

Learning & Development

CLYDE&CO

Career Development  
Framework  
UK fee earner competencies



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# Clyde & Co's competencies

The competencies developed for Clyde & Co, as set out in this booklet, underpin the firm's Career Development Framework (CDF). The Career Development Framework applies to all Clyde & Co fee earners and provides the basis for career development within the firm. Specifically, the Career Development Framework is intended to provide fee earners with:

- A clear view of what is expected of them at different stages of their career and provide development opportunities to enable them to meet those expectations
- A clear indication of strengths and areas for development
- The basis for more effective performance management and Career Development Reviews (CDR) across the firm
- The basis for clearer career development including understanding promotion criteria
- The basis for a move towards a culture of rewarding and advancing based on merit rather than the number of years post qualification
- Provide the firm with a framework for recruiting new fee earners into the firm

The core elements that make up the Career Development Framework are shown in the diagram below.



**A key element of the Career Development Framework is the competencies**

## The competencies

Competencies are defined as the behaviours or characteristics which enable fee earners to perform their role more successfully in more situations and more often. They focus on HOW a fee earner does things rather than just WHAT they do. These are the factors that underpin sustainable commercial performance.

Our competencies are focused on enabling fee earners to develop the right blend of skills, knowledge and behaviours that will allow them to become a well rounded fee earner; to support their career aspirations and achieve the business results expected to drive firm-wide business performance. Fee earner business results will be defined within each department and may vary by fee earner; however they will cover the same areas such as target number of hours, target fee income, client feedback, etc. The competencies will set out the expectations of fee earners at each level of their career and underpin all other elements of the Career Development Framework.

There are five core competencies:

- Technical Excellence
- People and Team
- Client Relationships and Business Development
- Finance and Practice Management
- Personal Effectiveness

The combination of these core competencies supports the delivery of fee earner business results and firm-wide business performance. Each of the core competencies is then divided into three sub competencies that illustrate the more specific skills and behaviours required.

In this booklet each competency describes what the expectations are of fee earners at different stages in their career.

## Levels of progression

The competencies consist of four distinct levels of seniority and experience. These levels represent the career progression steps of a fee earner from the point of being newly qualified to becoming a partner. Competence is cumulative across these levels: fee earners at the highest level would also be expected to have the competencies described at the lower levels.

Whilst there is inevitably some correlation between these levels and the number of years of experience a fee earner has, reference to PQE is purely indicative. Progression to different levels will be judged against the competency expectations in the framework.

The four levels are:

- **Junior Associate** (an internal job title, it will remain as Associate externally) - a relatively inexperienced fee earner who is primarily focused on learning and growing into the role, usually NQ-2PQE
- **Associate** – a mid-level fee earner who demonstrates a good understanding in their area of law and is developing a wider range of skills
- **Senior Associate** – an experienced fee earner who demonstrates strong technical skills and an understanding of the requirement of the role at this level and who is able to supervise more junior fee earners and lead matters/client interactions on their own
- **Legal Director** – a highly experienced fee earner with significant expertise in a specialised area, who leads matters and client interactions/relationships and often manages teams of more junior fee earners

## Using the competencies

The competencies will be used to inform all aspects of fee earner career development and management in the firm. Specifically, it will be used within the annual Career Development Review (CDR) process and in determining promotions between the levels of progression.

It will also help ensure that reward and recognition within the firm is based on an objective and consistent assessment of performance and potential. The annual Career Development Review process will be redefined and based on the following outline:

- Managers and fee earners will agree commercial targets and expected results as part of the annual Career Development Review meeting
- Managers and fee earners will agree the critical behaviours required to deliver those targets and results
- Managers will ensure fee earners are clear about what good performance will look like against these behaviours in the year ahead and set clear expectations of fee earners
- Managers will hold regular dialogue with and give frequent feedback to fee earners throughout the year to ensure there are opportunities to improve performance and there are no surprises at the end of the review period
- Managers will formally assess performance annually in the Career Development Review against the previously agreed behaviours
- Managers will document the Career Development Review and write up strengths/development areas

The competencies will also support promotion decisions within the firm. They will provide a consistent mechanism for evaluating whether a fee earner has performed at the appropriate level against the core competencies and demonstrates the ability to operate at the higher level. The promotion process will be redefined and based on the following outline:

- Has the fee earner met the agreed commercial performance targets and delivered other expected results?
- Has the fee earner exceeded the behavioural expectations at their current level on the critical areas defined by partners in their department/practice area?
- Is there any evidence of sub-standard performance in any of the other behavioural areas at their current level?

- Has the fee earner attended all relevant learning and development programmes at the appropriate level from the Clyde & Co learning and development curriculum, including an Advanced Development Centre if applicable?
- Has the fee earner demonstrated evidence of capability/potential to operate at the next level as defined by the competencies?
- If so, the department can propose promotion to new Associate, Senior Associate and Legal Director levels to central management annually with assessment focusing on firm-wide and departmental business impact and evidence of fee earner performance/potential

## **Making the competencies work for you**

Use the competencies to help guide you during your time at Clyde & Co. Take the competencies with you when seeking or delivering feedback. Consult the competencies prior to your Career Development Review or when deciding whether a particular training programme or learning resource is relevant for you. Above all, use the competencies as a guide to assist you with your performance and career progression.

### **Charlie Keeling**

Global HR Director

### **David Wood**

Global Head of Learning & Development

# Technical excellence

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Technical legal expertise: the knowledge of the law and ability to apply it</b>			
Demonstrates knowledge of relevant legal principles and procedural/statutory frameworks	Has good knowledge of the industry and can apply it to factual issues	Has comprehensive working knowledge of area of specialism	Internally recognised as a specialist in their field and is a "go to" person in their field
Able to draft clearly in a succinct and commercial manner which requires little editing	Drafts clear legal documents that are structurally consistent and reflect client instructions	Drafts complex advice and precedents using specialist knowledge	Conducts a range of legal discussions unsupervised ensuring the best outcome for the firm and their client
Keeps up to date with technical developments in relevant law and the practice area and can understand their context and impact	Actively develops and updates own sector legal knowledge and shares it with colleagues	Able to draft and interpret complex legal documents; reviews and edits the work of others to ensure accuracy, quality and consistency	Demonstrates strategic business knowledge of clients in their sector or area of expertise
Can identify potential arguments, claims and defences	Able to conduct legal discussions with clients	Able to conduct various legal discussions with minimal supervision reaching a satisfactory and workable outcome	
Has good knowledge of the law and can apply it to factual issues	Is beginning to develop specialism		
Can distinguish between legal and commercial issues	Actively identifies opportunities for knowledge sharing and takes ownership of them		
Knows when to seek guidance/input from more senior lawyers	Drafts articles and publications in order to maximise publicity for the firm		
Can recognise issues, problems and arguments and is beginning to identify potential solutions			

# Technical excellence

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Research: the ability to conduct research effectively and apply it commercially</b>			
Understands a problem by breaking it into smaller pieces and applies sound legal reasoning to the issue at hand	Can effectively apply legal principles to a range of specific, complex problems	Understands how each part of an issue affects another and uses them to provide appropriate solutions	Analyses large or complex information and identifies solutions
Uses internal and external research and knowledge resources effectively	Can identify major sources of in-house and external legal precedent for a specific area	Able to assess a range of legal information, identify solutions and communicate the way forward to the client	Champions the use of internal and external research resources
Conducts research competently and quickly, applies and communicates the results appropriately	Understands how to use and contribute to internal knowledge management/know how	Shares knowledge with clients through seminars, publications etc	Anticipates potential issues/areas of concern and recommends appropriate solutions
Shares knowledge at all levels internally	Recognises where changes in law or practice may require amendments to precedents and actions them, referring to PSL as required		

# Technical excellence

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Managing legal processes: the ability to ensure all legal processes are followed efficiently and effectively</b>			
Complies with the firm's risk management procedures and raises issues quickly	Identifies potential risk management issues and escalates appropriately	Ensures risk management procedures are complied with by liaising with practice area risk partner	
Diarises and shares important events eg court dates, client deadlines etc to ensure awareness that they are coming up and takes appropriate action	Organised and structured, proactively monitors tasks to ensure matters are progressed		
Makes full and accurate notes of discussions and advice to clients			
Complies with professional body rules and seeks guidance promptly where issues arise or conflicts identified			
Uses own specialism precedents effectively in drafting legal documentation			
Completes the firm's online compliance policies			
Understands and complies with the firm's risk management policies and procedures			

# People and team

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Guiding individual performance and development: develops the skills of self and others</b>			
Effectively utilises trainee, paralegal and secretarial resources	Effectively manages paralegal and secretarial resource	Supervises individual and team performance to ensure targets are met and development needs are identified	Coaches and mentors others to improve their performance, maintain levels of motivation and develop their skills
Seeks and acts on feedback on own performance	Provides relevant and timely feedback, both positive and negative, in a supportive way	Gives feedback to others in behavioural, not personal, terms, clarifying the impact of the behaviour	Regularly delivers effective internal and external training sessions
Earns trust by being reliable and consistent	Proactively and willingly supports team members	Delegates effectively to more junior members of the team and provides timely and constructive feedback	
Collaborates effectively with colleagues across the firm	Provides clear constructive guidance and, where appropriate, supervision to junior colleagues	Gives clear guidance to junior colleagues on expectations and performance	
	Effectively supervises trainees to ensure levels of motivation and standard of work remains high	Participates with partners in the CDR process across the group if asked to do so	
		Encourages innovation and initiative in others	

# People and team

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Teamwork and collaboration: working cooperatively and effectively with others</b>			
Participates willingly - is a good team player, cooperates positively and shares information readily	Supports other team members and works effectively within the team	Starts to take responsibility for fostering teamwork, ensuring that all team members are working effectively together	Leads by example and is considered to be a positive role model
Continually seeks ways to enhance their contribution to the team	Promotes group reputation with outsiders, actively championing cross-selling opportunities where appropriate	Creates and sustains a positive team environment, enabling all team members to learn and develop	Act as interface between senior associates and partners/HR to resolve issues
Committed to teamwork - gives full input and gets involved, cooperating positively with colleagues to address client and firm needs		Establishes and communicates clear standards and expectations to all members of the team	
Values others' input and expertise and is willing to learn from others and listens to constructive criticism		Addresses team conflict issues quickly and constructively to achieve a positive result	
		Shares information and expertise externally and internally to enhance effectiveness	
		Contributes to on-the-job training for colleagues	

# People and team

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Leadership: creating high performing teams</b>			
Demonstrates an understanding of the vision and goals of the practice and firm	Encourages colleagues to take more responsibility and make a bigger contribution to the team	Sets clear personal performance goals and assesses own performance objectively	Influences through professionalism and integrity across all levels of the business
Initiates self-learning as legal assignments require	Demonstrates awareness of own development needs and seeks solutions	Makes themselves available to others for informal coaching and mentoring to further develop	Frees up partner time for business development activities by being a trusted team manager
Responds positively to changing working arrangements and environments		Delegates authority effectively to get the job done and to develop the skills of others	Is proactively involved in building and resourcing the team
		Effectively leads teams of associates and, where appropriate, other staff to achieve high levels of utilisation and profitability	

# Client relationships and business development

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Building business relationships: establishing, maintaining and using relationships to create and develop business opportunities</b>			
Identifies and uses opportunities to meet peers at client organisations	Presents at internal seminars and drafts articles	Takes part in a range of promotional activities including internal and external seminars, writing for publications	Proactively seeks out and identifies new business opportunities with new and existing clients
Able to converse with clients about work and industry-related issues	Demonstrates good judgement and credibility with clients	Able to work on client matters with minimal supervision to achieve the best outcome	Establishes on-going relationships with clients that manage expectations, in particular on timeframes and costs
Understands the industry sector and takes an interest in market developments	Builds a strong rapport with clients, to establish and understand their needs	Can manage and run client meetings to ascertain requirements, advising on possible solutions and courses of action	Effectively manages own portfolio of clients or in teams with larger clients manage/contribute to certain aspects of the relationship
Takes full account of client SLAs and adheres to them where appropriate	Participates in tenders and pitch meetings	Manages small pitch and tender processes with partners to ensure deadlines are met	Identifies and develops new areas for growth demonstrating relationship management and organisational skills
Is a good ambassador for the firm		Initiates ideas for presentations/articles to clients and implements them with business development	
Consults with business and development team when developing industry related material for clients		Identifies potential new areas for client development and presents proposals back to the appropriate business development team or group	

# Client relationships and business development

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Commercial thinking: understanding the commercial drivers</b>			
Understands the commercial issues for client sectors and organisations	Demonstrates sound commercial judgement	Understands the commercial realities of the client's business	Implements and delivers firm-wide cross-selling opportunities
	Thinks commercially and not just legally when discussing the client and their business	Uses an understanding of a client's commercial issues to identify areas where the firm can help	Conducts a range of commercial negotiations unsupervised ensuring the best outcome for the firm and their client
	Recognises opportunities and follows through	Actively seeks out cross-selling opportunities within the firm	Able to conduct various commercial negotiations with minimal supervision reaching a satisfactory and workable outcome
		Able to conduct commercial negotiations under supervision to reach a satisfactory outcome	

# Client relationships and business development

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Cross-selling and business development</b>			
Can articulate clearly the firm's achievements and legal expertise and takes opportunities to promote the firm appropriately	Demonstrates an understanding of the need for cross-selling and creative thinking	Demonstrates a good understanding of the range of the firm's expertise in all jurisdictions and is alert to cross-selling opportunities	Implements and maintains development plans aimed at promoting and generating work from existing and new clients
Develops an awareness of the global firm and its offices and practices	Demonstrates an understanding of the global firm and its offices and practices	Develops a personal profile in the relevant practice/sector and a business plan to develop it	Contributes to the firm's key account development programme
	Shares information, activities and developments internally	Develops a personal business network through networking internally and at client and external events	Thinks of wider issues of the firm as well as individual impact
	Identifies opportunities for developing new or follow-on business	Seeks a lead role in hosting and speaking at client events	Thinks beyond their practice as to how they can contribute to other practices/offices
	Builds a network of internal contacts within and across practice groups	Seeks a lead role in new business development initiatives	Able to differentiate the firm when seeking business development opportunities
	Raises the firm's profile through involvement in relevant outside bodies/groups		Plays a lead role in new business development initiatives

# Finance & practice management

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Finance management and understanding of the business</b>			
Complies with billing requirements in client SLA	Assists in and promotes timely billing and sends bills out promptly	Assists, where appropriate, in the chasing of bills	Works with finance to monitor group finances and drive cash collection
Accurately describes work carried out	Generally requires little or no write down of time	Manages the billing process for clients in an accurate and timely manner	Monitors and ensures full time recording across the group
Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of accurately recording time and monitoring costs	Beginning to understand clients' expectations, objectives, negotiating position and key concerns	Understands and deals with client expectations, objectives, negotiating position and key concerns	
Records all time accurately and promptly without self editing		Contributes to the negotiation of profitable fee levels	
Begins to develop an understand of basic law firm economics eg multipliers etc			

# Finance & practice management

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Project management: ensuring projects are delivered</b>			
Effectively prioritises and completes tasks in a timely and efficient manner	Proactively manages issues to ensure things do not slip	Plans, anticipates and ensures completion of projects in a timely and efficient manner	Coordinates all aspects of a project to achieve a successful completion, including trouble-shooting
Communicates work status and progress to supervisor	Updates senior colleagues on progress	Provides partners with status reports on matters	Plans work outputs and priorities for a small group/team
Successfully completes several deliverables within competing deadlines	Works to an agreed budget and is able to recognise at early stages when revisions are required	Contributes to the management of files	
Diligent in file management, ensuring all documents are quickly and accurately filed	Proactively manages matters to drive them forward	Able to prioritise matters effectively and not let things slip	
Manages work and plans ahead to identify any future problems, communicating these to relevant colleagues	Effectively prioritises tasks and coordinates competing demands and deadlines on a portfolio of matters	Manages small teams effectively to ensure objectives and deadlines are met	
Proactively monitors the legal timetable to ensure key deadlines are met and tasks completed		Delegates proactively to junior lawyers, supervising workloads and delivering within timescale and to budget	
Consistently meets chargeable hours targets, asking for more work if necessary while anticipating peaks and troughs in workload			

# Finance & practice management

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Knowledge sharing</b>			
Uses knowledge management systems effectively	Applies knowledge management policies and practices and identifies development needs	Develops and promotes knowledge resources within the team/practice	Drives initiatives to promote firm-wide knowledge sharing around own area of expertise
Actively participates in technical training sessions	Shares information and experiences relevant to the firm	Initiates and implements knowledge sharing initiatives with the team and clients	Seeks ways of best using collective knowledge eg through thought leadership
Seeks opportunities to participate in the firm's pro bono projects to assist with self and business development			

# Personal effectiveness

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Communication</b>			
Produces first drafts of basic correspondence, advice, reports etc that are clear and accurate	Drafts more complex legal documents that are structurally consistent and accurately reflect relevant provisions	Is able to draft and interpret a series of complex related documents	Adopts a commercial approach to business related matters
Communicates articulately with a wide variety of audiences	Demonstrates creativity in use of communication methods to ensure the best method of communication for the audience	Delivers advice orally and in writing clearly, succinctly and articulately	Recognised as a role model for clear communication including accurate drafting and effective face to face engagement
Asks relevant and insightful questions in interactions with colleagues and clients	Adapts language and approach to suit target audience	Builds rapport quickly with a variety of audiences	Provides guidance to others on communicating more effectively
Seeks constructive feedback and takes active, positive steps to improve	Uses influence and persuasion effectively	Understand the impact of their behaviour and communication style on those around them and adapts their style to enhance results	
Demonstrates collegiality	Conveys confidence in interactions	Effectively influences internal and external stakeholders (ie colleagues, partners, clients)	
Conveys enthusiasm in interactions			
Demonstrates active listening skills to encourage effective two way communication			

# Personal effectiveness

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Clarity of thinking</b>			
Exercises sound judgement in most situations	Applies effective decision making and sound problem solving skills	Identifies and addresses underlying concerns on business and legal issues	Exercises sound judgement in difficult situations and mentors/coaches others to do the same
Recognises and effectively communicates underlying issues to expose legal problems or opportunities	Understands the context of the advice being given and anticipates outcomes and consequences	Makes timely and considered decisions in the most stressful and complex situations	Makes complicated ideas or situations clear and understandable
	Exercises sound judgement in stressful and complex situations		
	Deals with time pressures		

# Personal effectiveness

Junior Associate	Associate	Senior Associate	Legal Director
<b>Personal contribution</b>			
Creates a positive first impression and conveys credibility	Is confident in both 1:1 and group interactions	Displays gravitas and impact in all situations	Shows confidence and self-awareness at all times
Creates trust by being professional and honest at all times	Is able to influence others towards their point of view	Is calm and steady under pressure	Is identified as a leader in the practice area
Acts ethically and with integrity		Takes responsibility and ownership for issues and problems	Invests time in business development activities on the firm's and their own behalf
Demonstrates resilience - can respond and proactively "bounce back" from setbacks		Meets or exceeds financial targets; for example, achieves a high level of personal chargeable hours (>6.5 per day) and a multiplier in excess of 3 (personal billings divided by salary and benefits costs)	Takes an active role in, and spends time on, team supervision activities
Is enthusiastic and committed			Meets chargeable hours targets.
Demonstrates drive and determination			

# Our offices



● Clyde & Co offices  
■ Associated offices

**33** **290**

Offices across  
6 continents

Partners,  
over 1,400 fee earners  
and 2,400 staff

For full office details please refer to the Clyde & Co website [www.clydeco.com/offices/global](http://www.clydeco.com/offices/global)

## Asia-Pacific

Beijing  
Hong Kong  
Jakarta\*  
Shanghai  
Singapore  
Mumbai\*  
New Delhi\*  
Perth  
Sydney

## Europe

Guildford  
London  
Oxford  
Madrid  
Manchester  
Moscow\*  
Nantes  
Paris  
Piraeus  
St Petersburg\*

## Americas

Atlanta  
Caracas  
Montreal  
New Jersey  
New York  
São Paulo  
San Francisco  
Toronto

## Middle East/Africa

Abu Dhabi  
Dar es Salaam  
Doha  
Dubai  
Riyadh\*  
Tripoli

\*Associated offices

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