



University of  
**Nottingham**

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# Building a Culture for Success

A guide for staff at the University of  
Nottingham on our expectations and  
behaviours for success



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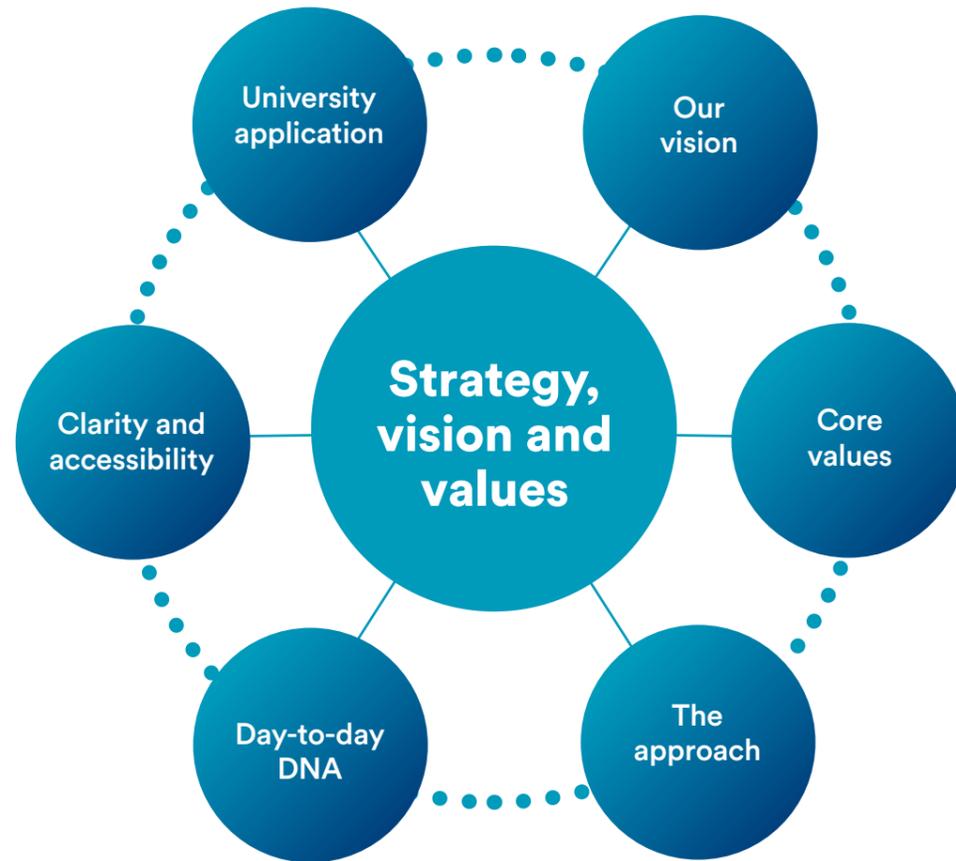


“  
**The University  
 will spread  
 the light of  
 learning and  
 knowledge.**”

*Jesse Boot*



# 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.



## Our vision is...

to be a university without borders, where we embrace the opportunities presented by a changing world, and where ambitious people and a creative culture will enable us to change the world for the better.

## 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.

## The approach

This approach focuses on how people perform in their role and is therefore quite distinct from knowledge (what you need to know in order to do the job) and skills (needed to perform, for example technical or management skills). We have developed a range of expectations and behaviours for success at work. It could also be called a competency framework.

This approach helps people to explore how well they apply their skills, knowledge and experience to their work and also how they reflect the culture and values of the University through their behaviour and attitude.

## 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.

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

## 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.

## 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.

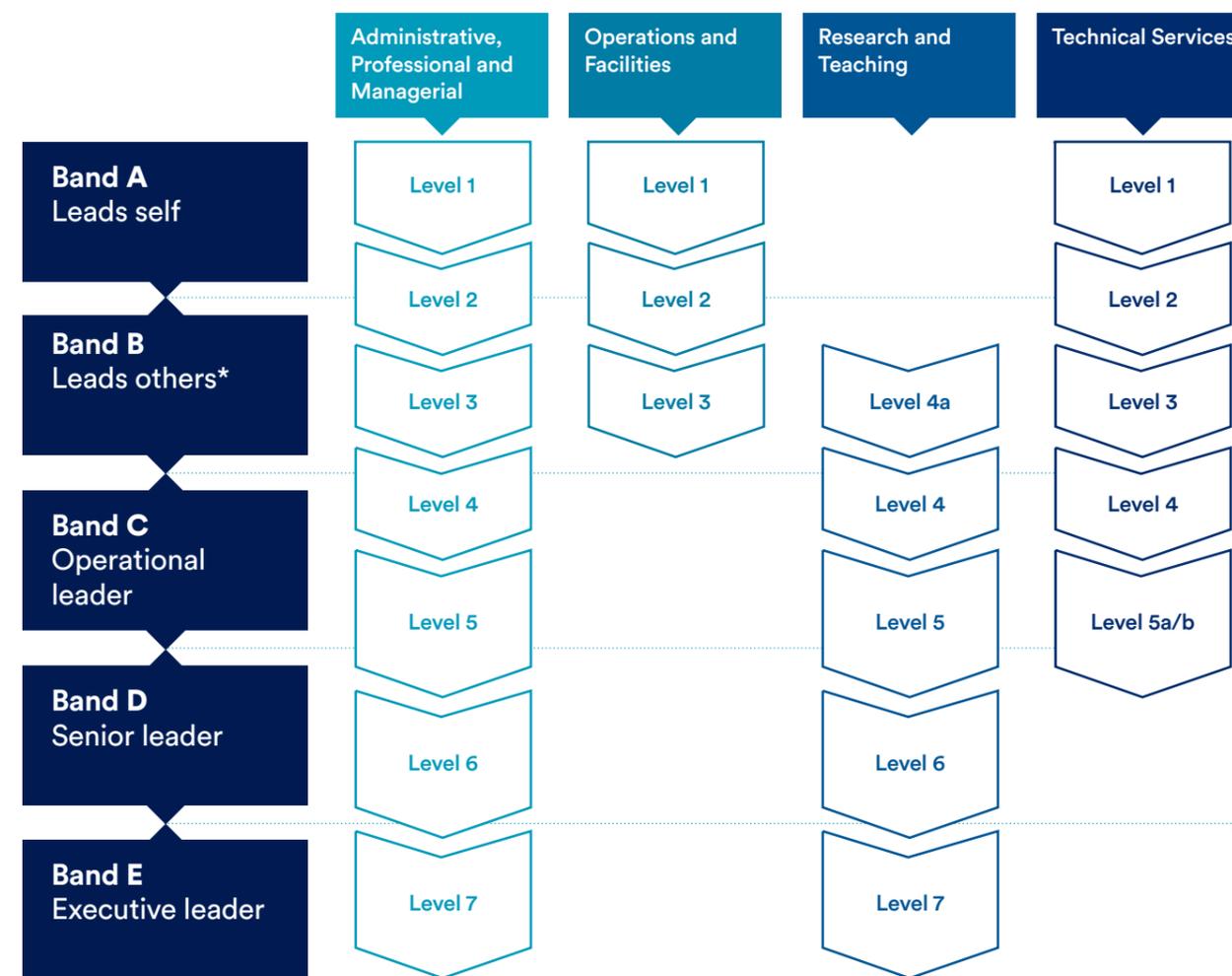
# How the approach aligns to job families

Use this page to identify which band your job level is aligned to.

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:

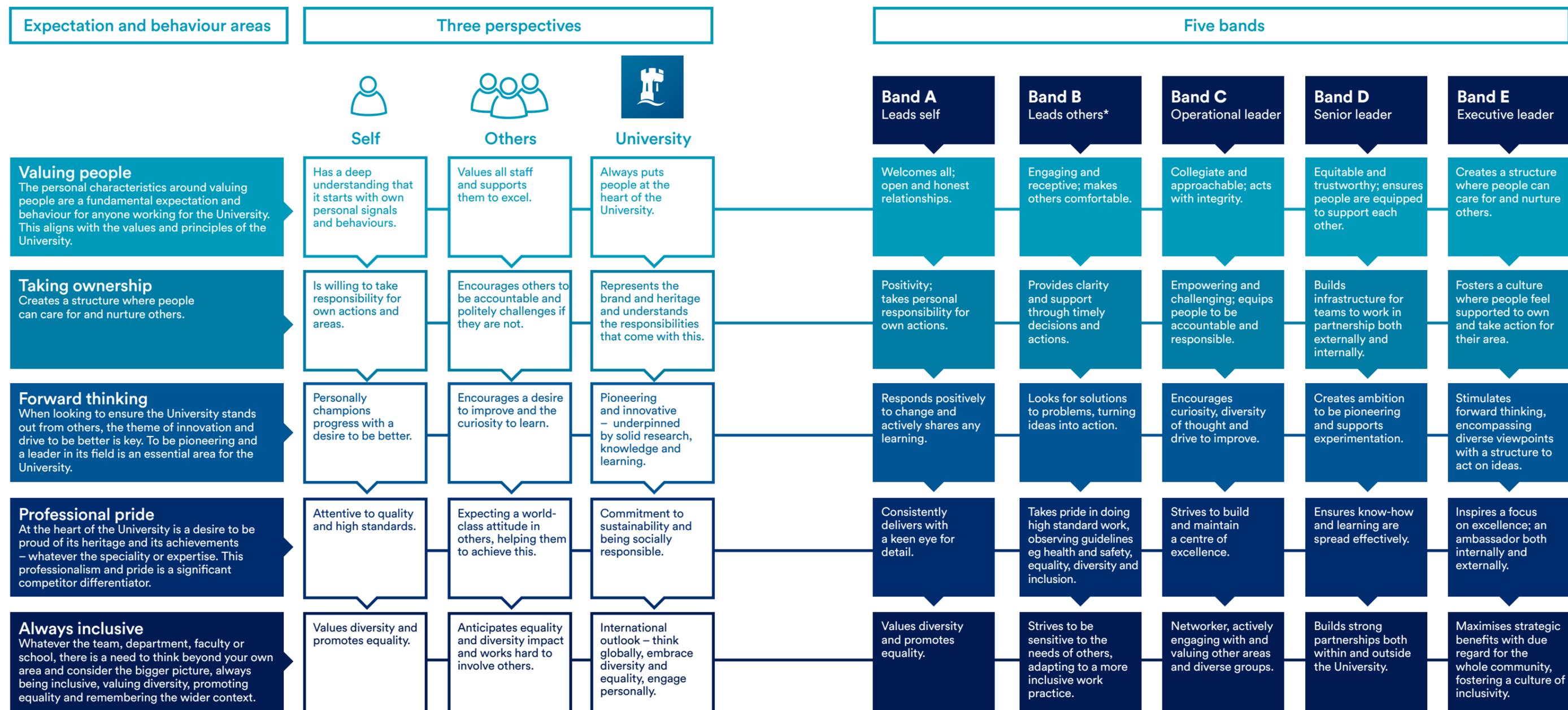


\* Leads others includes experts who may not have direct reports.

# The expectation and behaviour areas

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

The equally important perspectives are Self (how you operate personally), Others (how you work with others) and University (how you act as an ambassador for the University). For a detailed view of the expectations and behaviours for your band, refer to the following pages (pages 10-14).



\* Leads others includes experts who may not have direct reports.

# The details: Band A – Leads self

|                           |  Self                            |  Others                             |  University  |  Contra-indicators   |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Valuing people</b>     | Polite, courteous and honest at all times.  | Open, welcoming and caring to others, making time to meet.   | Always respects and considers the students' point of view as well as that of colleagues.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tends not to listen.</li> <li>■ Voices negative judgements about others.</li> <li>■ Rarely offers encouragement.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Taking ownership</b>   | Positive and takes responsibility for own actions, confident to say what they think.                              | Shows initiative, acts and responds to needs of others, tactfully offers practical guidance and advice.              | Understands how their role fits into the wider University.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Negativity, causing disruptions or factions.</li> <li>■ Blames others for errors.</li> <li>■ Makes excuses for underperformance.</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Forward thinking</b>   | Keen to learn and upskill, responds positively to change.   | Comfortable sharing ideas with others and receiving feedback or new ideas for how to improve.                        | Passionate about University's ambition to improve and clear about own role to help achieve this.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tendency to be behind the times.</li> <li>■ Dismissive of the suggestions and ideas of others.</li> <li>■ Reluctant to embrace new ideas.</li> </ul>                   |
| <b>Professional pride</b> | Self-appraising with awareness of the details, does what is expected well, first time.                            | Seeks feedback from others and contributes to the team.  | Demonstrates professionalism, great role-model for the University observing policies at all times eg health and safety and equality and diversity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Takes unacceptable risks.</li> <li>■ Accepting of inappropriate behaviour.</li> <li>■ Compromises quality for the sake of speed.</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Always inclusive</b>   | Aware of and sensitive to needs relating to different cultures, disabilities and other protected characteristics. | Recognises that everyone has an important role, irrespective of level, and the importance of equality and diversity. | Considers the wider implications across the whole community.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Makes little effort to consider alternative views</li> <li>■ Is dismissive about others' values or identities.</li> <li>■ Doesn't consider the big picture.</li> </ul> |

# The details: Band B – Leads others

|                           |  Self   |  Others  |  University                         |  Contra-indicators   |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Valuing people</b>     | Friendly, engaging and receptive.  | Puts others at ease, is willing to listen and is calm and patient ensuring the development of team, includes local safety policy and procedures.      | Goes out of way to ensure students feel cared for and comfortable.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Readily shows anxiety, annoyance or frustration.</li> <li>■ Interrupts when others are speaking.</li> <li>■ Appears distracted and uninterested in others.</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Taking ownership</b>   | Makes timely decisions, takes necessary action, and implements aspects of all plans, including health and safety, relevant to own area.      | Is clear about what is required, encouraging others to be accountable, adapting style as necessary.   | Respects and works to processes and guiding principles set out by the University.                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Misses deadlines, puts off making decisions or makes decisions too quickly.</li> <li>■ Makes excuses for underperformance</li> <li>■ Has a command/control approach.</li> </ul>                          |
| <b>Forward thinking</b>   | Effective planner, proactively looks for solutions to problems, seeking best practice and better ways of working.                            | Proactively shares learning and experience to develop others, helping them to turn ideas into action and in turn actively seeks feedback from others. | Supports University drive to improve through own actions, taking the opportunity to learn when it goes wrong.          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unwilling to challenge the status quo.</li> <li>■ Stifles innovation in others.</li> <li>■ Limits learning and development and withholds good practice.</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Professional pride</b> | Sets the example of how the job should be performed, setting personally stretching objectives, actively works to improve internal processes. | Expects a high standard in others and supports them to achieve this.  | Through own standards establishes a quality foundation in own area of expertise for the University.                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Compromises quality or tolerates poor workmanship. Is undemanding of others.</li> <li>■ Accepts and does not flag non-conformance to policy.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Always inclusive</b>   | Positive about diversity and equality for all people, flexing and adapting style as necessary.   | Welcomes contribution from others, invites comments and input to decisions and in turn is willing to put forward own ideas.                           | Promotes an inclusive and welcoming approach across internal and external communities, embracing change and diversity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Perceived to practice favouritism or inequality.</li> <li>■ Ignores or is resistant to change and/or others' perspectives</li> <li>■ Neglects to keep other parts of the University informed.</li> </ul> |

Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Band A.

# The details: Band C – Operational leader

|                           |  Self                             |  Others  |  University  |  Contra-indicators  |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Valuing people</b>     | Fair, collegiate and trustworthy in all they do; comfortable explaining reasons for decisions.                     | Proactively seeks ways to support others to develop, effectively working as a team.   | Understands the importance of working with integrity across the University.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reluctant to show compassion.</li> <li>Is impatient or disrespectful of others.</li> <li>Intolerant of failure and understanding limits of others.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Taking ownership</b>   | Self-aware, challenging themselves to be better, taking on board feedback.   | Through own actions inspires, empowers and equips others to be accountable and responsible, offering constructive feedback.         | Ensures the University requirements are interpreted accurately and translated into own workload including health and safety and equality and diversity plans and objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides little guidance when others are struggling.</li> <li>Misses the opportunity to explore the wider implications. Takes decisions without involving others.</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Forward thinking</b>   | Has a personal ambition to question and explore new ideas and embedding learning points from when things go wrong. | Encourages ambition to be leading edge, supporting considered experimentation, assessing any potential associated risk.             | Embraces University's ambition to be leading the way in terms of know-how and learning.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks initiative to learn from mistakes or recognise opportunities to do something better.</li> <li>Fails to address issues affecting the team.</li> <li>Does not adequately consider risks.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Professional pride</b> | Works at a high standard in own area of expertise following quality systems and control measures.                  | Engages others; requesting, expecting and achieving high quality work, identifying gaps or needs and making plans to address these. | Recognises and promotes the need for the University to enhance its performance, effectively balancing risk and costs.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks ambition for own area</li> <li>Losing touch with some or all key stakeholders</li> <li>Misaligned to overall goals of the University.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Always inclusive</b>   | Demonstrates and actively encourages inclusivity, making connections and networks beyond own immediate area.       | Proactively seeks to involve others and understand their differences.   | Makes the University accessible to the wider community, leading change to facilitate equality of outcomes, taking into account health, safety and wellbeing.                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only considers the evidence for own area.</li> <li>Does not rigorously consider the impact on the community.</li> <li>Does not communicate important information.</li> </ul>                            |

Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Bands A and B.

# The details: Band D – Senior leader

|                           |  Self   |  Others  |  University                         |  Contra-indicators   |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Valuing people</b>     | Inherent curiosity and desire to understand people, recognising that communication is a critical part of the role.   | Provides a structure for people to thrive, feel supported and valued and that their health, safety and wellbeing is being managed (including mental wellbeing). | Creates a healthy working environment that encourages networking across the University.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considers rank more important than equality.</li> <li>Impatient and does not stretch people.</li> <li>Does not support people to be the best they can be.</li> </ul>                   |
| <b>Taking ownership</b>   | Has a clear vision of what can be achieved, clearly communicates the direction and focus, effectively deploying people and resources to achieve this.            | Inspires people to achieve beyond what they think they can, providing infrastructure and opportunities for teams to work cross-departmentally.                  | Recognises the importance of partnerships and stakeholder management to the University both internally and externally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not respond well to pressure</li> <li>Works in own silo.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Forward thinking</b>   | Desire to be pioneering in own area of expertise, anticipating change, future needs and challenges.  | Breaks down barriers to innovation, championing curiosity in others with a focus to improve and enhance their service.  | Hungry to be a key player to help the University achieve its goal to be a global leader.                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gets caught up in new ideas without considering full implications.</li> <li>Afraid of trial and error.</li> <li>Reluctant to take a risk even with strong evidence.</li> </ul>         |
| <b>Professional pride</b> | 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. | Rewards ideas and celebrates success, ensuring thought leadership and learning are spread; teams feel equipped to effectively share their knowledge.            | Challenges internal systems and procedures that seem to get in the way of achieving the University goals.              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disinclined to share.</li> <li>Focuses on what is not working well, fostering a blame culture.</li> <li>Does not tackle the big issues that get in the way.</li> </ul>                 |
| <b>Always inclusive</b>   | Understands critical importance of creating partnerships and communicating beyond own area of expertise both internally and externally.                          | Motivates others to build connections, trust and rapport across other areas.  | Ensures collaboration is in line with University goals, paying due regard to the needs of the whole community.         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes a "one size fits all" approach to communication.</li> <li>Tolerates negativity about other teams.</li> <li>Does not value or learn from diverse identities and ideas.</li> </ul> |

Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Bands A, B and C.

# The details: Band E – Executive leader

|                    | Self   | Others   | University  | Contra-indicators   |
|--------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Valuing people     | Understands and role models behaviours; is approachable and accessible maintaining high ethical standards.   | Gains cooperation and support from peers and creates a nurturing and stimulating approach to develop talent and enhance wellbeing.                     | Cultivates a collaborative workplace, balancing the needs of customers, stakeholders and the wider University.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Uses power and politics to the detriment of the University.</li> <li>■ Only focuses on own aspirations</li> <li>■ Does not set health, wellbeing and safety objectives for team.</li> </ul>    |
| Taking ownership   | Communicates a clear vision of the future, taking time to be understood; puts forward effective solutions to complex problems.                             | Fosters a culture where people feel supported to own and take action, challenging people to find the best solution for the University.                 | Develops strategy for area to be in line with and deliver to the University strategies recognising the importance of health and safety and equality and diversity policy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ignores tough issues, conflict or poor performance.</li> <li>■ Criticises or does not take ownership of board decisions</li> <li>■ Disregards emergency procedures/risk.</li> </ul>            |
| Forward thinking   | Maintains optimism and keeps momentum going, creating a structure to drive continuous improvement while assessing potential risk.                          | Stimulates agile and forward thinking in others, motivating others and giving them confidence to try new things, never compromising health and safety. | Despite pressure to respond to change remains focussed on the University strategic goals.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Unwilling to try different approaches.</li> <li>■ Fails to establish clear priorities.</li> <li>■ Fails to register potential risk.</li> </ul>   |
| Professional pride | Drives through the University strategic aims and business goals ensuring plans are aligned to achieve the long term strategy despite short-term pressures. | Challenges people to focus on the best option for the University and department, faculty or school, making sure timelines and goals are achieved.      | Benchmarks performance against "best in class"; takes every opportunity to celebrate achievements of own department, faculty or school.                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Loses focus, does not monitor progress against key milestones</li> <li>■ Ignores poor performance.</li> <li>■ Does not invest time in own professional development.</li> </ul>                 |
| Always inclusive   | Ensures inclusive and accessible structures are in place for effective communication throughout own area and across others.                                | Promotes positive partnerships and collaboration across the University; ensures equality, diversity and wellbeing are central to policy making.        | Looks beyond the University and proactively explores how to involve other potential stakeholders; leads in building and sustaining an inclusive working environment.      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lacks awareness of competitors and market trends.</li> <li>■ Fails to appreciate interlinking of workflow.</li> <li>■ Fails to pay due regard to needs of the community as a whole.</li> </ul> |

Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Bands A, B, C and D.

# 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 representative 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:

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