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

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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 reputation – our people
Our reputation and heritage are a critical driver for our continued success. We deliver our reputation through our people. Therefore how we manage, support and develop our people is essential to our future success and reputation as a world leader.

Core values
To be able to deliver our ambition and vision through our global strategy we have to be clear about our core principles and values. To make sure we achieve these we also have to be clear about the expectations we have of our people and how these align to our strategy. To that end together we have created the University of Nottingham Building a Culture for Success guide, which outlines the expectations and behaviours of our people at work.

Our values as set out in our strategy are to:
■ put students at the heart of the University
■ value all staff and support them to excel
■ focus on quality and excellence
■ value diversity and promote equality
■ think globally, deliver locally, and engage personally
■ take an international view across all our activities

Day-to-day DNA
Making this approach part of our everyday working lives is key to our future success. These 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.

We add to the honour of our city and help to increase the wellbeing of our nation.

Jesse Boot

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
Consistent expectations and behaviours that become part of our day-to-day working will result in a sense of purpose and a more motivated work force and ultimately happier students, enabling us to achieve our goals and vision.
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:

**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.

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**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.

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**Recruitment and selection**

To ensure we are bringing the right people into the University, the expectations and behaviours are now built into the attraction, screening and selection process, indeed right across recruitment and talent identification.

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

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* 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 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.

#### Three perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuing people</td>
<td>Has a deep understanding that it starts with own personal signals and behaviours.</td>
<td>Values all staff and supports them to excel.</td>
<td>Always puts people at the heart of the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking ownership</td>
<td>Is willing to take responsibility for own actions and areas.</td>
<td>Encourages others to be accountable and politely challenges if they are not.</td>
<td>Represents the brand and heritage and understands the responsibilities that come with this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward thinking</td>
<td>Personally champions progress with a desire to be better.</td>
<td>Encourages a desire to improve and the curiosity to learn.</td>
<td>Pioneering and innovative – underpinned by solid research, knowledge and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional pride</td>
<td>Attentive to quality and high standards.</td>
<td>Expecting a world-class attitude in others, helping them to achieve this.</td>
<td>Commitment to sustainability and being socially responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always inclusive</td>
<td>Values diversity and promotes equality.</td>
<td>Anticipates equality and diversity impact and works hard to involve others.</td>
<td>International outlook – think globally, embrace diversity and equality, engage personally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Five bands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Leads self</th>
<th>Leads others*</th>
<th>Operational leader</th>
<th>Senior leader</th>
<th>Executive leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Welcome all; open and honest relationships.</td>
<td>Engaging and receptive; makes others comfortable.</td>
<td>Collegiate and approachable; acts with integrity.</td>
<td>Equitable and trustworthy; ensures people are equipped to support each other.</td>
<td>Creates a structure where people can care for and nurture others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Positivity; takes personal responsibility for own actions.</td>
<td>Provides clarity and support through timely decisions and actions.</td>
<td>Empowering and challenging; ensures people to be accountable and responsible.</td>
<td>Builds infrastructure for teams to work in partnership both externally and internally.</td>
<td>Fosters a culture where people feel supported to own and take action for their area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Responds positively to change and actively shares any learning.</td>
<td>Looks for solutions to problems, turning ideas into action.</td>
<td>Encourages curiosity, diversity of thought and drive to improve.</td>
<td>Creates ambition to be pioneering and supports experimentation.</td>
<td>Stimulates forward thinking, encompassing diverse viewpoints with a structure to act on ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Consistently delivers with a keen eye for detail.</td>
<td>Takes pride in doing high standard work, observing guidelines and being socially responsible.</td>
<td>Strives to build and maintain a centre of excellence.</td>
<td>Ensures knowledge and learning are spread effectively.</td>
<td>Inspires a focus on excellence; an ambassador both internally and externally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Values diversity and promotes equality.</td>
<td>Strives to be sensitive to the needs of others, adapting to a more inclusive work practice.</td>
<td>Networker, actively engaging with and valuing other areas and diverse groups.</td>
<td>Builds strong partnerships both within and outside the University.</td>
<td>Maximises strategic benefits with due regard for the whole community, fostering a culture of inclusivity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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).
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The details:
Band A – Leads self

**Valuing people**
- Polite, courteous and honest at all times.
- Takes responsibility for own actions, always sticks to what they think.

**Taking ownership**
- Positive and takes initiative for own actions, always sticks to what they think.
- Shows initiative, acts and responds to needs of others, tactfully offers practical guidance and advice.

**Forward thinking**
- Keen to learn and upskill, responds positively to change.
- Comfortable sharing ideas with others and receiving feedback or new ideas for how to improve.

**Professional pride**
- Self-protecting and aware of the details, does what is expected well, first time.
- Seeks feedback from others and contributes to the team.

**Always inclusive**
- Awareness of and sensitive to needs relating to different cultures, disabilities and other protected characteristics.
- Recognises that diversity is important role, irrespective of level, and the importance of equality and diversity.

**Contra-indicators**
- Tends not to listen.
- Voices negative judgements about others.
- Rarely offers encouragement.

The details:
Band B – Leads others

**Valuing people**
- Friendly, engaging and receptive.
- Seeks feedback from others.

**Taking ownership**
- Makes timely decisions, takes necessary action, and implements aspects of all plans, including health and safety, relevant to own area.
- Proactively shares learning and experience to develop others, helping them to turn ideas into action and in turn actively seeks feedback from others.

**Forward thinking**
- Sets the example of how the job should be performed, setting personally stretching objectives, actively works to improve internal processes.
- Seeks feedback from others and supports them to achieve this.

**Professional pride**
- Sets the example of how the job should be performed, setting personally stretching objectives, actively works to improve internal processes.
- Seeks feedback from others and supports them to achieve this.

**Always inclusive**
- 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.

**Contra-indicators**
- Ready to show anxiety, annoyance or frustration, interrupts when others are speaking.
- Appears distracted and uninterested in others.

Please note: these are in addition to those listed for Band A.
## The details: Band C – Operational leader

### Valuing people

**Self**  
Fair, collegiate and trustworthy in all they do; comfortable explaining reasons for decisions.

**Others**  
Proactively seeks ways to support others to develop, effectively working as a team.

**University**  
Understands the importance of working with integrity across the University.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Reluctant to show own strength.
- Is impatient or disrespectful of others.
- Intolerant of failure and understanding limits of others.

### Taking ownership

**Self**  
Self-aware, challenging themselves to be accountable on board feedback.

**Others**  
Through own actions inspires, empowers and equips others to be accountable and responsible, offering constructive feedback.

**University**  
Ensures the University requirements are interpreted accurately and translated into own workload including health and safety and equality and diversity plans and objectives.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Provides little guidance when others are struggling.
- Misses the opportunity to explore the wider implications.Takes decisions without involving others.

### Professional pride

**Self**  
Has a personal ambition to question and explore new ideas and learning points from which things go wrong.

**Others**  
Encourages ambition to be leading edge, supporting considered experimentation, assessing any potential associated risk.

**University**  
Embraces University’s ambition to be leading the way in terms of know-how and learning.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Lacks initiative to learn from mistakes or recognise opportunities to do something better.
- Fails to address issues affecting the team.
- Does not adequately consider risks.

### Forward thinking

**Self**  
Works at a high standard in own area of expertise, following quality systems and control measures.

**Others**  
Engages others; requesting, enacting and achieving high quality work, identifying gaps or needs and making plans to address these.

**University**  
Recognises and promotes the need for the University to enhance its performance, effectively balancing risk and costs.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Lacks ambition for own area.
- Failing to connect with some or all key stakeholders.
- Misaligned to overall goals of the University.

### Always inclusive

**Self**  
Demonstrates and actively encourages inclusivity, making connections and networks beyond own immediate area.

**Others**  
Proactively seeks to involve others and understand their differences.

**University**  
Makes the University accessible to the wider community, leading change to facilitate equality of outcomes, taking into account health, safety, and wellbeing.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Only considers the evidence for own area.
- Does not rigorously consider the impact on the community.
- Does not communicate important information.

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## The details: Band D – Senior leader

### Valuing people

**Self**  
Inherent curiosity and desire to understand people, recognising that communication is a critical part of the role.

**Others**  
Has a clear vision to achieve what they think they can, providing infrastructure and opportunities for teams to work cross-divisionally.

**University**  
Provides a structure for people to thrive, feel supported and valued and that their health, safety and wellbeing is being managed (including mental wellbeing).

**Contra-indicators**  
- Considers rank more important than equality.
- Impatient and does not stretch people.
- Does not support people to be the best they can be.

### Taking ownership

**Self**  
Has a clear vision and drive to achieve goals, maintaining a focus to enhance their performance.

**Others**  
Desire to be pioneering in own area of expertise, anticipating changes, future needs and challenges.

**University**  
Breaks down barriers to innovation, championing curiosity in others with a focus to improve and enhance their service.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Gets caught up in new ideas without considering full implications.
- Afraid of trial and error.
- Reluctant to take a risk even with strong evidence.

### Professional pride

**Self**  
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.

**Others**  
Rewards ideas and celebrates success, ensuring thought leadership and learning are spread; teams feel equipped to effectively share their knowledge.

**University**  
Challenges internal systems and procedures that seem to get in the way of achieving the University goals.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Disinclined to share.
- Focuses on what is not working well, fostering a blame culture.
- Does not tackle the big issues that get in the way.

### Always inclusive

**Self**  
Understands critical importance of creating partnerships and communicating beyond own area of expertise both internally and externally.

**Others**  
Motivates others to build connections, trust and rapport across other areas.

**University**  
Ensures collaboration is in line with University goals, paying due regard to the needs of the whole community.

**Contra-indicators**  
- Takes a ‘one size fits all’ approach to communication.
- Tolerates negativity about other teams.
- Does not value or learn from diverse identities and ideas.
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The details: Band E – Executive leader

Valuing people
Understands and role models behaviours, is approachable and accessible maintaining high ethical standards.

Taking ownership
Communicates a clear vision of the future, taking time to be understood and putting forward effective and creative solutions to complex problems.

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

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

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

Self
Valuing people
- Understands 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.
- Cultivates a collaborative workplace, balancing the needs of customers, stakeholders and the wider University.
- Uses power and politics to the detriment of the University.
- Only focuses on own aspirations.
- Does not set health, wellbeing and safety objectives for team.

University
- Communicates a culture where people feel supported to own and take action, challenging people to find the best solution for the University.
- 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.
- Ignores tough issues, conflict or poor performance.
- Criticises or does not take ownership of board decisions.
- Disregards emergency procedures or risk.

Contra-indicators
- Unwilling to try different approaches.
- Fails to establish clear priorities.
- Fails to register potential risk.

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
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