

AISAP Learning and Development Framework

A ROADMAP FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

in the Admission and Enrollment Management Profession

AISAP
Educate. Elevate. Empower.

Association of Independent
School Admission Professionals

AISAP Learning and Development Framework

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I. Executive Summary

The Learning and Development Framework is the result of a landmark project by the Association of Independent School Admission Professionals (AISAP) to identify professional competencies, skills, and standards that remarkable admission and enrollment professionals share.

The Learning and Development Framework presented herein set forth the knowledge, skills and behaviors required of successful admission and enrollment professionals in the context and progression of one's professional pathway and journey. In creating the framework AISAP turned to the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect™, a research based global competency framework, backed by a comprehensive set of assessment and development resources for individuals, teams and organizations. It defines professional competencies as "measurable skills and behaviors that lead people to succeed in their work." Through a facilitated process with individuals at Vanderbilt University and practitioners with significant experience in the profession, we established an industry-standard baseline to enhance the professionalism of the admission field. Ultimately, we identified thirteen professional competencies specific to admission and enrollment professionals.

AISAP's Learning and Development Framework is a guide that includes:

- Illustrations of the learning levels and professional progression of those in the profession.
- Definitions of professional competency terms
- Definitions of professional standards and skills
- A gap analysis to better understand your current baseline

The first purpose of the framework is to identify where you are on your professional journey. The second is to determine what your school currently needs from you today and what it may need in the future. These two perspectives come together to produce a productive synergy.

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II. Levels of Progression

For the current or potential admission and enrollment professional, it's important to define your journey and where you are in that journey. There are four levels of progression covered in the framework: Entering, Emerging, Advancing, and Mastery, all underpinned by professional behaviors and ethics.

AISAP – Levels of Learning and Development Professional Progression

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Area of Development	Entering	Emerging	Advancing	Mastery
Expertise	0-1 years of experience understanding of roles, responsibilities and profession are constantly being enhanced.	Provides technical experience/skills to the A&EM office. Developing skills through the AISAP L & D Framework.	Supports, designs, and manages all aspects of the A&EM office. Practice is consistent with L & D Framework.	Can support, design, and manage complex programs to advance the school. Meets the highest qualifications of an A&EM professional.
Scope	Focus is on systems and operational.	Focus on the A&EM processes for success.	Focus on A&EM office as it relates to the success of school.	Creates frameworks and new systems to advance the school and profession.
Organization Focus	Tactical and exploratory.	Tactical Support.	Tactical & Relational Support to the school.	Strategic advisor on leadership team of the school.
Value to System	Upholds Learning and Development system in the context of institutional vision, explores opportunity for growth.	Upholds AISAP Learning & Development Framework as a way to advance A&EM office.	Recommends & implements complex change to A&EM office.	Considered a valued partner in the advancement of the system.
Commitment to Profession	Exploratory.	Consistent membership or involvement in AISAP. May belong to other professional associations. May present at regional and annual institutes.	Consistent member in AISAP obtaining CAEP certification & its continuing education components.	CAEP Certified A&EM professional with consistent membership in AISAP. Leadership responsibilities in AISAP.
Experience	Internships and 0-1 years employed in the profession, seeks CAEP.	Up to 3-5 years as an A&EM professional or A&EM Director.	5-15 years as an A&EM professional or A&EM Director managing increasingly complex projects.	Greater than 10 years in role of A&EM professional or A&EM Director. Able to teach and mentor other professionals easily.

Entering Professionals with 0-2 years experience have a distinct track.

AISAP - Levels of L & D Professional Progression

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III. Professional Competencies

There are specific professional behavioral competencies needed to be successful in admission and enrollment. Through its Competency Modeling project, the management consultants at Korn-Ferry identified **thirty eight (38) behavioral competencies** that cover all industries. AISAP identified thirteen that apply directly to the Community of Practice for admission and enrollment professionals:

- **Action-oriented:** Readily acts on challenges, without unnecessary planning. Identifies and seizes new opportunities. Displays a can-do attitude in good and bad times. Steps up to handle tough issues.
- **Balances Stakeholders:** Understands internal and external stakeholder requirements, expectations, and needs. Balances the interests of multiple stakeholders. Considers cultural and ethical factors in the decision-making process. Acts fairly despite conflicting demands of stakeholders.
- **Has Business Insight:** Knows how schools work and are funded. Keeps up with current and possible future policies, practices, and trends in the organization, with the competition, and in the marketplace. Uses knowledge of business drivers and how strategies and tactics play out in the market to guide actions.
- **Collaborates:** Works cooperatively with others across the school to achieve shared objectives. Represents own interests while being fair to others and their areas. Partners with others to get work done. Credits others for their contributions and accomplishments. Gains trust and support of others.
- **Communicates Effectively:** Is effective in a variety of communication settings: one-on-one, small, and large groups, or among diverse styles and position levels. Attentively listens to others. Adjusts to fit the audience and the message. Provides timely and helpful information to others across the organization. Encourages the open expression of diverse ideas and opinions.
- **Focuses on the Customer:** Gains insight into customer needs. Identifies opportunities that benefit the customer. Builds and delivers solutions that meet customer expectations. Establishes and maintains effective customer relationships.
- **Makes Quality Decisions:** Makes sound decisions, even in the absence of complete information. Relies on a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience, and judgment when making decisions. Considers all relevant factors and uses appropriate decision-making criteria and principles. Recognizes when a quick 80% solution will suffice.
- **Drives Vision and Purpose:** Talks about future possibilities in a positive way. Creates milestones and symbols to rally support behind the vision. Articulates the vision in a way everyone can relate to. Creates organization-wide energy and optimism for the future. Shows personal commitment to the vision.
- **Possesses Global Perspective:** Looks toward the broadest possible view of an issue or challenge. Thinks and talks in global terms. Understands the position of the organization within a global context. Knows the impact of global trends on the organization.
- **Instills Trust:** Follows through on commitments. Is seen as direct and truthful. Keeps confidences. Practices what he/she preaches. Shows consistency between words and actions.
- **Has Interpersonal Savvy:** Relates comfortably with people across levels, functions culture, and geography. Acts with diplomacy and tact. Builds rapport in an open, friendly, and accepting way. Builds constructive relationships with people both similar and different to self. Picks up on interpersonal and group dynamics.

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- **Manages Conflict:** Steps up to conflicts, seeing them as opportunities. Works out tough agreements and settles disputes equitably. Facilitates breakthroughs by integrating diverse views and finding common ground or acceptable alternatives. Settles differences in productive ways with minimum noise.
- **Plans and Aligns:** Sets objectives to align with broader organizational goals. Breaks down objectives into appropriate initiatives and actions. Stages activities with relevant milestones and schedules. Anticipates and adjusts effective contingency plans.

The advantage of defining behaviors and competencies in this way is that they are measurable skills, attitudes, or attributes that can closely align to the professional's strategy for success. The complete learning and development framework can then help us to:

- Define what is required for success
- Align talent processes with a common language
- Serve as a long-term strategic planning tool
- Provide a solid foundation for the work at hand

IV. Professional Standards and Skills

The final element of the Learning and Development Professional Framework is a group of six Professional Standards and Skills. These six categories help us understand the school's mission, values, and practices.

Each category includes examples of what those standalone phrases mean. For example, an admission enrollment professional should note one of our professional standards is maintaining high standards of integrity and ethical behavior with all the constituents we serve. One of the factors within that is developing a professional philosophy consistent with the school's objectives. With this in mind, we broke down each of standards and skills to define the elements that make up that area of knowledge.

STANDARD 1: Ethical Conduct: *Maintain high standards of integrity and ethical behavior with all constituents served.*

- Demonstrate belief in, understanding of and commitment to the school's mission, values, and practices.
- Develop a professional philosophy consistent with the school's objectives.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the AISAP Ethical Behavior & Best Practices for Admission Professionals.
- Understand and adhere to the law regarding operational aspects of the admission and enrollment process.
- Embody Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice as a practice and value as an individual and as an Admission and Enrollment professional.
- Adhere to the standards of applicable state, regional, and national accrediting associations and guidelines of other membership associations and appropriate professional organizations.

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STANDARD 2: Operational Excellence: *Advance the mission of the school using best practices in admission and enrollment management*

- Understand expectations of the head of school and board of trustees.
- Understand institutional goals for student body composition within a complex environment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of current admission practices, data, and trends.
- Understand market trends to maintain the school's relevance in a broader educational context and use this knowledge to enhance recruitment, retention, revenue generation, and constituent relations.
- Understand how to develop and maintain a strategic marketing plan that differentiates the school's unique brand.
- Establish and maintain a process to support recruitment and retention of mission-appropriate students.
- Determine suitable assessment tools to evaluate an applicant's readiness for admission.
- Understand the proper administration and uses of standardized tests and be able to analyze other relevant data for students, parents, educators, institutions, and the public.
- Possess the ability to communicate effectively with students and families from a variety of social, cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds.
- Identify and utilize research tools to better understand the experience of currently enrolled students and alumni.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop, collect, analyze, and interpret data.
- Respect the confidentiality and sensitivity of all aspects of the admission and enrollment process.

STANDARD 3: Marketing & Communication: *Demonstrate exemplary communication skills and practices*

- Exhibit the ability to communicate admission and enrollment goals, trends, and challenges to the head, board, school leadership team, and school community.
- Exhibit mastery of verbal, non-verbal, and written communication for multiple audiences and for a variety of purposes.
- Employ relevant technology in a rapidly changing environment.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of all areas of school mission, vision, culture, history, curriculum, and co-curricular programs.
- Demonstrate the ability to place the school's advantages and benefits within the context of a family's wants and needs.
- Exercise tact, discretion, and diplomacy in dealing with sensitive circumstances.

STANDARD 4: Revenue and Financial Management: *Understand the school's economic context, revenue streams, and financial management and their implications for admission and enrollment management.*

- Understand the influence of the local, regional, national, and global economic forces on the school.
- Convey critical data and trends to the head of school and the board to understand access and affordability and to inform budgetary decisions.
- Understand the school's commitment to financial aid relative to other priorities.
- Establish mission driven financial aid philosophy, policies, and procedures.
- Understand systems and tools to determine financial need and demonstrate the ability to analyze financial aid data.

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STANDARD 5: Data to Drive Strategy: *Maintain current knowledge of local, regional, national, and global educational policies, practices, and programs*

- Maintain knowledge of current educational discourse and trends.
- Demonstrate knowledge of current curriculum and assessment practices in the school's market.
- Understand the educational needs, developmental stages, and values of the students and families served.

STANDARD 6: Leadership and Professionalism: *Model best practices in management and organizational development*

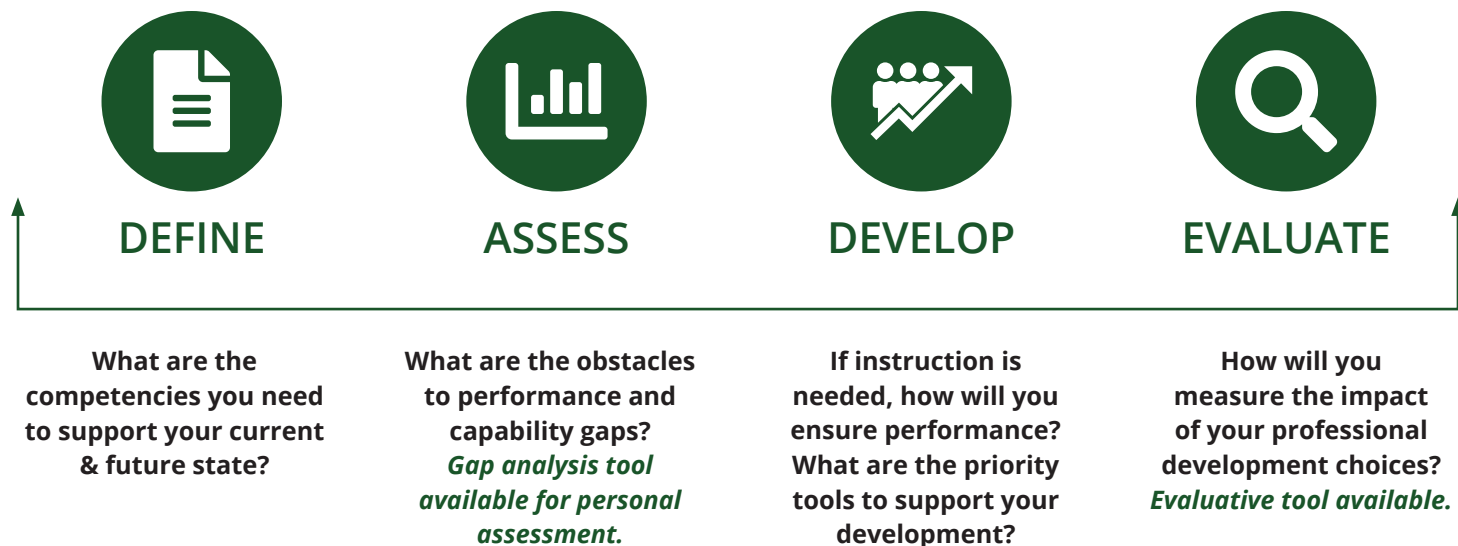
- Demonstrate the ability to effectively lead and manage the admission and enrollment process.
- Exhibit the ability to coordinate and facilitate committees and work effectively with volunteers.
- Collaborate effectively with all key constituencies to advance the mission of the school.
- Demonstrate the ability to engage the faculty and the entire school community in the admission process.
- Organize the office to use resources effectively and efficiently.
- Work within the employment policies and procedures of the school.

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Tailoring the Framework to Your Development Plan

In building your own professional framework, we encourage you to take some additional steps.

Building Your Professional Framework



Adapted from Buscado, E.
(Dec. 2016)

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The first step is to define the competencies, standards, and skills you need to support your current role in the organization. Importantly, it also includes what is being asked of you—not only in your job presently but where you might need to grow to get to the next level of understanding in this profession.

Next, assess the obstacles that stand in the way of your performance, including gaps in your capabilities. What are your strengths and, where are your growth opportunities?

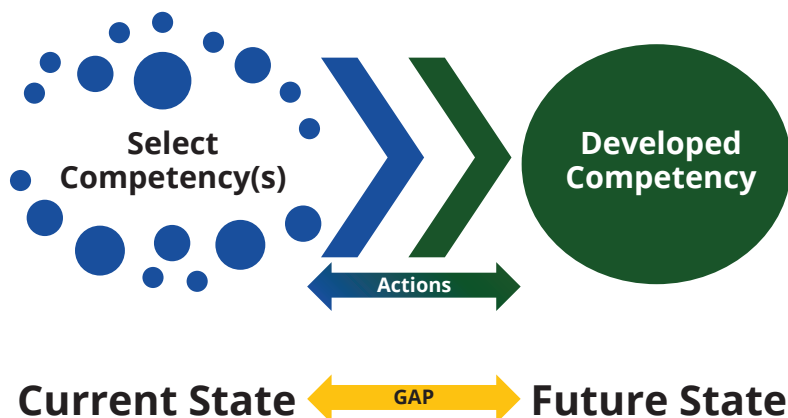
The “Develop” step identifies how you develop action steps to achieve your growth goals and defines what’s needed to support your progress.

Finally, in the “Evaluate” step, you ascertain whether you’ve successfully developed the skill or skills you lack or where you need improvement. Currently, we measure participation in our general understanding of a concept by offering continuing education credits. Learn more about AISAP’s [CECs](#) and [Approved Provider Program](#).

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A&EM Professional Gap Analysis

- Select competency from the framework that you would like to develop further.
- Using the item selected, conduct a gap analysis considering current and future state and the steps to take to correct, modify, or begin a new course of action for this identified competency.
- After the gap analysis is completed, construct an action plan that identifies the tools you are selecting.
- Pay attention to the following items:
 - Reason(s) the action or tool is being addressed (from gap analysis).
 - Tools needed to address competency (from gap analysis),
 - People to involve, e.g., Cohort Leader, Mentor, Head of School, and
 - Time for reasonable completion for the competency to be developed.



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Using AISAP's Learning and Development Framework, a professional can identify their own training needs as well as the needs of their teams. It will show where you and your team stand in terms of skills and professional behaviors. Through the gap analysis, areas of competence and standards will indicate higher and lower levels of attainment, knowledge, and growth. And through a gap analysis you can identify and map out training needs, your training budget and think strategically about the future of your own professional journey as well as your teams towards greater effectiveness and employment retention. Additionally, AISAP believes that Heads of School should assess the Learning and Development rubric required of a practitioner. Familiarity and understanding of these aspects will assist in the hiring process as well as support and evaluation of colleagues towards annual goals as compared to job responsibilities.

V. Putting this into your practice

AISAP serves as the global leader and primary resource in cultivating world class admission and enrollment professionals. The AISAP Learning and Development Framework is the professional curriculum guide that will ensure we are advancing the profession as the foundation of institutional success. AISAP recognizes that independent school admission and enrollment offices function under a wide range of circumstances and operate in complex educational environments. The Learning and Development Framework provides an industry standard baseline and guideline designed to enhance the professionalism of the admission field for all. - AISAP is committed to these competencies and standards. The end result is resources and innovative programming that serve to strengthen and advance our profession and the individuals we serve.

AISAP Learning and Development Framework

The Learning and Development Framework serves as the basis for our webinars, courses, Micro-Credentials and Credential (AEMP). These offerings help participants meet the challenges in the independent and private school environment and create a path for personal professional development. At the same time, it's indicative of how AISAP partners with our membership to identify standards, build competencies, and enhance professionalism in admission and enrollment.

We recognize that this is just one step towards demonstrating proficiency. That's why, moving forward, it's important to note how AISAP's Learning and Development Framework can be used as an evaluative tool. For employees or potential hires, the framework identifies the person's skill set as well as areas ripe for development and professional growth.

Put another way, the Learning and Development Framework serves as a curricular and soft skill roadmap identifying the competencies and behaviors necessary to create the context for practitioners to be their best selves. It's a tool that can be used for goal setting, evaluation as well as an ongoing guide for the practitioner.

You can leverage this tool to:

- Set goals for admission
- Structure or restructure the office
- Hire staff with the best assets and potential for growth

AISAP can help you develop a Curriculum Map leading you toward your Admission and Enrollment Management Professional (AEMP) credential exam and designation. To learn more about how AISAP can give you the information and knowledge you need to advance your institutional mission, work, and career, visit www.aisap.org.

ABOUT AISAP

AISAP is the Association of Independent School Admission Professionals. In fact, AISAP is the only association that has admission and enrollment management professionals as its sole mission and focus. Our vibrant community of professionals are willing to share their experience and insight in all aspects of independent school and private school admission and enrollment management. With their help, we aspire to inspire and serve every admission and enrollment professional to maximize their impact on the world of education.

AISAP Learning and Development Framework

Research and References

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