लाल बहादुर शास्त्री राष्ट्रीय प्रशासन अकादमी
Lal Bahadur Shastri
National Academy of Administration

ADDRESS TO OFFICERS

How to Become an Effective Officer

Building Competencies

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FOUR COMPETENCY DOMAINS

I — Interpersonal Skills and Communication

II — Getting Work Done

III — Personal Management in a Professional Setting

IV — Problem Solving, Decision-Making and Resilient Learning

Outline

From why competencies matter — to how each of us can build them, every day.

1. **What Makes an Officer Effective**
   Practical, transferable competencies
2. **Four Competency Domains**
   People · results · self · problems
3. **Domain I — Interpersonal Skills and Communication**
   5 competency areas
4. **Domain II — Getting Work Done**
   8 competency areas
5. **Domain III — Personal Management in a Professional Setting**
   11 competency areas
6. **Domain IV — Problem Solving, Decision-Making and Resilient Learning**
   10 competency areas
7. **The Way Forward**
   Building these competencies throughout a career

What Makes an Officer Effective?

> *Effectiveness comes from practical, transferable competencies that enable an officer to function well in complex professional and administrative environments.*

01

Practical

Grounded in the real situations officers face in professional and administrative life.

02

Transferable

Applicable across postings, sectors and career stages — competencies that travel with the officer.

03

Experiential

Built through practice, reflection and feedback — not through instruction alone.

Four Competency Domains

Effectiveness rests on four broad domains, comprising 34 competency areas.

DOMAIN I

Interpersonal Skills and Communication

Connecting, communicating and persuading — across audiences, channels and situations

5 competency areas

DOMAIN II

Getting Work Done

Leading teams and achieving results through people — with and without formal authority

8 competency areas

DOMAIN III

Personal Management in a Professional Setting

Managing oneself — emotions, attention, time, health, family, finances and conduct

11 competency areas

DOMAIN IV

Problem Solving, Decision-Making and Resilient Learning

Diagnosing, deciding, adapting — and learning fast in unfamiliar domains

10 competency areas

DOMAIN

I

Interpersonal Skills and Communication

Connecting, communicating and persuading — across audiences, channels and situations

5 COMPETENCY AREAS

WHAT THIS DOMAIN COVERS

01	Inclusive Interpersonal Communication
02	Clarity and Precision in Communication
03	Persuasion, Influencing and Pitching
04	Professional and Official Communication
05	Public Speaking and Extempore Communication

01 Inclusive Interpersonal Communication

01

Interact comfortably and respectfully with people of diverse backgrounds, roles and perspectives

02

Build rapport and establish professional relationships

03

Communicate inclusively — avoiding unintended exclusion, stereotyping or alienation

04

Demonstrate empathy and sensitivity in professional interactions

05

Adapt communication to the needs, background and expectations of different stakeholders

02 Clarity and Precision in Communication

01

Express thoughts, instructions and expectations clearly and concisely

02

Distinguish what must be communicated from what is merely incidental

03

Structure information logically

04

Communicate complex ideas in simple, accessible language

05

Avoid ambiguity, unnecessary jargon and communication overload

03 Persuasion, Influencing and Pitching

01

Present and defend an idea before different stakeholders

02

Persuade without necessarily relying on formal authority

03

Understand stakeholder interests and frame proposals accordingly

04

Make a compelling professional pitch

05

Anticipate objections and respond constructively

06

Build consensus around an idea or course of action

04 Professional and Official Communication

Communicate effectively across formal and informal channels — with the appropriate:

Tone | **Brevity** | **Clarity** | **Hierarchy** | **Recordability** | **Purpose**

ACROSS CHANNELS AND AUDIENCES

- Official letters and communications
- Notes, briefs and written submissions
- Professional emails
- Short-form digital communication — SMS and WhatsApp
- Oral instructions and professional conversations
- Communication with seniors, peers, subordinates and external stakeholders

05 Public Speaking and Extempore Communication

01

Speak confidently before an audience

02

Organise thoughts rapidly with limited preparation

03

Respond to questions and unexpected interventions

04

Make short, effective professional interventions in meetings

05

Deliver an extempore speech or briefing

06

Communicate effectively under pressure

DOMAIN

II

Getting Work Done

Leading teams and achieving results through people — with and without formal authority

8 COMPETENCY AREAS

WHAT THIS DOMAIN COVERS

01	Understanding People and Identifying Talent
02	Team Formation and Team Management
03	Delegation and Task Allocation
04	Creating Ownership and Motivation
05	Managing Upwards
06	Managing Subordinates and Peers
07	Authority and Non-Authority-Based Ways of Getting Work Done
08	Negotiation, Compromise and Conflict Management

01 Understanding People and Identifying Talent

01

Understand individual strengths, weaknesses, motivations and working styles

02

Identify talent and potential in people

03

Recognise complementary skills within a team

04

Distinguish between competence, motivation and reliability

05

Match people and capabilities to appropriate roles and tasks

02 Team Formation and Team Management

01

Build effective teams

02

Allocate roles based on capabilities and circumstances

03

Establish shared objectives and expectations

04

Manage diversity of personalities and working styles

05

Create conditions for ownership and accountability

06

Deal with interpersonal friction within teams

03 Delegation and Task Allocation

01

Decide what to delegate and what to retain personally

02

Delegate according to competence and readiness

03

Give clear instructions and define expected outcomes

04

Set up appropriate monitoring without micromanaging

05

Create accountability while allowing autonomy

04 Creating Ownership and Motivation

01

Get people to take on work willingly — not merely through compliance

02

Explain the purpose and larger significance of a task

03

Motivate colleagues and subordinates

04

Create ownership for institutional objectives

05

Recognise and reinforce good performance

06

Judge when incentives, persuasion, participation or authority are appropriate

05 Managing Upwards

01

Understand the expectations and working styles of superiors

02

Present information and options effectively to a superior

03

Anticipate what a superior needs to know

04

Disagree professionally when necessary

05

Manage upwards without compromising professional integrity

06

Seek support, resources or decisions appropriately

06 Managing Subordinates and Peers

01

Give difficult feedback

02

Handle non-performance

03

Address conflict and resistance

04

Correct mistakes without unnecessarily damaging relationships

05

Manage peers when formal authority is limited

06

Build cooperation across organisational boundaries

07 Authority and Non-Authority-Based Ways of Getting Work Done

01

When formal authority should be exercised

02

When authority may be counter-productive

03

The distinction between authority, influence, persuasion and negotiation

04

Different ways of obtaining cooperation

05

How relationships, credibility, expertise and trust can supplement formal authority

08 Negotiation, Compromise and Conflict Management

In administrative settings — as distinct from private-sector, trade or diplomatic contexts:

01

Identify the interests underlying stated positions

02

Negotiate with multiple stakeholders

03

Distinguish negotiable from non-negotiable matters

04

Make principled compromises

05

Manage disagreements without obstructing institutional objectives

06

Find workable solutions where interests compete

DOMAIN

III

Personal Management in a Professional Setting

Managing oneself — emotions, attention, time, health, family, finances and conduct

11 COMPETENCY AREAS

WHAT THIS DOMAIN COVERS

01	Emotional Regulation and Anger Management
02	Stress and Pressure Management
03	Attention, Focus and Listening
04	Professional Hazards and Risks in Public Service
05	Time and Workload Management
06	Building a Life Beyond the Professional Role
07	Family and Relationship Management
08	Health, Fitness and Personal Well-being
09	Personal Financial Management
10	Anonymity, Austerity and Personal Conduct
11	Social Media and Cyber Hygiene

01 Emotional Regulation and Anger Management

01

Recognise emotional triggers

02

Regulate reactions in high-pressure situations

03

Manage anger and frustration professionally

04

Avoid impulsive responses with professional consequences

05

Maintain composure during confrontation or provocation

02 Stress and Pressure Management

01

Identify sources and symptoms of professional stress

02

Distinguish productive pressure from harmful stress

03

Develop practical coping mechanisms

04

Maintain performance during sustained workload

05

Recognise when professional support or intervention may be required

03 Attention, Focus and Listening

01

Attention management

02

The ability to focus despite multiple demands

03

The ability to prioritise information

04

Active listening

05

Listening without prematurely forming a response — brainstorming ideas without judgement

06

Awareness of when to speak — and, equally, when to stop speaking and listen

04 Professional Hazards and Risks Associated with Public Service

01

Common professional risks in public-facing, high-responsibility positions

02

Reputational risks

03

Ethical and conflict-of-interest situations

04

Boundary management

05

Risks arising from informal commitments and communication

06

How seemingly routine decisions can create disproportionate consequences

07

Strategies for recognising, preventing and managing such risks

05 Time and Workload Management

01

Prioritise competing demands

02

Distinguish urgent from important tasks

03

Manage meetings, interruptions and communication overload

04

Allocate time to strategic versus routine work

05

Avoid unnecessary build-up of pending work

06

Create sustainable personal work systems

06 Building a Life Beyond the Professional Role

01

Cultivate inexpensive hobbies, interests and intellectual pursuits outside work

02

Develop interests that provide personal fulfilment

03

Maintain a meaningful identity beyond one's professional designation

04

Use periods of lower professional workload constructively

05

Develop a diversified portfolio of interests that builds resilience across career phases

07 Family and Relationship Management

01

Balance professional responsibilities with family commitments

02

Maintain meaningful relationships despite demanding postings

03

Communicate effectively with spouse and family about professional constraints

04

Manage transitions arising from transfers, postings and changing workloads

05

Recognise the impact of professional demands on family life, and vice versa

Health, Well-being and Personal Finance

08 Health, Fitness and Personal Well-being

Sustainable practices relating to:

- Physical fitness
- Sleep and recovery
- Nutrition and healthy routines
- Preventive healthcare
- Well-being during demanding assignments and frequent transitions

09 Personal Financial Management

Basic capability in:

- Personal financial planning
- Household budgeting, savings and investment decisions
- Retirement and long-term financial planning

10

Anonymity, Austerity and Personal Conduct

01

Maintain appropriate personal boundaries associated with public office

02

Practise institutional and personal austerity

03

Avoid unnecessary visibility or self-promotion

04

Maintain discretion in personal and professional life

05

Separate public office from personal identity

06

Develop habits that protect institutional credibility and personal privacy

11 Social Media and Cyber Hygiene

01

Manage the digital footprint

02

Understand the risks associated with social media use

03

Maintain boundaries between personal and official communication

04

Protect personal and professional information

05

Practise secure digital communication and device hygiene

06

Understand the permanence and professional consequences of digital content

DOMAIN

IV

Problem Solving, Decision-Making and Resilient Learning

Diagnosing, deciding, adapting — and learning fast in unfamiliar domains

10 COMPETENCY AREAS

WHAT THIS DOMAIN COVERS

01	Knowing One's Mandate, Authority and Limits
02	Diagnosing the Nature of a Problem
03	Choosing What Problem to Solve
04	Mobilising Resources for Problem Solving
05	System 1 and System 2 Decision-Making
06	Decision-Making Under Uncertainty
07	Problem Solving Under Resource Constraints
08	Adaptive and Resilient Problem Solving
09	Resilient Learning Across Domains
10	Learning Agility as a Professional Competency

01 Knowing One's Mandate, Authority and Limits

Distinguish clearly between four kinds of action:

What I

Can do

Within legal and delegated authority

What I

Should do

Within mandate, purpose and ethics

What I

Cannot do

Beyond authority, procedure or competence

What requires

Consultation

…or escalation to the appropriate level

…grounded in a clear understanding of

- Legal authority
- Delegated authority
- Institutional mandate
- Procedural boundaries
- Personal competence and capability
- Ethical and professional limits

02 Diagnosing the Nature of a Problem

Identify and classify problems before trying to solve them.

WELL-DEFINED

Thin Problems

- Relatively well-defined
- Known parameters
- Established technical solutions

vs

COMPLEX & CONTESTED

Thick Problems

- Complex, ambiguous, layered or contested
- Multiple stakeholders
- Interacting causes
- Uncertain solutions

Select the problem-solving approach according to the nature of the problem — rather than applying a single methodology to every situation.

03 Choosing What Problem to Solve

01

Identify competing problems

02

Prioritise problems when resources and attention are limited

03

Distinguish symptoms from root causes

04

Assess urgency, importance, impact and reversibility

05

Decide when a problem needs immediate intervention — and when it can be deferred

06

Recognise when solving one problem may create another

04 Mobilising Resources for Problem Solving

Identify and mobilise:

01
Human resources

02
Institutional resources

03
Financial resources

04
Information and data

05
Legal and procedural resources

06
Expertise

07
Technology

08
Interdepartmental and external partnerships

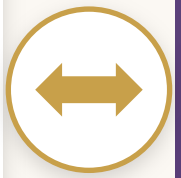
05 System 1 and System 2 Decision-Making

Recognise when to switch between two modes of thinking:

FAST · INTUITIVE

System 1

- Make rapid decisions using experience, pattern recognition and intuitive judgement



SLOW · DELIBERATE

System 2

- Slow down and undertake deliberate analysis
- Challenge first impressions and cognitive biases
- Seek additional information
- Use structured decision-making tools

> *The skill lies in switching deliberately between rapid and analytical modes of thinking — and it improves with practice.*

06 Decision-Making Under Uncertainty

Take sound decisions when:

01
Information is incomplete

02
Facts are changing

03
Time is limited

04
Resources are constrained

05
Stakeholder positions are unclear

06
The consequences of options cannot be fully predicted

Emphasis: defensible, timely and adaptable decisions — rather than waiting for perfect information.

07

Problem Solving Under Resource Constraints

01

Make trade-offs

02

Prioritise scarce resources

03

Identify minimum viable interventions

04

Use existing institutional resources creatively

05

Decide what not to do

06

Develop solutions proportionate to the problem and available capacity

08 Adaptive and Resilient Problem Solving

01

Learn from failed interventions

02

Reassess assumptions

03

Change course when evidence changes

04

Distinguish persistence from persistence with a flawed approach

05

Incorporate feedback into subsequent decisions

06

Remain effective when circumstances change unexpectedly

09

Resilient Learning Across Domains

Assignments are transferable and change often — the ability to learn unfamiliar domains rapidly is essential:

01

Enter an unfamiliar department or sector and quickly understand its mandate

02

Identify the institutional architecture and key actors

03

Understand major schemes, programmes and processes

04

Identify relevant laws, rules, policies and institutional arrangements

05

Separate what must be known immediately from what can be learnt progressively

06

Locate reliable sources of knowledge and expertise

07

Ask domain experts the right questions

08

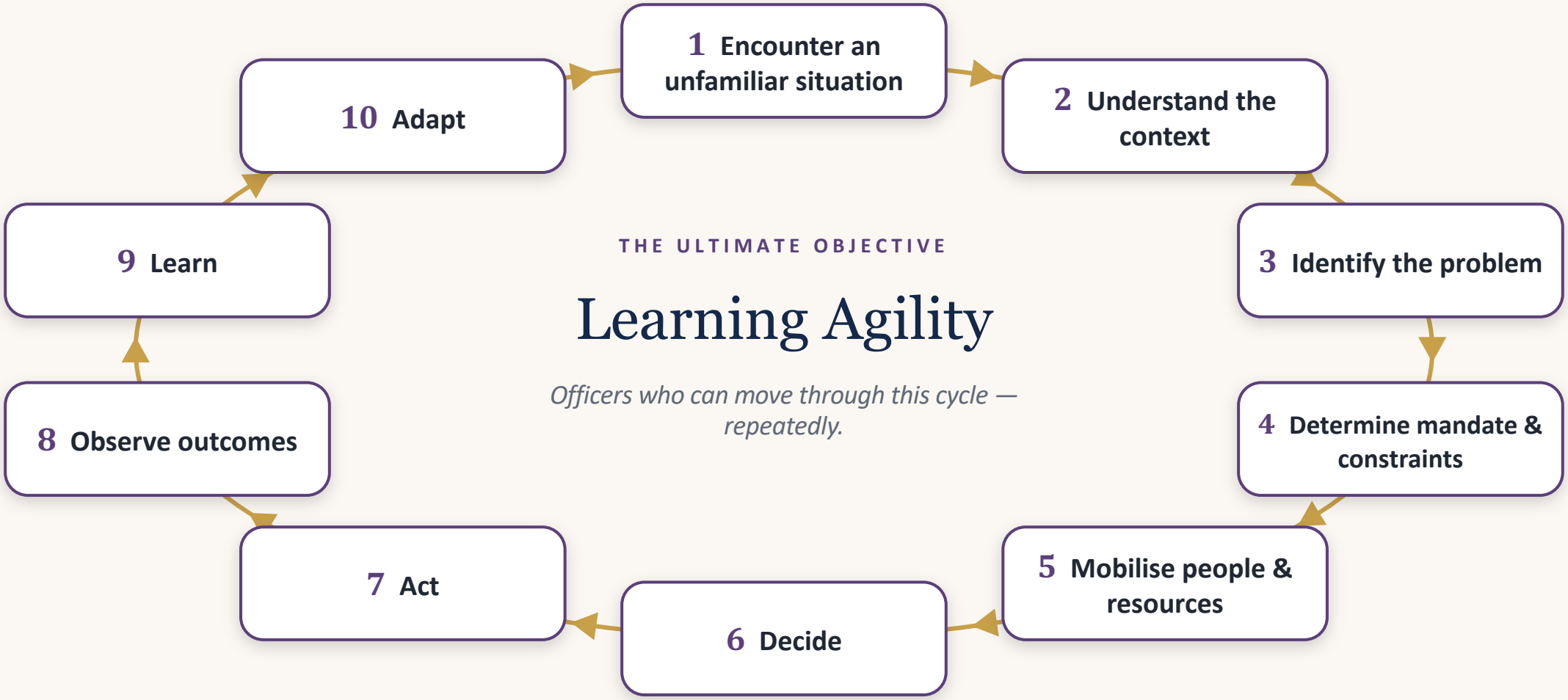
Build a mental model of a new sector quickly

09

Transfer learning and problem-solving approaches across domains

10

Learning Agility as a Professional Competency



Becoming an effective officer is not about knowing more — *it is about deliberately developing, practising, observing and refining how we act.*



Build capability deliberately, one competency at a time

Apply it in every posting and every interaction

Reflect honestly on your own behaviour

Seek feedback — and keep improving

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Lal Bahadur Shastri
National Academy of Administration

Thank You

धन्यवाद

Questions · Reflections · Suggestions

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शीलं परम भूषणम् · *Character is the supreme adornment*