

## ATD Competency Model™ Frequently Asked Questions



1. Can the ATD Competency Model be used in any organizational culture? Is one type of culture better suited to its use than another?
2. Is the ATD Competency Model useful for all types of training practitioners?
3. Does the ATD Competency Model describe different levels of proficiency within a competency?
4. Are any self-evaluation tools for those who wish to benchmark their current competencies against those of the new ATD Competency Model?
5. How can subject matter experts use the ATD Competency Model?
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### **1. *Can the ATD Competency Model be used in any organizational culture? Is one type of culture better suited to its use than another?***

The ATD Competency Model is not organization-specific or nation-specific. While the competencies it describes may be universal, the measurement of behaviors associated with these competencies will vary. Some customization will be needed—particularly at the national and organizational levels—because some behaviors are more appropriate in certain cultures than in others.

For example, trainers in Asia may be expected to demonstrate more subject matter expertise while U.S. trainers may be expected to take a more facilitative approach.

The 2013 ATD Competency Model is based primarily on North American data. While some international data was collected, the Model still must be tailored to fit specific national and cultural norms.

## **2. *Is the ATD Competency Model useful for all types of talent development practitioners?***

The training and development field includes many professionals who trained for and chose the field. Some people enter the field and remain in it for their entire careers as internal practitioners or external consultants. However, it also includes many people who take on the role of trainer as a matter of practicality. For example:

- Some rotate through the Talent Development function to build expertise, technical knowledge, and visibility as they advance through an organization.
- Some line (operating) managers may have Talent Development responsibilities but may not be aware of them or feel eager to carry them out.
- In small organizations, some competence may be required in all areas of the field while in large organizations practitioners may specialize in only one or two.

The ATD Competency Model is designed to be broadly applicable across the entire profession. Thus, it may require tailoring to address the very specific needs of particular individuals and groups.

## **3. *Does the ATD Competency Model describe different levels of proficiency within a competency?***

The simple answer is no. Further work would be needed to identify different levels of proficiency for behaviors tied to the competencies.

## **4. *Are any self-evaluation tools available for those who wish to benchmark their current competencies against those of the ATD Competency Model?***

ATD continually develops new content and tools that align to the Model to make the competencies actionable. Go to [www.td.org/model](http://www.td.org/model) and the ATD SkillTracker [www.td.org/skilltracker](http://www.td.org/skilltracker) for the most up-to-date information and self-evaluation tools.

## **5. *How can subject matter experts use the ATD Competency Model?***

The ATD Competency Model describes the competencies essential for high-performing Talent Development experts. It also can be a useful tool to help content experts become better at instructional design and facilitation.

## **6. *What are the first steps individual practitioners should take to align their current competencies with those of the ATD Competency Model?***

You can start by assessing yourself against the ATD Competency Model using the ATD SkillTracker, a free resource available at [www.td.org/skilltracker](http://www.td.org/skilltracker). Or, download the [Action Planning Tool for Individuals](#). Either of those tools can help you to identify personal strengths, areas for improvement—and career goals. Do some soul-searching and seek input from those who know your strengths and weaknesses.

Use the Areas of Expertise (AOEs) to decide the areas in which to focus. If unsure, try volunteering to gain experience in specific areas under consideration.

Once you know what you want to do and what you are good at, consider whether to be a generalist or a specialist. If you choose to be a generalist, try to learn about as many Areas of Expertise (AOEs) as possible. If you choose to be a specialist, you may wish to enroll in courses related to the AOEs in which you want to specialize.

Find mentors who are in the jobs you aspire to and formulate questions for them. As you gain experience and education, you will become an increasingly sophisticated user of the Model to build your expertise.

You may also wish to earn a professional certification, such as ATD Certification Institute's CPLP® (Certified Professional in Learning and Performance) or APTD (Associate Professional in Talent Development). Visit [www.td.org/certification](http://www.td.org/certification) for more details.

## **7. *How can academics use the ATD Competency Model?***

There are at least two ways for instructors or professors to use the Model. One way is to use it as a reference tool for students enrolled in training and development courses. Share the Model and ask them to review the sections that they think apply to them. The Model is an excellent starting point to discuss a student's career choices.

Academics can also use the Model as a foundation for academic curricula. Each Area of Expertise (AOE) may reflect planned courses. Clusters of competencies within an AOE may be grouped together as courses.

**8. How might learning staff leaders or organizations use the use the ATD Competency Model?**

Staff leaders can use the model for career individual developmental discussions with Talent Development practitioners. With some work, the Model might be the foundation of a culture-specific competency model for a team or organization. See our job aids: [Action Planning for Organizations](#) or [Adapting the Competency Model](#) for help.

**9. What is the expected shelf life of the skills and abilities described in the ATD Competency Model?**

A rapidly changing world can shorten the shelf life of talent development professionals' knowledge and skills. The Model can be used to assess one's current skills and to look into the future. The typical shelf life of a profession-wide model is usually 5-7 years.

Talent Development managers can use the Model to facilitate discussions with individuals and entire staffs about competencies needed today and in the future.

**10. When does ATD expect to update the ATD Competency Model?**

The Model is the foundation for many useful tools and educational resources from ATD. Moreover, the Model forms the basis of [ATD Certification Institute's CPLP® and APTD certification programs](#). ATD is committed to providing the most up-to-date information to its members and the profession it serves. Look for selective updates every few years and a holistic revision in 5-7 years in keeping with industry best practices.

**11. What's the best way to map the Model and its content to my organization?**

For more detailed guidance on this, go to the [Adapting the New ATD Competency Model™](#) job aid.