

Core Competencies for Administrators

We use the word “tribunal” to mean an organization, department, board, agency, or commission that includes decision makers.

Administrators need the following skills and values to do their work well.

1. Knowledge and Values

Administrators should:

- 1.1 understand the legal framework, jurisdiction, procedure, and subject matter of the tribunal.
- 1.2 provide a high standard of service by being ethical, accountable, and professionally responsible.
- 1.3 be aware of and respect diversity in all its forms. Some examples include creed, gender, race, religious customs, place of origin, ancestry, age, disability, mental capacity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, social or economic status, marital status, family status, or family affiliation.
- 1.4 build and support a work culture that ensures all tribunal processes and proceedings are transparent, accountable, and carried out with integrity.
- 1.5 adapt processes so they are equitable and inclusive to all people.

2. Communication

Administrators should:

- 2.1 communicate effectively using plain language (“language readily understood by all”) and working with interpreters, including American Sign Language (ASL) and braille, as needed.
- 2.2 always use language that is free from bias.

- 2.3 use computers, software, and online tools effectively to share documents and other information, keep clear records, and communicate promptly.
- 2.4 prepare and publish appropriate tools and reference materials to help all parties, representatives, and decision makers participate in the tribunal processes.

3. Administration of Cases

Administrators should:

- 3.1 establish and maintain the independence and authority of the tribunal so decision makers can stay impartial.
- 3.2 be independent and act with integrity.
- 3.3 be aware of unconscious bias and willing to challenge all biases.
- 3.4 be able to identify systemic biases and barriers.
- 3.5 understand the four principles of the duty to be fair and apply them when supporting cases.
- 3.6 help all parties participate fully to ensure fair treatment and just outcome.
- 3.7 deal effectively and efficiently with case management issues.

4. Legislation

Administrators should:

- 4.1 understand, use, and apply the tribunal's legislation and other applicable legislation.
- 4.2 apply the modern method of interpretation, which uses the ordinary meaning of words and considers the wider context and purpose of the legislation, to administer cases. Help decision makers to use the modern method to interpret legislation.
- 4.3 remind decision makers to logically explain, in decisions and other tribunal communication, how specific legislation has been interpreted and why.

5. Decision-Making and Decision Writing

Administrators should:

- 5.1 encourage and support decisions makers to take an active part in deliberations and decision-making, and show good judgment.
- 5.2 promote and make it easy for others to use a structured decision-making process to:
 - identify issues,
 - extract legal tests from legislation,
 - sort evidence by test,
 - weigh evidence to find facts on each test,
 - decide based on facts found on each test, and
 - reach a conclusion.
- 5.3 remind decision makers to explain their decision or conclusion or make their submission using plain language.
- 5.4 identify and account for unconscious bias that may affect impartial decision-making and decision writing.
- 5.5 when needed, write the decision on behalf of the decision makers, using the skills and values expected of decision makers.
- 5.6 deliver the decision, conclusion, or submission on time.

6. Additional Skills and Values for Administrators

Accountability and Court Performance

Administrators should collect, measure, analyze, and manage information about the tribunal's performance so they can show the public and the judiciary that it is performing well.

Budget and Fiscal Management

Administrators should ensure the tribunal has the funding, staff, and facilities to carry out its work effectively and efficiently now and in the future. They should manage the budgets and planning processes needed to do this.

Caseflow and Workflow

Administrators should ensure that the tribunal is efficient and resolving all cases fairly and on time.

Educational Development

Administrators should encourage a workplace culture that embraces learning, teaching, and training, and actively develop a system to keep decision makers up to date with new practices and legislation.

Ethics

Administrators should uphold the tribunal's ethical standards to the highest degree, to set an example for others and to show a personal commitment to the principles of citizenship and justice.

Leadership

Administrators should create, manage, or implement the tribunal's vision statement so everyone is committed to the same goals and the strategies to reach them.

Operations Management

Administrators should work to continuously improve the tribunal's day-to-day administrative processes and support staff in doing their best work.

Public Relations

Administrators should promote the tribunal and its work to a wide variety of audiences.

Public Trust and Confidence

Administrators should ensure that the tribunal is transparent and accountable to the public in all processes and proceedings, and that the work of the tribunal is carried out with integrity.

Purposes and Responsibilities of the Tribunal

Administrators should ensure that their tribunal is meeting its fundamental purpose and responsibilities.

Strategic Planning

Administrators should develop and promote a strategic vision for the tribunal. They should communicate with others inside and outside the organization to set up the processes and engage everyone to work together to reach those goals.

Tribunal Governance

Administrators should develop and ensure the tribunal is governed effectively so it can run in a consistent and predictable way.

Workforce Management

Administrators should understand the laws, legal rulings, and policies that guide the tribunal's operations and skillfully manage and motivate staff.

For Further Information

Several sources were particularly useful in writing these core competencies: the Judicial Studies Board's *Tribunal Competencies: Qualities and Abilities in Action*, the National Association for Court Management's Core Competencies (<https://nacmnet.org/who-we-are/initiatives/core-competencies/>), and the Foundation of Administrative Justice's course manuals.