

FIRMWIDE CORE COMPETENCIES

INTRODUCTION

Attached are Vinson & Elkins L.L.P.'s Firmwide Core Competencies. The overriding purpose of the competencies is to promote the development and retention of attorneys who reflect the Firm's commitment to excellence, professionalism, and diversity, who meet and exceed the needs of our clients, who sustain the Firm's culture, and who enhance its future performance. These competencies express the skills and abilities the Firm expects all of its attorneys to acquire as they develop. The competencies are divided into four levels. Level 1 establishes the skills and abilities V&E attorneys generally should attain by the end of their first year at the Firm. Level 2 sets forth the skills and abilities attorneys generally should attain by the end of their third year of practice. Level 3 includes the skills and abilities attorneys generally should attain by the end of their fifth year of practice. Level 4 sets forth the skills and abilities attorneys generally should attain by the end of their seventh year of practice.

We anticipate that all of the sections at the Firm will develop additional core competencies that are specific to that section's practice area, setting forth the skills, abilities, and experiences expected of attorneys practicing in that section. Together with the sections' core competencies, these Firm core competencies will provide a framework for evaluating associates, for developing and planning training programs, and for facilitating each attorney's ability to seek out the experiences necessary to develop the expected competencies.

Success at the Firm is not dependent on mastery of all core competencies by all attorneys, as we recognize that the Firm's strength is in part a result of the diversity of the talents of its professionals. Moreover, these core competencies should not be considered a checklist, the attainment of which will ensure success. Rather these core competencies are guideposts along the road of development for associates that can assist the associates and Section Heads in the measurement and planning of an associate's development. As associates move through their careers, they are expected to assume more responsibility for their own success and development at the Firm. This responsibility includes being familiar with the core competencies that the associate should be developing, and seeking out work assignments, pro bono engagements, and other opportunities that will allow the associate to develop those competencies.

Note: Office administrative partners in foreign offices should exercise discretion in applying these standards appropriately to lawyers qualified in non-US jurisdictions.

FIRMWIDE CORE COMPETENCIES

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES
Ethics and Professionalism Written Communication Oral Communication Research and Analysis Advocacy/Negotiation
WORK ETHIC
Work Management Initiative and Commitment
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
Teamwork, Cooperation, and Delegation Tact and Diplomacy
CLIENT RELATIONS
Relationship Management Business Development Billing and Timekeeping
FIRM ACTIVITIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Recruiting Professional Development Pro Bono and Community Involvement Mentoring and Retention

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

	Ethics and Professionalism
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is alert to and follows conflicts procedures. • Understands and follows Firm policies and bar disciplinary rules. • Understands resources available at the Firm to resolve ethics issues. • Understands that the Firm places ethics first. • Is able to identify risks involved in alternative courses of action.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Has basic understanding of issues related to impaired lawyers. • Is able to identify and evaluate risks involved in alternative courses of action and to recommend appropriate course of action to supervising lawyers.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Subject to all ethical standards, is able to recognize conflicts of interest under applicable professional standards and other issues that could be viewed as a conflict of interest by an existing client and effectively discuss and resolve such matter with the client. • Fosters Firm culture that places ethics first. • Is able to recognize and take appropriate action regarding impaired lawyers. • Is able to make preliminary decisions and recommendations on difficult ethical issues. • Is able to recommend course of action based upon evaluation of the relevant facts, issues, and risks, and to advocate for recommendation and to demonstrate how recommendation will achieve desired objectives.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Is able to properly resolve ethical, business, and issue conflicts. • Is able to evaluate the relevant facts, issues, and risks; to distinguish among various options; and to prepare and execute effective strategies to achieve the desired objectives, taking into account relative risks of alternative courses of actions and probability of accomplishing desired objectives.

	Written Communication
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares thoughtful, high quality written communications, including correspondence, pleadings, legal memoranda, transactional documents, and/or CLE or seminar presentations that exhibit careful preparation and attention to detail, for review by supervising lawyer. • Proofreads accurately, with close attention to detail.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Written work product is clear and concise and requires few modifications. • Effectively communicates in written work product.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Takes primary responsibility for correspondence, pleadings, legal memoranda, or transactional documents, with minimal review by supervising lawyer. • Effectively collaborates on larger written projects with other associates and partners.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Takes supervisory responsibility for reviewing and editing less experienced lawyers' written work product.

	Oral Communication
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses views, advice, and positions effectively and appropriately on straightforward matters both within and outside the Firm.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Effectively and appropriately advocates positions orally within the Firm on complex matters.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Effectively and appropriately advocates positions orally on complex and sensitive matters both within and outside the Firm. • Demonstrates effective oral presentation skills for discrete topics and issues. • Advocates capably on behalf of position and clients both within and outside the Firm.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Demonstrates effective oral presentation skills for complex and sensitive topics and issues. • Oral communications instill confidence in client in associate's ability to persuasively and effectively represent the client's interests.

	Research and Analysis
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to identify relevant issues and facts and to locate relevant authority or precedent and to apply that authority or precedent properly to the facts presented. • Demonstrates thoughtfulness, care, and precision.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Is able to understand and analyze complex fact patterns and legal concepts and to identify additional relevant issues that need to be addressed. • Is able to generate practical ideas and solutions to address issues presented and to communicate ideas and solutions to supervising attorney. • Is able to complete tasks efficiently recognizing appropriateness of time and costs.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Is able to effectively manage fact-finding and to delegate research to other lawyers, giving clear, organized assignments. • Is able to handle the role of organizing and synthesizing work, including the work of others, into a complete thoughtful analysis, and to provide practical advice to clients based on analysis. • Is able to evaluate and prioritize alternative courses of action based on research and analysis.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate analyses prepared by others and to develop advice and solutions. • Demonstrates the ability to communicate advice and solutions clearly to clients and others.

	Advocacy/Negotiation
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively advocates positions, conclusions, and recommendations to supervising attorneys.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Displays an understanding of fundamental advocacy and negotiating principles and begins to apply these principles toward achieving client objectives.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Demonstrates in client engagements the ability to (1) ascertain the goals and objectives of the client, (2) prepare for negotiations including a thorough comprehension of the technical requirements and merits of each position, and (3) adopt an appropriate advocacy/negotiating style in response to the issues and personalities involved. • Displays creativity in reaching solutions that accomplish client objectives.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Demonstrates a range of advocacy/negotiating skills and strategies and applies them so to obtain optimal results for client.

WORK ETHIC

	Work Management
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to adapt to changing situations. • Completes assignments effectively and on time.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Is able to work effectively under pressure, maintaining a professional demeanor. • Develops efficient work practices, including appropriate use of Firm resources and leveraging of other experiences. • Is able to handle multiple conflicting deadlines.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Is able to anticipate periods of conflict between multiple projects or clients and to effectively resolve conflict. • Is able to assume responsibility for managing others to meet conflicting deadlines for all or a significant part of engagements. • Demonstrates the ability to implement alternate strategies quickly and smoothly to meet client demands.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Is able to supervise the marshalling of resources for completion of significant projects. • Demonstrates the ability to anticipate changing circumstances and quickly implement alternative strategies. • Is able to manage project conflicts with calm, professional demeanor that instills in clients confidence in the Firm's resources.

	Initiative and Commitment
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates initiative and personal responsibility necessary to develop successfully. • Displays willingness to make commitments necessary to complete assignments on time and to acquire skills to develop as an attorney.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Seeks assignments that will enhance the associate's professional development. • Displays ability and efforts to develop professional and personal relationships within the Firm necessary for successful development.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Displays personal responsibility for meeting client's service expectations. • Demonstrates ability and willingness to rally others to meeting the tasks at hand. • Shows initiative in anticipating needs and solving problems.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Provides leadership and example to other attorneys to assist in meeting the Firm's mission.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

	Teamwork, Cooperation, and Delegation
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates willingness and ability to work effectively with others to address client and Firm needs. • Places best interest of Firm ahead of personal advancement at the Firm or of section interests. • Appropriately utilizes the Firm's staff and resources.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Is able to recognize issues independently; seeks and accepts additional responsibility to resolve those issues. • Uses appropriate personnel management techniques.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Seeks and is able to accept leadership responsibilities on significant projects. • Effectively delegates and supervises tasks to other associates. • Identifies tasks more appropriately done by others within the Firm, and clearly articulates the nature of and expectations associated with the particular task.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Seeks opportunities and demonstrates ability to fulfill leadership role on major projects and to handle all aspects of project management without supervision.

Interpersonal Skills	Tact and Diplomacy
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacts appropriately with Firm attorneys, staff, and clients, treating all persons with the highest level of respect. • Understands and values the contributions of the Firm's administrative staff.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Interacts appropriately with court personnel, opposing counsel, and others outside the Firm, treating all persons with the highest level of respect.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Is able to criticize or disagree with positions taken by peers and other associates in a constructive, tactful manner. • Is able to criticize or disagree with positions taken by clients and partners in a constructive, tactful manner.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Demonstrates willingness and ability to instruct and train other associates in appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts.

CLIENT RELATIONS

	Relationship Management
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses interactions between clients and more senior attorneys to define or to modify the scope of work and to deliver advice or other work product to clients.• With supervision, interacts appropriately with clients to obtain information or respond to specific client inquiries.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates Level 1 competencies.• Learns clients' business and legal issues.• Keeps supervising attorney and, if appropriate, client apprised of developments.• With supervision, is able to participate in defining or modifying scope of work with clients and in delivering advice or other work product to clients.• Takes the initiative to develop personal relationships with client personnel.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates Level 2 competencies.• Is able to act independently to define tasks and to deliver advice and work product to clients, consistent with an increasing awareness of the client's needs, of the time or Firm resources required, and of ethical responsibilities and limits.• Assumes more primary client contact and personal responsibility for client development and retention.• Becomes an integral part of client service teams.

Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates Level 3 competencies.• Subject to and consistent with the Firm's procedures and guidelines for new matter intake, is able to accept responsibility for defining with clients the scope of work to be undertaken, to establish fee arrangements and other terms of engagement with clients, and to make proper decisions to accept or reject cases or matters, consistent with the Firm's resources and standards for excellence, and with all ethical limitations.• Instills respect and confidence of clients in the Firm.• Demonstrates ability to identify and to anticipate client needs for services of our Firm and to seek retention by client.• Demonstrates ability to retain clients entrusted to associate.• Seeks to expand Firm relationship with client through delegation and introduction of other attorneys and practice groups.
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	Business Development
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a familiarity with industries and clients served in the associate's practice area, including a familiarity with the areas in which clients have specific needs for legal support.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Gains knowledge regarding the individual needs of clients. • Develops strong client relationships and is responsive to the legal requirements of each client. • Displays a willingness to participate in social and business activities that enhance client relationships.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Demonstrates growing business development skills and an ability to establish working relationships with clients, including assisting clients in accessing Firm resources. • Supports group client development efforts, including assisting in the preparation of business development materials and participating in client business presentations.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Develops working relationships with clients so that clients call the associate directly. • Actively seeks publication or speaking opportunities or involvement in industry, community, or civic groups that could present development opportunities. • Identifies and shares cross-selling opportunities.

	Billing and Timekeeping
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately and timely reports client and Firm time in compliance with the Firm's reporting deadlines, Time Reporting Guidelines, and particular time reporting requirements imposed by various clients on whose files associate works. • Uses time effectively to ensure that clients are provided the best value for dollars spent on legal services.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Assists the billing attorney, as required, by reviewing client invoices to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of all time entries. • With respect to clients for whom associate has billing responsibility, ensures that invoices are properly and accurately prepared, timely sent to the client, and timely paid. • Establishes lines of communication with clients to ensure that clients understand the value and billings of services from the Firm and to provide a procedure for addressing billing inquiries or issues.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies.

FIRM ACTIVITIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

	Recruiting
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participates in section and Firm recruiting activities, including interaction with interviewees and summer associates.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates Level 1 competencies.• Is able to evaluate critically prospective candidates and to articulate recommendation regarding hiring.• Is able to communicate the Firm's values to recruiting prospects and to describe Firm's business and its practice in areas outside that of the associate.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates Level 2 competencies.• Is able to identify talented recruiting prospects.• Is able to develop close, professional relationships with recruits and persuade them to join the Firm.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates Level 3 competencies.• Is able to communicate the Firm's prospects, mission, and culture to recruiting prospects.

	Professional Development
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends all mandatory Firm CLE and mandatory IT and administrative training programs appropriate to practice area as well as other programs relevant to practice area.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Uses CLE or other sources to supplement knowledge of intended practice areas as necessary. • Shows willingness to undertake Firm committee tasks/assignments. • Willing to assist in speaking and/or writing engagements for professional associations.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Seeks areas of expertise within practice area and develops knowledge and experience in such area.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Actively participates in Firm committee activities and/or other professional development activities, such as giving in-house or outside CLE programs or writing articles or providing legal updates.

	Pro Bono and Community Involvement
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is aware of and follows the Firm's policies and meets professional responsibilities with respect to pro bono work. • Is aware of and upholds the Firm's image within community.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Participates in Firm-sponsored pro bono or community activities.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Seeks out involvement in pro bono or community activities that enhance the Firm's reputation.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Seeks out leadership role in community activities that enhance the Firm's reputation. • Provides leadership and example within the Firm of pro bono or community involvement.

	Mentoring and Retention
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is familiar with the Firm's procedures and practices and is able to assist new personnel as they acclimate to a new work environment.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 1 competencies. • Actively shares information with newer associates to enhance and facilitate their development as productive and efficient attorneys.
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 2 competencies. • Becomes a resource and sounding board for younger associates regarding practice area skills, research and legal analysis, and professional development. • Acknowledges and accepts responsibility for role in retention of newer associates.
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates Level 3 competencies. • Provides leadership and guidance that enhances others' professional development and encourages their success. • Seeks out opportunities to mentor more junior associates.