

Competency reference number and title	A1 Working with Aims and Objectives
Level of attainment claimed	Level 5
Development period: Overall dates in which competency was developed for this assessment level	██████████

### Context

*Give a brief outline of the context in which you developed this competency. For example, your previous and current job roles or responsibilities*

I had been working at the ██████████ for 4 years in the role of Records Manager, taking on the new role of Archivist & Records Manager in October 2010. My work as Records Manager had been led by the implementation of the University's EDRMS and the particular change management demands of that major project, and by the information governance agenda.

On my return to my role following maternity leave I became Director of the ██████████ which had just received its round 1 HLF pass. The person appointed as my maternity cover continued to provide day to day service delivery for the archives function (eg. enquiries, research room) whilst I took on the responsibility for strategic service development for the archives function.

### Activity

*Give a brief description and examples from your professional activity and practice which demonstrate your competency at this level. Link this section to the competency definition in the Framework.*

I initiated and negotiated strategic aims and objectives both for the service and for major projects. We now operate within a business plan linked to higher level strategic plans of our parent department and of the organisation overall. I am responsible for delivery of plans in the short, medium and long term. As Project Director of the major service transformation project funded by the ██████████ (5 years, approx. £2million).

I am the strategic service lead for the organisation's archival function, and initiate, develop and evaluate the implementation of annual and longer-term plans for the whole service and related projects. I am responsible for delivery of my own and others' aims and objectives, aligned with these plans. I developed the whole service's first strategic plan 2013-2023 from which annual team plans & individual objectives are derived. This plan has been largely delivered within 5 years, and I am now leading on the strategic planning as the ██████████ is about to publish its new Strategy Map 2021-2027. During the stage 1 HLF project, as part of the project planning but extending beyond the project itself, I created the strategic framework for the service, including 10-year plan and associated KPIs as shown in the attached evidence (evidence: summary page from HLF round 2 application document "Strategic Management and Maintenance Plan 2017-2027"). The framework, shown in the table at the bottom of the page of evidence, also included the service's first policies for Acquisition, Preservation, Collections Information Management (competency B9) and Access. It encompassed delivery strategies, as well as project management and delivery plans. I consulted on and drafted 15 of the 17 documents listed in the framework, and was the principal channel with the external consultants who authored the remaining two (Activity Plan and Centre Design). I ensured any comments were incorporated into every document before obtaining approval of all final versions.

This strategic framework was used for the service's annual team plan and individual objectives, with this year being the last under that framework as the ██████████ new strategy map will be issued within the next few months. I am currently leading on the groundwork for the new Information & Records Management and Archives strategic plans which will be finalised once the overall strategy map is published.

As a line manager I am responsible for supervising the delivery of my own and team objectives. During [REDACTED] I led on our application for Archives Service Accreditation (awarded March [REDACTED]), which drew heavily on the strategic and policy framework. My work in managing performance (competency A7) feeds back into strategic planning.

### **Progression & Learning**

*Give a brief summary of how your skills, knowledge and experience within this competency have developed or been maintained during this period. Include examples of the different skills, knowledge and experience developed and the types of learning undertaken such as formal training, study or research, work achievements, contributions to the profession etc.*

I quickly developed knowledge of HLF's specific requirements for post-project planning, and the kinds of information they would expect to see in a document that would form a critical part of our round 2 submission in summer [REDACTED]. I have vision and strategy development skills, providing a clear sense of direction for my team and for others involved in the major project. This has included demonstrating political awareness - knowing who to talk and when; understanding the range of external factors that affect and influence the [REDACTED] vision and strategy and how this impacts on the archive and records management functions of the institution. I have also developed skills in routinely identifying broad longer term internal and external issues to understand the impact and implications for the University and service. Through this competency I have been able to develop a clear, realistic and focused vision and strategy that is meaningful for everyone. I have also developed my leadership skills, most notably collaboration and coaching, through this competency, as well as my communication and consultation skills. I have learned particularly to take time to gain buy-in and commitment from the team, particularly when new roles have been created to deliver specific pieces of activity, and new staff need to gain ownership of the activity building on their own skills and experience. I have worked particularly hard to facilitate open and honest discussions within the team and to ensure the team are appropriately informed - understanding what is happening, why and when, which is particularly important in a large and complex project involving moves to new premises and new areas of work. I realised early on that the project could provide an opportunity for a service which was in transition from a "one-person band" emerging through custom & practice. I therefore used a range of wider planning and development tools from my research, including revisiting the learning from my previous participation in an MLA action-learning set for emerging leaders and my work in project management for the [REDACTED] EDRMS implementation project. These included tools from the Arts Council aimed at museums and galleries, and libraries such as HE specific tools from JISC, and 3rd sector arts organisations including the [REDACTED] Project. I wanted to broaden my own and the [REDACTED] perspective on what its archive service could and should be.

### **Reflection**

*Reflect on and evaluate what you have learned from the activities you have undertaken to develop or maintain this competency. For example, what went well/not so well? What would you do differently next time?*

The project evaluation (see competency A7) showed that the strategic framework has served the project and our team well over the past 5+ years. However, as we achieved what was originally a 10 year plan within 5 years, I could probably have pushed this plan further in the beginning – although it did feel like a massive stretch back in 2013!

As the leader of the team as well as the Director of a major project, I found that having a shared understanding about what we aimed to achieve meant that everyone within the team was able to focus on how our day to day activities fit into a wider picture. Being able to be agile and respond to opportunities meant I had to listen and to keep sight of the bigger picture, which is not always easy in the midst of a busy schedule and working part-time. I now schedule time to reflect and adjust plans monthly (having something

on the calendar works well for me!) as well as a longer period quarterly to adjust plans. Archive Service Accreditation provided a very useful stocktake for the whole of the service including information & records management, at a time when the [REDACTED] project had been a necessary focus with the move to new premises and beginning the delivery of the Activity Plan. Developing vision and strategy, and leadership, are not areas which are ever “done” – they are always works in progress. I am generally happy with my development and maturing as a leader over the last few years, whilst recognising there are areas always to work on as the environment and team changes – communication being one. For example, where we have not gone on to mainstream areas of project activity (see competency A7 for further details), I have worked hard to consider and use relevant alternative methods of communication to ensure consistent messages reach the right audience at the right time, and to present unpopular or unwelcome information in a way that helps stakeholders to understand even if they do not agree with it. Whilst I will never exactly enjoy the most complex discussions or relationships that arise from these situations, I have found that personally leading these and building mutual trust and respect bears fruit later.

### **Follow Up**

*How have you applied your skills, knowledge and experience within this competency since? What do you intend to do next to maintain or further develop this competency?*

I continue to apply my skills, knowledge and experience as we develop service plans as part of the next strategy map (2021-2027). I also brought my HLF-specific knowledge and experience to a further HLF Heritage Grants project, acting as Director of a major partnership project to create a combined service with our local record office (2019/20). Now that HLF’s new Strategic Framework has been published the Board will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to decide whether to reactivate the project. I will need all the skills, knowledge and experience I have developed in this area to respond to the decision – whichever way it goes.