

Personal Development Plan Template

Your Definition of Leadership

Before you begin your journey as a leader through this program, we want you to take some time to reflect on what leadership means to you.

Step 1: Respond to the following questions (100-200 words) – How do you personally define leadership? Which of your core values influence the way you practice leadership?

Leadership, to me, is about fostering an environment where everyone feels heard, valued, and empowered to contribute. It is not just about guiding others but also about creating opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and growth. True leadership is not defined by titles or authority but by the ability to inspire and uplift those around you. Additionally, a good leader should create long-term, meaningful changes rather than temporary solutions. This means prioritizing continuous improvement, learning from others, and ensuring that leadership structures support future generations.

One of my core values that shapes my approach to leadership is inclusivity. To me, inclusivity means more than just having a diverse group of people present, instead meaning actively seeking out and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences, thereby creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts. This translates to being intentional about listening and making sure all voices are heard, especially those that might not always be the loudest or most dominant in the room.

Personal Development Plan Template

Your Leadership Competencies

Step 2: Complete the Personal/Self and Interpersonal/Team modules of the Illinois Leadership Inventory (ILI) here: <http://leadership.illinois.edu/ili/>. The ILI is a tool designed by the Illinois Leadership Center to help students better understand themselves and their leadership competencies. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete each module.

When you complete the ILI, you will receive a PDF of your responses as well as resources you can use to develop skills. You must upload the PDF of the ILI results for the Personal/Self and Interpersonal/Team modules to the Certificate Dashboard so we can verify you have completed both.

After completing the ILI, choose one competency from the Personal/Self level of practice and one competency from the Interpersonal/Team level of practice. You will also choose two more competencies from any of the four levels of practice. Ultimately, you will choose a total of four leadership competencies listed below:

- **Personal/Self:** Self-Knowledge, Self-Management, Reflection, Empathy, Openness, Integrity
- **Interpersonal/Team:** Common Purpose, Communication, Relationship Management, Group Dynamics, Followership, Cultural Competency
- **Organization:** Change Management, Diversity Advocacy, Systems Thinking, Innovation
- **Community/Society:** Human Dignity, Social Justice, Global Competence, Service-Minded, Sustainability

On the next page of this document, fill in the four competencies you have selected and address the following three questions for each competency.

Questions:

- Why did you choose this competency?
- How will you work on developing this competency? Please be specific.
- What practical skills or knowledge do you hope to gain by further developing in this competency?

Personal Development Plan Template

1. Self-Management

Why did you choose this competency?

I chose Self-Management because I believe improving this skill will enhance my ability to balance multiple responsibilities more effectively, especially as I continue to take on leadership roles like in Student Council or working on technical projects. Developing better time management and stress management skills will help me remain focused and productive even in challenging situations.

How will you work on developing this competency?

To improve my self-management, I will set clear goals and break tasks into smaller, manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed. I will prioritize tasks based on deadlines and importance, and implement strategies like using digital tools (e.g., task management apps) and creating schedules to stay organized. Additionally, I will work on managing stress by incorporating regular breaks and practicing mindfulness techniques to maintain focus.

What practical skills or knowledge do you hope to gain by further developing this competency?

By developing self-management, I hope to improve my ability to stay organized, set realistic goals, and work efficiently under pressure. I also want to better handle stress and stay motivated, which will help me perform better academically and in leadership roles.

2. Openness

Why did you choose this competency?

I chose Openness because I want to be more receptive to new ideas and feedback, which is crucial for personal growth, collaboration, and effective leadership. Whether working on projects like my current startup idea or in team settings, being open to diverse perspectives will help me create more innovative and inclusive solutions.

How will you work on developing this competency?

I will focus on actively seeking feedback from others, whether it's about my ideas, work, or leadership approach, and responding to it with an open mind. I will challenge myself to step outside my comfort zone and engage with people who have different viewpoints or experiences. Additionally, I'll aim to stay curious and open to new learning opportunities, like attending workshops or participating in discussions on topics I might not be familiar with.

What practical skills or knowledge do you hope to gain by further developing this competency?

By developing openness, I hope to become more adaptable and receptive to different perspectives, leading to better decision-making and more inclusive problem-solving. I also aim to improve my ability to collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds and enhance my creativity and innovation.

3. Communication

Why did you choose this competency?

I chose Communication because effective communication is crucial in both academic and leadership settings. Whether working on team projects or interacting in Student Council, improving my communication skills will help

4. Group Dynamics

Why did you choose this competency?

I selected Group Dynamics because as I continue to work with diverse teams understanding and managing group dynamics will help foster collaboration and ensure that everyone works effectively toward a shared goal.

Personal Development Plan Template

me express ideas more clearly and understand others better, ensuring that collaboration is productive and smooth.

How will you work on developing this competency?

To improve my communication, I will practice being more concise and clearer when expressing my ideas, both in writing and speaking. I will actively listen during conversations, ensuring that I fully understand the viewpoints of others before responding. Additionally, I'll seek out feedback on how I communicate and adjust based on the input I receive, whether it's about tone, clarity, or content.

What practical skills or knowledge do you hope to gain by further developing this competency?

By developing my communication, I hope to enhance my ability to articulate ideas clearly, facilitate better discussions, and present information effectively. I also aim to become a more empathetic communicator, improving my relationships with others by being attentive and responsive to their needs.

How will you work on developing this competency?

To improve my understanding of group dynamics, I will focus on observing how different personalities and work styles interact in group settings. I'll aim to encourage open communication, ensuring that everyone feels heard and included. I will also work on adapting my approach based on the group's needs, whether it's providing more structure for a team that lacks focus or allowing more freedom for a group that works well independently.

What practical skills or knowledge do you hope to gain by further developing this competency?

By developing group dynamics, I hope to improve my ability to foster collaboration, manage conflicts, and leverage the strengths of each team member. I also want to become more adaptable in group settings, allowing me to navigate different situations and team structures with ease.