Administration Careers & Development Working Group

Career Development Toolkit

Professionalism and Behaviours Framework



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PASA

Career Development Toolkit: Professionalism and Behaviours Framework

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Professionalism and Behaviours Framework

Shared professional behaviours across all nine job families

This framework describes the professional behaviours which support effective pensions administration. It applies across all nine job families and should be used alongside the relevant Job Family Pathway.

Five behavioural stages

The framework describes five behavioural stages. These complement the four capability levels but don't replace them or align with them on a one-to-one basis.

Where this document sits

PASA Career Pathways consists of nine Job Family Pathways and five Shared Career Pathways Resources. The Job Family Pathways describe the skills, capability levels, learning and qualifications relevant to different areas of pensions administration. The shared resources help individuals, managers and employers use the framework in practice.

The Professionalism and Behaviours Framework is one of the Shared Career Pathways Resources. It describes behaviours which apply across all nine job families. Use it alongside the Job Family Pathway relevant to your role and, if useful, the Personal Development Record.

1. Purpose and Scope

Pensions administration is a profession. The decisions, actions and conduct of those working within it affect members' experiences and financial security. Professional behaviour therefore matters alongside technical knowledge and accuracy.

This framework describes shared professional behaviours for people working across all nine PASA job families. It applies at every career level, although the behaviours expected will depend on the individual's responsibilities and the context of their role.



A development reference, not an assessment tool

This framework is a development reference rather than a job description or standalone performance-rating tool. It can provide one source of evidence within an organisation's existing development, capability and progression processes.

Individuals may use the Personal Development Record to reflect on relevant behaviours, record evidence and identify development priorities. Use of the PDR is optional, and the individual decides what to share.

2. How this framework is structured

2.1. Five behavioural stages

The framework describes professional behaviour at five stages. These aren't additional capability levels and shouldn't be treated as a separate promotion ladder.

Stages 1 and 2 describe developing and established professional practice. Stage 3 focuses on leadership through expertise, Stage 4 on formal people management and Stage 5 on senior organisational or functional leadership.

Stages 3 and 4 represent different, sometimes overlapping routes. An experienced specialist may demonstrate Stage 3 without managing people, while someone with formal management responsibilities should also consider the Stage 4 expectations.



Different routes, not a promotion ladder

Select the stage or combination of stages which best reflects the individual's responsibilities and evidence. Don't determine it solely from job title, time served or the capability level expected of the role.

2.2. Stage summary

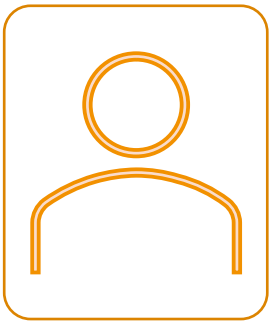
Stage	Suggested name	What it means	Broad relationship to capability levels
Stage 1	Developing professional practice	Building foundational professional habits and learning work responsibly with appropriate support	Often associated with L1 or with someone developing unfamiliar responsibilities
Stage 2	Established professional practice	Demonstrating professional behaviours consistently and working with appropriate independence	Often associated with L2
Stage 3	Leading through expertise	Influencing practice, handling complexity, sharing expertise and supporting others without necessarily managing them	Commonly associated with L3 or L4 specialist roles
Stage 4	Leading people	Setting expectations, developing others, managing performance and supporting an effective and inclusive team	Can apply at different capability levels where the role includes formal people management
Stage 5	Leading a function or organisation	Setting strategic direction, shaping culture and taking broad accountability for organisational outcomes	Commonly associated with senior leadership and L4 people-leadership roles

2.3. Eight behaviours:

The same eight behaviour areas are described at each relevant stage. This provides a consistent structure for discussing strengths, evidence and development priorities.

Code	Behaviour	What it covers
B1	Professional conduct and integrity	Integrity, confidentiality, ethical conduct, awareness of member impact and appropriate role modelling
B2	Accountability and ownership	Responsibility for commitments, decisions and outcomes, including identifying and escalating risk
B3	Initiative and constructive contribution	Identifying opportunities, contributing ideas and following through on agreed action
B4	Adaptability and constructive challenge	Responding effectively to change, raising concerns appropriately and helping improve the approach
B5	Inclusive and collaborative working	Treating others with respect, sharing knowledge and working constructively across boundaries
B6	Judgment and decision-making	Making reasoned decisions within authority, recognising limitations and escalating appropriately
B7	Learning and development	Reflecting, responding to feedback, maintaining relevant knowledge and supporting others where appropriate
B8	Improvement and responsible use of resources	Improving ways of working and using time, information, technology and other resources responsibly

3. How to use this framework



For individuals:

- Identify the stage or stages which best reflect your responsibilities
- Read the relevant behaviour descriptions and consider the evidence you have
- Select one or two strengths and one or two development priorities
- If useful, record your reflections and evidence in your Personal Development Record
- Discuss relevant areas with your manager, mentor or a trusted colleague if you choose



For managers:

- Use the framework to support development conversations and discuss relevant evidence
- Consider the individual's responsibilities rather than relying on their job title, tenure or assumed capability level
- Apply equivalent evidence standards consistently in comparable situations
- Use the framework within your organisation's existing performance and progression processes
- Refer to the Manager's Guide for further practical guidance



For employers:

- Compare the behaviour areas with your organisation's existing values and people frameworks
- Identify areas of alignment, difference or duplication before adopting the PASA language
- Use the framework as a development reference rather than automatically creating a separate assessment process
- Refer to Implementing the Framework for further guidance

4. Behaviours by stage

Stage 1 | Developing professional practice

At this stage, the individual is developing foundational professional behaviours and may need guidance in unfamiliar situations. They're learning relevant organisational expectations and building consistent ways of working. This stage shouldn't be assumed solely because someone is new to an employer or has recently changed role.

Behaviour	What this looks like
B1 Professional conduct and integrity	Acts with integrity and maintains confidentiality and follows relevant professional and organisational requirements. Communicates respectfully with colleagues, members and other stakeholders and understands how their conduct can affect others
B2 Accountability and ownership	Takes responsibility for their own tasks and workload. Completes work on time and to the expected standard. Seeks support promptly when requirements are unclear or a task may not be completed as expected
B3 Initiative and constructive contribution	Engages constructively with their work and learning. Asks relevant questions, contributes ideas where appropriate and follows through on agreed actions. Identifies straightforward improvements and discusses them with the appropriate person
B4 Adaptability and constructive challenge	Responds constructively to changes in priorities, processes or requirements. Seeks guidance where needed and raises questions or concerns appropriately to understand the reason for change and its effect on their work
B5 Inclusive and collaborative working	Works cooperatively and treats colleagues, members and other stakeholders with respect. Shares relevant information, recognises how their work affects others and offers support where appropriate
B6 Judgement and decision-making	Makes decisions within the agreed boundaries of their role. Checks relevant information, recognises when they need support and escalates matters they aren't authorised or equipped to resolve
B7 Learning and development	Engages with relevant learning and responds constructively to feedback. Applies learning to their work and begins to identify their own development needs
B8 Improvement and responsible use of resources	Uses information, systems, time and other resources responsibly. Follows relevant requirements for security, record keeping, efficiency and sustainable working

Stage 2 | Established professional practice

At this stage, the individual demonstrates professional behaviours consistently and works with appropriate independence. They contribute to team objectives, build constructive working relationships and take an active role in improving their own work.

Behaviour	What this looks like
B1 **Professional conduct and integrity**	Acts with consistent professionalism, integrity and confidentiality. Demonstrates organisational values in day-to-day conduct. Shows empathy and fairness, treating members, colleagues and stakeholders with respect in all interactions
B2 **Accountability and ownership**	Takes clear ownership of their workload and outputs. Supports colleagues and contributes to team and wider business objectives. Follows through on commitments and proactively flags risks or delays rather than waiting to be asked
B3 **Initiative and constructive contribution**	Identifies practical opportunities to improve work or resolve problems. Contributes ideas constructively, takes appropriate initiative and follows agreed actions through to completion
B4 **Adaptability and constructive challenge**	Adjusts effectively to changing priorities or requirements. Seeks to understand the reason and impact of change, raises concerns constructively and applies learning from previous experience
B5 **Inclusive and collaborative working**	Works constructively and inclusively with colleagues and internal and external stakeholders. Shares relevant information and considers how their decisions and actions affect other teams, members and the wider organisation
B6 **Judgement and decision-making**	Organises work efficiently and prioritises effectively. Uses sound judgement to resolve issues within their remit. Demonstrates confidence in handling standard and non-standard tasks. Escalates appropriately when matters fall outside their authority
B7 **Learning and development**	Takes responsibility for relevant learning and development. Reflects on their work, seeks and applies feedback and shares knowledge with colleagues where appropriate
B8 **Improvement and responsible use of resources**	Uses resources responsibly and looks for practical ways to improve efficiency. Supports sustainable working practices, including effective use of digital tools. Avoids unnecessary process and encourages sensible use of organisational resources

Stage 3 | Leading through expertise

At this stage, the individual handles complex, ambiguous or high-risk work and influences practice through their expertise. They share knowledge, support others and contribute to improvements beyond their own immediate work. This stage recognises professional leadership through expertise and influence. Formal people management isn't required.

Behaviour	What this looks like
B1 Professional conduct and integrity	Maintains a consistently high standard of professionalism, integrity and confidentiality. Handles sensitive information with care and represents the organisation with reliability and credibility. Acts as an informal role model for professional conduct within the team
B2 Accountability and ownership	Takes clear responsibility for their workload, decisions and outputs. Manages complex tasks with minimal supervision. Follows through on commitments, ensures work is completed to a high standard and proactively identifies and manages risk
B3 Initiative and constructive contribution	Identifies and progresses opportunities to improve processes, services or outcomes. Uses their experience to develop practical solutions and supports agreed improvements through to implementation
B4 Adaptability and constructive challenge	Responds constructively to changing priorities, deadlines and circumstances. Adjusts plans while protecting quality, raises emerging risks and helps colleagues understand and adapt to new requirements
B5 Inclusive and collaborative working	Builds inclusive and constructive working relationships across teams, functions and with external stakeholders. Shares knowledge appropriately, supports cooperative problem-solving and considers the wider effect of decisions on members and services
B6 Judgement and decision-making	Organises work efficiently, prioritises effectively and uses sound judgement to resolve issues within their remit. Demonstrates confidence in handling complex and ambiguous tasks. Navigates competing demands without loss of quality and escalates appropriately when necessary
B7 Learning and development	Actively seeks opportunities to develop skills and knowledge relevant to their role and the broader profession. Reflects on performance, welcomes feedback and applies learning to improve effectiveness. Supports the development of colleagues and contributes to knowledge-sharing across the team
B8 Improvement and responsible use of resources	Uses organisational resources responsibly and looks for ways to improve efficiency and reduce waste. Supports sustainable practices, including effective use of digital tools and processes. Contributes ideas for improvement and helps implement better ways of working

Stage 4 | Leading people

Stage 4 applies where an individual has formal responsibility for managing others. It adds people-management expectations to the behavioural stage which otherwise best reflects their professional practice. Someone may therefore demonstrate Stage 2 or Stage 3 behaviours in their own work while also using Stage 4 to consider how they lead and develop others. Stage 4 shouldn't be treated as a level which must follow Stage 3.

Behaviour	What this looks like
B1 Professional conduct and integrity	Demonstrates consistent professionalism, integrity and confidentiality. Models the professional standards expected of the team and addresses conduct concerns promptly and constructively
B2 Accountability and ownership	Sets clear responsibilities and expectations, provides appropriate oversight and holds people accountable fairly and consistently. Takes responsibility for team outcomes, addresses problems promptly and communicates significant risks or delays.
B3 Initiative and constructive contribution	Creates an environment in which people can contribute ideas, question existing approaches and suggest improvements. Assesses proposals fairly and supports appropriate action
B4 Adaptability and constructive challenge	Explains the purpose and implications of change, listens to concerns and helps the team adapt. Reprioritises work where necessary while protecting wellbeing, quality and service
B5 Inclusive and collaborative working	Builds an inclusive team environment in which people are treated fairly and can contribute effectively. Works constructively across teams, shares information appropriately and addresses behaviour which undermines collaboration
B6 Judgement and decision-making	Makes fair, well-reasoned decisions, delegates appropriately and maintains effective oversight. Balances individual, team and service needs and escalates matters outside their authority
B7 Learning and development	Takes responsibility for their own development and supports the development of others. Holds meaningful development conversations, provides useful feedback and helps individuals access appropriate experience, support and learning
B8 Improvement and responsible use of resources	Manages team resources responsibly and looks for opportunities to improve quality, efficiency and ways of working. Supports appropriate use of technology and considers the effect of working practices on people, services and the environment

Stage 5 | Senior leader

Stage 5 applies to roles with broad accountability for strategic outcomes, organisational culture or cross-functional delivery. This may include heads of function, directors and equivalent leaders. The focus is on setting direction, shaping culture and taking responsibility for outcomes beyond the individual's immediate team.

Behaviour	What this looks like
B1 Professional conduct and integrity	Demonstrates consistently high standards of professionalism, integrity and confidentiality. Models ethical and inclusive conduct and sets clear expectations for the function or organisation
B2 Accountability and ownership	Takes accountability for strategic decisions, outcomes and performance within their remit. Communicates risks, trade-offs and setbacks transparently and acts promptly where outcomes aren't as intended
B3 Initiative and constructive contribution	Provides clear strategic direction and connects organisational purpose with priorities and delivery. Creates the conditions for others to contribute, improve and remain focused through uncertainty
B4 Adaptability and constructive challenge	Anticipates and leads change, tests assumptions and responds to internal and external developments. Provides clarity while remaining open to evidence, challenge and adjustment
B5 Inclusive and collaborative working	Builds inclusive internal and external partnerships and works across organisational boundaries to achieve shared outcomes. Considers wider organisational, member and sector effects when making decisions
B6 Judgement and decision-making	Demonstrates sound strategic judgement and makes timely, well-informed decisions. Delegates appropriately, maintains effective oversight and balances long-term priorities with material operational needs
B7 Learning and development	Develops leadership and professional capability across the organisation. Supports fair access to development, encourages coaching and knowledge-sharing and considers future capability needs
B8 Improvement and responsible use of resources	Ensures financial, people, information, digital and physical resources are used responsibly. Sponsors improvements which support quality, efficiency, resilience and sustainable long-term outcomes

5. Relationship to the PASA Career Pathways framework

The Job Family Pathways describe capability in the context of particular areas of pensions administration. This framework provides the shared behavioural expectations which apply across those families.

Two frameworks, one development conversation

Use the two together: the relevant Job Family Pathway explains the capability expected in the work, while this framework supports discussion of how the individual conducts themselves, works with others and contributes more widely.

Complementing existing employer frameworks

Employers may also have their own values, conduct or behaviour frameworks. PASA Career Pathways are designed to complement those arrangements rather than replace them. Organisations should identify and remove unnecessary duplication when integrating the two.

About the Administration and Careers & Development Working Group

Building careers in pensions administration

The Administration Careers & Development Working Group (ACDWG) is focused on raising the profile of pensions administration as a modern, skilled profession and supporting clearer, more visible career development across the industry.

Administration careers now span a broad range of disciplines, including technical pensions knowledge, member services, technology and data, project delivery, operational risk, client relationship management and leadership. The Working Group aims to reflect this breadth and help people recognise the different routes available to build and develop a career in administration.

Creating clearer career pathways

A key focus of the ACDWG is helping individuals understand where they are, where they could go next and the skills they need to develop along the way.

The Group developed PASA's *Building Career Pathways in Pensions Administration* Guidance and is now expanding this work through the Career Development Toolkit. The aim is to provide a common framework for job families, capability and progression, while recognising roles and organisational structures differ across the industry.

Its work also considers how career development can connect with professional learning and qualifications, including PASA's work with the Pensions Management Institute (PMI).

Meet the Working Group

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