

Instant Messaging Competency Levels for Students

Entry Criteria

1. Student is familiar with basic computer terminology.
2. Student has basic computer skills.
3. Student knows how to use computer peripheral devices.
4. Student is familiar with general OS use (file systems).
5. The instant messaging client is installed, configured and the user account is set up.
6. Internet is connected.
7. Student is familiar with the concept of the Internet and email.

Exit Criteria

1. Student is able to communicate with contacts using the instant messenger.
2. Student is able to exchange files using the instant messenger.
3. Student is able to manage his or her account (add contacts etc.).

Competency Levels

Level 1:

The student is familiar with the concept of instant messaging and knows that an instant messaging client can be used for this purpose.

1. Student is familiar with the concept of chatting and knows that instant messaging clients can be used for this purpose.
2. Student is aware of the benefits of using an instant messaging client.

Level 2:

The student knows how to log in and out of the instant messaging client.

1. Student is able to start the instant messaging client.
2. Student is able to log in to a pre-configured account using a user name and password.
3. Student is able to log off.
4. Student is able to exit the instant messaging client.

Level 3:

The student can manage contacts.

1. The student can add contacts to the account.
2. Student can chat with the contacts.
3. Student is able to manage the contents of a chat window (clear previous messages, add emoticons etc.).
4. Student can manage contacts (make groups etc.).
5. Student is able to authorize or reject an add request, and is aware of the consequences of accepting a new contact.

Level 4:

The student can understand and use status icons.

1. Student understands the different status icons that appear with contacts.
2. Student is able to change his or her own status as desired.

Level 5:

Student is able to use some advanced features provided by the instant messenger as well.

1. Student is able to send and receive files using the instant messaging client.
2. Student is aware that logs can be kept of chats and that this option can be turned on and off as required.
3. Student is able to adjust simple settings in the messenger as desired, e.g., sound, appearance.

Level 6

Student is able to do minor troubleshooting in case they not able to log in to their account.

1. Student can figure out if the Internet is connected or not.
2. Student can check if he or she is entering the password/user name incorrectly (e.g., caps lock may be on)

Level 7:

Student is aware of the dangers of using instant messengers and is using reasonable safety measures while chatting.

1. Student knows that they cannot be 100% sure of the identity of person they are chatting with.
2. Student knows that they should keep their password secret and not give it out to anyone.
3. Student is careful about adding new contacts.
4. Student is careful about accepting file transfers.
5. Student is careful about clicking on URLs.

Level 8:

The student is aware of basic instant messaging etiquette.

1. Student checks (using status icons) that a contact is free to chat before initiating a chat session.
2. Student sets own status according to the situation.