own area of expertise for the University.
- Professional pride: Accepts and does not flag non-conformity to policy.
- Always inclusive: Promotes an inclusive and welcoming approach across internal and external communities, embracing change and diversity.

**Contra-indicators**
- Readily shows anxiety, annoyance or frustration, interrupts when others are speaking.
- Appears distracted and uninterested in others.
- Misses deadlines, puts off making decisions or makes decisions too quickly.
- Makes excuses for underperformance.
- Has a command/ control approach.
- Unwilling to challenge the status quo.
- Stifles innovation.
- Limits learning and development and withholds good practice.
- Compromises quality or tolerates poor workmanship.
- Is undemanding of others.
- Accepts and does not flag non-conformity to policy.

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Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Band A.
### Building a Culture for Success

#### The details: Band C – Operational leader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuing people</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair, collegiate and trustworthy in all they do; comfortable explaining reasons for decisions.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking ownership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-aware, challenging themselves to be accountable on board feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through own actions inspires, empowers and equips others to be accountable and responsible, offering constructive feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensures the University requirements are interpreted accurately and translated into own workload including health and safety and equality and diversity plans and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides little guidance when others are struggling.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forward thinking</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a personal ambition to question and explore new ideas and learning points from where things go wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages ambition to be leading edge, supporting considered experimentation, assessing any potential associated risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embraces University’s ambition to be leading the way in terms of know-how and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacks initiative to learn from mistakes or recognise opportunities to do something better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fails to address issues affecting the team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does not adequately consider risks.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional pride</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works at a high standard in own area of expertise, following quality systems and control measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages others; requesting, enacting and achieving high quality work, identifying gaps or needs and making plans to address these.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognises and promotes the need for the University to enhance its performance, effectively balancing risk and costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacks ambition for own area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacks touch with some or all key stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misaligned to overall goals of the University.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always inclusive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates and actively encourages inclusivity, making connections and networks beyond own immediate area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactively seeks ways to involve others and understand their differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes the University accessible to the wider community, leading change to facilitate equality of outcomes, taking into account health, safety, and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only considers the evidence for own area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does not rigorously consider the impact on the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does not communicate important information.</td>
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#### The details: Band D – Senior leader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuing people</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherent curiosity and desire to understand people, recognising that communication is a critical part of the role.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking ownership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a clear vision of what can be achieved, clearly communicating the direction and focus, effectively deploying people and resources to achieve this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspires people to achieve what they think can, providing infrastructure and opportunities for teams to work cross-functionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognises the importance of partnerships and stakeholder management to the University both internally and externally.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional pride</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivates others to be a key player to help the University achieve its goal to be a global leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks down barriers to innovation, championing curiosity in others with a focus to improve and enhance their service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognises the importance of partnerships and stakeholder management to the University both internally and externally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disinclined to share.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Always inclusive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is aware of business drivers and ensures workplace practices reflect these; keeps up to date with latest thinking and trends and adherence to health and safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards ideas and celebrates success, ensuring thought leadership and learning are spread; teams feel equipped to effectively share their knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenges internal systems and procedures that seem to get in the way of achieving the University goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takes a ‘one size fits all’ approach to communication.</td>
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Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Bands A, B and C.
The details:  Band E – Executive leader

Valuing people

Self
Understanding and role models behaviours; is approachable and accessible maintaining high ethical standards.

Others
Gains cooperation and support from peers and creates a nurturing and stimulating approach to develop talent and enhance wellbeing.

University
Cultivates a collaborative workplace, balancing the needs of customers, stakeholders and the wider University.

Contra-indicators
- Fails to register Research and Teaching
- Ignores poor ease of use
- Ignores poor ease of understanding
- Loses focus, challenges people to focus on the best option for the University and department, faculty or school, making sure timelines and goals are achieved.
- Fails to register potential risk.

Taking ownership

Self
Communicates a clear vision of the future, taking time to be understood puts forward effective solutions to complex problems.

Others
Fosters a culture where people feel supported to own and take action, challenging people to find the best solution for the University.

University
Develops strategy for an area to be in line with and deliver to the University strategies recognising the importance of health and safety and equality and diversity policy.

Contra-indicators
- Fails to pay due attention to area and across own department, faculty or school.
- Fails to register potential risk.

Forward thinking

Self
Maintains optimism and keeps momentum going, creating a structure that enables improvement while assessing potential risk.

Others
Stimulates agile and forward thinking in others, motivating others and giving them confidence to try new things, never compromising health and safety.

University
Despite pressure to respond to change remains focused on the University strategic goals.

Contra-indicators
- Keeps an eye on area to be in line with and deliver to the University strategies recognising the importance of health and safety and equality and diversity policy.
- Fails to register potential risk.

Professional pride

Self
Drives through the University strategic aims and business goals ensuring plans are aligned to achieve the long term strategy despite short-term pressures.

Others
Challenges people to focus on the best option for the University and department, faculty or school, making sure timelines and goals are achieved.

University
Benchmarks performance against “best in class”, takes every opportunity to celebrate achievements of own department, faculty or school.

Contra-indicators
- Loses focus, does not monitor progress against key milestones.
- Fails to appreciate interlinking of workflow.

Always inclusive

Self
Ensures inclusive and accessible structures are in place for effective communication throughout own area and across others.

Others
Promotes positive partnerships and collaboration across the University; ensures equality, diversity and wellbeing are central to policy making.

University
Looks beyond the University and proactively explores how to involve other potential stakeholders, leads in building and sustaining an inclusive working environment.

Contra-indicators
- Lacks awareness of competitors and market trends
- Fails to appreciate interlinking of workflow.
- Fails to pay due regard to needs of the community as a whole.

How we developed this approach

Co-creation
The approach has been developed through co-creation, collaboration and piloting. In this process a small project team lead by Carol Steed, Leadership and Management Director, worked with a group of over 150 potential users in defining the parameters and uses of a competency framework for the University of Nottingham.

By doing this we have ensured that the final approach is entirely bespoke for the needs of all staff at the University of Nottingham.

During this process we explored several key areas including:
- relevance to role
- ease of use
- ease of understanding
- what participants think a competency framework is for
- possible structure and content of the approach
- the difference between skills-based and behavioural-based frameworks and the advantages and disadvantages of both
- how people will use this approach in practice Managers – Middle, Senior and Executive

Participants
The people involved in the co-creation and follow-up sessions were a representatives sample of University staff and covered different levels and job families. The group included over 150 participants from:
- Research and Teaching
- Administrative, Professional and Managerial
- Operations and Facilities
- Technical Services
- Managers – Middle, Senior and Executive

Output
This approach and guide is a key output of this activity.

Further information
If you have any questions, please contact the HR Department:

+44 (0)115 951 5559
hr@nottingham.ac.uk

This publication is available in alternative formats.

+44 (0)115 951 5559

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If you have any questions, please contact the HR Department:

+44 (0)115 95 15202
hr@nottingham.ac.uk
nottingham.ac.uk/hr