

# **Professional Skills**

## **M32633**

### **Learning Portfolio**

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## Section 1 – Personal Skills – audit and reflection

During week 2, you will be asked to reflect on the skills, behaviours and capabilities you believe are your strengths.

You will also be asked to reflect on the skills, behaviours and capabilities you feel are a weakness and are development opportunities over the 11 weeks of this module.

By the end of the week, enter both lists here (you can add as many rows that you need).

STRENGTHS	DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Communication	More training on effective communication
Team building	Engaging in more team building opportunities to hone my people skills
Decision making	Pursuing mentorship opportunities for decision making
Public speaking	Engaging in more public speaking activities to gain more confidence
Process improvement	Pursuing technical training for process improvement

At the end of week 10, you will be asked to reflect on the skills, behaviours and capabilities you believe are your strengths now.

At the same time, you need to reflect on the skills, behaviours and capabilities you have developed during the module.

You will also be asked to reflect on the skills, behaviours and capabilities you want to develop further and these should be entered in the Personal Development Plan section (Section 3).

By the end of the week, enter both lists here (you can add as many rows that you need).

STRENGTHS	DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Consensus building	Mentorship on consensus building
Internal control	Mentorship on internal control
Business planning	Taking extensive training in business planning
Leadership	Mentorship opportunities on leadership are available at the organization
Benchmarking	Training on benchmarking effectiveness

**On completion of the lists for week 2 and week 10, answer the following questions in the template. Please include academic references as appropriate.**

**1. In week 2, did you find it easier to write your list of development areas or your list of strengths?**

It was challenging to write the list of development areas in week 2. I did not understand the professional skills I possess, and how I could pursue opportunities for personal development. Nonetheless, I tried to think about the skills I use in my day-to-day activities at the organization and identified a number of professional strengths I possess.

**2. Why do you think that was?**

This was the first time I was writing a professional development based on my competencies. I have been engaged in activities where I analysed other people's skills, but I was yet to self-analyze my own professional skills.

**3. How have your skills, behaviours and capabilities changed over the past 10 weeks?**

My skills and capabilities have changed over the past 10 weeks. I have come to identify more important professional skills that are more crucial to my job performance.

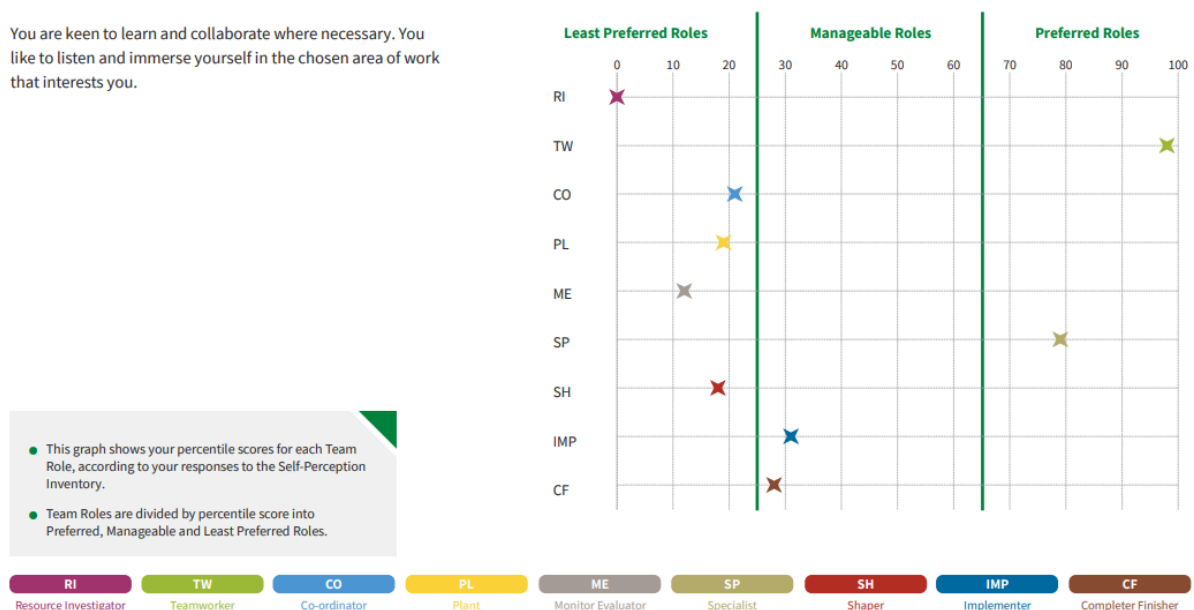
**4. When thinking about your learning on the module, what skill, behaviour or capability do you believe you have developed the most? Provide evidence.**

After taking part in the module, the skill that has undergone the most transformation is my team player skills. As demonstrated by the image below, I have attained high scores in teamwork as my preferred role, followed by the specialist competency.

**Based on your Self-Perception only**

Kailash, from your own perspective, Teamworker and Specialist are your top contributions.

You are keen to learn and collaborate where necessary. You like to listen and immerse yourself in the chosen area of work that interests you.



**5. How did listing your strengths make you feel in week 10?**

I was more confident when listing my skills in week 10. I knew what my strengths were, and I also understood the development opportunities I was required to implement to improve my skills. I also identified skills that were more relevant to my profession as a HR and embarked on improving them to enhance my performance and competency as a HR professional.

#### **6. How will you use reflective activities to develop your HR career?**

The reflective activities are crucial to my professional development as HR. They provided insight into my strengths and weaknesses. Identifying one's strengths as a HR is important as it selects them in selecting activities that they excel in (Ramlall & Melton, 2019). For instance, since I have identified my teamwork skills as a HR professional, I would be more inclined to work in roles requiring team leadership. The identification of strengths is important for HR professionals so that they can know their areas of competency. On the other hand, the module assisted in the identification of my weaknesses. I identified resource investigator and coordinator as my main weaknesses. Identifying one's weaknesses is important for HR professionals as it enables them to pinpoint areas of their competency that need improvements (Stone, Cox, & Gavin, 2020). Similarly, the activity has enabled me to identify my weaknesses and given me an opportunity to establish ways of improving them.

## **Section 2.1 Module Learning Record - Influencing people within the team environment?**

### **How do I influence people within the team environment?**

The learning plan has identified teamwork as my major strength. I enjoy working with other teams, especially sharing my expertise and knowledge to help other people. I influence other people in the team environment by meeting them one-on-one over coffee and lunch to ensure our conversations are more personal, less organized, and to facilitate the creation of rapport. I always have an open mind and ears and I am genuinely interested in learning about other people. For instance, I am interested in learning their intention, priorities, and their perception of the organization.

I also make an effort to demonstrate attentiveness by practising good verbal and nonverbal communication. When communicating with team members, I always maintain a steady gaze and nodding during the dialogues. I also stand tall and make direct eye contact to appear alert and interested. Kotamena et al. (2020) also indicate that body language is important as it sends the perception that a person is genuinely interested in the conversation.

In addition to communication, I influence other people in my team environment by ensuring regular meetings between us. The meetings are mainly physical, but they could also be virtual, depending on the situation. I also focus on ensuring constant communication between us to make sure everyone is playing their role to achieve team objectives. Meeting with other team members provides insight into their backgrounds, beliefs, and motivations, all of which came in handy during team meetings as we can identify everyone's strengths and shortcomings.

### **Identify and reflect upon specific learning that has taken place for you during week 3.**

I have come to understand that trust is the bedrock of effective leadership. Team members tend to feel at ease depending on how confident the HR is, as well as their abilities and intentions. One of the most effective methods to develop trust is to give it to people before they have earned it (Siswanto et al., 2020). This can assist in establishing rapport with one's team members since they will value the trust bestowed on them and may strive harder to maintain it. Team members are more inclined to follow the leader's direction if there is a demonstration of expertise. I will continue to gain expertise and information in my profession, and then share it with my team members to assist them in achieving success. I can enhance my expertise through attending continuing education classes in teamwork and discussing the highlights with the team in a meeting.

A good leader conveys the team's vision, and then encourages innovation, collaboration, and participation. This creates an environment of shared ownership, which instils a sense of pride and belonging in individuals. They believe that their input contributes to the team's success. As a team leader, I have learned the importance of

providing opportunities for minor victories. I know the importance of helping team members achieve incremental goals so they can attain larger success. People respond positively when their potential is amplified through accomplishment, and they value the leader who helped them flourish (Imam & Zaheer, 2021). It is quite rewarding when the team achieves success as a unit and everyone's contributions are acknowledged.

Another important lesson learned is how to balance freedom and authority. Influential team leaders are able to both relate to and motivate their people. Instilling faith in your team members' development on a regular basis can help in getting greater respect from one's peers. Team leaders should let team members know they have faith in the quality of their work, their time management, and their capacity to locate the necessary resources to actualize their roles. Autonomy also allows team members to work both independently and collaboratively, as well as to be creative, which can be quite motivating and encouraging. Nonetheless, as a leader, it is essential to do the right thing regardless of how difficult it may be. If team leaders display integrity and accept responsibility for their actions, team members are more inclined to trust them. As a team leader, one must remain composed in the face of problems, delays, and unanticipated impediments (Patil, 2019).

**What do you know about your skills, behaviours and capabilities now that you have listened to the lecture and attended the seminar, that you did not know before?**

The method of teamwork that I have mastered begins with the establishment of goals and objectives, the building of member trust, cooperative actions, and the establishment of a deadline. Frequently, difficulties and possibilities develop when working as a team (Doukanari et al., 2021). There was a time when members of our team were unable to work effectively as they were facing so much pressure. The team was able to determine a suggested framework for who would be responsible for particular sections and when these sections should be uploaded for compilation and revision. After the first two meetings, one team member assumed the role of team leader and kept the group on track. As a team, we were able to complete our research on the selected topic and contributed according to the assignment's requirements, citing and referencing appropriately. I have acquired an awareness of team expectations, why team communication is important inside the group, and the importance of team leadership. I have also learned that communication is the key to success, and I can continue to strengthen my input as a team member by checking in with other members more frequently.

Teamwork is crucial in the contemporary workplace, and it begins with me. The key to the success of a team is excellent communication, openness, trust in each team member to effectively perform their role, and a clear definition of duties and responsibilities. The performance of a team depends greatly on a balance between clearly defined goals and effective communication.

### **What will you do to continue or enhance your learning in this area?**

I will take more opportunities to work in teams. Teamwork provides crucial skills for personal development. In teams, students are more likely to do tough tasks, since they have the support and confidence of group resources. Taking part in team projects can also improve my effectiveness in task planning, time management, critical thinking, and communication skills, which are crucial for academic and professional achievement.

### **Section 2.2 Module Learning Record – Perception and bias**

#### **Identify and reflect upon specific learning that has taken place for you during week 4.**

I have learned the importance of perception and how to eliminate bias in one's interactions with other people.

Cognitive bias is a phrase used by psychologists and other behavioral experts to describe a systematic inaccuracy in how individuals perceive others or their surroundings (Menon & Bhagat, 2022). Individuals make sense of information based on their own prior experiences. Cognitively biased behavior occurs when an individual develops their own subjective social reality based on their past perceptions rather than objective input. I have learned that HR practitioners may unknowingly practice cognitive bias. For instance, when HR professionals are renowned largely engage in cognitive bias, they overlook HR's broader business influence. HR is not only about enjoying people, but also about comprehending them in order to tackle people-related issues within organizations (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). HR should assist individuals in realizing their full potential inside businesses where they live, work, and play.

#### **What do you know about your skills, behaviours and capabilities now that you have listened to the lecture and attended the seminar, that you did not know before?**

I now understand how cognitive bias may have a negative impact in my performance as a HR. Over time, I have gained skills in recognizing my own bias in relation to my relationship with other people, and applying an inclusive approach when dealing with other people. I now view each person as an individual as opposed to stereotyping them based on their background and appearance. In a separate survey, professors regarded male laboratory manager applicants as substantially more qualified and employable than their female counterparts (Byyny, 2017).

### **What will you do to continue or enhance your learning in this area?**

To enhance learning in perception and bias, I should continue taking training on how I can improve my perception and bias. Another strategy I could pursue involves getting mentorship from members of the organization who have more experience in leadership to provide me with insight into how I can become more proficient as a HR by eliminating bias in my relationship with other organizational members.

### **Reflect on ONE impact unconscious bias could have on HR?**

Unconscious bias may have a negative impact on the HR's recruitment effectiveness. According to Byyny (2017), professors regarded male laboratory manager applicants as substantially more qualified and employable than their female counterparts. The faculty chose a greater beginning wage and provided more career guidance to male applicants. In addition, the average pay of female researchers who received mentored career K08 or K23 grants was around 32,000 less than that of their male counterparts. In addition, women scientists who are parents are 79 percent less likely to be hired and, if hired, are offered a wage that is less than women who do not have children. In contrast, fatherhood is advantageous for men. The study reveals the negative impacts on unconscious bias against women, and against women who are mothers.

Unconscious bias in the workplace can have the same negative impacts as overt forms of bias and discrimination. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, discriminatory treatment or practices, a toxic company culture, and a lack of diversity in the workplace can all stem from pervasive unconscious bias (Noon, 2018). Management and HR departments should place a high priority on promoting workplace diversity for both business development and legal reasons. It has been demonstrated that businesses with a highly varied workforce function more efficiently and perform better than their competitors that lack diversity (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020). Having personnel with a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, experiences, and personalities will foster innovation and allow for the consideration of a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives.



## **Section 2.3 Module Learning Record – Influential Presentations**

**Identify and reflect upon specific learning that has taken place for you during weeks 6 and 7.**

Weeks 6 and 7 have provided me with effective skills needed to foster communication with the audience. I have learned how to create content for different audiences, and how to ensure the delivery of the presentation is aligned with the audience's informational needs. I have learned how to apply communication skills to make the delivery of my presentations more engaging.

One important lesson from the course is the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication.

**What do I know about your skills, behaviours and capabilities now that you have listened to the lecture and attended the seminar, that you did not know before?**

Some of the skills acquired include the ability to communicate intricate information in simple and intriguing ways to keep the followers engaged, the ability to communicate ideas and emotions effectively, the development of self-esteem and the acquisition of real-world skills, such as the ability to present accomplishments and skills during a job interview. Importantly, I discovered how to sustain the audience's interest in my lectures by articulating and pronouncing words as accurately as possible.

**What will you do to continue or enhance your learning in this area?**

I should improve my communication skills to become a more engaging communicator. I understand presentation affects the audience's perception and response to my communication. Therefore, it is important for me to learn how to convey ideas effectively through body language. I will pursue practice sessions that include both the verbal and nonverbal components of presentations. I will pursue opportunities for creating more presentations, as well as getting feedback on my presentations from my peers. This way, I can strengthen my shortcomings and become an effective communicator. The effectiveness of my message delivery can be enhanced by paying great attention to my verbal and nonverbal communication.

## **Section 2.1 Module Learning Record – Managing Difficult Meetings**

**Identify and reflect upon specific learning that has taken place for you during week 8.**

HR professionals work in a challenging and complex environment as they have to balance the needs of different stakeholders. On one hand, human resource managers are required to effectively manage employees to ensure they perform satisfactorily, and that they achieve the organization's objectives. On the other hand, they are required to achieve the goals set by the executive management. In the course of their day to day activities, HR professionals may come across difficult meetings. Knowing how to manage such meetings ensures positive outcomes for all the stakeholders.

**What do you know about your skills, behaviours and capabilities now that you have listened to the lecture and attended the seminar, that you did not know before?**

I had previously mentioned about the importance of communication skills in effective presentations. Communication skills are also a vital component of managing difficult meetings. HR professionals should anticipate each stakeholder's needs and strive to meet the needs in a way that will create value for each stakeholder (Järlström, Saru, & Vanhala, 2018). I now know how to manage challenging meetings by anticipating the audience's needs and addressing them in a way that will provide value for them. For instance, when delivering negative news to employees, I understand the importance of being brief and to the point, but providing clear and accurate information.

**What will you do to continue or enhance your learning in this area?**

The best way to promote learning in managing difficult meetings is training. I should look for available literature of instances in which HR professionals were faced with challenging scenarios and determine the steps they took to address them. Getting mentorship from experienced HR professionals will also provide insight into how I can handle challenging meetings to get positive outcomes.

**Section 3 Personal Development Plan** for the year ahead (i.e. twelve months following submission of your portfolio).

<b>What do I want/need to Learn. <i>Be specific.</i></b>	<b>What will I do to achieve this? <i>Learning method.</i></b>	<b>What resources or support will I need?</b>	<b>What will my success criteria be?</b>	<b>Target dates for review and completion</b>
Communication skills	Training and mentorship	Literature on communication skills and help from mentors	Improved communication skills	In 12 months
Teamwork	More teamwork activities	Opportunities for teamwork activities	Improved teamwork roles	In 12 months
Managing perception and bias	Training	Literature on perception and bias	Multicultural awareness	In 8 months
Managing difficult meetings	Training and mentorship	Literature on managing difficult meetings and help from mentors	Effective communication skills	In 12 months
Team leadership	Training and mentorship	Literature on team leadership and help from mentors	Effective leadership skills	In 9 months

#### **Section 4 A concise, self-reflective summary of your learning on this module**

This module has taught me about influencing people in the team environment, being conscious of perception and bias, managing difficult meetings, and making influential presentations. HR work frequently necessitates making difficult personnel decisions to assure the achievement of corporate outcomes, as well as developing new personnel practices to free employees to perform at their highest level. The HR bias regarding cognitive bias can be replaced with a dedication to empowering individuals. The last important thing I learned is that good team leaders clearly communicate their expectations. They specify objectives at the outset of a project and communicate them to the team so that they have a clear understanding of their roles and expectations. Effective communication can eliminate confusion and encourage employees to perform more jobs successfully.

## Section 5 Bibliography

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