

*Draft in progress*

***PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS  
FOR EXECUTIVES***



**Queensland  
Government**

**Education  
Queensland**



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Education Queensland's success is directly related to the capability of its people. This is particularly pertinent for senior leaders in the organisation. Senior leaders establish the strategic intent of the organisation and achieve success through the leadership and management of others. To enhance their performance, and the success of the organisation, it is essential that the skills, knowledge and behaviours of executives are clearly articulated and align directly to the State Education 2010 Strategy.

To this end the Professional Standards for Executives in Education Queensland were developed in partnership with Development Dimensions International (DDI). The Standards have been customised to fit the language and context of Education Queensland and provide the framework for succession planning, recruitment, selection, performance and development of executives.

In customising the Standards for Education Queensland, it was evident in the descriptors that there are two levels of performance. The first level being those THRESHOLD or entry level, knowledge, skills and behaviours, which are essential for minimal effectiveness in the role. The second level are those DIFFERENTIATING knowledge, skills and behaviours that distinguish superior performance from average performance.<sup>1</sup> The two levels provide an important framework for individual performance and the focus of the organisation's Executive Development Program.

There are eleven Standards and they are as follows:

**Differentiating Competencies**

Executive Behaviour  
Aligning Performance for Success  
Reconceptualises Strategic Direction  
Building Successful Teams  
Change Leadership  
Client Orientation  
Building Partnerships

**Threshold Competencies**

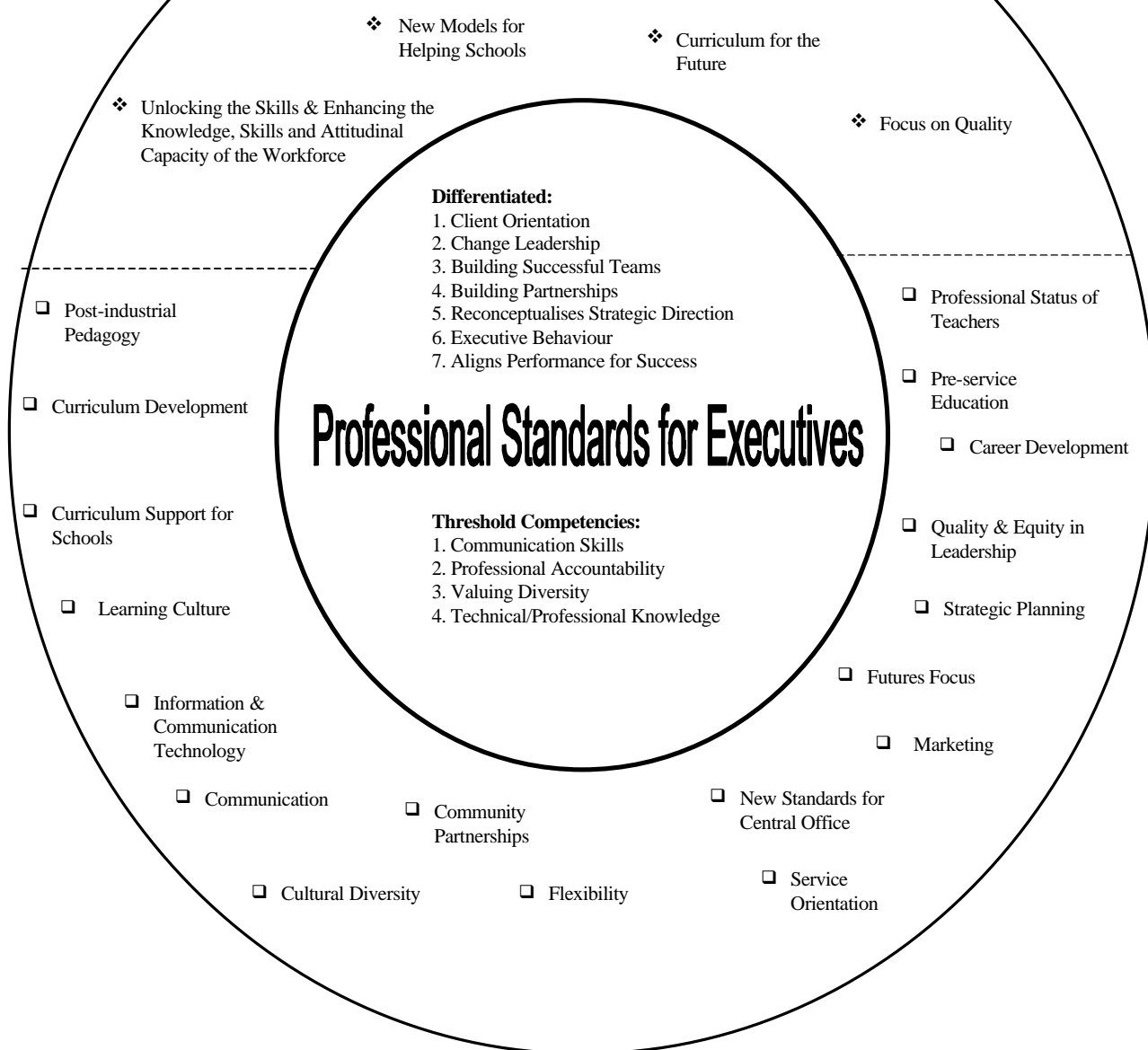
Communication Skills  
Professional Accountability  
Valuing Diversity  
Technical/Professional Knowledge & Skills

<sup>1</sup> ( *Spencer & Spencer – ‘Competency at Work: Models for Superior Performance’ 1993*)

## Key Roles

Key Roles	Executive Standards
LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Behaviour</li><li>• Communication Skills</li></ul>
MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aligns Performance for Success</li><li>• Valuing Diversity</li></ul>
PEOPLE & PARTNERSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building a Successful Team</li><li>• Builds Partnerships</li></ul>
CHANGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change Leadership</li><li>• Technical/Professional Knowledge &amp; Skills</li></ul>
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Client Orientation</li></ul>
ACCOUNTABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reconceptualises Strategic Direction</li><li>• Professional Accountability</li></ul>

# Future needs that will assist in our journey to 2010



**Executive Behaviour** – Demonstrating qualities, traits or attributes (excluding intelligence, competence, or special talents) that contribute to the ability to effectively relate to and identify with peers and superiors; conveying an image that is consistent with the organisation’s executive team.

*Key Actions:*

- Advocates for organisation
  - Champions organisational decisions and values in a credible way (eg. When interacting with media, external stakeholders and internal personnel).
- Manages stress
  - Remains dispassionate under conditions of emotional stress; remains calm and deliberate when confronted by work-related stress or by opposition from others; does not overreact.
- Has impact
  - Exhibits a presence that contributes to the ability to command attention and respect; conveys an air of confidence and instils confidence in others.
- Demonstrates corporate diplomacy
  - Conducts interactions with peers, senior management and stakeholders in a politically astute manner; displays understanding of organisation needs and relationships so as to get things done within complex organisation structures and public environments.
- Exhibits flexibility/adaptability
  - Maintains effectiveness in varying environments and with different tasks, responsibilities and people.
- Behaves ethically
  - Conducts self in an above-reproach manner consistent with expectations and mores of society.
- Knows self
  - Understands own strengths and weaknesses as well as impact on others; is open to feedback from others.
- Maintains personal health and well-being
  - Exhibits a personal energy to achieve success; balances work priorities with personal life so that neither is neglected; maintains healthy lifestyle.

**Aligning Performance for Success** – Focusing and guiding others in accomplishing work objectives.

*Key Actions:*

- Sets performance goals
  - Collaboratively works with direct reports to set meaningful performance objectives; sets specific performance goals and identifies measures for evaluating goal achievement.
- Establishes approach
  - Collaboratively works with direct reports to identify the behaviours, knowledge, and skills required to achieve goals; identifies specific behaviours, knowledge, and skill area for focus and evaluation.
- Creates a learning environment
  - As necessary, helps secure resources required to support development efforts; ensures that opportunities for development are available; offers to help individuals overcome obstacles to learning.
- Collaboratively establishes development plans
  - Collaboratively identifies learning and development opportunities, eg. observation, feedback, coaching and mentoring etc, that will help the individual achieve important goals.
- Tracks performance
  - Implements a system or uses techniques to track performance against goals and to track the acquisition and use of appropriate behaviours, knowledge, and skills.
- Evaluates performance
  - Holds regular formal discussions with each report to discuss progress toward goals and review performance; evaluates each goal.

**Reconceptualises Strategic Direction** – Securing information and identifying key issues and relationships relevant to achieving a long-range goal or vision; establishing and committing to a course of action to accomplish a long-range goal or vision after developing alternative courses of action based on logical assumptions and factual information and taking into consideration resources, constraints, and organisational values.

*Key Actions:*

- Gathers information
  - Identifies/recognises information gaps or need for additional data and obtains it by describing what needs to be known and the means to obtain it; asks relevant, clear and specific questions to verify facts and obtain additional information.
- Organises information
  - Organises information/data to identify/explain trends, problems and causes; compares/contrasts/combines information to identify underlying issues; sees associations between seemingly independent problems to recognise possible cause-effect relationships.
- Performs data analysis
  - Organises and interrogates quantitative data to identify/explain trends and problems and their causes.
- Evaluates/Selects strategies
  - Generates and considers options to achieve long-term goal/vision; develops decision criteria considering all pertinent factors; considers risks of options; aligns strategies with organisation's long-range goal/vision and other business unit strategies; selects most probable option for success.
- Develops timelines
  - Analyses short and long term strategic goals and determines long-range objectives; develops initial timelines based on these strategic goals.
- Establishes implementation plan
  - Identifies the key tasks necessary to achieve the desired objectives.
- Executes plan
  - Ensures execution of developed strategies.

**Building a Successful Team** – Using appropriate methods and a flexible interpersonal style to help build a cohesive team; facilitating the completion of goals.

*Key Actions:*

- Develops direction
  - Ensures that the purpose and importance of the team are clarified (eg. team has clear values, goals and plans); guides the setting of specific and measurable team goals and objectives.
- Develops structure
  - Helps to clarify roles and responsibilities of team members; helps ensure that necessary steering, review, or support functions are in place.
- Facilitates goal accomplishment
- Involves others
  - Listens to and fully involves others in team decisions and actions; values and uses individual differences and talents.
- Informs others on team
  - Shares important or relevant information with the team.
- Models commitment
  - Adheres to the team's expectations and guidelines; fulfils team responsibilities; demonstrates personal commitment to the team.
- Manages conflict
  - Confronts differences and explores methods of resolution.

**Change Leadership** – Continuously seeking (or encouraging others to seek) opportunities for different and innovative approaches to addressing organisational problems and opportunities; facilitating the use of knowledge or help from outside the workplace (from the larger organisation or outside the organisation) to identify potential problems or improvement opportunities; advocating the need for self or others to seek a better way to address work process issues.

*Key Actions:*

- Recognises opportunities
  - Recognises problems as opportunities for process improvement; learns from mistakes.
- Encourages boundary breaking
  - Encourages associates to question established work processes or assumptions; challenges associates to ask “why” until root cause is discovered; involves stakeholders in continuous improvement actions and alternatives.
- Values sound approaches
  - Consistently remains open to ideas offered by others; recommends and uses good ideas from sources outside immediate work group to solve problems; takes calculated risks.
- Addresses change resistance
  - Helps individuals overcome resistance to change; shows empathy with those who feel loss as a result of change.
- Manages complexity, contradictions and paradoxes
  - Implements sound approaches that minimise or reduce complexities, contradictions and paradoxes; works to achieve effective systems and/or common processes; readily makes adjustments when implemented approaches do not work.

**Client Orientation** – Actively seeking input from internal and/or external clients to better understand client needs, perceptions etc; making efforts to ensure that client needs are listened to and understood by self and other team members, thus making client focus a driving force behind program/project activities; placing high value on client enthusiasm by exceeding client expectations.

*Key Actions:*

- Facilitates open communication
  - States action-oriented purpose in client meetings that focuses the discussion on the client's needs; establishes rapport; uses effective questioning style and other procedural suggestions to facilitate discussion.
- Clarifies mutual understanding of client needs
  - Gains full understanding of the client's position by seeking/confirming information and opinions; questions client assumptions in such a way that hidden needs can be surfaced.
- Develops ideas/solutions
  - Presents information relevant to solutions or alternatives; seeks client's ideas and suggestions about solutions or alternatives.
- Gains agreement
  - Gains agreement that proposed solutions/alternatives would successfully address the client's needs/ideas; summarises and clarifies potential solutions/alternatives in relation to client's acceptance of alternatives; clarifies any needed follow-up actions.
- Manages client expectations
  - Avoids unreasonable commitments.
- Follows up
  - Initiates appropriate actions based upon client input.
- Maintains client trust
  - Listens and responds with empathy to client issues or ideas; acknowledges client contributions to discussion in a manner that maintains esteem.

**Building Partnerships** – Identifying opportunities and taking action to build strategic relationships between one's area and other areas, teams, departments, units, or organisations to help achieve business goals.

*Key Actions:*

- Identifies partnership needs
  - Analyses the organisation and own area to identify key relationships that should be initiated or improved to further the attainment of own area's goals.
- Explores partnership opportunities
  - Exchanges information with potential partner areas to clarify partnership benefits and potential problems; collaboratively determines the scope and expectations of the partnership so that both areas' needs can be met.
- Formulates action plans
  - Collaboratively determines courses of action to realise mutual goals; facilitates agreement on each partner's responsibilities and needed support.
- Subordinates own area's goals
  - Places higher priority on organisation's goals than on own area's goals; anticipates effects of own area's actions and decisions on partners; influences others to support partnership objectives.
- Monitors partnership
  - Implements effective means for monitoring and evaluating the partnership process and the attainment of mutual goals.
- Negotiation
  - Effectively explores alternatives and positions to reach outcomes that gain the support and acceptance of all parties.

**Communication Skills** – Expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas effectively in individual and group situations (including nonverbal communication); presenting ideas effectively when given time for preparation (including use of visual aids); clearly expressing ideas in memoranda, letters, or reports that have appropriate organisation and structure, correct grammar, and language and terminology; adjusting language to the characteristics and needs of the audience.

*Key Actions:*

- Builds commitment
  - Gains commitment to vision/direction, values individual and unit goals in a manner that motivates individuals to achieve.
- Promotes confidence
  - Conveys an air of conviction and assurance, speaks positively about the organisation's and own area's ability to achieve identified goals; discourages others from undermining organisational or own area's initiatives.
- Oral mechanics
  - Uses appropriate grammar and vocabulary; uses words relevant to the complexity of the message and the intended audience.
- Oral organisation
  - Sequences information in a logical manner to aid understanding; speaks clearly and understandably and with a reasonable number of words.
- Oral delivery
  - Speaks with a pace and inflection that aids understanding; uses body language that is consistent with the verbal communication.
- Presentation impact (style)
  - Appears interested, confident (through an understanding of the material), and enthusiastic; maintains professional, calm, and deliberate demeanour throughout presentation; enhances delivery effectiveness through nonverbal communication (eg. eye contact)



**Communication Skills continued on Page 15**

- Checks understanding
  - Checks for audience understanding of issues or concepts presented.
- Uses visual aids
  - When appropriate, uses visual aids to support and enhance the audience's understanding of content.
- Written mechanics
  - Uses appropriate grammar and punctuation; uses words relevant to the complexity of the message and the intended audience (avoids jargon or technical words).
- Written Organisation
  - Sequences information in a logical manner to aid understanding; writes clearly and understandably and with a reasonable number of words.
- Written delivery
  - Uses a tone and format suggested by the topic and the audience.

**Professional Accountability** – Setting high standards of performance for self and others; assuming responsibility and accountability for successfully completing assignments or tasks; self-imposing standards of excellence rather than having standards imposed.

*Key Actions:*

- Sets standards for excellence
  - Establishes criteria and/or work procedures to achieve a high level of quality, productivity, or service.
- Ensures high quality
  - Dedicates required time and energy to assignments or tasks to ensure that no aspect of work is neglected; works to overcome obstacles to completing tasks or assignments.
- Takes responsibility
  - Accepts responsibility for outcomes (positive or negative) of one's work; admits mistakes and refocuses efforts when appropriate.
- Encourages others to take responsibility
  - Provides encouragement and support to others in accepting responsibility; does not accept others' denial of responsibility without questioning

**Valuing Diversity** – Creates and maintains an environment that naturally enables all participants to contribute to their full potential in pursuit of organisational objectives.

*Key Actions:*

- Demonstrates inclusive behaviour
  - Establishes relationships with and learns more about people of other cultures and backgrounds; continually examines own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses.
  
- Champions diversity
  - Celebrates differences through team building; promotes increased diversity through recruitment and development of individuals from varied background/cultures; confronts racist/sexist/inappropriate behaviour; challenges exclusionary organisational practices.

**Technical/Professional Knowledge and Skills** – Having achieved a satisfactory level of technical and professional skills or knowledge in position-related areas; keeping up with current developments and trends in areas of expertise.

*Key Actions:*

- Understand technical terminology and developments
- Know how to apply a technical skill or procedure
- Know when to apply a technical skill or procedure
- Perform complex tasks in area of expertise