



**SWPS
University**



**Transversal
Competence
Model**
SWPS University

Introduction

We live in a rapidly changing world. New technologies, daily challenges, and working in increasingly diverse teams mean that, in addition to specialist knowledge, we need universal competencies and skills that will be useful in any situation and in any position or role.

Therefore, as a university that is constantly developing, and acting in accordance with the guidelines of the European strategy for the development of scientific staff (HRS4R), we have created a Transversal Competence Model.

The model is our roadmap, showing us what skills will help all of us — and each of us individually — to develop and achieve our goals. We want our university to be innovative, and we want people working here to be satisfied and feel that their work is meaningful. The competence model is designed to help us achieve this.

The textbook is a collection of information explaining what the model is and what the characteristics of individual competencies are. It is addressed to all USWPS employees and serves as a starting point for reflection, self-assessment, and planning development activities, while also showing the benefits of developing specific competencies.



What are competencies?

Competence is a combination of three elements:

- **Knowledge:** What you know.
- **Skills:** What you can do.
- **Attitude:** Your approach to work and cooperation with others.

By developing our competences, we not only become better employees, but also function more efficiently in everyday life.

What are transversal competencies?

According to the definition by *Hart, Noack et al. (2021)*, “*transversal skills and competencies are learned and validated skills that are widely regarded as essential or valuable for effective performance in any type of work, study, or life activity.*” They are “*transversal*’ because they are not linked to any one specific context (work, profession, academic discipline, civic or social engagement, occupational sector, group of occupational sectors, etc.).”¹

This means that transversal competences are universal knowledge and skills that can be used in a variety of life and work situations.

It’s important to remember that:

- These are not innate talents, but abilities that can be acquired and developed through learning, experience, and practice.
- They are considered crucial to effective functioning, regardless of what we do. They help in achieving goals, solving problems, and in effective cooperation.
- They are not assigned to any specific industry, profession, field of science, or social role. Instead, they “intersect” all these areas.

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1 Transversal Skills and Competencies, TSC

We take our transversal skills with us when we change jobs, career paths, or get involved in social activities. Unlike specialized skills (e.g., expertise in a specific discipline, knowledge of a specific programming language, knowledge of selected legal regulations), transversal competencies are useful in a broader context and allow you to function effectively outside the academic environment.

What is a competence model?

A competence model is a tool that describes in a structured way what skills, knowledge, and attitudes are desirable and essential for employees to function effectively in a given organization. In other words, it is a set of precisely defined competencies that the institution considers necessary to achieve its strategic goals.

The competence model also includes:

- Clearly defined expectations.
- Clear development path.
- Access to targeted training and support.

The competence model is primarily intended to help the university better plan the development of its employees and manage talent within the university, supporting processes such as recruitment, onboarding new employees, individual development plans, development discussions, and academic staff evaluation.

It is worth noting that the transversal competence model presented below differs from traditional competence models in that it goes beyond the needs of a specific organization or position. While classic competence models focus primarily on the skills necessary to function effectively within a given institution and achieve its strategic goals, the USWPS Transversal Competence Model takes a broader perspective. It addresses the needs of both employers and employees, emphasizing the development of universal skills that can be transferred between different workplaces, industries, or even countries. As a result, by developing transversal skills, employees invest not only in their current work position, but also in their professional and personal future, gaining tools to adapt to the changing world of work and to find their place in any professional environment.

Each competency group has a set of indicators assigned to it, which can be treated as development guidelines. The competence self-assessment questionnaire is a tool that will help you assess the extent to which individual competences are already being used by a given employee or in a given position, and to what extent you should focus on their development. It is also worth emphasizing that the indicators themselves are not used to evaluate the work or the employee. They serve to reflect on and build self-awareness of strengths.

Framework for the competence model transversal at USWPS:

The concept and assumptions of the model were developed under the supervision of Dr. Anna Ziółkowska, professor at SWPS University, in cooperation with the HR Excellence in Research Team, the Teaching Advisors Team, and the Human Resources Department.

Universality of competences and skills

The main objective of the model is to develop universal competencies in employees. This means that they are to ensure effective functioning not only within USWPS, but also in every other workplace, other universities in Poland and abroad, and even in other, non-professional areas of life. The model focuses on skills that can be used in any environment.

Equal importance of competences

The model emphasizes that professional success, quality of work, and employee evaluation do not depend solely on specialized skills (knowledge of a chosen discipline or expertise in a chosen field). Transversal competencies play an equally important role. It is important that all employees develop their competences in all four areas, depending on the needs and capabilities of both the employee and the university.

Versatility in competences development

The model assumes comprehensive and balanced development of the employee, rather than specialization in only one area of transversal competencies. However, this does not mean that the highest level of proficiency will be required in each of the 12 competences. Balance must be maintained in development—the model assumes that each person's competence profile may be different and that there is no requirement to have the same level of advancement in all competences.

A coherent, thoughtful model structure

The model is consistent and structured. It consists of four main areas, within which a total of 12 specific competences have been identified. Their development will support the achievement of the University's strategic goals.

USWPS transversal competence model

The USWPS transversal competence model focuses on four main competence areas.

1. Competences related to digitization and innovation

- 1.1. Data analysis competences
- 1.2. Digital competences
- 1.3. Competences in critical, innovative, and creative thinking

2. Competence in managing and organizing work

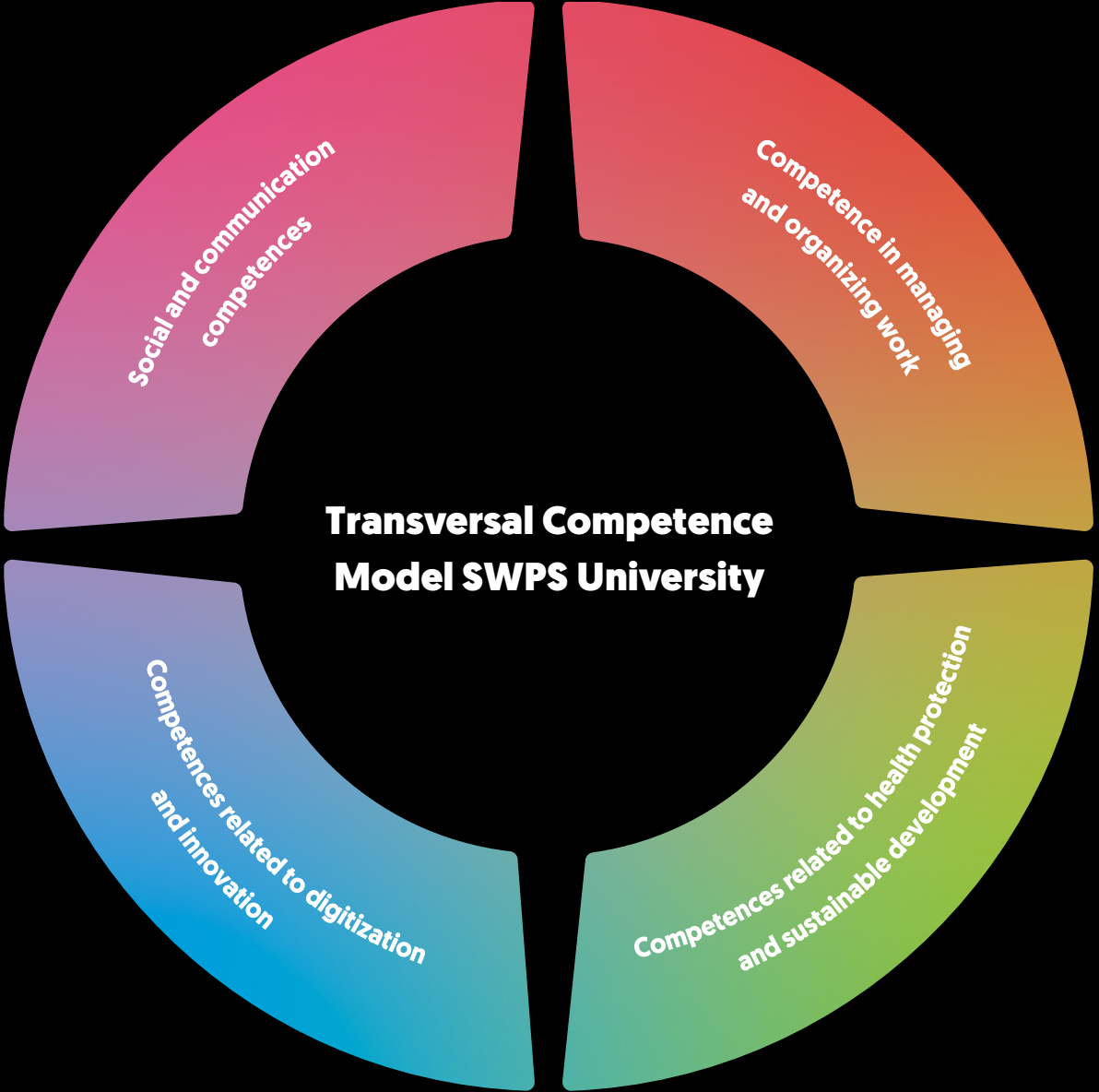
- 2.1. Competence in planning and organizing your own work
- 2.2. Management and leadership competences

3. Social and communication competences

- 3.1. Communication competences
- 3.2. Competences in teamwork and supporting others
- 3.3. Competence in establishing professional contacts
- 3.4. Competence in following ethical principles

4. Competences related to health protection and sustainable development

- 4.1. Competences related to health and well-being
- 4.2. Competences related to environmental protection
- 4.3. Competences related to social engagement



**Transversal Competence
Model SWPS University**

Social and communication
competences

Competence in managing
and organizing work

Competences related to health protection
and sustainable development

Competences related to digitization
and innovation

Clarification of definitions

1. Competences related to digitization and innovation

Definition: These are acquired and proven abilities to use digital tools, analyze data, and think innovatively and creatively to solve problems and create added value in various contexts.

1.1. Data analysis competences

Definition: Knowledge and skills in analyzing and presenting data refer to the ability to understand and apply statistical concepts and methods in order to analyze, process, and present data, draw conclusions, and make decisions.

Indicators:

- Uses data analysis methods appropriate to the discipline or scope of responsibilities represented
- Can prepare data summaries
- Uses appropriate tools for data analysis
- Can present analysis results in visual form
- Can interpret quantitative or qualitative data
- Can assess the reliability of data and its analysis

1.2. Digital competences

Definition: Digital skills encompassing the knowledge and ability to use digital technologies, including computers, software, the internet, and mobile devices, effectively and safely.

Indicators:

- Supports systems and applications appropriate for the tasks performed
- Can use communication platforms
- Complies with cybersecurity rules
- Uses digital tools in work organization
- Knows and can use generative AI tools

- Able to develop students' digital competences, including the use of AI tools [D]
- Manages research data in accordance with FAIR principles [B]

1.3. Competences in critical, innovative, and creative thinking

Definition: Critical, innovative, and creative thinking refers to the ability to analyze information, generate new ideas, solve problems, and implement innovative solutions.

Indicators:

- Can analyze problems from different perspectives
- Suggests improvements to processes in their area of work
- Shows openness to new solutions
- Can adapt to technological changes
- Applies existing solutions to new contexts
- Assesses the effectiveness of implemented innovations
- Generates innovative ideas in various areas of their work
- Combines knowledge from various fields/disciplines
- Develops new methods and approaches in its activities

In summary, skills and competences related to digitization and innovation include the ability to freely use new technologies, analyze data, and think creatively.

The development of these competences directly translates into the efficiency and quality of everyday work through a creative approach to tasks and less time spent on repetitive, routine tasks.

Key benefits for the employee:

- optimizing working time through the ability to effectively use digital tools, including AI, to automate routine tasks, such as analyzing research data, creating visualizations, or preparing teaching materials,
- increased efficiency and quality of scientific work thanks to data analysis competences enabling deeper research into problems, more reliable interpretation of results, and more effective publishing, which increases the chances of gaining recognition in the scientific community and obtaining grants,
- personal development, increasing authority, and strengthening one's position in the scientific community through continuous improvement of digital and innovative competencies,
- more effective transfer of knowledge to students through innovative thinking and the introduction of new teaching methods,
- increasing work efficiency and minimizing the risk of errors through the automation of administrative processes,
- more effective teamwork thanks to the use of digital collaboration tools (communication platforms, project management tools, document sharing), which enables efficient coordination of activities, even in geographically dispersed teams,
- reducing monotony and increasing job satisfaction by enabling the implementation of improvements and initiatives.

Benefits for the university:

- increasing the competitiveness, innovation, and prestige of the university by developing digital competences and innovative and creative thinking among employees,
- improving the quality of work, including research and teaching, by developing competence in data analysis and innovative thinking among employees, reducing task completion times, cutting costs, and ensuring more effective management through the digitization of administrative and scientific processes.

2. Competences in management and work organization

Definition: It is a set of skills and competences that enable effective planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling of individual and team activities in an academic environment. It includes the ability to think strategically, make decisions, and lead teams in a way that supports the organization's goals while developing the potential of employees.

2.1. Competence in planning and organizing one's own work

Definition: Knowledge and ability to effectively manage time and resources in order to complete tasks and achieve professional goals. This includes prioritizing tasks, creating action plans, and using tools to support work organization.

Indicators:

- Effectively manages time and deadlines
- Correctly prioritizes actions
- Systematically carries out assigned duties
- Manages available resources rationally
- Responds flexibly to unexpected situations
- Efficiently manages ongoing projects
- Accurately documents work and meets reporting deadlines
- Understands the need for and principles of financing scientific or artistic activities and is able to secure the necessary resources for their implementation [B²]
- Systematically develops his/her research or teaching skills [BD³]

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2 B — reference to persons employed in the group of research employees

3 BD — reference to persons employed in the group of research and teaching staff

2.2. Management and leadership competences

Definition: The ability to effectively manage teams and make decisions that lead to the achievement of institutional goals. It includes strategic planning, delegating tasks, motivating colleagues, managing relationships, and building an atmosphere of cooperation and trust in the academic environment.

Indicators:

- Effectively coordinates team work
- Makes decisions
- Clearly communicates goals and tasks
- Fairly distributes responsibilities
- Monitors task completion
- Resolves conflicts within the team
- Provides constructive feedback
- Cares about a good atmosphere in the team.
- Builds cooperation networks
- Inspires, motivates, and supports the development of colleagues or students

In summary, competence in planning and organizing one's own work is the ability to plan tasks well, set priorities, and manage time effectively, which can lead to better professional results, a lighter workload, and new opportunities for development. If you manage a team, this also includes the ability to motivate others and distribute responsibilities fairly.

Key benefits for the employee:

- optimal management of working time and minimization of stress related to tight deadlines, thanks to the ability to plan and organize one's own work,
- improved ability to prioritize and plan tasks,
- building authority within the research team by developing management and leadership competences,
- more efficient project and team management, motivating and supporting others, which translates into a better atmosphere of cooperation and increases job satisfaction for both yourself and your team,
- more efficient team management (team coordination, task delegation, conflict resolution) through the development of management competences
- more efficient combination of tasks from different areas, e.g., between research, teaching, organizational duties, and publishing.

Benefits for the university:

- faster and more efficient project implementation, more effective project planning and management,
- building an atmosphere and institutional culture based on trust and cooperation through the development of management competences,
- increased employee satisfaction.

3. Social and communication competences

Definition: Social and communication skills and competences are a set of knowledge, attitudes, and key skills that enable effective communication, relationship building, and cooperation with others in various contexts, both professional and social, taking into account ethical principles and cultural norms.

3.1. Communication competences

Definition: The ability to effectively convey and receive information in various forms and contexts, taking into account the needs, cultural and interpersonal differences of recipients, and the specific nature of the academic environment. It includes written, verbal, and nonverbal communication.

Indicators:

- Conveys information clearly and precisely
- Creates transparent documentation
- Properly formulates business correspondence
- Can communicate in English
- Fluent in the language in which he/she teaches [D⁴]
- Participates in international scientific or artistic discourse [B]
- Promotes scientific knowledge or artistic activities [B]

3.2. Competences in teamwork and supporting others

Definition: The ability to collaborate effectively in diverse teams, including building relationships based on trust and respect, the ability to adapt to dynamically changing group conditions, striving to achieve synergy in teamwork, and supporting other team members in achieving common goals.

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4 D — reference to persons employed in the group of teaching staff

Indicators:

- Actively and effectively participates in team work
- Shares knowledge and experience
- Supports the development of colleagues
- Follows the principles of teamwork
- Contributes to a positive atmosphere
- Creates an atmosphere conducive to professional development

3.3. Competence in establishing professional contacts

Definition: The ability to initiate, build, and maintain lasting professional relationships in the workplace and to create cooperation networks in a broader industry context. It also involves the ability to cooperate with people from different levels of the organizational hierarchy, exchange knowledge and experience, and solve problems together in the workplace.

Indicators:

- Builds positive relationships in the workplace
- Maintains professional relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Represents the unit in public relations
- Develops a network of professional contacts
- Initiates research or implementation projects with external partners [B]
- Establishes or undertakes cooperation with the socio-economic environment [BD]
- Participates in international research networks [B]

3.4. Competence in following ethical principles

Definition: The ability to make decisions and take action in accordance with ethical principles while maintaining transparency. Primarily covers aspects such as: responsibility for actions taken and awareness of the social impact of one's work, honesty, respect for diversity, compliance with internal procedures, and willingness to respond to unethical behavior in one's environment.

Indicators:

- Complies with professional ethics
- Maintains confidentiality of information
- Operates transparently and responsibly
- Treats everyone with respect
- Responds to ethical violations
- Respects intellectual property rights
- Promotes ethical standards in science and teaching [BD]
- Ensures research integrity [B]

In summary, social and communication skills and competences are the art of communicating with others, conveying information clearly, and building good relationships. It also involves the ability to work in a team, share knowledge, and act in accordance with ethical principles.

Key benefits for the employee:

- smoother flow of information, faster problem solving, and more effective implementation of research and teaching projects thanks to the ability to communicate clearly and build relationships,
- giving more effective public presentations and promoting science more efficiently through the ability to present complex scientific issues to a wider audience, for example at scientific conferences or in the media,
- building positive relationships with other departments and participating in cross-team projects, resulting in a greater sense of belonging and job satisfaction,
- better interdepartmental cooperation and support for interdisciplinarity through communication and social competences,
- the opportunity to build professional networks (networking),
- more efficient fundraising for research, publications, and promotion of achievements at home and abroad thanks to communication competences, including networking,
- knowledge transfer to business and more effective cooperation with business partners.

Benefits for the university:

- more effective teamwork thanks to better communication, trust building, and cooperation skills, which translates into faster implementation of organizational, research, and teaching projects, as well as a reduction in conflicts within teams,
- more effective relations and cooperation with the socio-economic environment,
- more effectively functioning interdisciplinary teams,
- more international cooperation networks established and maintained, a greater number of research projects, publications, and grants,
- conducting research and projects in accordance with the highest ethical standards, improving the atmosphere and organizational culture through developed social and communication competences, creating an environment based on cooperation, trust, and respect.

4. Competences related to health protection and sustainable development

Definition: Skills and competences that enable individuals to take a holistic approach to health and well-being, both their own and that of others, and to understand and act in favor of sustainable development.

4.1. Competences related to health and well-being

Definition: The ability to take care of one's own physical and mental health and support the well-being of others in the workplace, taking into account the principles of work-life balance and workplace ergonomics.

Indicators:

- Complies with ergonomic principles in the workplace
- Uses stress management techniques
- Maintains a good work-life balance
- Responds to health hazards in the workplace
- Promotes a healthy lifestyle among colleagues and students

4.2. Competences related to environmental protection

Definition: The ability to assess and minimize the impact of one's own actions on the environment and promote sustainable development in the workplace and private life.

Indicators:

- Applies energy and water saving principles
- Sorts waste at the workplace
- Promotes electronic document circulation
- Supports environmental initiatives
- Makes rational use of assigned resources
- Promotes environmental protection and sustainable development at work (including in research and teaching)

4.3. Competences related to social engagement

Definition: The ability to actively participate in academic and local community life, undertake social initiatives, and engage in activities promoting sustainable development.

Indicators:

- Participates in the life of the academic community
- He is involved in charity work or social projects.
- Supports volunteer initiatives
- Promotes social values in the workplace
- Cooperates with non-governmental organizations
- Initiates projects for the local community

In summary, skills and competences related to health protection and sustainable development mean taking care of yourself — maintaining a work-life balance. It is also our shared responsibility to care for the environment and engage in the life of the university and the local community.

Consciously taking care of yourself and your surroundings translates into better well-being, less stress, and a sense that your work has a deeper meaning. By developing these competences, you will protect yourself from burnout and give your work a greater sense of meaning.

Key benefits for the employee:

- better teamwork by caring for your own well-being and that of other team members, which creates a more supportive and productive work environment,
- more effective stress management, better health and well-being through conscious care for one's own health,
- greater satisfaction with work and life thanks to a better work-life balance and the ability to set priorities and take care of rest,
- a sense of purpose and impact through the opportunity to engage in social and environmental initiatives,

- better quality of work and greater efficiency, thanks to the ability to cope with deadline pressure and a large number of tasks,
- a sense of belonging to the team through active participation in the academic community, e.g., in volunteer projects.

Benefits for the university:

- reducing absenteeism and turnover, thereby increasing institutional efficiency and employee satisfaction,
- conducting more innovative research that responds to global challenges,
- building the image of USWPS as a modern and socially responsible university that cares about the health and well-being of its employees and actively promotes sustainable development,
- organizational culture that supports social and environmental values consistent with the university's development strategy.

How to use the Transversal Competence Model?

The Transversal Competence Model is a tool that lives and grows with us. To fully leverage its potential, we encourage you to take three simple steps:

1. Consider which of the described competences are already your strength and which areas you would most like to develop in the coming year. You can use the self-assessment questionnaire to better evaluate your potential.
2. Use the model as a basis for a development discussion with your supervisor. Work together to set priorities and find the best forms of support.
3. Choose one or two competences you want to work on and plan specific, small steps that will help you strengthen them in your daily tasks.



Summary

Development is a process, not a one-time event. We believe that systematic and conscious improvement of transversal competencies is an investment in the development of all of us, as well as in the development of the university, which is co-created by committed employees. The model and related processes will be regularly reviewed and updated to respond to the changing needs of the university, labor market trends, and technological advances.



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