

# Healthcare Leadership Alliance

American College of Healthcare Executives  
American College of Physician Executives  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
Healthcare Financial Management Association

Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society  
Medical Group Management Association and its certifying body,  
the American College of Medical Practice Executives

## HLA Competency Directory User's Guide



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## Introduction

The Healthcare Leadership Alliance (HLA) has created the HLA Competency Directory, an interactive tool to ensure that future healthcare leaders have the training and expertise they need to continue meeting the challenges of managing the nation's healthcare organizations. HLA is comprised of the nation's premier professional societies representing more than 100,000 members across the healthcare management disciplines.

The HLA Competency Directory is a landmark effort to identify competencies that are important across diverse professional roles within healthcare management. Three hundred competencies are categorized under five major domains:

- leadership;
- communications and relationship management;
- professionalism;
- business knowledge and skills; and
- knowledge of the healthcare environment.

Two years in development, the HLA Competency Directory is based on extensive job analyses and research to validate the components. The project was undertaken by the HLA member organizations to ensure that healthcare leaders are prepared for the future challenges they will face, and to determine the commonalities and distinctions in credentialing and professional certification among the various associations.

The directory will be used by HLA member organizations to further enhance their certification and continuing education programs, as well as to advise their members regarding needed skills for professional development.

The HLA Competency Directory also will be used by university educators in health administration to design curriculum, as well as by other professionals in the health management field, such as human resources professionals, who may use it to better define the requirements for management positions.

The HLLA Competency Directory is a searchable reference tool structured around a classification system that allows the users to filter and sort information by domain, competency, skill area, management specialty and key words. This provides a relational database by which the user can look at a complex array of information in meaningful ways.

The Healthcare Leadership Alliance is comprised of the following organizations:

- American College of Healthcare Executives;
- American College of Physician Executives;
- American Organization of Nurse Executives;
- Healthcare Financial Management Association;
- Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society; and
- Medical Group Management Association and its certifying body, the American College of Medical Practice Executives.

The American College of Physician Executives did not participate in the HLA Competency Directory.

## HLA Competency Directory Content by Classification Variable<sup>1</sup>

The organizing principle for the development of the Excel-based HLA Competency Directory was the creation of a classification system that permits users to filter the information by one or more classification variables, thus providing a flexible way to view information in meaningful ways. The structure of the directory is described below.

### Domain (Column A)

The definitions of each domain are provided, along with the number of competencies within each domain by total number, number of core competencies and number of specialty competencies:

Domain	Number		
	Total	Core	Specialty
Domain 1: Communication and Relationship Management (The ability to communicate clearly and concisely with internal and external customers, establish and maintain relationships, and facilitate constructive interactions with individuals and groups.)	25	22	3
Domain 2: Leadership (The ability to inspire individual and organizational excellence, create a shared vision and successfully manage change to attain the organization's strategic ends and successful performance.)	24	23	1
Domain 3: Professionalism (The ability to align personal and organizational conduct with ethical and professional standards that include a responsibility to the patient and community, a service orientation, and a commitment to lifelong learning and improvement.)	24	23	1
Domain 4: Knowledge of the Healthcare Environment (The understanding of the healthcare system and the environment in which healthcare managers and providers function.)	22	20	2
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills (The ability to apply business principles, including systems thinking, to the health care environment.)	36	33	3
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: A. Financial Management [moved description up one row]	35	18	17
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: B. Human Resources	24	16	8
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: C. Organizational Dynamics and Governance	18	11	7
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: D. Strategic Planning and Marketing	21	17	4
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: E. Information Management	36	24	12
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: F. Risk Management	18	15	3
Domain 5: Business Knowledge and Skills: G. Quality Improvement	17	10	7
Total	300	232	68

<sup>1</sup> The Classification Variables are listed across Row 2 of the Competency Directory.

### Knowledge/Skill (Column B)

This column indicates whether the competency is a knowledge (the understanding needed to carry out professional responsibilities) or skill (activities performed as part of one's work responsibilities). There are 139 knowledge competencies and 161 skill competencies.

### Competency (Column C)

This column lists all the competencies in the directory. There are 300 competencies contained in the directory.

### Skill Area (Column D)

This column provides action verbs that describe each skill and are derived from the definitions of each domain. As such, it provides a summary of the skill areas covered in the directory. There are 16 skill area descriptors:

Skill Area	
• Advocate	• Learn throughout life
• Analyze	• Manage
• Be accountable	• Negotiate
• Communicate	• Promote
• Develop	• Provide service
• Execute	• Research
• Facilitate	• Think strategically
• Integrate	• Train

### Key Words (Column E)

This column provides 32 key words that describe both the knowledge and skills contained in the directory. Key words summarize the topic areas covered in the competencies. Topic areas may cross domains. Therefore, the directory user can view the competencies from the perspective of topics covered in the directory. Key words can be used by themselves to filter the competencies or they can be used in combination with a skill area and/or domain and/or competency to filter the information. The key words are:

Key Words	
Accounting	Budgets
Contracts	Culture
Data	Decision making
Ethics	External factors
External relations	Groups, teams
Interpersonal relations	Methods, models
Needs	Organization
Outcomes	Patient, families, community
Physicians	Planning
Policies, procedures	Presentations
Problem solving	Proposals
Regulation	Reimbursement
Resources	Risk
Self	Staff
Standards	Systems
Technology	Vision, goals

### **Core/Specialty (Column F)**

This column designates whether the competency is a core competency or a specialty competency. A core competency has been identified as important to all health management professionals in healthcare fields represented by the HLA organizations. A specialty competency has been identified as important to some but not all professionals. There are 231 core competencies, 68 specialty competencies and one competency that has not been identified as core or specialty, for a total of 300.

### **Summary of Competencies by Core and Specialty (Columns G to K)**

The information in these columns denotes whether a competency is a core competency or a specialty competency based on its relevancy to the professionals represented by the participating HLA organizations.

## **How to Use the HLA Competency Directory Excel Filtering Tool**

With the large amount of information in the HLA Competency Directory, The Excel filtering tool provides a way to look at the data quickly and efficiently from different perspectives, such as by HLA competency domains; skill area, key words or core/specialty.

Click on an autofilter button (the downward arrow at the bottom right of each Row 3 cell in Columns A through K) for one or more options about how to look at the information.

As described by Excel:

### **Overview**

Filtering is a quick and easy way to find and work with a subset of data in a list. A filtered list displays only the rows that meet the criteria you specify for a column. Unlike Excel's sorting feature, filtering does not rearrange a list. Filtering temporarily hides rows you do not want displayed.

When Excel filters rows, you can edit, format, chart and print your list subset without rearranging or moving it.

### **Using the AutoFilter arrows**

Clicking an AutoFilter arrow displays a list of all unique, visible items in the column, including blanks (all spaces) and nonblanks. By selecting an item from a list for a specific column, you can instantly hide all rows that don't contain the selected value.

On the following page are filtering options that appear when you click on a filtering arrow:

To	Click
Display all rows	All
Display all rows that fall within the upper or lower limits you specify, either by item or percentage; for example, the amounts within the top 10 percent of sales	Top 10
Apply two criteria values within the current column, or use comparison operators other than AND (the default operator)	Custom
Display only rows that contain a blank cell in the column	Blanks
Display only rows that contain a value in the column	Non Blanks
Note: The blanks and nonblanks options are available only if the column you want to filter contains a blank cell.	

### HLA Competency Example

Click on the Skill Area autofilter arrow (Column D). A list of the Skill Areas will appear.

**Filtering by One Column:** Click on “Develop.” Each competency related to “Develop” will appear. To return to the full list, click on the autofilter button (Column D), and select “All.”

**Filtering by Two Columns:** To filter two columns, click on the Skill Area autofilter (Column D). Select “Develop.” Now, click on Key Word (Column E) and select “Culture.” Each competency related to “Develop” and “Culture” will appear. To return to the full list, click on the autofilter buttons for Column D and then on Column E (or Column E and then Column D).

**Custom Filtering:** To find specific values in rows in a list by using one or two comparison criteria for the same column, point to Filter on the Data menu, click AutoFilter, click the arrow in the column that contains the data you want to compare, and then click Custom.

- To match one criterion, click the comparison operator you want to use in the first box under “Show rows where,” and then enter the value you want to match in the box immediately to the right of the comparison operator.

Comparison operations include:

• Equals
• Does not equal
• Is greater than
• Is greater than or equal to
• Is less than
• Is less than or equal to
• Begins with
• Does not begin with
• Ends with
• Does not end with
• Contains
• Does not contain

Example: Competency (Column C). Select the “Custom” filter. Then, select “Contains” in the top left box. Then, type “environment” in the top right box. Click “OK.” All competencies with the word “environment” will appear.

- To display rows that meet two conditions, enter the comparison operator and value you want, and then click the “And” button. In the second comparison operator and value boxes, enter the operator and value you want.

Example: Competency (Column C). Select the “Custom” filter. Then, select “Contains” in the top left box. Type “compliance” in the top right box. Click on the “And” comparison button. Select “Contains” in the lower left box. Type “regulation” in the lower right box. Click “OK.” All competencies pertaining to “compliance” and “regulation” will appear. (Note: You may type “regulation” or “regulations” and competencies with either the word “regulation” or “regulations” will appear.)

- To display rows that meet either one condition or another condition, enter the comparison operator and value you want, and then click the “Or” button. In the second comparison operator and value boxes, enter the operator and value you want.

Example: Competency (Column C). Select the “Custom” filter. Then, select “Contains” in the top left box. Type “compliance” in the top right box. Then, select “Contains” in the lower left box. Type “regulation” in the lower right box. Click “OK.” All competencies pertaining to “compliance” or “regulation” will appear.

## **Printing the HLA Competency Directory**

The directory is meant to be used as an online tool. However, some individuals may want to print the entire document. The document is formatted to print Columns A through K on 8 ½” x 11” paper (landscape orientation).