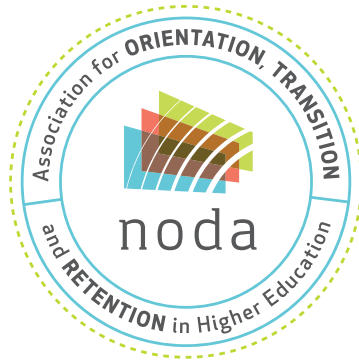




NODA Core Competencies



ASSOCIATION FOR
Orientation • Transition • Retention
IN HIGHER EDUCATION



The NODA Core Competencies

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Introduction

The mission of NODA-Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education is to provide education, leadership, and professional development in the field of college student orientation, transition, and retention (OTR). To that end, the NODA Board has embarked on strategic planning efforts that support their mission and vision of being the premier association for professionals in orientation, transition, and retention.

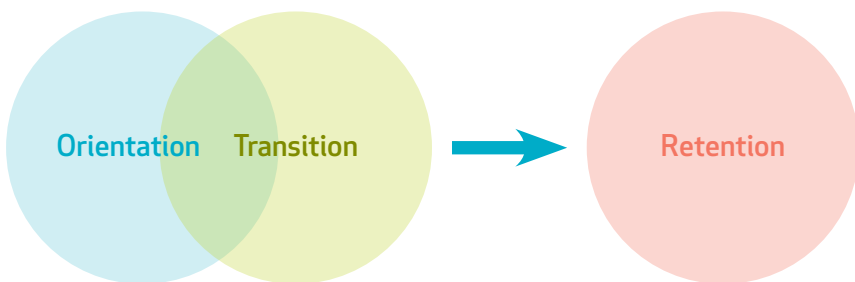
NODA has a long history of collaboration and communication with the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). The CAS standards for Orientation Programs (2011) have provided the framework for developing and assessing effective and accountable orientation programs and services for many years. Further, CAS provides the Characteristics of Individual Excellence for Professional Practice in Higher Education, which are general professional competencies to practice and apply the programmatic standards and guidelines. However, the orientation programs CAS standards do not provide specific competencies for OTR professionals. The NODA Core Competencies were established to fill the gap and offer direction for guiding individual personal and professional development in orientation, transition, and retention.

The NODA Core Competencies were designed to be the organizational system for knowledge, skills, and abilities of all professionals. Competencies are a “benchmark for defining a profession” (Havice, 2015). Competencies not only provide a common framework and foundation of skills for professionals involved in the Association, they also create opportunities for professional development and help advance the skills and experiences for all levels of OTR professionals.

Philosophical Framework

The field of orientation, transition, and retention is organizationally complex and a practical field which professionals routinely attempt to interpret in simplistic viewpoints. In the viewpoint of organizational theory, orientation, transition, and retention cannot be categorized or understood as a simple issue or approach through simple structures. Orientation, transition, and retention is a highly interconnected context, therefore must be approached through a complex lens (Snowden & Boone, 2007; Chillers, 1998).

The NODA Core Competencies have been written to blur the traditional independent fields known more specifically to orientation in order to address the greater relational context of orientation, transition, and retention. Contemporary professionals in orientation, transition, and retention must recognize the intersectionality of orientation, transition, and retention to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully support students.



Process

In November 2014, the NODA Board of Directors, in support of the strategic plan, initiated an ad hoc committee to draft the NODA Core Competencies. The ad hoc committee was comprised of seven NODA members ranging from new professionals to those with an advanced level of experience in orientation, transition, and retention.

Throughout the six-month competency development process, the ad hoc committee reviewed key documents including the CAS Standards for Orientation Programs (2011), the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators (2015), peer association competency frameworks, the NODA Task Force report (2012) on the definition of orientation, transition, and retention, the NODA Listserv Data Analysis (Summer 2013) and position descriptions of OTR professionals in many levels at multiple types of institutions. The committee members engaged in a process of discussion and analysis of these guiding documents, formal position description, and other resources (Rode & Cawthon, 2010; Cawthon & Schreiber, 2012; Ward-Roof & Guthrie, 2010; Burkard, Cole, Ott & Stoflet, 2005; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2013).

From this analysis, twelve foundational areas of the OTR profession emerged as thematic focuses into which the competencies of the field can be categorized. The competencies of the OTR profession have been categorized into foundational, intermediate, and advanced skills within each of the Foundations.

Drafts of the NODA Core Competencies were shared with a series of external and internal (NODA) reviewers. Feedback was evaluated and applied where necessary and appropriate. Internal reviewers included NODA leaders within committees and networks. A special thank you to external reviewers Dr. George Kuh (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment), Dr. Joe Cuseo (Educational Advisor, AVID for Higher Education), Dr. Cindi Love (ACPA Executive Director) and Kelli McCloud-Schingen (KMS Intercultural Consulting).

NODA Core Competencies Ad Hoc Committee:

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Competency Foundations

The NODA Core Competences are comprised of twelve foundational areas. The ‘Foundations’ are thematic tenets, which provide the framework for the core competencies. The Foundations are highly interconnected and building competence in one Foundation may be contingent on competence in a subsequent one. The Foundations for the NODA Professional Competencies are:

- Theoretical and Institutional Knowledge
- Diversity, Inclusion, and Access
- Campus Collaborations
- Curriculum and Content Development
- Program Delivery and Management
- Organization and Leadership
- Communication
- Crisis Management
- Financial Management
- Laws, Policies, and Governance
- Enrollment Management
- Research, Assessment, and Evaluation

The Foundations are thematic areas in which all professionals in orientation, transition, and retention must build skill and competence. Some tenets addressed in other association competencies may not be reflected as a self-standing Foundation but woven throughout all levels of the Foundations.

Example: Technology

Technology is a vital knowledge, skill, and ability to the success of OTR professionals. Technology, however, is a competence area that transcends and supports all of the Foundations reflected in the NODA Core Competencies. Technology is rapidly changing and affects the work of all OTR professionals. Technology is addressed within the twelve Foundations but in a supportive lens within each specific Foundation.

Intended Audience and Implementation

Professional competence is built through the context of knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are attained through both formal and informal ways of learning. The three influence one another creating a cycle necessary for professionals to engage in and ultimately be successful within the field. Professional and personal experience combined with education, however, influence an individual's competence within a Foundation.

Within each of the Foundations, the competencies are outlined in foundational, intermediate, and advanced sequence. Foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels are drafted in the context and framework of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Bloom's framework provides professionals with a progression of knowledge, skills, and abilities which could be measured or documented through professional evidence or success criteria (Adelman, 2015).

The levels are not intended to be tied to a positional or job level, but rather to focus on a progressive building of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Job duties and responsibilities differ widely from institution to institution, depending upon the institutional type, the organization of OTR programming or offices, or even the institution's host country. In addition, experienced professionals who take on new positions with different responsibilities may need to build competence at a foundational level in a Foundation area outside of their experience and expertise. Therefore, it is imperative OTR professionals recognize professional competence does not correlate with job level/status, position title or educational attainment.

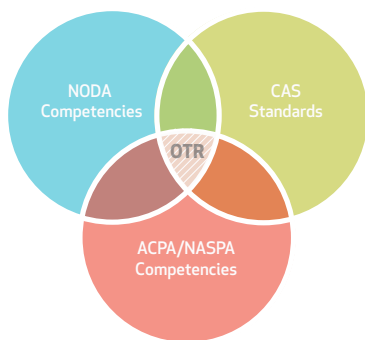
The NODA Core Competencies are not meant to be a checklist of professional attributes but should be thought of as a guide to develop one's professional growth. OTR practitioners should challenge themselves to be honest in their self-reflection regarding the knowledge, skills,

and abilities they need to obtain and seek opportunities to learn and advance themselves in that area or competency. Development in certain competencies may be for personal or professional reasons; for example, to provide experience for a job search or professional advancement opportunity.

The ACPA/NASPA professional competencies offer the knowledge and skills for student affairs professionals. The authors suggested the ten established competency areas “lay out essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of all student affairs educators, regardless of functional area or specialized within the field” (2015, p. 7). The NODA Core Competencies reflect further knowledge, skills, and abilities of higher education professionals specifically practicing in the field of orientation, transition, and retention.

While the ACPA/NASPA competencies offer **knowledge, skills, and abilities** for all student affairs educators and CAS Orientation Programs standards suggest **programmatic guidelines, standards, and assessment**, the NODA Competencies complete a **holistic approach** to OTR practice.

The graphic below illustrates the blending of several frameworks, including the NODA Core Competencies, for OTR professionals to strive toward. As scholars and educators, professionals must seek out opportunities from multiple sources to establish evidence-based practices and professional experiences.



An example of how a professional may use two or more frameworks to build competence would, again, be in the realm of technology. Technology is a freestanding theme within the ACPA/NASPA competencies. OTR professionals can turn to the ACPA/NASPA competencies to assess their knowledge, skills, and abilities specifically in technology. Professionals can then utilize the NODA Core Competencies to frame the technological knowledge, skills, and abilities within orientation, transition, and retention.

NODA Core Competencies

The NODA Core Competencies are highly complementary of and intertwined between the Foundations. Competence in one Foundation may be contingent on competence in a subsequent one. As some competencies are interwoven, OTR professionals are reminded the NODA Core Competencies are not a checklist of knowledge, skills, and abilities, but are a framework to build comprehensive competence in the field of orientation, transition, and retention.

What follows are the competencies based on the categories:

Theoretical and Institutional Knowledge

Orientation and transition are fundamental experiences for college student success leading to the ultimate outcome of retention and persistence to graduation. OTR practitioners must have theoretical knowledge of student learning and development combined with a working knowledge of the institutional functions.

Foundational

- Articulate student development, transitional, student learning and environmental theories
- Describe the purpose and function of orientation, transition, and retention
- Identify the theoretical causes of student departure
- Specify the different constituents served by OTR programs
- Identify contemporary student and parent/family demographics and relationships within individual institutional context (i.e. recruiting and enrolling)
- Interpret the institutional mission and culture and their effect on orientation, transition, and retention programming
- Determine campus history, tradition, and politics that could contribute to the successes and challenges of the work completed by the OTR office
- Possess a technical comprehension of student course registration system and process
- Outline the institutional structure of the academic advising process and academic support structures which connect to student academic success
- Access student data to inform decisions and practices of OTR programs
- Identify and adhere to the NODA Statement of Ethical Standards

Intermediate

- Explore institutional and higher educational trends to better predict, influence and adjust to changing OTR practices
- Identify the current research which surrounds OTR practices
- Employ theory to practice concepts in program and staff development
- Identify theory which may be institution-specific to support campus populations and climate
- Establish one's own philosophy of student engagement and retention
- Compare practices based on use of a variety of student development theories
- Implement practices incorporating how individuals process and understand information, specifically visually, auditorily and kinesthetically
- Describe the institutional use and structure of student data management

Advanced

- Use theory juxtaposed with institutional data to project student yield, retention and attrition behaviors
- Pursue knowledge creation, synthesis, and application in orientation, transition, and retention
- Employ a technical understanding of student data management to guide data-driven decisions
- Comprehend one's institutional recruitment and enrollment life-cycle
- Advocate for OTR programs as a partner in student academic success through the support of academic and career planning advising

Diversity, Inclusion, and Access

Orientation, transition, and retention strategies and practices are critical components in access to higher education for diverse student populations. OTR practitioners value the intersectionality of students' identities and serve as allies through inclusive transitional practices.

Foundational

- *Read* the NODA [Statement of Non-Discrimination](#) and [Equity, Inclusion, & Social Justice Commitment](#).
- *Read* the NODA Indigenous [Land Acknowledgement Statement](#) and any acknowledgements on your campus.
- *Review* research and best practices for supporting the needs of historically marginalized communities in higher education.
- *Identify* elements of your identity including, your attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, lived experiences, biases, privileges, power, and impacts.
- *Review* your institution's documents, reports, plans, and statements, etc. (e.g. campus climate survey, strategic plans) related to diversity, inclusion, and access.
- *Articulate* your institution's philosophy and vision for diversity and inclusion.
- *Identify* your campus's departments and units that serve as experts in, focus on providing, and promoting resources that support access and equity for the needs of historically marginalized communities.
- *Participate* in on-campus and off-campus trainings, lectures, workshops, classes, and retreats focused around diversity, inclusion, and access topics.
- *Name* the demographics of your institution in order to identify gaps in current programs and services.
- *Articulate* the concept of organizational structure and organizational behavior and its impact on marginalized communities.
- *Identify* access barriers to the student experience.
- *Describe* the concept of universal design and how it can be used in OTR.
- *Recognize* how hiring can and has been used in maintaining systems of oppression, privilege, and power within an organization.
- *Identify* examples of inclusive recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and supervision practices.
- *Review* the historical context of your institution and the current actions or inactions it is taking to better support indigenous communities, especially for those on which the land of the institution resides.

Intermediate

- *Articulate* the elements of your identity including your attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, lived experiences, biases, privileges, power, and impacts in connection with orientation, transition, and retention.
- *Synthesize* the content you are learning from your on-campus and off-campus trainings, lectures, workshops, classes, and retreats focused around diversity, inclusion, and access topics.

- *Review* how your institutional policy on inclusion and access relates to the areas of orientation, transition, and retention.
- *Identify* resources focused on supporting the needs of historically marginalized communities that are being implemented at your institution.
- *Provide* examples of your institution and area's organizational structure and organizational behavior around diversity, inclusion, and access.
- *Examine* how your institution's documents, plans, statements, etc. (e.g. campus climate survey, strategic plans) related to diversity, equity, and inclusion are connected to current institution practices and how you can implement those practices in your work.
- *Collaborate* across campus with other institutional areas/units that support and provide resources to historically marginalized communities.
- *Articulate* how your institution is currently applying universal design in orientation, transition, and retention programs.
- *Implement* support mechanisms for indigenous communities, especially for those on which the land of the institution resides, in partnership with campus experts.
- *Implement* inclusive recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and supervision practices at your institution in partnership with experts in diversity, inclusion, and access and human resources.
- *Report* how your organization's current recruitment and hiring procedures could be impacting systems of privilege/power/oppression at the institution.

Advanced

- *Design* on-campus and off-campus trainings, lectures, workshops, classes, and retreats focused around diversity, inclusion, and access topics (e.g. specialized yield and retention programs, mentor programs, and online programs/initiatives).
- *Evaluate* inequality from a variety of intersectional perspectives to become better informed with working with historically marginalized communities.
- *Assess* your institution's access barriers in the orientation, transition and retention process for historically underrepresented groups across campus.
- *Analyze* your institution and area's organizational structure around diversity, inclusion, and access with others.
- *Administer* processes and practices focused at addressing organizational behavior on orientation, transition, and retention at your institution and area (e.g. policies, mission statements, culture).
- *Appraise* how your institution's policies and practice on diversity, inclusion, and access are impacting historically underrepresented groups at your institution.
- *Create* opportunities to engage with historically marginalized communities at your institution to determine their needs and develop solutions.
- *Implement* educational technologies to promote digital equity for diverse learners.
- *Examine* current recruitment and hiring documents and processes to support impact on prospective candidates from historically marginalized communities.
- *Assess* recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and supervision processes focused on inclusion and retention for employees.

Campus Collaboration

The success of OTR professionals and programs relies on strong external and internal partnerships and collaborations. These competency areas outline knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the OTR practitioner to possess in order to shape and maintain strong collegial relationships.

Foundational

- Outline the structure, function, and purpose of campus partnerships
- Identify and sustain working relationships with a variety of campus partners
- Recognize strengths of existing partnerships
- Establish relationships with faculty members and administrators
- Develop a working knowledge of campus practices and policies for various functional areas
- Articulate the structure and placement of OTR programs and/or office as they relate to the larger university structure
- Effectively communicate with a wide variety of campus constituents from support staff to upper-level administration
- Identify and articulate the importance of all roles within a campus structure

Intermediate

- Seek out and defer appropriately to campus experts in other functional areas
- Solicit new partnerships that strengthen program offerings
- Identify and navigate challenges with campus partners
- Utilize assessment data to inform campus partners on the effectiveness of initiatives
- Negotiate goals, procedures, and planning details with stakeholders
- Pursue opportunities to participate in/serve the greater campus community and engage with practices/policies/procedures of other functional areas
- Employ opportunities to incorporate faculty members in OTR programs
- Ensure that key collaborators feel informed of, included in and engaged in OTR programs, policy, decisions, and change

Advanced

- Engage in partnerships that foster student-centered institutional change
- Advocate for the needs of the OTR programs and office with respect to budget, staffing, or other support
- Engage faculty members' input on OTR program planning and vision
- Model a vision for campus-wide participation in OTR initiatives
- Create opportunities for a variety of campus stakeholders to contribute to the campus OTR vision
- Create sustaining collaborative relationships with campus colleagues also concerned with the development, retention, and education of students
- Apply assessment data to create and modify OTR strategies and partnerships

Curriculum and Content Development

Central to the OTR profession is the creation of programs and practices that support student transition and success. OTR practitioners must have a strong skill set in strategically designing and organizing content and transitional learning on an ongoing basis.

Foundational

- Utilize programmatic content and outcomes to define OTR program types and delivery methods
- Specify institutional priorities related to orientation, transition, and retention
- Determine program needs based on understanding and knowledge base of orientation, transition, and retention
- Define campus history and traditions and its impacts and influences on orientation, transition, and retention
- Articulate the role orientation, transition, and retention has on student persistence and success

Intermediate

- Outline the institutional expectations of new and transitioning students
- Establish plan of action and/or curriculum within the framework provided by established program goals and learning outcomes
- Identify the university structure and administrative procedures and policies which will affect planning, including facility use, FERPA and communication practices
- Formulate the various types of programs offered by distinguishing population needs
- Demonstrate awareness of current trends or topics that influence programmatic content
- Design programs that match institutional goals and needs while supporting student transition and success
- Construct learning activities that promote metacognition
- Utilize Universal Design when creating programmatic components
- Intentionally map the institutional need of OTR programs with a students' developmental progression
- Facilitate opportunities for students to identify their personal and academic goals
- Create opportunities which facilitate the student use of campus resources and services

Advanced

- Establish the institution's curriculum for successfully transitioning a student to the institution
- Adapt changes to programs by projecting trends and future needs of students and the field of orientation, transition, and retention
- Train and direct other professional, support, and part-time staff in their program planning and development responsibilities related to transitioning students

- Provide direction for the assessment of programs and planning, with the intention to continuously improve and provide programs relevant to the changing needs of students, those who support them and the university
- Utilize yield, melt, and retention data to further develop support programs for incoming and current students
- Advocate for program development and address issues associated to transitions experienced throughout the duration of higher education (e.g. second-year students, re-enrollment, withdrawal process)

Program Delivery and Management

OTR practitioners must be intentional in event management and delivery to implement effective programming designed to facilitate new student transition. OTR professionals must also support and direct others in program logistics, delivery, and management.

Foundational

- Facilitate multiple types of programs including multi-media and face-to-face
- Develop agendas and schedules for programs, events, and activities
- Identify staff and peer staff needs to implement programs and services
- Employ a variety of teaching and training methods in staff preparation and program implementation
- Coordinate foundational contracts for essential logistics including food, venues, transportation, setup, technology, and speakers
- Identify and adhere to the NODA Statement of Sustainability

Intermediate

- Evaluate and guide the skills of others in presentation, facilitation, and teaching
- Provide critical and constructive feedback to staff, peer leader staff and campus partners/presenters to achieve programmatic outcomes
- Articulate current societal trends and innovative methods of program delivery
- Demonstrate awareness of current trends or topics that influence programmatic delivery
- Gain familiarity with the styles and programs offered by other campus departments and like-institutions
- Utilize Universal Design in program implementation and delivery
- Manage multiple and simultaneous logistical components of program implementation

Advanced

- Create environments that promote peer-to-peer leader engagement
- Analyze data and trends to better inform decision making regarding short- and long-term effectiveness of delivery methods and strategies
- Align programs with available technologies and overall strategic plan and with developmental progress of students
- Provide vision for overall program quality and performance standards as well as the adherence to university expectations for program delivery
- Utilize campus collaborations and assessment to address concerns and relevance to program implementation

Organization and Leadership

OTR practitioners must be cognizant of OTR's organizational placement within the institutional structure and provide effective leadership for the success of programs dedicated to the orientation, transition, and retention of students. OTR practitioners must be intentional about their own professional development as well as the professional development and leadership of those under their supervision.

Foundational

- *Serve* as an advisor, guide, supervisor and mentor to student groups and individuals including new students and student leaders.
- *Identify* effective practices related to recruitment, selection, and/or hiring, including individuals and group interviewing for all staff. (eg. undergraduates, graduates, professionals, etc.)
- *Outline* personal and professional expectations for all staff (e.g. undergraduates, graduates, professionals, etc) in their behavior, growth, and learning
- *Guide* peer-leaders in ethical standards and inclusive, appropriate professional practices.
- *Identify* constructive and beneficial professional and personal development opportunities for self and others.
- *Develop* appropriate networking skills and actively seek out professional development opportunities.
- *Identify* one's own strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and working style.
- *Recognize* personal and professional development opportunities that are constructive and beneficial for self and others.
- *Recognize* effective practices in supervising and developing undergraduate staff.
- *Guide* peer-leaders in ethical standards and inclusive, appropriate professional practices.
- *Identify* professional development opportunities to develop networking skills for all staff. (e.g. undergraduates, graduates, professionals, etc.)
- *Identify* one's own strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and working style as it pertains to your work in OTR.
- *Describe* your leadership philosophy as it pertains to your work in OTR.
- *Recognize* appropriate conflict mediation skills to move individuals and teams toward conflict resolution.

Intermediate

- *Exercise* effective practices related to recruitment, selection, and/or hiring, including individual and group interviewing for all staff. (e.g. undergraduates, graduates, professionals, etc.)
- *Demonstrate* an ability to mediate and move individuals and teams toward conflict resolution.
- *Effectively employ* conflict management skills, including mediation, collaboration, and group facilitation.

- *Engage* in professional and personal development opportunities that promote self-growth.
- *Articulate* the importance of encouraging staff to participate in professional and personal development opportunities that promote self-growth.
- *Articulate* the strategic plan for OTR programs to campus constituents and participants.
- *Serve* as a mentor for new professionals and students.
- *Guide/coach* new professionals in understanding of the functional and organizational structure and support in scenarios of change.
- *Develop* professional strategies that aid in navigating through unit and institutional change.
- *Model* effective practices in supervising and developing undergraduate staff , including providing a comprehensive training program, opportunity for team development, and individualized and team feedback.
- *Guide* colleagues and staff in ethical standards and inclusive, appropriate professional practices.

Advanced

- *Engage* staff in developing a vision for your unit and OTR programs that reflect institutional mission.
- *Negotiate* a shared vision, learning outcomes, and expectations with institutional staff, constituents, and stakeholders.
- *Apply* the vision, mission, purpose, and goals for OTR programs connecting them to your institution's strategic plan.
- *Engage* in conversation with Senior Leadership in lobbying to ensure that OTR programming is adequately supported and appropriately staffed.
- *Supervise* multiple levels and types of staff, connecting staff with the purpose and goals of the office and institution.
- *Evaluate* staff in their professional development vision and strategy and personal leadership skill building.
- *Serve* as a model leader for creative thinking, creative problem solving, and supervision.
- *Develop* office and program policies and procedures that incorporate institutional and administrative goals and strategic direction.
- *Advocate* for representation in institutional planning initiatives and unit visibility to internal and external constituents.
- *Assess* program and student needs and progress to campus constituents.
- *Develop* an in-depth understanding of organizational change.
- *Manage* change as it impacts staff, OTR programs, and enrollment.
- *Navigate* campus politics while maintaining the purpose of OTR programs for student success and learning.

Communication

Effective communication is critical to the success of OTR practitioners and programs. Competency in this area refers to the skills and understanding necessary to interact with others in an educational setting using a variety of methods and strategies.

Foundational

- Demonstrate appropriate and professional interpersonal writing skills
- Demonstrate effective public speaking skills to groups of varying size and populations
- Identify one's own presenting style and instruction techniques and skills
- Demonstrate active listening and effective speaking skills
- Identify and articulate program expectations, purpose, and learning outcomes
- Identify verbal and nonverbal cues in a variety of settings and guide communication appropriately
- Ensure the provision of professional, helpful, and high quality services to meet the needs of constituents
- Exercise social media strategies to engage with new students, market programs and build institutional affinity
- Identify the components needed for an effective social media, communications and marketing strategies or plans
- Produce print-media in communicating OTR messages

Intermediate

- Develop and disseminate program related communications to campus partners
- Identify communication strategies to disseminate program expectations
- Write effectively for appropriate audiences using a variety of publication styles and media
- Exhibit high-level writing and editing skills through reports, publications, presentations and other written modes of communication
- Establish comprehensive social media, communications, and marketing plans and strategies
- Utilize thoughtful written and verbal communication skills for a variety of audience sizes and types, including in-person, electronic, and social media avenues
- Understand and promote the use of technology for OTR programs

Advanced

- Assess social media impact on orientation, transition, and retention
- Manage and assess outreach efforts, including communications and marketing plans
- Create and deliver information and feedback to varied audiences using a variety of methods
- Manage internal and external communication efforts

Crisis Management

The management of emergencies and crises in higher education supports the overall effectiveness of programs, services, and student development. OTR practitioners must develop an awareness of and appropriate skills in response, direction, and management of high impact/high stress situations.

Foundational

- Demonstrate understanding of the process and protocols to be implemented when faced with a crisis situation, including medical, mental health, behavioral, weather, and facility related emergencies
- Demonstrate ability to implement critical incident response procedures and protocols including conflict de-escalation skills
- Navigate conflict and confrontational situations involving a variety of difficult levels and constituents
- Articulate the emergency communication plan and familiarize self with specifics of institutional goals, directives, and procedures
- Recognize the functional and organizational structure of departments, units and the overall institution as it relates to emergency management

Intermediate

- Facilitate processes and practices to ensure physical and emotional safety and security of constituents
- Implement emergency management protocol with emergency personnel in various levels of emergency status, including medical, mental health, weather, and facility related scenarios
- Recognize and implement the institutional emergency communication plan for a wide variety of scenarios
- Demonstrate the proper techniques in handling emergency situations and adhere to the appropriate guidelines of follow up for an emergency situation
- Incorporate training experiences for professional and student staff on crisis response and emergency procedures
- Recognize the desires and needs of intended audiences to receive emergency communication response messages
- Adhere to institutional workers' compensation policies and procedures
- Exhibit the appropriate behaviors of flexibility and adaptability when faced with drastic change within a functional unit or institution

Advanced

- Develop emergency response processes and protocols in accordance with institutional directives, understanding the impact of procedures on the physical and emotional safety and security of constituents
- Proactively train and educate all student employees, new professionals and mid-level professionals regarding program safety and security measures
- Influence emergency management protocol and procedures by developing response plans with essential emergency personnel prior to a crisis situation including but not limited to medical, mental health, weather, facility, and missing or harmed person related scenarios
- Influence, develop, and evaluate emergency communication plans in conjunction with campus partners to accommodate and respect the needs of the institution, the scenario, the individual(s) affected and the community
- Demonstrate proper techniques for establishing preventative measures and reassess processes and protocols after an emergency situation
- Provide leadership and direction to minimize the negative impact of drastic changes within unit or institution

Financial Management

There are many funding sources for OTR programs, services, and staffing. It is the responsibility of OTR practitioners to be ethical stewards of funding and finances. Competencies in financial management require an understanding of budgeting, priority management, fiscal responsibility and ethical judgment.

Foundational

- Describe foundational budgeting models in regard to institution-specific policies and practices
- Recognize the impact that funding and budgeting models have on program development
- Understand one's own institutional OTR funding model and institutional financial planning
- Implement foundational budgeting principles and ethical practices
- Identify support resources to help navigate institutional and state/province policies and procedures for contracts and procurement processes
- Understand student staffing compensation practices

Intermediate

- Manage procurement process and contracts for OTR programs and services
- Manage purchasing and outsourcing procedures and implementation
- Develop, allocate, and monitor specific program budgets including staff compensation
- Understand and utilize appropriate institution/state/province guidelines for fundraising and funding

Advanced

- Guide others in the appropriate use of institutional and programmatic funds for OTR programmatic impacts
- Connect financial priorities with institutional directives, missions, and strategic plans, including reallocation or diminishment of funds
- Oversee the documentation and accountability related to the use of resources, including personnel, programmatic, office management and collaborations
- Negotiate fundraising and sponsorship opportunities to support OTR programs and services
- Project budget needs based on enrollment trends
- Navigate external factors which can affect OTR funding models, including mandates, state/province funding changes, and governing boards

Laws, Policies, and Governance

Laws, policies, and governance structures affect all levels of planning in higher education. OTR practitioners must have a current awareness of internal institutional policies, legal implications, and the impact of state/province, and federal statutes and laws on the daily operations and procedures of OTR programs.

Foundational

- Articulate the relevance of governance structures and policies for public and private institutions
- Acknowledge institutional policies and procedures including student codes of conduct and academic policies and their effect on orientation, transition, and retention
- Recognize and utilize appropriate reporting structures on campus for varying situations regarding student behavior, staffing and program implementation
- Interpret and act in accordance with state/province, and federal statutes and laws which affect OTR policies and practices
- Interpret and execute laws in accordance with campus policies affecting procedures and practices in hiring, planning, collaboration, funding, staffing, and program administration in orientation, transition, and retention
- Identify resources that aid in understanding the laws and policies that affect programs and services in orientation, transition, and retention

Intermediate

- Train new professionals and student staff regarding institutional, state/ province, and/or federal statutes and policies connected to specific impacts on OTR procedures and practices
- Distinguish and differentiate between public and private institutions' governance structures and policies that have an impact on orientation, transition, and retention
- Articulate the impact of local, state/province, and federal laws and policies on OTR programs' content, budgets, and limitations
- Identify and recommend resources that aid in comprehending the laws and policies impacting programs and services in orientation, transition, and retention
- Interpret and apply relevant laws and policies to programs and services in orientation, transition, and retention

Advanced

- Develop and interpret campus policy that reflects institutional mission and priorities
- Interpret, analyze, and apply relevant laws and policies to programs and services in orientation, transition, and retention
- Navigate local, state/province, and federal laws and policies which impact OTR programs' content, budgets, and limitations
- Assess current and developing laws and policies that affect planning OTR programs

- Create necessary interventions to maintain compliance with institutional, local, state/province, and federal guidelines, laws and policies
- Make appropriate recommendations informed by data, trends, and campus policy to campus constituents regarding the impact on orientation, transition, and retention
- Utilize professional association standards/practices to shape OTR policies
- Interpret institutional, state/province, and federal guidelines to create effective policies and practices for OTR staffing, programs and services
- Consistently utilize both data and perspective to influence institutional planning

Enrollment Management

The enrollment and support of qualified, prepared and informed students is a goal of the institution. To support the institutional goals OTR practitioners must have knowledge and be active participants in the enrollment process with the end goal of student success and retention.

Foundational

- Understand the importance of the college transition process and factors affecting students, families, and the institution
- Articulate the connection between the enrollment process and retention strategy planning
- Understand processes affecting enrollment, including financial aid and admissions related procedures and support
- Assist students and families in understanding the enrollment process
- Engage with perspective and committed students and maintain rapport throughout the enrollment process through OTR programs
- Acknowledge the importance of recruitment practices and university-wide yield programs

Intermediate

- Outline the institution's recruitment process and practices that affect yield and ultimately OTR programs
- Interpret institutional priorities regarding admission and enrollment management to guide planning of OTR programs
- Frame the impact OTR programs have on the student experience by supporting educational options and decision-making for matriculating students
- Utilize enrollment trends and demographics to inform retention practices and strategies
- Develop a working knowledge of matriculation, melt, and yield activities to assist with the planning of OTR programs
- Incorporate content related to final steps of the admissions and enrollment process into orientation and transition programs
- Assist with training campus partners on the enrollment process as it relates to orientation, transition, and retention

Advanced

- Analyze practices and data to effectively guide the collaboration and interaction between recruitment, admission, and retention life cycle with the OTR program initiatives
- Provide guidance to faculty, staff, and administration regarding needs of incoming/current student base
- Advise Admissions on institutional retention goals in order to support and inform the institutional recruitment strategy

- Create cross-training opportunities for admission, enrollment managers and OTR staff and campus partners
- Interpret trends regarding academics and graduation statistics in relation to college transition and retention
- Differentiate the first year to second year persistence factors and process and utilize these in OTR planning and practice
- Possess a technical understanding of student data management
- Create training opportunities for OTR professionals on the current needs of prospective students
- Project trends in enrollment and their impact on current and future needs of students, families, and institution

Research, Assessment, and Evaluation

Effective programs and services are inextricably based in the assessment of the needs of those affected and the outcomes and effectiveness of the program or service. OTR practitioners must possess knowledge and skill in the development and the use of research, assessment and evaluation tools as well as the interpretation and use of information gathered.

Foundational

- Demonstrate ability to establish learning outcomes for student staff training and OTR programs
- Differentiate between assessment and evaluation as well as needs assessment and programmatic assessment
- Develop skill in foundational techniques of data analysis
- Utilize professional networks to benchmark and inform practices
- Describe the differences in and applications of both qualitative and quantitative research methodology
- Identify computer software to support the assessment and evaluation process
- Construct an assessment design and tool utilizing qualitative and quantitative collection measures

Intermediate

- Develop learning outcomes tied to student staff training and content of the OTR program and the broader goals of the institution
- Exhibit the skills necessary to create an assessment instrument for OTR programs that is based in learning outcomes
- Develop skills in using data to inform knowledge-based decision making
- Analyze and disseminate data from programmatic assessment findings
- Identify gaps in OTR knowledge, discern research questions and develop strategies to address them
- Exhibit knowledge of the research literature to guide programmatic decision making

Advanced

- Guide the process of creating learning outcomes and related objectives
- Guide the process of building, utilizing, and evaluating assessment instruments and methodologies
- Formulate research questions and develop strategies to address them through different methodologies and research designs
- Analyze data to predict trends, apply to retention initiatives and share with necessary campus constituents to inform knowledge-based decision making
- Contribute to OTR scholarship by presenting and publishing research findings and best practice literature
- Actively engage with and utilize professional networks effectively to share best practices and grow programs, including leveraging the NODA professional network for benchmarking

Resources

The work of orientation, transition, and retention programs requires a specific skill-set and an understanding of the landscape of higher education. Many OTR practitioners are responsible for job duties outside of the scope of orientation, transition, and retention. There are, of course, many resources to support the work of these practitioners and their personal and professional development. Peer associations' competency frameworks, programmatic standard and assessment models, and other population-specific consortiums offer a breadth of information to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of NODA members.

- ACPA/NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators
- AHEPPP-Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals
- CAS-Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
- CAS Characteristics of Individual Excellence for Professional Practice in Higher Education
- Journal of College Orientation and Transition
- National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students
- National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
- Designing Successful Transitions: A Guide for Orienting Students to College, a monograph series developed by NODA and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
- National Association for College Admissions Counseling, Statement on Counselor Competencies
- Orientation Planning Manual-NODA
- NODA Statements on Ethical Standards, Non-Discrimination and Sustainability

Recommendations

Education is an ever-evolving field; thus higher education will continue to change from the impact of students, parents and families, research, technology, laws and policies, and funding. As higher education changes, OTR professionals must remain current in their knowledge and develop new practices and skills to support students (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005).

It is recommended that the Association review, evaluate, and update the NODA Core Competencies every three years from their adoption and in a time-interval that is consistent with the implementation of the NODA Needs Assessment as outlined by the strategic plan. Ad hoc committees should be formed to review the data from the Needs Assessment, assess trends and changes in higher education and recommend changes to the competencies as needed. If approved in 2016, the NODA Core Competencies should be reviewed again in 2019.

From the work of this initial ad hoc committee, three further opportunities for competency development have been identified: The creation of a self-assessment rubric; the establishment of leadership competencies for association volunteer leaders; and the establishment of student leader and graduate student OTR competencies.

The goal of a set of professional competencies is to provide professionals the guidelines and avenues needed to improve their individual practice and advance their knowledge. There are opportunities for individual assessment in the NODA Core Competencies. Additionally, the core competencies could be used for research or scholarship to advance the field of orientation, transition, and retention.

An external reviewer suggested that NODA create training and certification programs. This specialized training could be incorporated into undergraduate and graduate curriculums or offered as on-demand educational opportunities. Practitioners new to the field of orientation, transition, and retention but not new to higher education could benefit from the combination of current educational opportunities such as Orientation Professionals Institute with certification modules as a way to catapult themselves into the field of orientation, transition, and retention.

Certification trainings have been offered in other higher education associations such as NACADA, The Global Community for Academic Advising.

The NODA Core Competencies are a framework to start the conversation of the articulation of competencies needed for volunteer leaders within the Association. The success of the Association depends upon the success of today's leaders within NODA. There are many leadership opportunities for all levels of professionals within NODA. The foundational-to-advance structure of the NODA Core Competencies offer plenty of opportunities to formalize the leadership qualities needed to serve within NODA.

Finally, while developing the professional NODA Core Competencies, it became apparent that NODA has a unique opportunity to shape graduate and undergraduate leadership experiences within orientation, transition, and retention. Establishing NODA core competencies for graduate students would help them prepare to enter the field of orientation, transition, and retention, while similar core competencies for undergraduate student leaders would provide a framework for learning about orientation, transition, and retention and the impact it has on student success. Such guidance in knowledge, skills, and abilities also generates and shapes the next generation of OTR professionals and NODA members.

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The NODA Core Competencies were designed to be the organizational system for knowledge, skills and abilities of all orientation, transition, and retention professionals. Competencies are a benchmark for defining a profession. Competencies not only provide a common framework and foundation of skills for professionals involved in the association, they also create opportunities for professional development and help advance the skills and experiences for all levels of OTR professionals.

The NODA Core Competences are comprised of twelve foundational areas. The 'Foundations' are thematic tenets, which provide the framework for the core competencies. The Foundations are highly interconnected and building competence in one Foundation may be contingent on competence in a subsequent one.



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