What are competencies?

“Competencies” are the knowledge, skills and attributes that are used at work, school, and in other environments. They can involve expertise that individuals already have but don’t know how to describe. They can be described in ways that are:

- Observable
- Measurable
- Transferable
- Based on performance

Using a competency approach helps individuals understand their strengths, plan their learning, relate academic and workplace experiences, and showcase their abilities as they apply for jobs and make career decisions.

What types of competencies does UVic use?

10 core competencies

UVic Co-op and Career has identified 10 core competencies that are valued across all sectors:

- Personal management
- Communication
- Managing information
- Research and analysis
- Project and task management
- Teamwork
- Commitment to quality
- Professional behaviour
- Social responsibility
- Continuous learning

Program-specific competencies

Many of UVic's academic programs have outlined program-specific competencies that students can expect to develop through these programs; students use them to assess their learning.

Cross-cultural competencies

UVic Co-op and Career has identified 4 cross-cultural competencies that individuals could develop through experiences in culturally diverse workplaces:

- Cross-cultural motivation
- Cross-cultural knowledge
- Strategic thinking
- Cross-cultural behaviour

Professional competencies

In addition to the competencies identified by UVic Co-op and Career, students are also encouraged to develop competencies valued by the professional bodies related to their future or current professions.

How does the competency model work?

At UVic Co-op and Career, the model is part of a larger experiential education curriculum that values reflection and frames student learning within a competency framework. Here’s an example of how the model works within the co-operative education program and work experience programs; it can also be used by any student to assess learning and articulate competency development to employers. For details, visit www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer/competencykit.