

Professional Competencies

For Youth Protection in Higher Education



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The Youth Protection Professional Competencies are available free of charge to HEPNet members. If you would like to access additional copies, contact membership@higheredprotection.org.

CONTRIBUTORS

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- Caroline Shelton, University of Washington
- Carolynn Komanski, University of Florida
- David Chupak, Michigan State University
- Elliot Young, Kansas State University
- Ericha Geppert, University of Pittsburgh
- Lindsay Meyer Bond, HEPNet
- Ryan VanDeusen, Kansas State University
- Sandy Weaver, Pennsylvania State University

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INTRODUCTION

The field of youth protection in higher education has grown quickly since 2012, shining a light on the need for stronger safeguards in college and university settings. In response to systemic abuse including several high-profile cases shared in the media, colleges and universities across the country began to assess how many minors were in their midst and what level of protections were in place to keep them safe from harm. Most universities found that they either had no youth protection policies and practices in place, or what they had was inadequate.

As a result, colleges and universities are increasingly hiring or designating individuals to serve as youth protection professionals. These newly created positions are tasked with developing requirements for reporting suspected child abuse, procedures to screen and train personnel working with minors, and other protective measures.¹ Youth protection professionals may be situated in different departments in higher education settings with varied day-to-day functions, but common skills and behaviors unite the field.

This field of youth protection is set apart from traditional higher education operational roles because of the application of a lens which elevates the importance of addressing child maltreatment and recognizes the unique developmental needs of youth in an adult-centered environment. This approach distinguishes youth protection professionals from other risk management, compliance, or programmatic roles throughout the university. As youth protection becomes increasingly recognized as an important function in higher education, there is a need to outline professional characteristics as a guide for those within and outside the field.²

ABOUT HEPNET

The Higher Education Protection Network (HEPNet) seeks to advance the interactions of higher education institutions with children and youth. HEPNet serves as a coordinated voice promoting good practices for youth engagement as well as interactions with other vulnerable populations. HEPNet was established in 2017 to champion and support the advancement of this growing collective of youth protection professionals.

As the nation's only professional association driven to protect youth served by colleges and universities, our members collaborate across all departments in higher education, and with youth safety champions outside of higher education. HEPNet is the expert in protecting youth in the higher educational environment. Through the provision of member benefits in programming, professional development, services, and resources, HEPNet shares expertise with hundreds of members representing institutions serving millions of youth annually. Establishing professional competencies is just one more way that HEPNet executes its mission.

ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

In 2022, based on a need to formalize the emerging common approach to youth protection in higher education, HEPNet worked closely with the membership to develop Professional Competencies for Youth Protection in Higher Education. These competencies describe the fundamental knowledge, skills, and essential behaviors for successful job performance and represent the defining characteristics that embody a youth protection professional in higher education.

Seven competencies embody both technical knowledge as well as applied expertise in order to develop, implement, and oversee strategies that protect youth.

1. Addressing Child Maltreatment
2. Youth As a Unique Population
3. Education and Professional Development
4. Institutional Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
5. Monitoring and Assessment
6. Organizational Leadership
7. Risk Management

The first two competencies emphasize foundational domains of knowledge that guide the youth protection professional: Addressing Child Maltreatment and Youth As a Unique Population. To create a culture of safety for youth in higher education settings, a youth protection professional must apply the expertise represented by the first two competencies in all areas of their work, including within the remaining five competencies.

The five competencies, Education and Professional Development, Institutional Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, Monitoring and Assessment, Organizational Leadership, and Risk Management, represent critical skill sets commonly found in higher education, however, they require a specialized approach for youth protection. Within each competency, there is reference to the unique approach that differentiates a youth protection professional from another role in higher education. For example, a skilled youth protection professional must integrate the knowledge of child maltreatment and youth development into education and professional development efforts (Competency #3).

Each competency includes a brief definition, a how it is applied in the field of youth protection in higher education, and applicable terminology. The competencies are articulated into measurable behaviors across three proficiency levels (developing, performing, excelling).

EXAMPLE

#	COMPETENCY # <i>Competency Title</i>	
	DEFINITION brief definition	BEHAVIORS measurable actions categorized by proficiency level
	DESCRIPTION details including context and application	• <i>Developing</i> • <i>Performing</i> • <i>Excelling</i>
	TERMINOLOGY (as applicable)	

Throughout this publication the term “youth” refers to individual(s) under the age of 18. Occasionally other terms may be used in place of “youth,” including “minor” and “child.”

APPLICATIONS OF THE COMPETENCIES

There are various applications of these competencies, all founded on the vision of formalizing the field and supporting promising practices to protect youth in higher education.

These include:

- Self-assessment for professional development
- Developing or refining job scope or position descriptions
- Performance appraisals
- Advocating for professional development
- Benchmarking organizational and positional placement and salary

Many existing HEPNet resources already support the achievement of competency behaviors. HEPNet is committed to continuing to develop and offer professional development and educational resources that support achievement across the competency areas.

AUDIENCE

The competencies are intended for individuals with various roles, positions, and functions in higher education. HEPNet recognizes that one's place in the organizational chart factors into the needed level of proficiency for each competency. For example, a youth protection professional may want to move toward performing or excelling in all competencies while a university Vice President may only need to master the developing behaviors to be an effective champion and decision-maker.

Protecting youth in higher education requires collaboration and broad support; the goal is that more individuals in the higher education system see a role for themselves in youth protection efforts and can find a place along the proficiency continuum that meets their desired and needed level of proficiency for each competency.

COMPETENCY BEHAVIORS & PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Within each competency, behaviors illustrate measurable actions that meet the competency.

The behaviors indicated for each competency are allocated across three proficiency levels: developing, performing, and excelling. An individual will find themselves along different points of the continuum of professional development in each given competency. Generally, the standard proficiency level of a youth protection professional is "performing." However, in this new field many seasoned youth protection professionals may find themselves at different proficiency levels, developing in some competencies and excelling in others.

DEVELOPING

An individual with skills at this level is developing toward the standard of practice for a youth protection professional. Someone with developing skills can identify, and in some cases articulate, elements of a given competency.

PERFORMING

An individual with skills at this level meets the standard of practice for a youth protection professional. Someone performing at this skill level can interpret and advise on the concepts of a given competency and can articulate gaps and strengths.

EXCELLING

An individual at this skill level is excelling beyond the standard expectations for a youth protection professional. Someone excelling in a competency can have significant institutional impact and can apply knowledge to address complex, intersecting youth protection issues.

1

COMPETENCY 1 *Addressing Child Maltreatment*

DEFINITION

The ability to translate, summarize, and report on the scope of child maltreatment as it relates to higher education settings.

DESCRIPTION

Fluency in the competency of addressing child maltreatment includes prevention, identification, and reporting, and encompasses all types of child maltreatment – physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Child maltreatment is preventable once one understands the four types of abuse, including the signs of each. Thorough knowledge of this competency is the foundation for all prevention efforts.

To be effective as a youth protection professional and to promote a safe environment, one must:

- Understand that child maltreatment is preventable,
- Understand and be able to articulate how to prevent abuse from occurring,
- Define the four types of abuse, including signs and identification of each, and
- Be able to work within local definitions and laws related to child abuse/maltreatment, including reporting requirements.³

Youth protection professionals must also be adept at briefly discussing the history and status of youth protection as a field, and specifically its origins rooted in child maltreatment incidences that have occurred in higher education settings. This brings context to individuals who are new to youth protection and reminds those within institutional leadership why the youth protection office is important.

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Articulate at least one method to prevent abuse to promote a safe environment.
- State the four types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect).
- Identify where to find local definitions and laws that guide child abuse/maltreatment, including reporting requirements.
- Identify characteristics of an effective strategy to mitigate child maltreatment in an institutional setting.

Performing

- Explain how higher education serves youth and therefore must work against child maltreatment.
- Articulate several methods to prevent abuse that promote a safe environment.
- Clearly define the four types of abuse and how to identify each type (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect).
- Summarize local definitions and laws related to child abuse/maltreatment, including reporting requirements, and know how to stay current on updates.
- Implement a strategy to mitigate the risk of child maltreatment in an institutional setting.

Excelling

- Explain how higher education serves youth and therefore must work against child maltreatment and provide an accurate representation of where the field is going.
- Apply a trauma-informed approach to investigations such as forensic interviewing.
- Evaluate how current local and federal laws regarding child maltreatment impact the institution.
- Assess and refine a strategy to mitigate the risk of child maltreatment in an institutional setting.

2

COMPETENCY 2 *Youth as a Unique Population*

DEFINITION

The ability to raise awareness within the higher education setting that youth are prevalent and they have unique safety needs and circumstances that must be addressed. This competency requires a general understanding of youth development.

DESCRIPTION

Children and youth are not little adults. Environments that are designed specifically for children, such as schools and youth-serving organizations adhere to both physical and operational standards that safeguard youth in this environment. Physical structures and the safety or security of buildings, classrooms, laboratories, or outdoor areas in higher education are built primarily to serve adult students and employees who can freely move about and navigate their campus, without supervision or concern.

Similarly, operational policies, procedures, and personnel conduct requirements in schools and youth-serving organizations are developed to address the needs children and youth have for additional supervision, support, and protection. The prevailing policy landscape in higher education speaks to primarily an adult audience, even though colleges and universities oftentimes engage with more youth annually than with adults. Given that higher education settings do not inherently consider the unique needs of youth, vulnerabilities exist that, if not addressed, can result in harm to youth, including injury, abuse, or trauma.

A youth protection professional must serve as a translator and promoter of the special considerations that stem from youth's presence in higher education settings. It is essential to

be familiar with the fundamental concepts of youth development, and able to effectively articulate the risks of not attending to youths' unique needs. Fluency in these concepts equips the professional to cultivate appropriate environments, policies, procedures, and practices that reflect the developmental needs and circumstances of youth, and offer the higher standard of care that they require.⁴

It is important to note that, beyond age and developmental factors, youth are impacted by their diverse life experiences and individual identities.⁵ Societal attitudes regarding race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or economic status can impact youth's safety. For example, youth attending a university sponsored program may experience bullying or harassment due to attitudes of other participating youth. A youth protection professional must be aware of the vulnerabilities certain youth face that can lead to harm or abuse.

TERMINOLOGY

Youth development: Youth development refers to the developmental stages of a young person and may include physical, emotional, social, or intellectual characteristics.

Youth development initiatives: Youth development initiatives may include the implementation of curricula, youth program accreditation systems, or quality improvement initiatives that are recognized as promising or evidence-based practices within the field of youth development.

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Provide a basic explanation of why youth are a unique population in higher education settings.
- Identify characteristics, e.g., physical, emotional, social, and intellectual that are unique to youth in a higher education environment.
- Identify examples of policies, procedures, and programmatic best practices that are tailored for youth in the higher education setting.

Performing

- Raise awareness within the institution of the prevalence of youth in higher education settings.
- Advise stakeholders to address the unique and diverse needs of youth in institutional policies and procedures.
- Advise youth program personnel to address the unique and diverse needs of their participant population.

Excelling

- Influence stakeholders to address the unique needs of youth within multiple institutional policies and procedures.
- Advise stakeholders beyond one's own higher education institution on strategies to create safe environments for youth in non-youth-centric settings.
- Implement institution-wide youth development initiatives.

3

COMPETENCY 3

Education and Professional Development

DEFINITION

The ability to lead educational and professional development initiatives within the institution that support youth protection initiatives, as well as advance one's own professional development and continual learning.

DESCRIPTION

Beyond communicating expectations and operational requirements for individuals who work with youth in higher education programs and services, youth protection professionals must excel in educating others, both those within and outside of the campus community, about concepts that are foundational to youth protection efforts.⁶ Professional development and education offer a measure to prevent abuses and other violations of youth safety from occurring.⁷ By leading educational and professional development initiatives for campus personnel and members of the surrounding community, youth protection professionals can promote a culture of care for those who play a key role in providing safe experiences for children. Such educational initiatives can occur in various venues, including but not limited to live educational sessions or workshops occurring either in-person or over virtual webinar platforms; asynchronous, virtual educational modules; publications in newspapers, newsletters, journals, books, or other forms of written or virtual media; informational website publications; video, text, photos, or digital images posted on social media; or appearances on television or radio outlets.

Additionally, youth protection professionals must advance the knowledge and skills that are essential to their performance and contributions to youth protection initiatives by pursuing their own ongoing education and professional development. As an emerging field, it is imperative to stay current with rapidly evolving best practices. There are a variety of ways to engage in lifelong learning, including advanced courses, certifications, and other opportunities.

TERMINOLOGY

Outcome-based education: Outcome-based education is an approach to education that focuses on what students will be able to know or do in relation to educational objectives set for lessons, courses, or educational experiences.⁸

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Coordinate with campus or external experts who can serve as training presenters.
- Determine required education topics based on institutional context, training needs, and trends in the field.
- Relate campus education / professional development initiatives to trends, cultural norms, and occurrences in the local community.
- Monitor developments in the field of youth protection to identify trends that require learning and development.
- Pursue professional development opportunities such as webinars, conferences, and educational offerings related to topics and skills that are relevant to youth protection efforts.

Performing

- Facilitate education programs related to university youth protection guidelines and operational requirements and in response to emerging trends and recent developments.
- Coordinate with campus and community experts to create vital training and development partnerships.
- Develop an education plan and supporting materials that include both recurring training and new training and development programs to address emerging topics.
- Produce content and materials to promote awareness of youth protection initiatives and basic practices for advancing local efforts related to youth safety and abuse prevention.
- Evaluate how emerging trends and recent developments in youth protection impact learning needs.
- Assess educational needs among youth program leaders.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of training and development programs.
- Construct an individualized professional development plan that identifies short- and long-term performance goals, skills and knowledge, and educational and/or professional development opportunities to support the pursuit of those goals.

Excelling

- Teach an advanced course related to youth protection.
- Develop an outcome-based educational curriculum for youth program personnel that includes a method for participants to demonstrate attainment of skills or knowledge.
- Coordinate an educational campaign involving both informational marketing and educational workshops aimed to develop competencies related to youth protection among members of the local community.
- Conduct root cause analysis of critical incidents to recommend preventative education strategies.
- Develop an educational needs assessment plan that incorporates input from campus/community observations, trends observed in higher education news, feedback from youth program participants and families, feedback from youth program leaders, and post-event evaluations.
- Develop an education evaluation plan that measures the degree to which training and development programs contribute to the accomplishment of determined outcomes.
- Pursue ongoing certification, credentials, or educational advancement in areas relevant to youth protection.⁹
- Lead presentations and educational/professional development initiatives that promote the advancement of knowledge and skills for other youth protection professionals.

4

COMPETENCY 4

Institutional Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

DEFINITION

The ability to understand, modify, and create policies, procedures, and guidelines as they apply to federal, state, local laws, and institutional policies and processes that impact and govern the protection of minors.

DESCRIPTION

Performance of this competency includes implementation and maintenance of the policy over time. This three-stage process is referred to as the policy life cycle and is defined below:

- **Development of policy:** If there is no current institutional youth protection policy, the professional researches, writes, and ensures institutional approval and implementation of the policy in accordance with institutional rules.
- **Maintenance of policy:** After a policy is implemented, the professional completes a regular review of the policy to ensure all information, position titles, web links, and content is up to date.
- **Assessment and policy renewal:** There needs to be a regularly scheduled assessment of the impact and application of the policy. The policy should be reviewed and updated in accordance with institutional rules. For example, some institutions require a policy review and update every five years. Policies may also require renewal or change in response to a new state or federal law.

Structural safeguards, such as institution-wide policies, procedures, and guidelines, are foundational to youth protection. Policies and procedures are unique to an institution. The degree to which state and local laws influence policies and procedures will also vary between institutions. A youth protection professional must understand the policy landscape of their institution, and effectively influence policies, procedures, and guidelines to provide key structural safeguards for minors. The youth protection policy may intersect with multiple institutional departments.

TERMINOLOGY

Policy: A policy is a formal document approved by the institution at the cabinet or board level in accordance with institutional shared governance.

Procedure: A procedure is the operationalization of an established policy.

Guidelines: Guidelines are supplemental materials and resources that support and interpret policy requirements.

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Explain the components of youth protection policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Identify applicable local, federal, and state laws as they apply to youth programming and protection.
- Identify institutional policies and procedures that have considerations for minors.
- Participate in the youth protection policy life cycle.

Performing

- Advise relevant stakeholders about youth protection policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Identify gaps and/or non-compliance in youth protection policies, procedures, and guidelines and advise on corrective action.
- Create, update, and/or revise youth protection and other institutional policies to be most impactful and current with local, federal, and state laws.
- Oversee the youth protection policy life cycle through development, maintenance and assessment, and policy renewal.

Excelling

- Influence stakeholders to create a culture of safety in the protection of minors.
- Contribute to policy development at the local, state, or national level.
- Oversee the full policy life cycle for multiple institution-wide policies.

5

COMPETENCY 5 *Monitoring and Assessment*

DEFINITION

The ability to monitor and assess youth protection programs in higher education settings and improve quality and efficacy.

DESCRIPTION

This competency encompasses the ability to:

- Develop practical tools and techniques that can be used to implement ongoing compliance monitoring activities,
- Perform assessment and report on monitoring results, and,
- As applicable, integrate results into youth programming to modify and improve youth protection goals.

Monitoring and assessment involve the physical and behavioral action of auditing. Auditing is an independent review and examination of records and activities to assess the adequacy of system controls, ensure compliance with established policies and operational procedures, and recommend necessary changes in controls, policies, or procedures. The process of auditing affords multi-pronged approaches that examine multiple factors for a program (e.g., recorded policy, site visits, and documented assessments or activities).¹⁰ For example, a youth protection professional visits a program to observe, learn about the program, meet program leaders, ask questions, and finalize the audit (a site visit).

It is important to note that specific laws or institutional policies will inform monitoring and assessment practices, record-keeping of files, and data management. These activities may be considered responsibilities of a youth protection professional.

TERMINOLOGY

Assessment: Collecting and reviewing data. Assessment provides feedback that is process-oriented.

Evaluation: Passing judgment on the basis of standards. Evaluation provides feedback that is product-oriented and determines the extent to which an objective is achieved.¹¹

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Assist with audits for youth protection in higher education.
- Identify and summarize the effectiveness of youth protection program based on audit data.
- Explain why monitoring and assessment are needed for youth protection in higher education.
- Identify resources that support the monitoring and assessment process.

Performing

- Conduct audits for youth protection in higher education.
- Analyze data to create reports and make recommendations to promote the effectiveness of the youth protection program.
- Implement a monitoring and assessment process.
- Assess the effectiveness of the youth protection monitoring and assessment process and revise accordingly.

Excelling

- Design audits and audit cycles for youth protection in higher education.
- Participate in and advise on monitoring, assessment, and evaluation practices beyond the institution (e.g., at local, state, or national levels).
- Design a multi-pronged approach for a monitoring and assessment process e.g., tools, plans, and resources.
- Influence institutional change to promote a culture of safety through the use of data from monitoring and assessment processes.

6

COMPETENCY 6 *Organizational Leadership*

DEFINITION

The ability to work effectively within the various types of organizational structures within higher education to foster a culture of safety for minors. This requires understanding how organizational management and culture are influenced by those structures and how those impact the functionality and expectations of youth protection offices or youth protection professionals at those institutions.

DESCRIPTION

Institutions of higher education are multi-faceted environments, and the operationalization of youth protection practices is often a large-scale change management project. Types of institutional settings (e.g., large or small, private or public, 2- or 4-year), structural and governance models (e.g., centralized or decentralized), will inform the specific approaches one must take to promote and achieve youth protection goals. Comprehension of these variables as well as youth protection's placement within the institution will inform youth protection professionals about what steps may be necessary to operationalize certain requirements or practices and can help prepare youth protection professionals for the variable responses and behaviors of people in the organization.¹² Youth protection professionals must be able to customize implementation strategies based on their institution's unique structure and modify their communication styles to build strong relationships both horizontally and vertically within the organization.¹³

Regardless of differences between institutional settings, certain key strategies underpin one's ability to affect change in an organization, particularly in the domain of communication and relationship building.

Conveying what can sometimes be complex requirements or discussing sensitive material with various audiences demands that a youth protection professional have very strong and adaptable communication skills. Creating space for conversation, problem solving, and addressing questions helps to build and maintain relationships with individuals in all areas of the institution, and allows them to feel involved in decisions that affect them.¹⁴ Similarly, clear communication and conversation with institutional management and stakeholders is critical, as leaders must be directly involved to allocate resources that make youth protection operations possible.¹⁵ Actively and effectively engaging stakeholders and clearly communicating the impact of youth protection operations on individuals in all corners of an institution are important in building momentum toward a culture of safety, since an individual's perceptions can impact their responses toward organizational change.¹⁶

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Identify the key organizational structures within the institution that impact the youth protection office, role, governance, etc.
- Identify departments, campuses, and roles within the institutional hierarchy that are stakeholders in youth programming.
- Identify appropriate communication channels within institutional structures to promote youth protection goals.
- Identify diverse communication, training, and presentation needs.

Performing

- Leverage the youth protection professional's place within the institutional structure to promote youth protection goals.
- Build and maintain productive stakeholder relationships across departments, campuses, and institutional hierarchy.
- Choose and use appropriate communication channels within institutional structures to give visibility to youth protection goals.
- Tailor communication, training, and presentations to diverse audience needs.

Excelling

- Influence structural changes within the institution to strengthen youth protection efforts.
- Lead organizational, interdepartmental initiatives that advance youth protection goals.
- Leverage stakeholder relationships across departments, campuses, and institutional hierarchy to impact significant change that advances youth protection.
- Create visibility around the importance of youth protection within higher education among external stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels.
- Serve as a leader among youth protection professionals and colleagues beyond the institution and contribute to advancing the youth protection field via conferences, presentations, and projects.

7

COMPETENCY 7 *Risk Management*

DEFINITION

The ability to identify and implement risk and risk management strategies that protect youth and support higher education professionals to run their programs successfully. This includes assessing and mitigating risk, monitoring compliance, and advising on effective and appropriate strategies.

DESCRIPTION

Types of risk in a higher education setting that must be identified and treated include the following:

- Health and Safety
- Financial
- Operational
- Compliance
- Liability
- Strategic
- Reputation

Elevated risks specific to youth in higher education settings include responsibility and accountability, supervision, unplanned time, mixed age groups, medical management, emergency management, transportation, physical space and environmental hazards, online engagement and social media, over-night programming, and of course, child maltreatment.

Once risks are identified, they must be managed. While it is not usually possible or even preferred to eliminate all risks, evaluation can start with the DIM process: develop [a risk management plan], implement [plan], and manage [plan]. Risks can be treated by avoidance, transferring, accepting, and reducing.¹⁷

TERMINOLOGY

Accept: The institution is willing to accept the risk. The risk is within the institution's level of risk appetite. Acceptance of risk may involve implementing new risk controls in place to accept the risk.

Avoid: The institution is not willing to accept the risk despite risk treatment or transfer techniques being deployed. The risk cannot be within the institution's level of risk appetite.

Compliance: managing adherence to the risk management plan, including policies, procedures, and guidelines, within established boundaries

Reduce: The institution needs to modify the risk before it is willing to accept the risk. Action is needed before the risk is within the institution's level of risk tolerance.

Transfer: The institution decides to transfer the risk to another entity. The risk must be transferred before the risk is within the institution's level of risk appetite.

BEHAVIORS

Developing

- Identify the risks associated with interacting with youth in higher education settings.
- Identify risk management techniques to manage the risk of working with youth.
- Respond to basic risk management questions by sharing pre-existing resources such as liability waivers and participation agreements.
- Explain the basic risk management process the institution uses.
- Assist with compliance processes to effectively address policy requirements.

Performing

- Incorporate risk management techniques that mitigate risks of interacting with youth in higher education settings into institutional policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Advise relevant stakeholders regarding risks and risk management techniques for interacting with youth.
- Regularly meet with other risk, legal, insurance, and compliance partners to address risk concerns and identify areas for mitigation.
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify non-compliance, gaps in risk management procedures and practices, and to offer suggestions for mitigation.
- Develop and implement a compliance strategy to effectively address institutional requirements for youth directed initiatives.

Excelling

- Evaluate the risk management plan as it relates to mitigation and efficacy.
- Establish a multi-prong risk management approach for youth protection across the institution.
- Partner with institutional insurance professionals and establish youth protection procedures that address insurability.
- Evaluate youth protection compliance strategies to assess how effectively it addresses policy requirements.

COMPETENCIES AT-A-GLANCE

Self-Assessment Tool

1

COMPETENCY 1: ADDRESSING CHILD MALTREATMENT

Developing

- ☐ Articulate at least one method to prevent abuse to promote a safe environment.
- ☐ State the four types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect).
- ☐ Identify where to find local definitions and laws that guide child abuse/maltreatment, including reporting requirements.
- ☐ Identify characteristics of an effective strategy to mitigate child maltreatment in an institutional setting.

Performing

- ☐ Explain how higher education serves youth and therefore must work against child maltreatment.
- ☐ Articulate several methods to prevent abuse that promote a safe environment.
- ☐ Clearly define the four types of abuse and how to identify each type (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect).
- ☐ Summarize local definitions and laws related to child abuse/maltreatment, including reporting requirements, and know how to stay current on updates.
- ☐ Implement a strategy to mitigate the risk of child maltreatment in an institutional setting.

Excelling

- ☐ Explain how higher education serves youth and therefore must work against child maltreatment and provide an accurate representation of where the field is going.
- ☐ Apply a trauma-informed approach to investigations such as forensic interviewing.
- ☐ Evaluate how current local and federal laws regarding child maltreatment impact the institution.
- ☐ Assess and refine a strategy to mitigate the risk of child maltreatment in an institutional setting.

COMPETENCY 2: YOUTH AS A UNIQUE POPULATION

Developing

- ☐ Articulate examples of youth as a unique population in higher education settings.
- ☐ Identify characteristics, e.g., physical, emotional, social, and intellectual that are unique to youth in a higher education environment.
- ☐ Identify examples of programmatic practices, policies, and procedures that are tailored for youth in the higher education setting.

Performing

- ☐ Raise awareness of the prevalence of youth in higher education settings.
- ☐ Advise relevant stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, those responsible for the physical environment) to address the unique developmental needs of youth.
- ☐ Advise youth program stakeholders to tailor their settings for youth.

Excelling

- ☐ Influence stakeholders to cultivate environments, policies, procedures, and practices within the institution unique to youth in higher education settings.
- ☐ Advise stakeholders locally, nationally, i.e., beyond one's own higher education institution on creating safe youth environments in non-youth-centric settings.
- ☐ Implement comprehensive strategies to include more tailored youth development practices in youth programs.

2

COMPETENCIES AT-A-GLANCE CONTINUED

Self-Assessment Tool

3

COMPETENCY 3: EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing

- ☐ Coordinate with campus or external experts who can serve as training presenters.
- ☐ Determine required education topics based on institutional context, training needs, and trends in the field.
- ☐ Relate campus education / professional development initiatives to trends, cultural norms, and occurrences in the local community.
- ☐ Monitor developments in the field of youth protection to identify trends that require learning and development.
- ☐ Pursue professional development opportunities such as webinars, conferences, and educational offerings related to topics and skills that are relevant to youth protection efforts.

Performing

- ☐ Facilitate education programs related to university youth protection guidelines and operational requirements and in response to emerging trends and recent developments.
- ☐ Coordinate with campus and community experts to create vital training and development partnerships.
- ☐ Develop an education plan and supporting materials that include both recurring training and new training and development programs to address emerging topics.
- ☐ Produce content and materials to promote awareness of youth protection initiatives and basic practices for advancing local efforts related to youth safety and abuse prevention.
- ☐ Evaluate how emerging trends and recent developments in youth protection impact learning needs.
- ☐ Assess educational needs among youth program leaders.
- ☐ Evaluate the effectiveness of training and development programs.
- ☐ Construct an individualized professional development plan that identifies short- and long-term performance goals, skills and knowledge, and educational and/or professional development opportunities to support the pursuit of those goals.

Excelling

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Teach an advanced course related to youth protection.☐ Develop an outcome-based educational curriculum for youth program personnel that includes a method for participants to demonstrate attainment of skills or knowledge.☐ Coordinate an educational campaign involving both informational marketing and educational workshops aimed to develop competencies related to youth protection among members of the local community.☐ Conduct root cause analysis of critical incidents to recommend preventative education strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Develop an educational needs assessment plan that incorporates input from campus/community observations, trends observed in higher education news, feedback from youth program participants and families, feedback from youth program leaders, and post-event evaluations.☐ Develop an education evaluation plan that measures the degree to which training and development programs contribute to the accomplishment of determined outcomes.☐ Pursue ongoing certification, credentials, or educational advancement in areas relevant to youth protection.¹⁸☐ Lead presentations and educational/professional development initiatives that promote the advancement of knowledge and skills for other youth protection professionals. |
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COMPETENCIES AT-A-GLANCE CONTINUED

Self-Assessment Tool

4

COMPETENCY 4: INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Developing

- ☐ Explain the components of youth protection policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- ☐ Identify applicable local, federal, and state laws as they apply to youth programming and protection.
- ☐ Identify institutional policies and procedures that have considerations for minors.
- ☐ Participate in the youth protection policy life cycle.

Performing

- ☐ Advise relevant stakeholders about institutional policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- ☐ Identify gaps and/or non-compliance in youth protection policies, procedures, and guidelines and advise on corrective action.
- ☐ Create, update, and/or revise youth protection and institutional policy(ies) to be most impactful and current related to local, federal, and state statutes.
- ☐ Lead the youth protection policy life cycle through development, maintenance and assessment, and policy renewal.

Excelling

- ☐ Influence stakeholders to create a culture of safety in the protection of minors.
- ☐ Contribute to policy development at the local, state, or national level.
- ☐ Oversee the full policy life cycle for multiple institution-wide policies.

COMPETENCY 5: MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Developing

- ☐ Assist with audits for youth protection in higher education.
- ☐ Identify and summarize the effectiveness of youth protection program based on audit data.
- ☐ Explain why monitoring and assessment are needed for youth protection in higher education.
- ☐ Identify resources that support the monitoring and assessment process.

Performing

- ☐ Conduct audits for youth protection in higher education.
- ☐ Analyze data to create reports and make recommendations to promote the effectiveness of the youth protection program.
- ☐ Implement a monitoring and assessment process.
- ☐ Assess the effectiveness of the youth protection monitoring and assessment process and revise accordingly.

Excelling

- ☐ Design audits and audit cycles for youth protection in higher education.
- ☐ Participate in and advise on monitoring, assessment, and evaluation practices beyond the institution (e.g., at local, state, or national levels).
- ☐ Design a multi-pronged approach for a monitoring and assessment process e.g., tools, plans, and resources.
- ☐ Influence institutional change to promote a culture of safety through the use of data from monitoring and assessment processes.

5

COMPETENCIES AT-A-GLANCE CONTINUED

Self-Assessment Tool

6

COMPETENCY 6: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Developing

- ☐ Identify the key organizational structures within the institution that impact the youth protection office, role, governance, etc.
- ☐ Identify departments, campuses, and roles within the institutional hierarchy that are stakeholders in youth programming.
- ☐ Identify appropriate communication channels within institutional structures to promote youth protection goals.
- ☐ Identify diverse communication, training, and presentation needs.

Performing

- ☐ Leverage the youth protection office's place within the institutional structure to promote youth protection goals.
- ☐ Build and maintain productive stakeholder relationships across departments, campuses, and institutional hierarchy.
- ☐ Choose and use appropriate communication channels within institutional structures to give visibility to youth protection goals.
- ☐ Tailor communication, training, and presentations to diverse audience needs.

Excelling

Influence structural changes within the institution to strengthen youth protection efforts.

Lead organizational, interdepartmental initiatives that advance youth protection goals.

Leverage stakeholder relationships across departments, campuses, and institutional hierarchy to impact significant change that advances youth protection.

Create visibility around the importance of youth protection within higher education among external stakeholders at the local, state, and national levels.

Serve as a leader among youth protection professionals, colleagues, and stakeholders beyond the institution and contribute to the youth protection field via conferences, presentations, and projects.

COMPETENCY 7: RISK MANAGEMENT

Developing

- ☐ Identify the risks associated with working with youth and/or hosting youth in higher education settings.
- ☐ Identify risk management techniques to manage the risk of working with minors.
- ☐ Respond to basic risk management questions by sharing pre-existing resources such as liability waivers and participation agreements.
- ☐ Explain the basic risk management process the institution uses.
- ☐ Assist with compliance processes to effectively address policy requirements.

Performing

- ☐ Incorporate risk management techniques that mitigate risks of interacting with youth in higher education settings into institutional policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- ☐ Advise relevant stakeholders regarding risks and risk management techniques for interacting with youth.
- ☐ Regularly meet with other risk, legal, insurance, and compliance partners to address risk concerns and identify areas for mitigation.
- ☐ Conduct a risk assessment to identify non-compliance, gaps in risk management procedures and practices, and to offer suggestions for mitigation.
- ☐ Develop and implement a compliance strategy to effectively address institutional requirements for youth directed initiatives.

Excelling

- ☐ Evaluate the risk management plan as it relates to mitigation and efficacy.
- ☐ Establish a multi-prong risk management approach for youth protection across the institution.
- ☐ Partner with institutional insurance professionals and establish youth protection procedures that address insurability.
- ☐ Evaluate youth protection compliance strategies to assess how effectively it addresses policy requirements.

7

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- 9 Example Professional Certifications:
 - Certified Praesidium Guardian– <https://www.praesidiumguardian.com/>
 - Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics (SCCE)– <https://www.corporatecompliance.org/certification/become-certified/ccep>
 - University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA)– <https://www.urmia.org/professionaldevelopment/professionaldevelopmentoverview>
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- 18 Example Professional Certifications
 - Certified Praesidium Guardian – <https://www.praesidiumguardian.com/>
 - Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics (SCCE) – <https://www.corporatecompliance.org/certification/become-certified/ccep>
 - University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA) – <https://www.urmia.org/professionaldevelopment/professionaldevelopmentoverview>

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- "Aligning with the Emerging Field of Youth Protection in Higher Education," American Camp Association, September 2019
- "Why and How to Build a Youth Protection Program," URMIA Insights, June 2019
- "Risk Management and Compliance, Along with Other Special Considerations," Pre-College Programming in Higher Education: The Evolution of a Movement: A practitioner's handbook for current and future pre-college programming leaders, September 2019

Also visit the HEPNet community resource and member pages to find additional references and resources, at <https://www.higheredprotection.org/>

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

For Youth Protection in Higher Education

