The CBE and PLA Playbook

Tools for Alternative Credit Programs

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How to Use the CBE and PLA Playbook

For Members Launching or Growing Full-Fledged CBE Programs

For colleges and universities launching or scaling full CBE programs (defined below), *The CBE and PLA Playbook* provides members with step-by-step guidance to determine whether launching a CBE program is the right fit for their institutions, tools to mitigate the costs and risks of launch, and resources to support continuous improvement in student screening and support.

- **Deciding Whether CBE Is Right for Your Institution, page 25**
- **Launching a CBE Program, page 39**
- **CBE Student Screening and Support, page 51**

Defining Competency-Based Education (CBE)

The predominant definition in the field for full-fledged CBE programs is that they are characterized by two elements:

1. Credit for Competencies, Not Seat Time

   CBE programs award academic credit based on mastery of clearly defined competencies, rather than on "seat time." In traditional education, time is fixed and mastery is variable. In CBE, mastery is fixed and time is variable.

2. Technology-Enabled Personalization

   In CBE programs, technology affords each student a distinct pathway through content based on what they know/don't know and where they need most support—"personalization at scale." There are two main types of personalization in CBE programs: personalized pacing and personalized content.

See page 10 of this publication for a more detailed definition of CBE and a glossary of related terms.

For Members Looking to Incorporate Personalized Learning (including PLA) Without Launching Full-Fledged CBE Programs

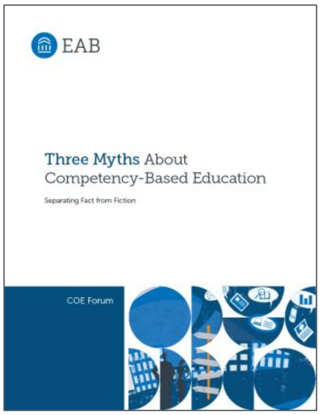
Given that most universities decide not to invest in full-scale CBE programs because of its significant costs and risks, this playbook also contains tools for members looking to serve adult learners with alternative and personalized methods that do not involve a full CBE launch.

- First, a glossary of CBE terms helps members understand the different components of CBE and methods that can be implemented without a full CBE program launch. **See page 10 for a Glossary of CBE Terms.**
- Second, success coach resources and student time management tools can be used to implement intrusive advising models and coaching for self-paced courses and programs. **See page 62 for a Success Coach Communication Manual and page 79 for a Success Coach Intervention Guide.**
- Third, this playbook gives members tools to build or expand Prior Learning Assessment programs that award credit by evaluating students' prior work, training, and other nontraditional learning experiences. **See page 86 for a Prior Learning Primer and page 91 for PLA Portfolio Process and Risk Maps.**

Beyond This Publication

Additional White Paper:

Three Myths About Competency-Based Education



Based on lessons learned from early movers in CBE, this publication helps members separate the hype about CBE from the costs and the risks. In order to help members make informed decisions about CBE launch – as well as educate campus stakeholders on the challenges inherent to the CBE business model – EAB provides in-depth analysis of the three predominant myths to CBE below:

- *Myth 1: Students and employers are demanding CBE*

In reality, students are not searching for CBE and few know what it means. Employers' interest in CBE is no different than their engagement with traditional programs.

- *Myth 2: CBE is faster and lower-cost for students*

Most students progress at an average pace in CBE and end up paying tuition similar to traditional programs.

- *Myth 3: CBE is lower-cost for institutions*

An immature vendor market and the cost of supporting self-paced learning make CBE programs more expensive to launch and to run than traditional programs.

How to Order Copies of *Three Myths About Competency-Based Education*

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CBE and PLA Playbook Table of Contents

I. CBE Playbook

CBE and PLA Playbook Table of Contents

II. PLA Playbook

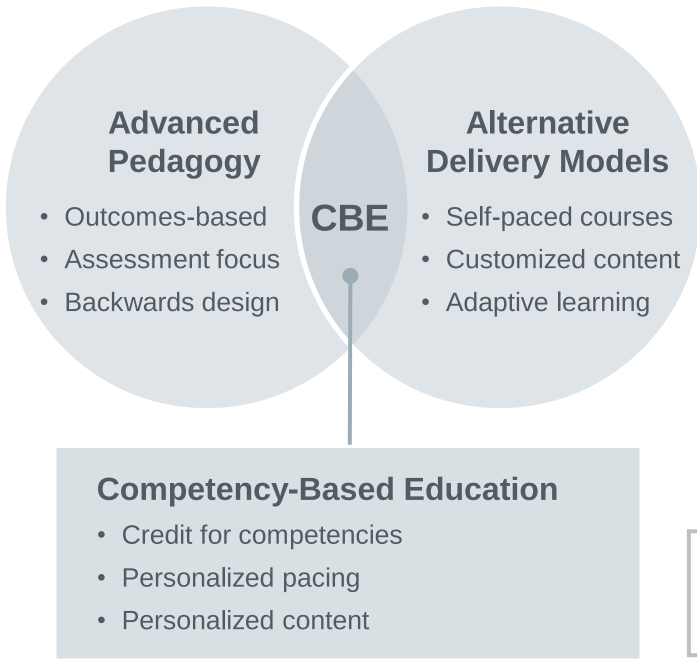
Understanding the CBE Landscape

CBE PLAYBOOK

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms

Many Definitions of CBE Across the Higher Education Landscape

Defining competency-based education (CBE) is no easy task. Members report hearing dozens of competing interpretations of the term, which can include everything from alternative pedagogies to adaptive learning technologies. To make matters more confusing, some use CBE as a synonym for any outcomes-based pedagogies. To help members understand what CBE is—and what it is not—this glossary of CBE terms first identifies and defines the terms and pedagogies most often conflated with CBE, outlines EAB's working definition of CBE, and defines the specific terms related to each component of this working definition.



For a more detailed definition of CBE, see page 12

Terms Defined in this Glossary

All of the terms in this glossary can be included as components of CBE programs, however schools can implement any of these elements without launching a full-fledged CBE program.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

Pedagogical Terms Commonly Confused with CBE

Through research conversations and an extensive review of literature across the field, EAB surfaced the main types of pedagogical terms most often confused with CBE: 1) those that focus on learning outcomes, which some schools define as competencies, and 2) personalized teaching methods. While these pedagogical elements are often part of CBE programs, schools can use these approaches without launching a CBE program.

Learning Outcomes Focus:

While arguably all well-designed courses are outcomes-based, **outcomes-based education** refers to a process whereby faculty and instructional design staff follow a standard framework for course and program design. Faculty must define and articulate specific learning outcomes, pinpoint which elements of their lesson plans match to each outcome, and create granular, rubric-based assessments to measure student learning. Systematic reviews are used to evaluate faculty teaching and curricular effectiveness, as well as to facilitate comparisons of student outcomes across different courses and over time.

Proficiency-based or **performance-based learning** is a framework typically used in K-12 education in which specific learning outcomes (mastery of particular skills or concepts) are used to determine whether a student is ready to progress to the next grade or to graduate.

Personalized Teaching Methods:

Problem-based learning asks students to learn new content that will help them solve specific problems. Students must identify the information they need to know and apply what they learn to their problem diagnosis and solution.

In **project-based learning** students demonstrate clearly defined skills by completing project work, not by taking tests. Instead of following a preset syllabus, students seek out and learn content that will help them complete course projects.

An **emporium model** replaces traditional faculty-led classrooms with individualized, interactive online or adaptive activities. Students learn new material based on their individual strengths and weaknesses and typically progress at their own pace. Recent examples of institutions using an emporium model, most commonly for developmental math, include Virginia Tech and Northern Arizona University.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

EAB's Working Definition of Competency-Based Education (CBE)

Recognizing that many interpretations of CBE exist in the higher education landscape, EAB based its working definition of CBE on the interpretation most common among thought leaders and educational technology vendors. This definition includes core elements identified in over 100 calls with colleges and universities that have either fully operational CBE programs or launch plans and has two key parts:

1

Credit for Competencies, Not Seat Time

Academic credit awarded based on mastery of clearly defined competencies, rather than on "seat time." In traditional education, time is fixed and mastery is variable. In CBE, mastery is fixed, and time is variable.

2

Technology-Enabled Personalization

Technology affords each student a distinct pathway through content based on what they know/don't know and where they need most support—"personalization at scale." Generally there are two main types of personalization in CBE programs: personalized pacing and personalized content.

Variations on Personalized Pacing

- Course must be completed in fixed time, but pacing within it varies
- Total course span personalized—it can take 5 or 15 weeks

Variations on Personalized Content

- Extra "hints" or recommended content based on areas where student is struggling
- Different content pathway (type, amount, and order) based on needs determined through assessments

The remainder of this glossary defines terms associated with each component of this definition, first focusing on how CBE programs identify and measure competencies, and next outlining the terminology and technologies involved in personalized CBE program pacing and content.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

1. Credit for Competencies, Not Seat Time

Defining Competencies

Competencies are well-defined skills students need to possess in order to demonstrate learning, show workplace readiness, and complete credential programs. Faculty can develop competencies as part of an internal curriculum design process or draw competencies from an outside source, including industry associations, employers, and government agencies. Skills can range from hard technical competencies (i.e., manufacturing skills) to soft, interpersonal competencies (i.e., verbal communication).

Member FAQ: What is the difference between competencies and learning outcomes?

While some schools use "competency" and "learning objective" interchangeably, most CBE programs distinguish between what competencies and learning outcomes measure:

Competencies		Learning Outcomes
• Reflect skills needed in workplace • Emphasize skills over academic content	**VS**	• Reflect what students learn in class • Measure mix of skills and academic content

Outside Competency Frameworks

Industry-defined competencies are nationally recognized skill sets created by industry or employer organizations in fields such as manufacturing and nursing. These frameworks can include both technical and soft skill competencies, but usually they focus on technical competencies necessary for certification and licensure.

Corporate competency frameworks offer prepackaged definitions of soft skills used across industries for employee and especially managerial performance evaluations. A third-party talent assessment provider develops these frameworks for corporate clients, along with tools and rubrics to support internal evaluation efforts. Although some CBE program competencies draw from the types of competencies featured in corporate frameworks, only rarely do higher education institutions purchase or reference corporate frameworks directly.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

1. Credit for Competencies, Not Seat Time (cont.)

Measuring Competencies

To award credit for learning, CBE programs must evaluate whether students can demonstrate competencies. CBE programs use specific terms for different types of learning evaluation.

Assessments are tests CBE programs use to determine whether students can demonstrate competencies. While traditional programs often factor in participation grades and homework in addition to tests, CBE programs evaluate learning solely through assessments, which take the form of multiple choice quizzes and exams, projects, and essays.

Some CBE programs refer to learning evaluation as **authentic assessment**, a term drawn from experiential pedagogy, to distinguish CBE assessments from tests in traditional programs. While traditional tests evaluate knowledge of course content, "authentic" assessments are intended to have real-world application to workplace skills. Typically, "authentic" assessments take the form of a hands-on project, simulation, or demonstration.

Direct assessment has two related meanings, one pedagogical and one policy-oriented. The pedagogical definition refers to the measurement of student learning through assessments, not credit hours. The policy-oriented definition refers to a specific Title IV designation created in the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 that allows schools to distribute financial aid based on this direct assessment of student learning.

For more information about Direct Assessment and federal financial aid regulations governing CBE programs, see Tool 3: Federal Financial Aid Policy FAQs

Assessment Methods

Formative assessments resemble pre-tests in traditional programs in that they measure how well students demonstrate competencies before starting a lesson. In CBE programs, formative assessment results determine what content students can skip and what they need to study, creating a customized learning pathway for each student.

Instead of following a set program schedule, students take **summative assessments** when they determine they are ready to demonstrate a competency, often with the advice of instructional faculty and academic support staff.

If students fail an assessment, they can usually re-take summative assessments. Generally students can retake an assessment two or three times, and most programs limit the number of assessment attempts to no more than three.

Rubrics are frameworks in the form of a checklist or matrix that itemize evidence that students need to show on an assessment to demonstrate a competency. Rubrics standardize the evaluation of student performance and facilitate comparisons of results between different evaluators.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

1. Credit for Competencies, Not Seat Time (cont.)

Mastering Competencies

In a competency-based **mastery model** students must show mastery on every assessment to progress and earn a credential. By contrast, in a traditional online or face-to-face program a student can earn an A on one test, an F on another, and average out to a passing grade of a C.

There are two main competing definitions of **mastery** among CBE programs. The first defines mastery as the successful demonstration of a competency. The second applies to programs that define multiple levels of successful competency demonstration. In these programs, mastery is a higher-level demonstration of a competency. In programs using this approach, students can earn either first-level competency by meeting baseline requirements or earn higher-order mastery by meeting more rigorous standards.

Member FAQ: What is the difference between competency and mastery?

There are two competing definitions of mastery among CBE programs. While most programs define mastery as the demonstration of competency, some programs define mastery as a special designation for students with advanced competency.

Mastery = Competency
- Required of all students
- Generally defined as equivalent to a B
- Programs require assessment scores around 80%-85%

VS

Mastery = Advanced Level of Competency
- Optional, but all students must earn competency
- Generally defined as equivalent to a high A
- Can also be earned with supplemental project or assignment
- Programs require assessment scores 94% or higher

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

2a. Personalized Pacing

Self-Paced Format

While CBE programs build their content around standardized competencies, the CBE delivery model emphasizes personalized pathways. Students in CBE programs set their own pace within specific program parameters.

CBE programs deliver content in an online, **asynchronous**, format. Unlike synchronous online courses, where a class of students meets and interacts with an instructor according to a set schedule, asynchronous delivery allows students to access content at any time and complete work faster or slower than their peers.

The **self-paced** format of CBE programs allow students to take more or less time learning content. Self-paced programs give student some, but not total, flexibility. In some programs, students can determine their own pace within the time frame of a traditional term (e.g., complete work as quickly or slowly as needed within a 15-week term). In other programs, students have more flexibility and can determine the total length of the course (e.g., 4 weeks or 24 weeks).

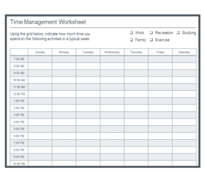
The flexible pacing of CBE programs is designed to improve student outcomes, but in practice most students need extra help setting and meeting their own deadlines.

As a result, students often create **personalized learning plans** in consultation with faculty or academic support staff when they enroll in a CBE program. In some programs, students revisit or create a new personalized learning plan at the beginning of each term or subscription period. These plans help students institute structure within the flexibility of a self-paced program and can incorporate students' short-term learning goals, long-term career goals, and skill gaps identified during an initial screening process.

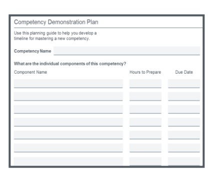
As part of the planning process, **pacing charts** are specific tools to help students set deadlines within a self-paced program. Schools create pacing charts to show when students should meet milestones and how much progress they should make within each term or subscription period.

EAB Pacing Chart and Personalized Learning Plan Tools

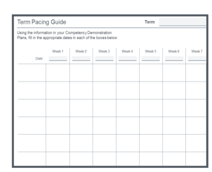
Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets



Time Management Charts



Competency Demonstration Plan



Term Pacing Charts

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

2a. Personalized Pacing (cont.)

Unbundled Faculty Model

In a program where faculty teach traditional classes and students move at the same pace, each faculty member often plays multiple roles at the same time—course designer, lecturer, discussion leader, coach, tutor, and grader. But in self-paced CBE programs, where students learn different content at different times without the structure of a traditional class, students require individualized and intensive support to succeed. To provide this support and scale faculty resources, some programs use an **unbundled faculty model**, where different faculty members create content, guide students through a program, and evaluate student work.

The CBE Unbundled Faculty Model

Unbundled Faculty Roles

The extent of faculty unbundling varies from school to school. While some larger CBE programs have different faculty serving in each function, other schools unbundle some, but not all, faculty roles. Other variations on this model incorporate staff members such as professional advisors, instructional designers, and graduate student graders in roles traditionally played by faculty.

Content experts develop and update instructional material for a CBE program in their area of academic expertise. Content experts frequently work with instructional design staff, who advise on curriculum design and help with the technological aspects of creating modularized content online.

Success coaches (also referred to as student mentors, faculty mentors, and academic coaches) are students' main point of contact throughout a CBE program. Used by the majority of operational CBE programs, success coaches meet with students on a weekly basis via phone, email, or Skype. Success coach conversations typically cover assessment preparation, academic challenges, and balancing school with work and life demands.

Additional Success Coach Resources:

- ✓ Tool 12: Success Coach Communication Manual
- ✓ Tool 14: Success Coach Intervention Guide

Subject matter tutors give students just-in-time support for specific content areas. These faculty members answer questions from students struggling with the material and provide more intensive one-on-one support on the recommendation of success coaches to help students prepare for assessments.

Evaluators (also called reviewers or assessors) evaluate student performance on assessments and provide written feedback, usually within a short time frame of 24 to 48 hours. As with graders in a traditional program, evaluator roles can be filled by graduate students or specially trained staff members.

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 1: Glossary of CBE Terms (cont.)

2b. Personalized Content

CBE programs provide students with personalized content pathways in several different ways. The most common method customizes content for students based on assessment results. Students can “test out” of content they already know and spend more time focusing on new or difficult material. In the past few years, new adaptive learning vendors have developed technology that creates customized content for students that does not depend solely on test results, but rather responds to students’ individual needs as they learn.

Adaptive Learning Tech

Adaptive learning technologies customize the amount and type of online content students see based on how they answer questions embedded within lessons or how they interact with the learning material itself. Due to a relatively immature vendor market and the high cost of implementation, it is still rare for CBE programs to use adaptive platforms. Schools that do invest in adaptive technology typically use it to enrich traditional remedial or introductory-level courses using emporium-style learning laboratories or to add customized homework assignments.

EAB analysis of the educational technology landscape identified two main types of adaptive learning technology:

1. Rule-based adaptive earning acts as a next-step recommendation engine and is the simpler of the two. It uses student responses to questions to create branching learning paths based on if/then logic. Students see different required or recommended pathways based on their performance, with different pathways for struggling, average, and advanced students.

2. Algorithm-based adaptive learning responds to students in real time as they work through content, calculating new sequences of material dynamically. While rule-based adaptive technology follows if/then logic, algorithm-based adaptive technology also incorporates variables that calculate how much time students spend on task, the amount of reading material students access, which videos they watch, and what links they click. These formulations create unique content pathways for each learner that are continually updated.

Two Main Types of Adaptive Learning Technology

Rule-Based		Algorithm-Based
• Branched learning paths • Follows if/then logic • Different pathways for struggling learners	VS	• Content sequence created dynamically • Unique pathway for every learner

See Appendix A, on page 81, for links to additional resources about adaptive technology and the adaptive learning vendor landscape

Source: EAB Interviews and analysis

Tool 2: Comparison Chart of Key CBE Programs

To provide a better sense of fully operational programs in the CBE landscape, the table below lists key features of a select list of fully operational CBE programs. Members can use this chart to quickly compare credential type and program fields offered, tuition cost, and student enrollments of major CBE programs. Organized by launch date from the longest-running program to the newest, each description includes a web link for members interested in learning more information about specific programs.

Institution	Key Information	
Western Governors University www.wgu.edu	Launch Date	January 1997
	Credential Type	• Bachelor’s • Master’s • Teacher Licensure
	Program Field	• Education • Business • Nursing • Information Technology
	Tuition	• Averages $3,000/ 6-month subscription, plus fees
	Students Enrolled	• 50,000+
	Website	• http://www.wgu.edu
College for America at Southern New Hampshire University	Launch Date	January 2013
	Credential Type	• Associate’s • Bachelor’s
	Program Field	• Business • Communications • Health Care Management
	Tuition	• $2,500/ year, all-inclusive subscription
	Students Enrolled	• 1,000+ students
	Website	• http://collegeforamerica.org
Northern Arizona University	Launch Date	May 2013
	Credential Type	• Bachelor’s
	Program Field	• Business • Information Technology • Liberal Arts
	Tuition	• $2,500/ 6-month all-inclusive subscription
	Students Enrolled	• ~400 students
	Website	• http://pl.nau.edu

Source: collegeforamerica.org/about/entry/faq; McManimon, Michelle, “NAU Personalized Learning,” *Arizona Daily Sun*, 2014; nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator; pl.nau.edu; wgu.edu.edu; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 2: Comparison Chart of Key CBE Programs (cont.)

Institution	Key Information	
Capella University	Launch Date	October 2013
	Credential Type	• Certificates • Bachelor’s • Master’s
	Program Field	• Business • Information Technology • Psychology
	Tuition	• $2,200/quarter for up to 4 courses
	Students Enrolled	• *Data not publicly available*
	Website	• http://www.capella.edu/flexpath-self-paced-learning
UW flexible option UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM	Launch Date	January 2014
	Credential Type	• Certificates • Associate’s • Bachelor’s
	Program Field	• Business • Information Technology • Nursing
	Tuition	• $2,250/3-month all-inclusive subscription - or - • $900/set of competencies
	Students Enrolled	• ~250 students (as of January 2014)
	Website	• http://flex.wisconsin.edu
BRANDMAN University CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM	Launch Date	Summer 2014
	Credential Type	• Bachelor’s
	Program Field	• Business
	Cost	• $5,400/year, all-inclusive subscription
	Students Enrolled	• 44 students (initial cohort)
	Website	• https://www.brandman.edu/cbeducation

Source: brandman.edu/cbeducation; capella.edu/flexpath-self-paced-learning; flex.wisconsin.edu; Fain, Paul, “Competency-Based Bachelor’s from Brandman Could Be Glimpse of The Future,” *Inside Higher Education,* 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 3: Federal Financial Aid Policy FAQs

Members considering CBE programs face a confusing patchwork of federal regulations governing credit hours and financial aid. The FAQs below and supplemental links to more information provide a primer on federal policies and common regulatory challenges institutions face when considering or implementing competency-based education programs.

Credit Hours vs. Competencies

What is the difference between credit hours and competencies?

Credit hours are intended to represent the amount of time students spend engaged in educational activities. For example, one credit hour roughly equates to three hours of coursework per week and a three-credit-hour course should require nine hours of course work every week.

Competencies, by contrast, represent what students know or can do. Unlike credit hours, competencies are not attached to any time-based unit. One student could master a competency in three hours, while another may require twelve.

Federal Definition of the Credit Hour[1]

An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that is not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class work for each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester…or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

Is it possible to award financial aid without using credit hours?

With very few exceptions, universities must use credit hours to comply with federal financial aid regulations. Federal financial aid programs use the number of credit hours students take to determine how much aid they receive. Additionally, only students who make consistent progress toward their degree, as measured by the number of credit hours they complete, can remain eligible for federal financial aid.

Institutions that apply for and receive a special status from the Department of Education called Direct Assessment can award students credit for competencies instead of credit hours. However, even programs with Direct Assessment status must articulate how competencies equate to standard credit hours to calculate students' federal enrollment status and to verify satisfactory academic progress.

For more about federal financial aid policies for CBE programs

Porter, Stephen R., "Competency-Based Education and Federal Student Aid," Department of Leadership, Policy, and Adult & Higher Education, North Carolina State University, http://www.thehatchergroup.com/wp-content/uploads/Competency-Based-Education-and-Federal-Student-Aid.pdf

1) Federal Student Aid Handbook, Volume 2, Chapter 2, Page. 27. http://goo.gl/Jhjrqr.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 3: Federal Financial Aid Policy FAQs (cont.)

Direct Assessment

What is Direct Assessment?

The Department of Education defines Direct Assessment as an educational program that measures student learning using summative assessments, rather than credit or clock hours. Although it's common to hear the terms "Direct Assessment" and "competency-based" used interchangeably, in the context of higher education policy, Direct Assessment refers to a specific Title IV designation created in the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005.

Is Direct Assessment necessary for CBE programs?

No. Although all Direct Assessment programs are competency-based, not all competency-based programs have Direct Assessment status. In fact, the majority of competency-based programs use a traditional credit hour framework to measure student academic progress. Only a select few CBE programs have Direct Assessment status, including College for America, Capella FlexPath, UW-Flex, and Brandman's Competency-Based Bachelor of Business Administration.

What are the limitations of Direct Assessment?

In theory, Direct Assessment allows institutions to create new curricula untethered from time-based measures of learning. In practice, however, Direct Assessment programs face many of the same limitations as credit-hour programs.

Although Direct Assessment programs measure student learning through competencies, these programs must continue to maintain credit-hour equivalencies for each competency, and students must comply with the same pace requirements as their peers in credit hour-based programs.

Programs that accept financial aid under the Direct Assessment designation may not award financial aid for:

- Remedial coursework
- Sub-degree programs for elementary or secondary teachers
- Programs at foreign schools
- Preparatory coursework

Additionally, to qualify for Direct Assessment, programs may not include any components or courses that rely on credit- or clock-hour measures. This restriction disqualifies programs in fields where licensing bodies require a minimum number of instructional or training clock hours as a condition for certification.

Federal guidance about applying for and implementing Direct Assessment:

Department of Education, Dear Colleague Letter, "Applying for Title IV Eligibility for Direct Assessment (Competency-Based) Programs," Mar 2013, http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1310.html

Department of Education, Dear Colleague Letter, "Competency-Based Education Programs—Questions and Answers," Dec 2014, http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1423.html

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 3: Federal Financial Aid Policy FAQs (cont.)

CBE Financial Aid Without Direct Assessment

What are the challenges of awarding financial aid in CBE programs?

Federal aid programs award aid in proportion to the amount of time a student spends each week engaged in academic activity. Because competency-based education allows students to move at their own pace, students can take different amounts of time to complete the same material. This makes it difficult to determine how much aid students in competency-based programs should receive based on their enrollment status and their academic progress.

What makes it difficult to determine enrollment status in CBE programs?

As constructed, enrollment status assumes each course requires a minimum number of hours to complete. This allows programs to calculate the number of hours each student spends on coursework each week and to use that number to determine each student's level of aid. Competency-based programs do not require students to spend a minimum number of hours to master a competency.

What is Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)?

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is a measure that the Department of Education uses to ensure that students who receive financial aid are making regular progress toward their degree. A student must meet SAP criteria in terms of both pace and performance to remain eligible for financial aid.

Two Measurements of Satisfactory Academic Progress

1. **Pace**: To demonstrate satisfactory pace, a student must remain on track to finish a program within 150% of the program's published length. For example, if a program is estimated to take four years, then a student must complete enough credits each term to graduate within at least six years.

2. **Performance**: To demonstrate satisfactory performance, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least a C or its equivalent.

How do SAP requirements limit the flexibility of CBE programs?

SAP requires students to remain on track to finish their academic program within 150% of the program's published length. To ensure students satisfy this requirement, institutions must impose minimum limits on the number of competencies a student attempts and completes each term.

SAP also requires that institutions calculate a GPA equivalent for every student. To meet the conditions of SAP, students must maintain a GPA of at least a C or better. To do so, institutions must create a system to convert the number of competencies attempted and completed into a grade point average.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 3: Federal Financial Aid Policy FAQs (cont.)

Experimental Sites

What are Experimental Sites?

The Department of Education created three new “experimental site” designations in the summer of 2014 that allow schools to create innovative or experimental new programs. These designations were developed in response to widespread dissatisfaction with restrictive federal aid policies and in support of new federal initiatives to encourage experimentation with alternative delivery models,

What types of programs can qualify as Experimental Sites?

Institutions can apply for waivers for three different types of experimental sites. These waivers allow schools to:

1. Offer curricula that mix Direct Assessment and credit hour-based courses
2. Provide financial aid funding for prior learning assessment (PLA)
3. Award aid on alternative funding schedules not tied to regular academic payment periods

Additional information about experimental site waivers

Department of Education, “Invitation to Participate in the Experimental Sites Initiative,” Federal register Volume 79, Number 147, Jul 2014, http://ifap.ed.gov/fregisters/FR073114ExperimentalSites.html

For guidance on applying for experimental site status see:

Public Agenda, “Experimental Sites Q&A: Competency-Based Education,” Sep 2014, http://www.cbenetwork.org/news-and-insights/experimental-sites-qa-competency-based-education/

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

EAB

Deciding Whether CBE Is Right for Your Institution

CBE PLAYBOOK

Tool 4: CBE Readiness Diagnostic

Institutions deciding whether to invest in CBE must first assess the risk of launching a new program. Determining the availability of existing institutional resources and capabilities that would support a CBE program launch is the first step in this process. This diagnostic tool helps institutions assess whether their available funding, existing infrastructure, experience with different instructional delivery models, and campus culture will support or hinder the development of a new CBE program. The categories and readiness levels defined in this diagnostic are based on conversations with operational CBE programs as essential capabilities for success and will help members assess their own risk and readiness before launching a new CBE program.

For each category in the diagnostic, check the box next to the **one** statement that best describes your institution, adding up the points from each diagnostic page. Total your points at the end of the diagnostic and review the scoring guide for an assessment of your institution's CBE readiness.

Experience Delivering Online Education

Which ONE statement best describes your institution's experience with delivering online education?	**Best Describes Institution**	**Points**
We offer very few or no online education options for our students.	☐	0
In the past few years we have launched one or more online programs.	☐	1
We're experienced providers of online education, operating multiple programs for more than three years.	☐	2
We are considered leaders in online education, running multiple revenue-generating online programs for five years or more.	☐	3

Flexible Instructional Delivery

Which ONE statement best describes your institution's experience with flexible online delivery?	**Best Describes Institution**	**Points**
We offer only cohort-based traditional programs that operate according to standard academic term calendars.	☐	0
We offer some programs that feature non-standard terms or flexible start dates.	☐	1
We offer online self-paced classes.	☐	2
We offer one or more online self-paced degree or certificate programs.	☐	3

(continued)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 4: CBE Readiness Diagnostic (cont.)

Online Student Support

Which ONE statement best describes your institution's support services for online students?	Best Describes Institution	Points
We are a "no frills" institution, with very limited support services for students in either online and face-to-face programs.	☐	0
Our online programs offer some student support, but not nearly the same services that face-to-face students receive.	☐	1
Students in our online programs have access to the same level of robust student services as students in our face-to-face programs.	☐	2
In addition to offering robust support services for online students, advisors in our programs regularly conduct proactive outreach with online students.	☐	3

Tracking Student Success

Which ONE statement best describes how your institution uses learning analytics?	Best Describes Institution	Points
We aren't aware if students are struggling until they drop, fail, or withdraw from a course.	☐	0
We use an LMS for course administration purposes, but do not use LMS data to monitor and analyze student progress and engagement.	☐	1
We encourage faculty to use LMS analytics to actively monitor student progress and identify struggling students.	☐	2
We use an automated system to track student progress and engagement: students who fall behind trigger an automatic advising intervention.	☐	3

Assessment Orientation

Which ONE statement best describes your institution's approach to measuring learning outcomes?	Best Describes Institution	Points
We've struggled to consistently measure learning outcomes; right now our assessment efforts are just enough to meet accreditation requirements.	☐	0
Assessing learning outcomes is a priority at our institution, but learning outcomes still aren't used widely or consistently.	☐	1
Using well-defined outcomes to measure student learning is an established practice across our institution.	☐	2
Not only do we measure and track well-defined student learning outcomes, we use standardized outcomes to compare programs and student groups.	☐	3

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 4: CBE Readiness Diagnostic (cont.)

Faculty Support

Which ONE statement best describes faculty attitudes toward CBE at your institution?	Best Describes Institution	Points
Faculty at our institution fear CBE and have already spoken out against it because they think it threatens their academic freedom and role in the classroom.	☐	0
In general, faculty seem wary of CBE or any other kind of pedagogical experimentation; we will need to broach this topic carefully.	☐	1
Faculty seem receptive to learning more about CBE; If we held a CBE information session for faculty, it would be a well-attended and constructive discussion.	☐	2
We could easily identify faculty champions of CBE or a department willing to experiment with a new CBE program.	☐	3

Staff Capacity

Which ONE statement best describes the available staff capacity to support a new CBE program at your institution?	Best Describes Institution	Points
Our staff resources are already at capacity and it's unclear when we'll be able to hire more staff.	☐	0
We would need to rely on existing staff resources to launch a CBE program, but our staff have some extra capacity.	☐	1
We would be able to hire at least one or two dedicated CBE staff members in addition to using any extra capacity of our existing staff.	☐	2
We will be able to hire needed financial aid, admissions, registrar, and general back office staff to launch a CBE program and will continue hiring as needed.	☐	3

Back Office IT Infrastructure

Which ONE statement best describes your institution's current back office IT systems?	Best Describes Institution	Points
Almost every administrative unit uses its own information system, and sharing information between these systems has been an ongoing challenge.	☐	0
We have well-integrated administrative systems that facilitate smooth reporting and information-sharing between units.	☐	1
Our administrative systems are both well-integrated and flexible enough to configure for customized needs.	☐	2
We have flexible, well-integrated administrative systems and we've been able to implement automated solutions for non-standard reporting needs in the past.	☐	3

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 4: CBE Readiness Diagnostic (cont.)

Funding Availability *(worth double points)*

Which ONE statement best describes your institution's projected access to start-up and ongoing funding for a CBE program?	Best Describes Institution	Points
There is no external funding available for start-up costs; we will rely on limited existing resources for launch and need CBE to generate new revenue right away.	☐	0
External funding will supplement our internal resources for CBE start-up costs, but we will depend on program revenue to support all ongoing operational costs.	☐	2
We have external and internal funding for launch, and will can afford to "carry" the additional cost of running a new CBE program for a year.	☐	4
We expect we will have access to sufficient funding from both external and internal sources, even if it takes several years for a CBE program to break even.	☐	6

Total Points

____

Interpreting Your Results

Add up your points from pages 26-29 and use the scoring guide below to assess your institution's CBE readiness. Please note that for any total diagnostic score or readiness level, a CBE pilot requires significant change management and investment from even the most well-prepared institutions.

Points Total	CBE Readiness
24 to 30	**Ready for CBE, but Proceed with Caution** Your institution is well-positioned to start planning for a pilot CBE program, but be advised that investing in an experimental delivery model involves risk. Develop a thorough business plan, estimate costs, and prepare a robust planning timeline before investing.
16 to 23	**Potentially Ready for CBE, but Not for the Next 3 to 5 Years** Your institution has some characteristics that could support a new CBE program, but it will be essential to build needed infrastructure and develop support on campus first, a process that can take at least several years.
8 to 15	**Not Yet Ready, Consider Personalized Learning Alternatives** Your institution may not have sufficient capabilities of resources to support a new CBE program. Explore strategies to deliver personalized learning through other methods, such as project-based learning or a small-scale PLA program.
0 to 7	**Far from Ready, CBE Poses Significant Risks** Given your institutions' existing infrastructure, experience with new delivery models, and culture, CBE is not the right choice to meet your goals. A CBE investment could involve significant financial losses.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 5: CBE Program Development Road Map

The development and launch of any new degree program necessitates careful advance planning and significant effort from faculty and staff. CBE adds new complexity to the process, requiring new technologies and extra content development steps. All too often institutions launching CBE programs report scrambling toward the finish line, with program development tasks left unfinished just months, or even weeks, before launch. Members need to prepare for how—and when—they will tackle CBE implementation challenges.

Despite pressure to gain an early-mover advantage, CBE development plans need to allow time for overcoming obstacles such as faculty pushback and administrative troubleshooting. This road map outlines a plan for realistic launch timing based on lessons learned from pioneering CBE programs, many of whom found implementation required up to a year longer than they expected. Each step references online resources and EAB implementation tools to help members expedite development wherever possible.

Note on road map timing: Contacts reported an average time-to-launch ranging from one to four years, depending on the program degree type. This road map outlines a planning sequence for an average two-year development time frame. The end of the roadmap lists factors that can accelerate or delay the launch of a CBE program.

	Development Steps and Timing	Description and Selected Resources
1	Evaluate Program Options and Select Degree Program *2 years before launch*	• Assess potential degree fields and types, reviewing profiles of existing CBE programs • Determine the right-fit program for your institution ✓ Web resource: CAEL profiles of CBE programs, http://www.cael.org/pdfs/2012_competencybasedprograms ✓ Tool 2: Comparison Chart of Key CBE Programs ✓ Tool 6: CBE Program Selection Guide
2	Develop Business Case and Secure Funding *18-20 months before launch*	• Estimate start-up and ongoing program costs • Make requests for internal funding and assess grant funding options • Determine term length and tuition pricing strategy • Evaluate vendor solutions for curricular design, LMS platforms, student support services, and back-office administration ✓ Tool 7: Model CBE Business Case ✓ Tool 8: CBE Vendor Quick Reference Guide
3	Solicit Faculty Buy-In *16-18 months before launch*	• Develop faculty stakeholder communications plan and messaging • Form faculty working groups for curriculum and content development • Present plans to the Faculty Senate or appropriate committees ✓ Web resource: Case study of SUNY-Empire State's faculty communication strategy, http://nextgenlearning.org/blog/innovators-next-door-empire-state-college-suny-ventures-competency-based-education

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 5: CBE Program Development Road Map (cont.)

Development Steps and Timing	Description and Selected Resources
4 Create Student Recruitment and Support Strategy *12 to 16 months before launch*	• Develop student marketing and employer outreach strategy • Identify and set recruiting metrics • Determine appropriate support structure to promote student success • Create hiring plan for success coaches and other new staff ✓ Tool 9: Sample CBE Job Descriptions ✓ Tool 10: Success Coach Investment Estimator
5 Develop Content *1 year before launch*	• Work with faculty to define competencies, seeking employer input where appropriate • Develop lesson modules and competency assessments ✓ Web resource: Case study of Texas Affordable Baccalaureate CBE design process: http://www.educause.edu/library/resources/next-gen-tools-faculty-engagement
6 Implement Program Logistics *1 year before launch*	• Execute marketing strategy and build program website • Begin student recruitment for soft launch • Configure administrative systems for self-paced programs and non-standard terms ✓ Tool 11: Student Screening Resources
7 Prepare for Soft Launch *9 months before launch*	• Finish recruiting initial student cohort for soft launch • Preview and test program content and competency assessments • Troubleshoot technical issues with learning platform • Determine whether back-office processes can be automated and if additional staff resources will be needed to complete manual processes
8 Soft Launch of Pilot Program *6 months before launch*	• Identify and resolve administrative and technical glitches • Monitor student outcomes, revising curriculum as necessary • Network with other developing and fully operational CBE programs ✓ Web resource: Competency-Based Education Network (CBEN) site with program profiles and membership information, www.cbenetwork.org

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 5: CBE Program Development Road Map (cont.)

Development Steps and Timing		Description and Selected Resources
9	Official Program Launch	• Hire and train additional admissions and student success staff to meet the needs or larger student enrollments • Collect data on student outcomes, program costs, and revenue ✓ Tool 12: Success Coach Communication Manual ✓ Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets
10	Evaluate Program Performance *6 months after launch and ongoing*	Key Questions to Consider: • Is the program meeting enrollment goals? • How do CBE student outcomes compare to traditional online students? • Does the CBE program generate revenue to sustain ongoing costs? • What additional programs would work well in a CBE format?

Degree Type and Institutional Practices Influence Time-to-Market

Strategies That Accelerate Launch	Hurdles That Delay Launch
Convert CBE program from existing degree	Creating a new degree from scratch that requires faculty committee approval
Build on existing well-defined competencies or learning outcomes	Measuring learning outcomes and defining competencies for the first time
Use systems in place for existing self-paced programs or courses	Offering self-paced instruction for the first time
Launch master's or certificate with fewer courses to develop than a bachelor's degree	Developing general education courses for a CBE bachelor's degree
Launch non-credit certificate that does not offer financial aid or need faculty approval	Needing accreditor approval

⚠ Accreditation requirements and standards vary, and in some cases policies for CBE programs have not yet been established. Please see the Appendix A for accreditor-specific resources

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 6: CBE Program Selection Guide

One of the first decisions schools piloting CBE must make is which program to offer. Often, institutions base this decision on a few key factors, such as student demand or which faculty are most likely to support CBE. While these factors are important, institutions must also consider student support needs, the size of up-front investments, and ongoing operational costs—all factors that are largely influenced by credential type.

CBE Credential Type Comparison Chart

The table below compares five different CBE credential types according to the up-front investment required and alignment with student success outcomes. Use this table – along with the discussion questions on the next page—to help guide decisions about which credential type best fits your institution's available CBE program development and student support resources.

This table rates how well each CBE credential type fits the investment and student success criteria in the left column, according to the following key:

● ◕ ◑ ◔ ○

Most conducive to CBE success → **Least** conducive to CBE success

	Non-credit Certificate (Undergrad or Grad)	For-Credit Undergrad Certificate	For-Credit Graduate Certificate	Bachelor's Completion	Full Bachelor's	Professional Master's
Requires Less Content Development	●	●	●	◑	○	◑
Short Student Completion Time	◕	◕	◕	◔	○	◑
Attracts Proven Learners	◑	◔	◕	○	◔	●
Minimal Approval Processes	●	◑	◑	○	○	◔

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 6: CBE Program Selection Guide (cont.)

Critical Questions to Ask When Choosing a New CBE Program

Determine Costs of Content Development Resources and Available Resources

1. What capacity do we have to fund faculty compensation and instructional design for new program content?
2. How much content can we develop given our available resources, and how quickly do we need to launch this program? Can we consider programs where there isn't pre-existing content to build upon, or will we need to rely on existing content to reduce faculty development time and speed time to market?
3. Which fields will allow us to draw from existing competency frameworks? Do we have the resources to define competencies and develop a framework from scratch?
4. Which of our departments have faculty who are interested in developing content and teaching for a CBE program?
5. Which of our departments have the most experience with online learning and experimentation with nontraditional pedagogies?

Assess Audience Fit

6. Do we have traditional online programs where student and employer demand is sufficient to consider converting existing program for a CBE launch?
7. What is the risk that a new CBE program will cannibalize existing enrollments of traditional programs in the same field?
8. Do potential employers of graduates in this field understand and value competencies?
9. What outreach and stakeholder education will be necessary to ensure employers understand competencies and the unique value of the new program?
10. What segments of our current online student population demonstrate the most success and are least in need of extra faculty and staff support?
11. What fields and types of programs currently offered appeal most to bachelor's degree holders?
12. What will it cost to provide additional remedial and proactive student support, and how much of our operational budget can we devote to CBE student support services?
13. If we cannot afford to provide CBE students with robust support services, how would a potential drop in retention and graduation rates affect both our accreditation status and institutional reputation?

Identify Internal and External Approval Processes

14. How much room will our program development timeline allow for faculty and regulatory approvals?
15. What is the process for faculty and curriculum committee review for different credential types, and how long will each process take?
16. What review process does our accreditor require for new CBE programs and how does the process vary by program type?

See the Appendix A, page 81, for links to accreditor-specific resources.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 7: Model CBE Business Case

Developing a detailed and exhaustive business case is critical for determining whether a new CBE program represents a sound investment for your institution and how much risk will be involved in launching a new program. Without a business case, it is easy to underestimate the costs and risks of implementation, a difficult lesson learned by a number of CBE first movers. This tool consists of a series of tables and examples that will guide users through consideration of the key factors that should inform decisions about whether or not to pilot a CBE program.

The following pages contain tables for each of the elements in a CBE business case. Fill out the tables to collect the information needed to develop a sound understanding of the costs and risks associated with new CBE programs. In each table, the first few considerations been filled in with hypothetical example responses based on lessons learned by early CBE programs. Please note these examples are not exhaustive and should be augmented by your institution's specific consideration factors. Each table includes several customizable cells for considerations not already listed, but each institution's list of factors can and should be expanded beyond the available cells in the template.

1. What assumptions about CBE do we need to test?

Assumption	Factors to Test
A new CBE program will help differentiate us from online competitors with programs in the same field	• Existing CBE programs by regional and national peer and competitor groups in program field • Student perceptions and understanding of CBE • Extent to which students perceive CBE as a differentiating factor when choosing among programs in the same field
A new CBE program will generate additional revenue from serving adult student segments who want a flexible program	• Capacity to extend recruiting reach to new adult student segments • Demand among target student segments for CBE or alternative delivery model programs • Extent of existing demand for self-paced programs among adult learners
Custom….	
Custom….	
Custom….	

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 7: Model CBE Business Case (cont.)

2. What are the projected benefits of a new CBE program?

Projected Benefits	Current Pain Points	Expectations for New CBE Program	Barriers to Meeting Expectations
Generate additional revenue from new enrollments	• Declining initial and repeat enrollments among core student segments	• Appeal to new student segments interested in more flexible online delivery options	• Students fail to differentiate between CBE and traditional online programs • Demand for flexible programs already met by competitors or existing CBE and self-paced programs
Improve retention and completion rates	• Students balancing work and family responsibilities fall behind and drop out when unable to meet rigid deadlines	• Self-paced format allows students to customize program deadlines • Students can retake assessments instead of receiving failing grade	• Flexible deadlines encourage procrastination and, ultimately, non-completion • Students repeat too many assessments and fail to progress in program
Successful CBE program innovations catalyze widespread updates to online program portfolio			
Custom….			
Custom….			
Custom….			

Additional CBE Playbook Tools to Aid in Business Case Development

✓Tool 5: CBE Program Development Road Map

✓Tool 6: CBE Program Selection Guide

✓Tool 10: Success Coach Investment Estimator

(continued)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 7: Model CBE Business Case (cont.)

3. What are the associated costs?

Faculty and Staff Considerations	Estimated Cost
Faculty content development stipends	• $5,000 per faculty member, per course or competency
Success coach salaries	• $45,000 annual salary + 4% merit increase + benefits/coach
Psychometrician to design assessments	
Instructional design staff compensation	
Additional registrar and financial aid staff	
Custom….	
Custom….	

IT and Systems Considerations	Estimated Cost
LMS plug-in purchases and systems integration	
CBE program web portal design	
Digital portfolio software	
SIS integration and configuration	
Vendor consultation (e.g., Blackboard implementation services)	
Custom….	
Custom…	

Marketing and Recruiting Considerations	Estimated Cost
Lead generation and qualification services	
Outreach for B2B or B2C partnerships	
Program website design	
Content and collateral development	
Direct email campaigns	
Custom….	
Custom….	

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

Tool 7: Model CBE Business Case (cont.)

4. What are the projected risks?

Consideration	Risk Drivers	Strategies to Mitigate Risk
Unable to automate back office processes for non-standard terms and self-paced delivery	• Administrative systems cannot be configured or customized for CBE • Manual processes for CBE students limits ability to scale program	• Small-scale soft launch with an initial cohort of 20 students or fewer will limit staff time spent on manual processes and allow for more time to develop workarounds before expanding program • Hiring additional IT and administrative support staff
Insufficient student enrollments to meet tuition revenue targets	• Students unfamiliar with competency-based programs • Marketing campaigns require specific, targeted effort to new student segments • Recruitment takes longer than anticipated	• Marketing strategy brands CBE programs using terms familiar and important to students, such as "flexible" and "affordable" • Recruitment strategy developed during early stages of program development process
Program development costs exceed budget		
Content development not completed in time for program launch		
Strong faculty resistance to CBE delays program development and incurs additional "carrying" costs		
Insufficient funds to support student success and success coach staffing		
Program does not generate sufficient revenue to sustain costs		
Students struggle in self-paced format, lowering institution's completion and retention rates		
Students fail to realize cost savings of subscription pricing and do not re-subscribe for additional terms		
CBE program cannibalizes existing online and face-to-face student enrollments		
Custom….		
Custom….		

Source: EAB interviews and analysis

EAB

Launching a CBE Program

CBE PLAYBOOK

Tool 8: CBE Vendor Quick Reference Guide

Given that CBE programs are still a relatively small and new part of the higher education landscape, members report that CBE vendors are still difficult to identify. This tool provides a snapshot of vendors marketing services to CBE programs, listing selected clients where publicly available. Please note that not every example client listed here has a specific CBE program, but may instead use a flexible delivery model or offer another type of alternative credit program.

Most vendors considered for inclusion in the following table were raised by CBE first movers during EAB research conversations. Other vendors included here advertise services specific to CBE programs. This tool is not an exhaustive list and cannot substitute for the process of scoring vendors based on the unique needs of your unit.

Vendor Product Categories

Curricular Design Services

Consulting to help scope curricula, define competencies, and develop assessments

Learning Technology Platforms

LMS platforms optimized for delivering modular, self-paced, online courses

Student Support Services

Advising or academic support services through a technology product or outsourcing solution

Administrative Services

Technology to support back-office and administrative functions in CBE programs

CBE vendor landscape least developed in **Student Support Service** and **Administrative Service** categories

Additional EAB resources to aid student service and administrative service functions in CBE:

CBE Job Descriptions

Tool 9

Communication Templates

Tool 12

Coach Intervention Guide

Tool 14

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 8: CBE Vendor Quick Reference Guide (cont.)

	Summary	Curricular Design	Learning Tech	Student Services	Admin Services
Blackboard	• LMS and content design • Used by some fully operational CBE programs *Example Client: Capella FlexPath* http://www.blackboard.com/Services.aspx	✔	✔		
Cengage	• Provide digital course content • Curricular design and faculty training on system content *Example Client: Undisclosed* http://www.cengage.com/us/	✔			
Difference Engine	• Cloud-based LMS designed for modular and CBE programs *Example Client: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges* http://www.difference-engine.com/		✔		
Educate Online	• Full suite of enablement services • LMS platform designed to work in CBE programs *Example Client: Undisclosed* http://www.educate-online.com/	✔	✔	✔	
Flat-World	• Creates customizable digital textbooks and course content • Offers mobile-first LMS for CBE programs *Example Client: Brandman University* http://www1.flatworldknowledge.com/	✔	✔		
Helix Education	• Full suite of enablement services *Example Clients: Undisclosed* http://www.helixeducation.com/	✔	✔	✔	
Inside Track	• Provides outsourced academic coaching *Example Clients: ASU Online, Penn State World Campus* http://www.insidetrack.com/			✔	

1) While many vendors, included some listed in the above table, provide administrative services to clients, vendors categorized as administrative services in this guide offer services designed to solve back-office challenges specific to CBE programs with non-standard academic terms and flexible pacing.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 8: CBE Vendor Quick Reference Guide (cont.)

	Summary	Curricular Design	Learning Tech	Student Services	Admin Services
LoudCloud	• FASTRAK LMS built for CBE programs *Example Clients: Collin County Community College, University of Florida – Lastinger Center in College of Education* http://loudcloudsystems.com/		✓		
Lumen Learning	• Helps institutions identify and adopt open educational resources *Example Clients: Salt Lake Community College, University of Maryland University College, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges* http://lumenlearning.com/	✓			
Motivis Learning	• Developing a Salesforce-based LMS for CBE programs • Platform originally developed for College for America at Southern New Hampshire University *Example Client: Missouri Innovation Campus* http://motivislearning.com/		✓		
Pearson eCollege	• Full suite of enablement services • Used by some fully operational CBE programs *Example Clients: Northern Arizona University, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board* http://www.ecollege.com/index.php	✓	✓	✓	
Regent8	• Automated financial aid services, including services for programs with nonstandard terms *Example Clients: Brandman University, Southern New Hampshire University, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board* http://www.regenteducation.com/				✓
TK20	• Cloud-based system to collect and track assessments and portfolios *Example Clients: West Florida University, Arizona State University* http://www.tk20.com/				✓

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 9: Sample CBE Job Descriptions

Institutions launching new CBE programs often hire dedicated staff and faculty to serve in a range of CBE-specific roles and must determine the right qualities and qualifications for these new hires. Sample job descriptions from other CBE programs give members a starting place to develop their own position descriptions and qualifications and can help expedite hiring for programs with an accelerated launch timeline. The positions highlighted here are applicable to programs using one or more facets of an unbundled faculty model, with different positions for assessment, tutoring, instruction, instructional design, and success coaching. These descriptions are derived from publicly available job postings with the origin of each posting referenced in the footnotes. Sample descriptions include:

1. Evaluator, Biochemistry
2. Tutorial Faculty, Interdisciplinary: Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Assessment
3. CBE Instructor, Accounting
4. Academic Coach
5. Psychometrician

1. Evaluator, Biochemistry[1]

Job Description

Accurately and consistently score student submissions. Provide robust feedback to students on each scoring event.

Essential Functions and Responsibilities

- Complete all scoring in assigned area accurately and consistently, based upon available student work.
- Include robust feedback for students on every scoring event.
- Actively participate in meetings as outlined by the Evaluation Director, Evaluation Delivery Manager, and/or Evaluation Supervisor
- Assist as a Subject Matter Expert in the development and maintenance of assessments upon request at the option of the evaluator.
- Assist with scoring efforts in other areas for which qualified when needed.
- Abide by the policies and procedures to maintain compliance with FERPA regulations.
- Abide by policies established by the WGU Human Resources department.
- Notify Evaluation Supervisor of planned absences ahead of time. Two weeks of notice is expected for extended time away (longer than 48 hours) so that adequate coverage can be arranged to ensure scoring.
- Satisfactorily perform other duties as assigned.

Required Skills

- Understanding and appreciation of competency-based education model.
- Fluent use of educational technological platforms and common office software packages.
- Must be able to spend significant time working at a computer.
- Must be able to communicate at a high level of writing skills.

Required Experience

- Minimum earned master's degree in a field related to biochemistry.
- Minimum of 3 years of work experience in a field related to biochemistry.

Job Location

Work from home, United States

Position Type

Part-Time/Adjunct

1) Western Governors University, www.higheredjobs.com .

Tool 9: Sample CBE Job Descriptions (cont.)

2. Tutorial Faculty, Interdisciplinary: Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Assessment[2]

Job Description

This position will be responsible for tutoring and evaluating students in interdisciplinary competencies within Mathematics and Natural Sciences, including Quantitative Literacy, Quantitative Fluency, Principles and Concepts of Natural Science, and Methods and Applications of Natural Science. The position will also provide support to the Director of Competency-Based Assessment in assessment activities.

Minimal requirements for the position are:

- Graduate degree in appropriate mathematics, natural science, or interdisciplinary field
- Experience in online and/or blended/hybrid instruction

Preferred qualifications include:

- Graduate training and teaching experience in multiple disciplines
- Experience with higher education quantitative academic assessment

3. CBE Instructor, Accounting[3]

Job Description

$46,350 (Base salary for 250-day contract – January 1 to December 31, 2015)
$10,000 (Stipend for development and continuous improvement of CBE Program)

Columbia Basin College seeks a Competency Based Education (CBE) instructor to teach Accounting course(s) for a business transfer degree program that is competency-based, completely online, self-paced, and uses existing openly licensed content. Students will enroll in six-month terms and complete as many courses as they are able each term. These course(s) are part of an 18-course business transfer degree program. The content and all materials will be openly licensed based on curriculum developed by Washington community college faculty. The instructors who teach this Program will serve as content experts for students working at their own pace during the term, which includes preparation, administration and grade assessments for mastery of the learning outcomes for assigned courses. This position also requires active engagement and working with a cohort of other faculty who teach in the program, as well as completion coaches and other program staff. The position is performed remotely and as such does not require on-campus instruction or daily reporting to work at the CBC campus.

CBC is the fiscal agent for the pilot colleges under this CBE Program, which represents nine colleges in the community and technical college system. For more information on the Program, please see http://www.sbctc.edu/college/_e-elearning-competency-based-education.aspx.

General Qualities Desired:

- Passion for teaching and a commitment to student success
- Commitment to the community college mission
- Commitment to shared governance and staying current in one's discipline
- Willingness to become involved in competency-based education activities beyond one's discipline

(continued)

2) Brandman University, higheredjobs.com.
3) Columbia Basin College, governmentjobs.com.

Tool 9: Sample CBE Job Descriptions (cont.)

3. CBE Instructor, Accounting (cont.)

Primary Responsibilities:

- Provide competency-based education by providing expert and consistent instruction for students in Principles of Accounting I (ACCT& 201), Principles of Accounting II (ACCT& 202), Principles of Accounting III (ACCT& 203) and other related courses in the CBE business transfer degree program
- Utilize eLearning tools to deliver instruction that supports students in achieving course learning outcomes
- Deliver online learning-centered, openly licensed instruction developed by Washington community college faculty. This includes establishing an environment conducive to learning and student involvement, as well as effectively planning and preparing for instruction and supporting student success
- Provide student performance criteria and evaluation for students working at their own pace through a comprehensive online curriculum
- Promote student success by exhibiting a passion for teaching and engaging students in the learning process
- Manage the learning environment through keeping accurate records, submitting grades and other reports on time
- Respond to students' and colleagues' voicemail and/or electronic correspondence within a reasonable time (as expressed in more detail below)
- Support continuous improvement of the student experience by providing and evaluating student learning data, and participate in regular workshops and meetings
- Relate professional/life/industry experience to learning by the continuation of professional/technical skills development, the introduction of industry perspective into courses, and the active awareness of professional/industry trends and opportunities
- Attend required trainings, professional development activities, and/or meetings

Required Qualifications:

- Master's degree in Accounting, Business, or closely related field
- College-level teaching experience in the discipline utilizing eLearning techniques and modalities
- Understanding of how people learn and ability to craft lessons in ways that accelerate learning
- Experience working with others on collaborative learning projects to reach common outcomes

Desired Qualifications

- Ph.D. in Accounting or closely related discipline
- Certification in Accounting, CPA or other
- Experience teaching competency-based courses
- Professional certification in online learning (Quality Matters, Sloan, etc.)

Skills and Abilities:

- Demonstrated ability to work positively with individuals from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities
- Demonstrated willingness to embrace new technology and use of a broad range of learning resources and technologies
- Ability and interest in participating in learning outcomes, and in assessing and authenticating learning
- Ability to apply data to improve teaching and learning outcomes
- Demonstrated ability of pursuit of creative and/or scholarly endeavors in area of expertise

Tool 9: Sample CBE Job Descriptions (cont.)

4. Academic Coach[4]

Job Description

Academic Coach serves a critical coaching and support role for student success. Coaches are their students' primary source of information about program operation, and about the policies and procedures of the college. Coaches counsel their assigned students in understanding expectations and overcoming obstacles to ensure success.

Coaches take a deep personal interest in their students' academic progress and reflect commitment to their students' success in all their daily work. They are experts in their students' academic program details and are able to answer or to obtain answers to all the questions they may have about their programs.

Coaches advise students on time management and schedule benchmarks for the student to successfully master program concepts, knowledge, and skills. They help students identify their learning strengths and weaknesses and connect them with the resources necessary to extend the former and overcome the latter. They are well organized and good communicators, interpersonally, technologically, and in writing. Finally, they are not only capable in these many areas, but also dedicated to performing these functions in full measure.

Coaches must perform core responsibilities. These include:

- Providing direct, comprehensive program guidance to assigned students
- Managing students' academic progress according to TAACCCT Grant program policies
- Maintaining appropriate documentation of all academic transactions
- Maintaining regular communication with students according to program protocol
- Be well versed in Microsoft Outlook Suite Products, specifically Outlook Calendar

Essential Functions and Responsibilities

- Facilitates sections of the Orientation Course, which is required of all new students
- Works with the Recruiter/Career advisor and assists students in their educational planning and progress from initial enrollment to graduation
- Evaluates student learning styles, skills, deficiencies and goals; identifies appropriate learning resources for them to use; and facilitates their use of those resources
- Monitors student academic progress, communicating with each student every week; s/he intervenes as necessary to assist those students having difficulty and completes database updates on their academic status
- Working with the Recruiter/Career advisor, assists students in career planning within the boundaries of his or her expertise, and directs students to planning resources in other areas as appropriate
- Serves as the student's advocate in resolving matters of academic difficulty, misunderstanding or confusion

Performance Measurements

- Student success (as measured by number of program graduates)
- Student retention (as measured by % of students retained 7 months, 13 months, 19 months)
- Student satisfaction (as measured by approved survey responses administered to program participants)
- Other measures, as agreed upon

4) Broward College, jobs.browards.edu.

Tool 9: Sample CBE Job Descriptions (cont.)

5. Academic Coach (cont.)

Required Skills
- Strong customer service orientation and extraordinary communication skills
- Technologically competent, specifically with online programs, tracking, and communication technology
- A remarkable talent for organization is a requirement
- Must be able to spend significant time working at a computer
- Must be able to spend significant time on the telephone
- Must have good Microsoft Office skills and strong internet capabilities
- Must be able to communicate at a high level verbally and in writing
- Excellent collaboration skills
- Ability to work as a member of a team
- Experience with integrated technology systems and tools

Required Experience
- A minimum of an associate's degree
- 3 years related professional experience

6. Psychometrician[5]

The psychometrician assists the lead psychometrician in providing services of the assessment department. Responsibilities may relate to standard setting, equating, security, compliance, analysis and interpretation of assessment data, and other related activities. In addition, the psychometrician may assist the lead psychometrician in leading design and implementation of department policies and procedures related to testing.

Performance Measurements
- Best practices implemented for psychometric analysis
- Effective communication with other department and university employees
- Projects are completed according to scheduled timelines

Required Skills
Assessment development and analysis experience including:
- Analyzing and interpreting data from various types of assessments
- Preparing and facilitating standard-setting events
- Coordinating and performing statistical analyses required for score reporting and data interpretation
- Developing score interpretation materials through the application of statistical methods and indices
- Designing, developing, and documenting technical operating procedures and statistical guidelines for various programs related to educational measurement
- Performing and interpreting data analyses such as item analyses and reliability analyses
- Reporting results of statistical analyses in the form of graphs, charts, and tables
- Strong project management skills; ability to work well with a team
- (SQL skills are not required but would be a plus.)

Required Experience
- Graduate degree in education, data analysis, or a closely related field. Experience may include doctoral studies.
- 3-5 years of experience in testing, research, or closely related fields such as statistics and data analysis.

5) Western Governors University, www.linkedin.com.

Tool 10: Success Coach Investment Estimator

Considered a necessary cost of business by CBE first movers, CBE success coaches improve persistence and completion rates and assume the mentoring and administrative responsibilities traditionally performed by faculty. Institutions call this "unbundling the faculty role" because it allows faculty to focus on their role as instructors, while others take on faculty members' ancillary responsibilities.

While unbundling allows individual faculty members to reach more students, hiring success coaches and other support staff, including tutors and evaluators, can dramatically increase a program's cost structure. Institutions using success coaches have often been surprised by the ongoing cost of success coach staffing, especially when compounded by the costs of hiring subject matter tutors and evaluators.

The formula below helps members calculate the instructional cost per student of using both instructional faculty and success coaches. Next, the worksheet on the following page illustrates how institutions can use this calculation to estimate the financial impact of success coaches on CBE program costs. Members can use these estimates to understand the additional investment and revenues necessary for success coaches and make decisions about CBE program course sizes, success coach caseloads, and salaries.

Illustrative Formula for Instructional Costs Per Student[1]

$$\frac{\text{Success Coach Salary}}{\text{Success Coach Case Load}} + \frac{\text{Instructor Salary}}{\text{Instructor Case Load}} = \text{Instructional Cost Per Student}$$

1) This formula assumes a program model where students take courses individually. To calculate costs in a model where students take multiple courses, multiply instructor costs by the average student course load.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 10: Success Coach Investment Estimator (cont.)

To project the annual additional cost of using success coaches, institutions should consider the extent of their individual program's scale ambitions. The worksheet below outlines the steps an institution would take to estimate the financial impact of adding success coaches and how course size and caseloads affect instructional costs.

In the example below, for instance, the success coach model increases instructional costs by $275 per student each year, even after raising instructional caseloads by 25%, from 160 students a year (four classes with 40 students each) to 200 students per year (four classes with 50 students each). Example figures in the worksheet below are based on average ranges given by CBE first movers.

Success Coach Calculation Worksheet

	Cost with Success Coaches	Cost without Success Coaches
(A) Student Courseload *Number of courses students attempt, per year*	4 Courses	4 Courses
(B) Instructor Salary*	$65,000	$65,000
(C) Instructor Caseload *Number of students faculty teach, per year*	200 students	160 Students
(D) Instructor Cost per Student (A × B ÷ C)	$1,300	$1,625
(E) Success Coach Salary*	$45,000	
(F) Success Coach Caseload *Number of students coaches serve, per year*	75 students	
(G) Success Coach Cost per Student (E ÷ F)	$600	
(H) Total Cost per Student (D + G)	$1,900	$1,625

Larger caseload reduces instructional costs...

…but success coaches add new costs

Additional $275 per student equals over $100,000 in new annual costs for a CBE program serving 375 students

*Please note that this worksheet calculates costs based on salary alone and does not include additional costs associated with benefits packages.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

CBE Student Screening and Support

CBE PLAYBOOK

Tool 11a: Student Screening Guide

Self-paced CBE programs are not the right fit for every student, especially those who lack academic preparation or well-developed study skills. CBE first movers have found it essential to screen for students who possess four key qualities for success in a CBE program:

1. Facility with technology
2. Foundational academic skills
3. Self-discipline
4. Realistic expectations for the program

Our interviews with CBE programs identified the most common methods used to screen prospective students for these qualities. The table below indicates which screening methods work best in assessing each student quality. The tools presented across the following pages provide templates and guidance to help members develop their own student screening processes.

Determine the Right Screening Method for Different CBE Student Qualities

Four Qualities of a Successful CBE Student	Student Self-Assessment	Formal Evaluation	Application or CV Review	Applicant Interview	Orientation Module
	Tool 11b: Student Self-Assessment Template	*Tool 11c: Assessment Vendor Comparison*		*Tool 11d: CBE Admissions Interview Script*	*Tool 11e: Orientation Module Syllabus*
Digital Fluency	✓				✓
Academic Aptitude		✓	✓		
Self-Discipline	✓			✓	✓
Realistic Expectations			✓	✓	✓

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11b: Student Self-Assessment Template

To succeed in a CBE program, students need access to the right technology and the self-discipline to stay on task and meet deadlines. Online self-assessments offer a simple and low-cost way to help students decide if they have the right technology and study skills—before they apply to a competency-based program.

Members can use this self-assessment template as a guide to create their own questionnaire customized to their program's unique requirements and expectations. Prospective student self-assessments can be used as a guide for CBE enrollment conversations and even as a starting point for follow-up discussions with an enrollment counselor. To maximize the benefits of a student self-assessment as an enrollment tool, include instructions for students to save and submit their results to your institution.

Is a Competency-Based Program Right for You?

This short self-assessment will help you make an informed decision about whether or not a competency-based program is right for you. Answer the following questions as honestly as possible. After completing the assessment, interpret your responses using the scoring guide located at the end of this assessment.

Technology Access

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your *access to technology*?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
My computer reliably runs on Windows XP/7 or on Mac OS 10.6 or higher	☐	☐	☐
I have access to reliable Internet with a fast connection, such as a DSL or cable modem	☐	☐	☐
My Internet browser will play standard multimedia formats (e.g., Flash, QuickTime, Silverlight)	☐	☐	☐
I am able to download and install software and plug-ins on my computer	☐	☐	☐
My computer runs PDF, word processing, and spreadsheet software	☐	☐	☐

(continued)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11b: Student Self-Assessment Template (cont.)

Digital Fluency

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your *facility with technology*?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
I am comfortable using the web to retrieve information and search for answers	☐	☐	☐
I am comfortable using the computer to read articles and watch videos	☐	☐	☐
I am comfortable communicating through email, chat, and forums	☐	☐	☐
I am comfortable using word processing software on my computer	☐	☐	☐
I have someone who I can turn to for technical help when I run into trouble	☐	☐	☐

Study Habits

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your *study habits*?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
I can devote at least 15 to 20 hours a week to studying	☐	☐	☐
I consistently set goals and meet deadlines on my own	☐	☐	☐
I excel at balancing competing demands from work, life, and school	☐	☐	☐
I don't need a lot of reminders or deadlines to stay on task and get all of my work done	☐	☐	☐
I like to plan my work in advance so that I can finish my assignments on time	☐	☐	☐

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11b: Student Self-Assessment Template (cont.)

Attitudes and Expectations

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your *attitude and expectations*?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
When I get stuck on a problem at work, I am comfortable asking for help from a colleague	☐	☐	☐
I have friends or family who I can turn to for support and motivation	☐	☐	☐
Completing this degree is a top personal or professional priority for me	☐	☐	☐
I learn best when I have figured something out on my own	☐	☐	☐
When I don't know how to do something, my first step is to look it up myself	☐	☐	☐

Interpreting Your Responses

Scoring Instructions: Add up the number of times you responded "Strongly Agree." Use the table below to score your self-assessment and determine your readiness to begin a CBE program.

Number of "Strongly Agree" Responses	Recommendation
15 to 20	Your answers indicate that a competency-based program is a good fit for you. Contact an enrollment advisor to learn more about CBE at Example University.
10 to 15	Your answers indicate that you may struggle with some elements of CBE. To learn more about CBE programs at Example University, visit our website or contact an enrollment advisor to learn more.
Fewer than 10	Your answers indicate that a competency-based program may not be the best fit for you at this time. Consider if an online or in-person program at Example University would be a better fit. Visit our website or contact an enrollment counselor to learn more.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11c: Student Assessment Vendor Comparison

Many competency-based programs serve a population of adult students who have been out of school for a number of years. These programs often require applicants to complete assessments of academic and technological skills as well as behavioral factors to verify they have the attributes to succeed in a college-level program. Although some institutions develop their own assessments, many use services offered by third-party vendors.

This tool profiles the major vendors identified by EAB research contacts as offering academic skills screening appropriate for CBE programs. While none of the vendors listed below currently offer services specific to CBE, each vendor screens for academic readiness and attributes critical to CBE success. Members can use this guide to identify an assessment provider that meets their prospective CBE student screening needs. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and cannot substitute for the process of scoring vendors based on the unique needs of your program.

ACT Compass	**Description**	Aptitude assessment designed to evaluate whether students have college-level academic skills
	Intended Use	Helps institutions identify remediation needs among newly admitted students
	Features	• Proctored, computer-adaptive delivery • 1.5 to 2 hours to complete
	Coverage	Reading comprehension, writing skills, college level math
	Pricing	Undisclosed
	Website	http://www.act.org/products/higher-education-act-compass/
College Board Accuplacer	Description	Online assessment designed to evaluate students' preparation for college-level work
	Intended Use	Helps counselors place students in appropriate college courses
	Features	• Online, computer-adaptive delivery • <1 hour to complete • Provides domain-level scores and remediation recommendations
	Coverage	Reading comprehension, sentence construction, college-level math
	Pricing	$1.80 to $2.20 per test
	Website	https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/accuplacer-tests
ETS Success Navigator	Description	Success Navigator is an online assessment designed to evaluate psychosocial factors correlated to success and persistence in college
	Intended Use	Predicts likelihood of student retention
	Features	• Delivered online • 30 min to complete • Institutional report offers first-year GPA projection and probability of returning for following year • Provides domain-level scores and remediation recommendations
	Coverage	Academic behaviors, self-management, social factors
	Pricing	$6 per test
	Website	https://www.ets.org/successnavigator/

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11c: Student Assessment Vendor Comparison (cont.)

Smarter Measure	**Description**	Online test designed to evaluate the skills, attributes, and knowledge required to succeed in hybrid and online courses
	Intended Use	Evaluates preparation for online learning
	Features	• Delivered online • Approximately 30 min to complete • Student report offers domain-level scores and remediation recommendations
	Coverage	Self-management, reading comprehension, social factors, typing skills, learning styles, college level math
	Pricing	Undisclosed
	Website	http://www.smartermeasure.com/

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11d: CBE Admissions Interview Script

Early pioneers in competency-based education report that applicants are unfamiliar with how competency-based education differs from traditional educational programs or have unrealistic expectations about the program. An application interview is a good opportunity to clarify misconceptions about CBE and redirect applicants for whom CBE may be the wrong fit. Interviews facilitate an in-depth understanding of student expectations that can be difficult to assess in standardized online questionnaires. However, interviewing prospective students can be a time-consuming process, especially if enrollment counselors are unsure about how to conduct the interview.

This interview script helps enrollment counselors save time in preparing to interview prospective CBE students, outlining common discussion topics and sample questions to help evaluate student fit. Members can use this guide to develop their own interview protocol and train their admissions staff.

Prospective CBE Student Interview Guide

Introductions

Begin the interview with questions about how the applicant chose your program, then probe to understand more about the applicant's expectations.

Thanks for expressing interest in Example University. I'd like to use our time to ask you some questions about your interests and why you chose Example University. I'm also happy to answer any questions you have for us."

What brought you to Example University? How did you hear about our competency-based program?

How are you planning to use your degree? (e.g., get a new job, get a promotion, personal enrichment)

Capturing motivational information may be useful to calibrate marketing messages later on

Program Structure

Assess students' initial understanding of CBE programs and how they might differ from traditional formats, offering clarification where necessary. Next, explore the student's prior experiences with online and self-directed learning

What have you heard about Competency-Based Education?

- *What have you found confusing about CBE so far?*
- *What about the competency-based model interested you in this program?*
- *Is there anything about CBE that worries you?*

At Example University, all of our courses are self-paced and delivered online. That gives you a lot more flexibility, but it can also be harder for some students. Have you ever taken an online course before?

- *[If so] What was your experience like? What did you enjoy about the experience and what was hard for you?*
- *[If not] How concerned are you that most of your classes will be online?*

Behavioral questions capture information about how the student has performed in similar situations in the past

Our program is designed around the competencies employers in your field are looking for. That means our program has fewer electives than other college programs. How much choice do you expect to have in choosing your coursework in this program?

(continued)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11d: CBE Admissions Interview Script (cont.)

Program Preparation

Succeeding in a self-paced online environment requires a high level of discipline and commitment. Use this portion of the interview to understand if the applicant is prepared to make the time commitment and work independently.

CBE is different from a traditional program because you work at your own pace and set your own deadlines. Tell me about a time when you worked on a project at your job or in school where you had to set your own timeline and keep yourself on track?

- *What was your experience like? What did you enjoy about the experience and what was hard for you?*
- *What concerns do you have about learning in a self-directed environment?*

Even though our program is self-paced you'll need to complete a minimum number of courses every term to remain eligible for financial aid. Generally, this means finding time for 15 to 20 hours a week for studying. Can you tell me about how you spend your time in a typical week and how you'll find time to work on your courses?

- *What other responsibilities make demands on your time (e.g., work, children, parents)?*
- *Do you have a place to work that's quiet and away from distractions?*

Give applicants a concrete understanding of the time commitment required for your program

When you join our CBE program, we provide you with a dedicated success coach and one-to-one tutoring; however, most of the work you'll do will be on your own. Are you comfortable working independently?

- *Are there family members or friends who can act as a support network?*

Use this opportunity to describe the support services available to students

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11e: Sample Orientation Module Syllabus

It can be difficult for prospective students to understand the difference between a competency-based program and a traditional credit-hour program until they have experienced it for themselves. This type of problem is not unique to CBE, as schools that serve a large number of adult students in online programs for the first time report that new students do not know what to expect. Some for-profit online schools such as University of Phoenix and Kaplan University have introduced trial periods to help students make an informed decision about whether or not an online program is right for them. For-profit institutions interviewed by EAB report that 20% to 25% of students who use a trial period will decide to opt out, making trial periods a valuable mechanism for screening out students who are not the right fit for online learning.

However, implementing a trial period can be costly and administratively complex. Institutions looking for a simpler, low-cost solution use online pre-application or orientation modules as an alternative to trial periods. Unlike a full trial period, orientation modules offer students access to a limited set of introductory materials designed to simulate the experience of participating in a competency-based program. For example, Brandman University's "Competency Introduction Module," requires prospective students to demonstrate that they can complete self-paced tasks in the institution's proprietary LMS before they can even apply to the CBE program.

The sample orientation module syllabus on the following page helps institutions understand the topics traditionally included in an online orientation module and design a module customized to their own programs.

	Length	*Admission*	*Outcomes*
Trial Period Ashford University's "AU Promise"	Three-week trial period for all admitted students	Conditional admit granted; no charge or aid disbursed in trial	Approx. 20% trial students opt out; (16% voluntary; 4% academic)
Orientation Module Brandman University's "Competency Intro. Module"	One-week orientation for all prospective students	Self-paced module, must be completed to unlock application	Student outcomes not available at this time

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 11e: Sample Orientation Module Syllabus (cont.)

Online Orientation to Competency-Based Education at Example University

DESCRIPTION

This orientation module will introduce students to the basic principles of competency-based learning, equipping students with the tools and strategies they need to be successful at Example University. After completing this course of study, students will be able to navigate their course LMS, articulate their program's academic expectations, and demonstrate an understanding of habits and strategies of highly successful students.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce students to the unique characteristics of competency-based education
2. Teach students how to use the course LMS to access learning materials and submit assignments
3. Provide students with an overview of the habits and strategies used by highly successful students
4. Orient students to the range of services and academic support available at Example University
5. Explain the academic expectations outlined in the university handbook

COURSE COMPONENTS

Understanding CBE: Learn the basics of competency-based education
Speaking the Lingo: Coaches, competencies, and mastery
Anatomy of a CBE Program: What to expect from your degree

Navigating the Learning Portal: Understand how to use the student learning portal
LMS Road Map: Accessing study materials and submitting assignments
Communicating Through the Student Portal
Assignment: Use the learning portal to contact your success coach

Preparing for Success: Strategies to succeed in a competency-based program
Study Strategies: Optimizing your study time
Time Management: Charting a course to graduation
Assignment: Create a personal study schedule for the next four weeks

Student Support: Learn about the resources available at Example University
How We Help: Accessing student services
Academic Assistance: Tutoring and support

Program Expectations: Learn about your responsibilities as an Example University student
Coaches and Instructors: How Example University faculty and staff work with you
Understanding Academic Integrity
Financial Aid 101: Navigating the financial aid process
Assignment: Complete a short self-reflection essay about the aspects of this orientation module you found challenging and how you overcame those obstacles.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12: Success Coach Communication Manual

The success coach is one of the most important staff roles in a competency-based program and, in many ways, success coaches are the public face of the institution to students. Success coaches serve as the first point of contact with a program, welcoming newly admitted students and guiding them through goal-setting, time management, and the process of demonstrating competencies. Developing standard communication templates and guides promotes a consistent level of service across different success coaches. For experienced coaches, communication templates save valuable preparation time. For new coaches, or for coaches who hold dual roles, communication guides clarify responsibilities and set standards for high-quality student interactions.

The tools offered on the following pages present a suite of communication guides and conversation worksheets compiled from practitioners working in the field. Use these tools as a starting place to develop your own success coach communication guides and templates.

Success Coach Responsibilities

Inform

- First point of contact for all students
- Personalized planning and goal-setting
- Helps establish time management skills
- **Tool 12a**: Welcome Call Conversation Script
- **Tool 13**: Time Management Worksheets

Monitor

- Monitor student progress toward degree
- Conduct regular check-ins
- Provide motivational reminders
- **Tool 12b:** Call Preparation Worksheet
- **Tool 12c**: Follow-Up Email Builder

Intervene

- Triage academic and motivational issues
- Proactively identify behavioral issues
- Connect students with other needed services
- **Tool 14:** Success Coach Intervention Guide

Success Coach Role in Brief

Salary Range
- $35K to $45K

Daily Calls
- 30 to 40 (outgoing)
- 10 to 15 (incoming)

Caseload
- 90 to 150 students

Other Outreach
- Text
- IM
- Email
- Video Chat

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12a: Welcome Call Conversation Script

Establishing expectations and identifying problems early are critical ways that institutions position students to succeed in a competency-based program and first movers have found that early investment in communication between the program and the student pays dividends later on. One way institutions have facilitated early communication is through a welcome call–a conversation between a success coach and a new student that occurs after the student has been admitted but before the first day of classes.

Institutions use the welcome call to explain program expectations, spotlight potential obstacles to student success, and define a set of goals for the upcoming term. This conversation guide provides an overview of commonly used conversation topics and provides scripting suggestions based on interviews we conducted with program administrators across the sector. Members should use this guide as a template for designing their own communication protocol.

Welcome Call Agenda and Sample Scripting

Introductions

The welcome call is your first opportunity to establish a personal connection with the student. Use the first 10 to 15 minutes of the call to introduce yourself and get to know more about the student's goals and motivations for joining your program. Knowing your student's motivations and goals will be helpful later on, when the student needs encouragement and motivation.

Hello Susan, before we get started I wanted to make sure that now is still a good time to talk. These conversations typically last between 45 minutes to an hour. Does that work for you?

As your Success Coach, it's my responsibility to make sure that you're staying on track and that we're giving you all the help you need to be successful. To do that, I'd like start by learning more about you—what you're hoping to get out of Example University and how you think I can be most helpful. I'd also like to find a time for us to schedule a regular check-in and to set some academic goals for this term."

Clearly explain your role and responsibilities and outline agenda for remainder of call

Let me start by telling you a little about myself, then I'd love to turn it over to you. [Describe: educational background, experience/tenure at University, personal interests]

Offering information about your background and interests helps establish rapport and builds trust

Why don't you tell me a little about yourself? What brought you to Example University and how are you hoping to use your degree?

Spotlighting Potential Obstacles

Institutions report that the most common obstacles to success are family and work responsibilities. Use 10 to 15 minutes in your first call to anticipate any obstacles that might prevent the student from staying on track. Knowing what might cause problems ahead of time will help you identify warning signs before they begin to cause real issues.

What do you think will be your biggest obstacle over the next few months? Are there ways I can help you overcome that?

How regular is your work schedule? Do you think that could be an issue?

Are there any personal or family responsibilities that might get in the way of your studies?

Probe for common obstacles and anticipate problem areas

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12a: Welcome Call Conversation Script (cont.)

Welcome Call Agenda and Sample Scripting (cont.)

Schedule Weekly Check-In

Weekly check-ins are a critical part of the success coach's responsibility. Use your first call with the student to set up a regular time each week to check in. For students that push back against regular meetings ,emphasize that weekly check-ins are for their benefit and occur only until they become comfortable and demonstrate success in the program.

One of my responsibilities as a [success coach] is to schedule a regular check-in with you to make sure you're getting all the support you need and to make sure you're staying on track. These are quick phone calls, usually between 15 to 20 minutes.

To start off, we'll talk every week. As you get more comfortable in the program we can discuss changing the frequency of our chats. In the meantime, what times are you free for a weekly check-in?

Most institutions start with weekly calls, then move to bi-weekly after students master their first competency

Set Academic Goals for Term

Many early CBE pioneers report that setting clear academic goals with a weekly timeline helps students stay on track. A clear timeline also helps success coaches monitor which students are moving ahead and which students are falling behind. In the remainder of your time, talk the student through the competencies they'd like to complete this term and help them set a realistic timeline for completing each topic and assignment.

Even though our courses are self-paced, many students find it helpful to set goals and deadlines for themselves, to make sure they stay on track. It also helps me to make sure that I'm getting you the support you need at the right times.

Let's talk about each of the competencies you've registered for this term and what your timeline is for completing them. We can adjust your timeline if you decide to move faster or you need more time.

See **Tool 13** for time management and goal-setting worksheets

Additional Questions

End the call by asking if the student has any additional questions or concerns and congratulating them for enrolling in your program.

Susan, it's been great talking with you and I can't wait to work with you over the next few months. Before we go, are there any other questions you have for me?

Great! I'll send you a follow-up email later today with a recap of our conversation. Have a great day!

See **Tool 12c** for guidance on preparing a follow-up email

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12b. Check-In Call Preparation Worksheet and Conversation Script

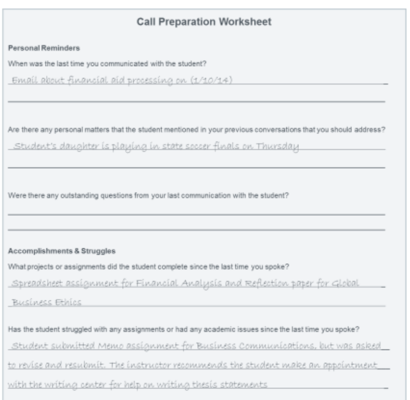
Given that CBE courses lack the structure of a traditional online course, it can be easy for students to fall behind in a competency-based, self-paced format. CBE pioneers have found that most students in a competency-based program move at the same pace, or slower, than their peers in traditional programs.

A simple way to help students stay on track is for success coaches to conduct regular phone calls with each of their students to check in on their progress and to remind them of their deadlines and responsibilities. Although periodic check-in calls are a simple way to boost student completion, they require a significant investment of staff time. Conducting a 15-minute phone call across a caseload of 80 students will consume 20 hours per week, without considering the time it takes to prepare for a call.

To help streamline the process, institutions develop communication guides to help reduce the time success coaches spend preparing for each call and to ensure that coaches use their limited time with each student in the most efficient way possible.

The preparation worksheet on the next page is designed to direct coaches toward the information they need to make the best use of their time with students. After completing the worksheet, review the sample conversation script to see one example of how information collected on the preparation worksheet can be used to lead an effective check-in call.

Call Preparation Worksheet



Call Preparation Worksheet

Personal Reminders

When was the last time you communicated with the student?

Email about financial aid processing on (1/10/14)

Are there any personal matters that the student mentioned in your previous conversations that you should address?

Student's daughter is playing in state soccer finals on Thursday

Were there any outstanding questions from your last communication with the student?

Accomplishments & Struggles

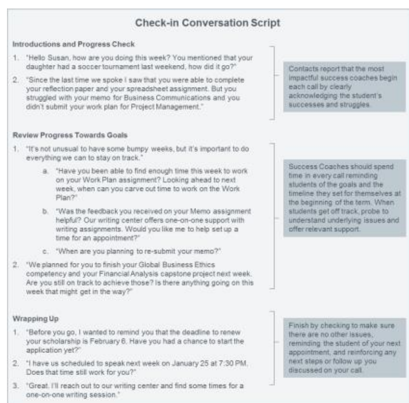
What projects or assignments did the student complete since the last time you spoke?

Spreadsheet assignment for Financial Analysis and Reflection paper for Global Business Ethics

Has the student struggled with any assignments or had any academic issues since the last time you spoke?

Student submitted Memo assignment for Business Communications, but was asked to revise and resubmit. The instructor recommends the student make an appointment with the writing center for help on writing thesis statements

Sample Conversation Script



Check-in Conversation Script

Introductions and Progress Check

1. "Hello Susan, how are you doing this week? You mentioned that your daughter had a soccer tournament last weekend, how did it go?"
2. "Since the last time we spoke I saw that you were able to complete your reflection paper and your spreadsheet assignment. But you struggled with your memo for Business Communications and you didn't submit your work plan for Project Management."

Contacts report that the most impactful success coaches begin each call by clearly acknowledging the student's successes and struggles.

Review Progress Towards Goals

1. "It's not unusual to have some bumpy weeks, but it's important to do everything we can to stay on track."
    a. "Have you been able to find enough time this week to work on your Work Plan assignment? Looking ahead to next week, when can you carve out time to work on the Work Plan?"
    b. "Was the feedback you received on your Memo assignment helpful? Our writing center offers one-on-one support with writing assignments. Would you like me to help set up a time for an appointment?"
    c. "When are you planning to re-submit your memo?"
2. "We planned for you to finish your Global Business Ethics competency and your Financial Analysis capstone project next week. Are you still on track to achieve those? Is there anything going on this week that might get in the way?"

Success Coaches should spend time in every call reminding students of the goals and the timeline they set for themselves at the beginning of the term. When students get off track, probe to understand underlying issues and offer relevant support.

Wrapping Up

1. "Before you go, I wanted to remind you that the deadline to renew your scholarship is February 6. Have you had a chance to start the application yet?"
2. "I have us scheduled to speak next week on January 25 at 7:30 PM. Does that time still work for you?"
3. "Great. I'll reach out to our writing center and find some times for a one-on-one writing session."

Finish by checking to make sure there are no other issues, reminding the student of your next appointment, and reinforcing any next steps or follow up you discussed on your call.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12b: Check-In Call Preparation Worksheet and Conversation Script (cont.)

Call Preparation Worksheet

Personal Reminders

When was the last time you communicated with the student?

Email about financial aid processing on (1/10/14)

Are there any personal matters that the student mentioned in your previous conversations that you should address?

Student's daughter is playing in state soccer finals on Thursday

Were there any outstanding questions from your last communication with the student?

Accomplishments & Struggles

What projects or assignments did the student complete since the last time you spoke?

Spreadsheet assignment for Financial Analysis and Reflection paper for Global Business Ethics

Has the student struggled with any assignments or had any academic issues since the last time you spoke?

Student submitted Memo assignment for Business Communications, but was asked to revise and resubmit. The instructor recommends the student make an appointment with the writing center for help on writing thesis statements.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12b: Check-In Call Preparation Worksheet and Conversation Script (cont.)

Call Preparation Worksheet (cont.)

Progress Toward Goals

What goals did the student set for themselves over the period since you last spoke?

1) complete spreadsheet assignment for Financial Analysis; 2) complete reflection paper for Global Business Ethics; 3) complete memo assignment for Business Communication; 4) complete work plan assignment for Project Management

What progress did the student make toward those goals since the last time you spoke?

Completed goals #1 and #2 but not #3 or #4

What goals has the student set for the next two weeks?

Complete Business Ethics module and complete capstone project for Financial Analysis

Administrative

Are there any upcoming deadlines that the student should be aware of?

Remind student that deadline to renew scholarship is February 6

Are you still available for upcoming meetings scheduled with the student?

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12b: Check-In Call Preparation Worksheet and Conversation Script (cont.)

Sample Conversation Script

Introductions and Progress Check

Contacts report that the most impactful success coaches begin each call by clearly acknowledging the student's successes and struggles.

Hello Susan, how are you doing this week? You mentioned that your daughter had a soccer tournament last weekend, how did it go?

Personal touches help build rapport when used appropriately

Let's start by talking about the progress you made this week. I saw you completed your reflection paper and your spreadsheet assignment. But you struggled with your memo for Business Communications and you didn't submit your work plan for Project Management.

Review Progress Toward Goals

Success coaches should spend time in every call reminding students of the goals and the timeline they set for themselves at the beginning of the term. When students get off track, probe to understand underlying issues and offer relevant support.

It's not unusual to have some bumpy weeks, but it's important to do everything we can to stay on track.

- *Have you been able to find enough time this week to work on your Work Plan assignment? Looking ahead to next week, when can you carve out time to work on the Work Plan?*
- *Was the feedback you received on your Memo assignment helpful? Our writing center offers one-on-one support with writing assignments. Would you like me to help set up a time for an appointment?*
- *When are you planning to resubmit your memo?*

Students may not be aware of additional services that your institution provides

We planned for you to finish your Global Business Ethics competency and your Financial Analysis capstone project next week. Are you still on track to achieve those? Is there anything going on this week that might get in the way?

Wrapping Up

Finish by checking to make sure there are no other issues, reminding the student of your next appointment, and reinforcing any next steps or follow-up you discussed on your call.

Before you go, I wanted to remind you that the deadline to renew your scholarship is February 6. Have you had a chance to start the application yet?

I have us scheduled to speak next week on January 25 at 7:30 PM. Does that time still work for you?

Great. I'll reach out to our writing center and find some times for a one-on-one writing session.

See **Tool 12c** for guidance on preparing a follow-up email

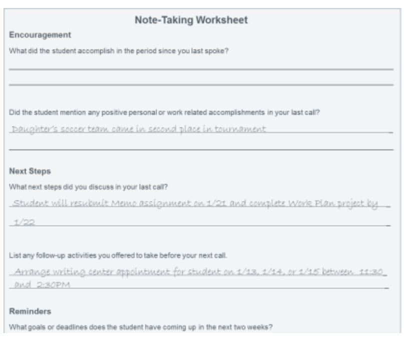
Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12c: Follow-Up Email Builder and Template

For busy students balancing work, family, and a self-paced degree program, tasks and deadlines can easily fall through the cracks. Follow-up emails, sent within 24 hours of each communication, help to reinforce information and to ensure that students do not forget about important deadlines or goals. Making follow-up emails a regular part of your institution's communication processes for check-in calls helps to ensure that the conversations coaches have with their students are having the largest impact possible; however, crafting an effective follow-up email takes valuable staff time.

Effective note-taking during check-in conversations helps coaches write accurate and organized follow-up emails quickly. The worksheet on the next page provides a simple template for success coaches to identify and record important information during conversations with students that is critical to include in a follow-up email. After completing the worksheet, review the sample email on the following page to see how the information collected in the worksheet helps in crafting an effective follow-up email.

Note-Taking Worksheet



Note-Taking Worksheet

Encouragement

What did the student accomplish in the period since you last spoke?

Did the student mention any positive personal or work related accomplishments in your last call?

Daughter's soccer team came in second place in tournament

Next Steps

What next steps did you discuss in your last call?

Student will resubmit Memo assignment on 1/21 and complete Work Plan project by 1/22

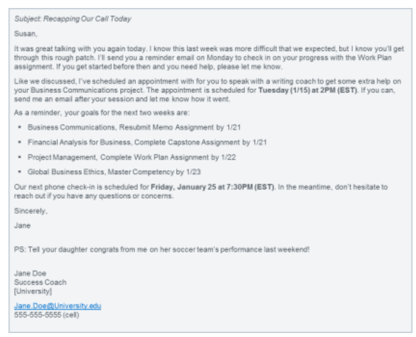
List any follow-up activities you offered to take before your next call.

Arrange writing center appointment for student on 1/13, 1/14, or 1/15 between 11:30 and 2:30PM

Reminders

What goals or deadlines does the student have coming up in the next two weeks?

Sample Follow-Up Email



Subject: Recapping Our Call Today

Susan,

It was great talking with you again today. I know this last week was more difficult that we expected, but I know you'll get through this rough patch. I'll send you a reminder email on Monday to check in on your progress with the Work Plan assignment. If you get started before then and you need help, please let me know.

Like we discussed, I've scheduled an appointment with for you to speak with a writing coach to get some extra help on your Business Communications project. The appointment is scheduled for **Tuesday (1/15) at 2PM (EST)**. If you can, send me an email after your session and let me know how it went.

As a reminder, your goals for the next two weeks are:

- Business Communications, Resubmit Memo Assignment by 1/21
- Financial Analysis for Business, Complete Capstone Assignment by 1/21
- Project Management, Complete Work Plan Assignment by 1/22
- Global Business Ethics, Master Competency by 1/23

Our next phone check-in is scheduled for **Friday, January 25 at 7:30PM (EST)**. In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jane

PS: Tell your daughter congrats from me on her soccer team's performance last weekend!

Jane Doe
Success Coach
[University]

Jane.Doe@University.edu
555-555-5555 (cell)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12c: Follow-Up Email Builder and Template (cont.)

Note-Taking Worksheet

Encouragement

What did the student accomplish in the period since you last spoke?

Did the student mention any positive personal or work-related accomplishments in your last call?

Daughter's soccer team came in second place in tournament

Next Steps

What next steps did you discuss in your last call?

Student will resubmit Memo assignment on 1/21 and complete Work Plan project by 1/22

List any follow-up activities you offered to take before your next call.

Arrange writing center appointment for student on 1/13, 1/14, or 1/15 between 11:30 and 2:30PM

Reminders

What goals or deadlines does the student have coming up in the next two weeks?

1) Resubmit memo assignment, Business Comm. (1/21); 2) complete capstone for Financial Analysis (1/21); 3) submit Work Plan, Project Management (1/22); 4) complete Global Business Ethics Module

When is your next scheduled appointment with the student?

Friday, Jan 25 7:30 PM

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 12c: Follow-Up Email Builder and Template (cont.)

Sample Follow-Up Email

Subject: Recapping Our Call Today

Susan,

It was great talking with you again today. This last week was more difficult that we expected, but I know you'll get through this rough patch. I'll send you a reminder email on Monday to check in on your progress with the Work Plan assignment. If you get started before then and you need help, please let me know.

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As a reminder, your goals for the next two weeks are:

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Our next phone check-in is scheduled for **Friday, January 25, at 7:30PM (EST)**. In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jane

PS: Tell your daughter congrats from me on her soccer team's performance last weekend!

Jane Doe
Success Coach
Example University

Jane.Doe@University.edu
555-555-5555 (cell)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets

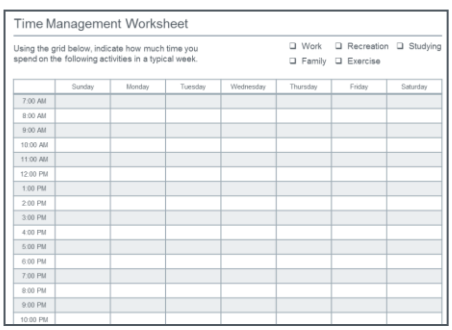
While regular success coach outreach helps students stay on track in self-directed programs, CBE pioneers report that students are much more likely to succeed when success coaches conduct structured conversations about goal-setting and time management at the outset of every term. Some institutions have electronic systems to record and track student progress toward goals, but simple time management worksheets and planning guides are a low-tech and low-cost resource to support these success coach conversations.

The time management planning worksheets on the following pages provide members with templates for developing their own tools or as a framework for building an automated tracking system. Success coaches can use these worksheets to guide and reinforce planning conversations with students.

Time Management and Planning Worksheets

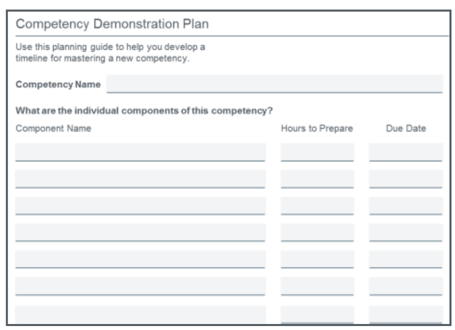
Time Management Worksheets

Offer simple resources to help students analyze how they spend their time and schedule regular study periods



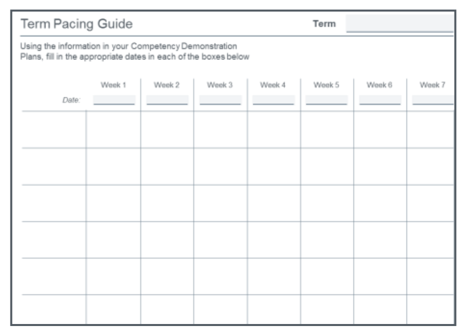
Competency Demonstration Plan

Provide a framework for deconstructing the intermediate steps required to demonstrate mastery over a competency



Term Pacing Guides

Offer a single place to record due dates and deadlines that take place over the course of an academic term

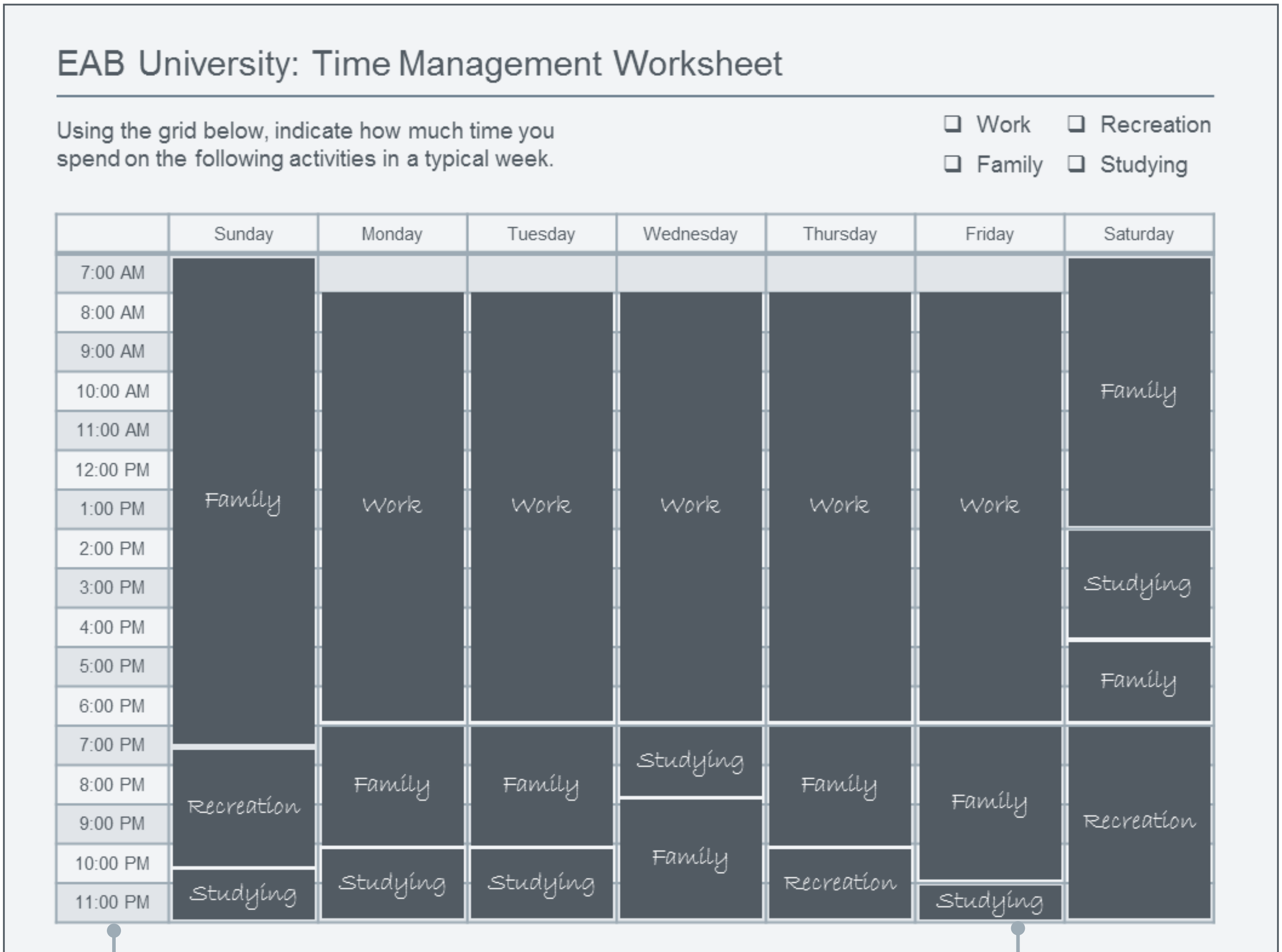


Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets (cont.)

Time Management Worksheets

Finding enough time to study is critical for student success, especially for adult learners balancing demands from family, work, and school. A weekly time management worksheet helps students predict how much time they have available for studying and reminds them to preserve this time for coursework. Completing this schedule can also help students recognize the limitations of their available time for studying, helping them set realistic expectations for degree pacing and goals.



Worksheet shows 9 ½ hours allocated for study time and identifies opportunity for extra studying before work

Student realizes available study time limited to late at night and weekends

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets (cont.)

Time Management Worksheets (Oregon State University)

At Oregon State University, students work with advisors to develop a weekly study schedule based on their existing commitments and coursework priorities. While OSU uses this tool to structure advising conversations with students in traditional programs, it is also an especially effective strategy for guiding time management conversations with CBE students, who often face more and different demands on their time than traditional students. This worksheet features a daily to-do list, and a weekly priority list in the left-hand column helps students differentiate between ongoing priorities and special priorities for the week.

Priorities for this week (regular)	Est. Time	Time	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**	**Sunday**
		7:00 AM							
		8:00 AM							
		9:00 AM							
		10:00 AM							
		11:00 AM							
		12:00 PM							
		1:00 PM							
		2:00 PM							
		3:00 PM							
Priorities for this week (special)		4:00 PM							
		5:00 PM							
		6:00 PM							
		7:00 PM							
		8:00 PM							
		9:00 PM							
		10:00 PM							
		11:00 PM							
	Total Time	To Do List							

Source: Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, http://success.oregonstate.edu/learning-corner/all-tools-worksheets.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets (cont.)

Time Management Worksheets (Oregon State University)

Students at Oregon State use this worksheet to add up how much time they spend on different activities each week. The worksheet is pre-populated with activities to help students thoroughly account for their time. Adding up time spent on different activities helps students identify activities where they can spend less time (e.g., Facebook or Random Internet) in order to devote more time to priority activities like studying or time with family members.

Time Log Worksheet

Use this sheet to arrive at a more accurate accounting of your time than your initial guesses on the Time Budget sheet might have shown. Take time to do this each day – if you try to do it all at once, you'll have difficulty remembering how you spent your time!

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Class hours								
Study hours								
Sleep								
Meals/Eating								
Exercise								
Family								
Facebook or Random Internet								
TV, Movies, Videos								
Miscellaneous Personal								
Miscellaneous Recreation								
Commuting/Travel								
Other:								
Total:	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	24 Hours	

Check your math – each vertical column (i.e. Monday entries) should total 24 hours. Each activity (i.e. sleep) should be added horizontally to get your weekly total, Bring this sheet to class next week.

Academic Success Center, Oregon State University, 2013

Source: Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, http://success.oregonstate.edu/learning-corner/all-tools-worksheets.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets (cont.)

Competency Demonstration Plans

CBE first movers caution that students often have unrealistic expectations about how long it will take to master a competency. To help students estimate the time they need to prepare, a competency demonstration plan lists the individual steps required to demonstrate mastery. Some CBE programs record this information in a centralized database where it is analyzed to help students benchmark against how much time their peers typically budget for each component.

Competency Demonstration Plan

Use this planning guide to develop a timeline for mastering a new competency. Using the syllabus provided by your instructor, list each of the components you will need to complete in order to demonstrate mastery. For each component, estimate the number of hours required to complete the component and choose a date by which you will complete the component.

Competency Name Financial Analysis

What are the individual components of this competency?

Component Name	Hours to Prepare	Due Date
Spreadsheet tools	1	1/21
Reading asset statements	5.5	1/31
Profitability analysis	3	2/2

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets (cont.)

Term Pacing Guides

Students and success coaches use term pacing guides to record CBE program milestones and deadlines in a centralized place. At the outset of a term, this guide structures success coach conversations with students to help them set their own deadlines within a self-paced course. Throughout the term, students use this tool to keep track of their coursework, while success coaches use it to monitor student progress and make decisions about when students need extra coaching, tutoring, or other interventions. Institutions that record this information in a digital platform are able to automate alerts and reminders when students miss self-imposed deadlines.

Term Pacing Guide

Term 1/15 – 3/7

Use this pacing guide to track deadlines and milestones across the seven weeks of the term. Using the information in your Competency Demonstration Plans, fill in the appropriate dates in each of the boxes below.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Date:	1/15	1/22	1/29				
Financial Analysis		Spreadsheet tools		Reading assets	Profit. Analysis		
Project Management	Sample Timeline		Work Plan				
Business Ethics		Reflection Memo					

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 13: Time Management Worksheets (cont.)

Term Pacing Guides (Sinclair Community College)

Sinclair Community College provides students in self-paced courses with pacing guides that feature preloaded timelines for different rates of acceleration. At a glance, students can see the timeline for completing the course at the traditional pace of 16 weeks and compare it to the workload required to finish the same course in 4, 8, or 12 weeks. These pacing guides prevent students from overestimating how quickly they can complete a self-paced course and helps those on an accelerated time frame maintain their pacing.

Sinclair Community College

TOPIC	GRADED ASSIGNMENTS	16-Week	12-Week	8-Week	4-Week
Topic 1 - Installing Servers	Topic 1 Lab Topic 1 Quiz	5/26/14	5/26/14	5/26/14	5/26/14
Topic 2 - Configuring Servers; Configuring Local Storage	Topic 2 Lab Topic 2 Quiz	6/2/14	6/2/14	5/26/14	5/26/14
Topic 3 - Configuring File and Share Access; Configuring Print and Document Services	Topic 3 Lab Topic 3 Quiz	6/9/14	6/2/14	6/2/14	5/26/14
Topic 4 - Configuring Servers for Remote Management	Topic 4 Lab Topic 4 Quiz	6/16/14	6/9/14	6/2/14	5/26/14
Topic 5 - Creating and Configuring Virtual Machine Settings	Topic 5 Lab Topic 5 Quiz	6/23/14	6/16/14	6/9/14	6/2/14
Topic 6 - Creating and Configuring Virtual Machine Storage; Creating and Configuring Virtual Networks	Topic 6 Lab Topic 6 Quiz	6/30/14	6/16/14	6/9/14	6/2/14
Topic 7 - Configuring IPv4 and IPv6 Addressing	Topic 7 Lab Topic 7 Quiz	7/7/14	6/23/14	6/16/14	6/2/14
Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam	7/14/14	6/30/14	6/16/14	6/2/14
Topic 8 - Deploying and Configuring the DHCP Service	Topic 8 Lab Topic 8 Quiz	7/21/14	6/30/14	6/23/14	6/9/14
Topic 9 - Deploying and Configuring the DNS Service	Topic 9 Lab Topic 9 Quiz	7/28/14	7/7/14	6/23/14	6/9/14
Topic 10 - Installing Domain Controllers	Topic 10 Lab Topic 10 Quiz	8/4/14	7/14/14	6/30/14	6/9/14
Topic 11 - Creating and Managing Active Directory Users and Computers; Creating and Managing Active Directory Groups and Organizational Units	Topic 11 Lab Topic 11 Quiz	8/11/14	7/14/14	6/30/14	6/9/14
Topic 12 - Creating Group Policy Objects	Topic 12 Lab Topic 12 Quiz	8/18/14	7/21/14	7/7/14	6/16/14
Topic 13 - Configuring Security Policies	Topic 13 Lab Topic 13 Quiz	8/25/14	7/28/14	7/7/14	6/16/14
Topic 14 - Configuring Application Restriction Policies; Configuring Windows Firewall	Topic 14 Lab Topic 14 Quiz	8/25/14	8/4/14	7/14/14	6/16/14
Final Exam	Final Exam	9/8/14	8/11/14	7/14/14	6/16/14

Required milestone dates

Worksheet shows 9.5 hours allocated for study time and identifies opportunity for extra studying before work

Source: Sinclair Community College, Dayton, OH.

Tool 14: Success Coach Intervention Guide

Conversations with early pioneers confirm that the 80-20 rule applies to success coaching in competency-based education. Your success coaches will spend 80% of their time addressing issues that arise from 20% of their students. Developing a system to quickly triage potential student issues before they become larger problems will help save staff time and allow your success coaches to focus their energy on higher value tasks.

Many mature competency-based programs have developed automated systems to flag problematic behavior and trigger different response protocols, but developing a list of behavioral indicators takes time and a significant amount of learning analytics data. To help members develop their own early warning systems, EAB collected a set of commonly used intervention triggers observed in our interviews with practitioners in competency-based education. The list of intervention triggers outlined below can serve as a starting place for institutions as they analyze their own data to develop an intervention strategy.

Performance Indicators	Common Student Intervention Triggers Used in Competency-Based Programs		Potential Response Protocols
Motivational Indicators Student discouraged by academic struggle or personal issues	**Low Assignment Grade** Assessment grade in 40th percentile of all students **Missed Goals** Student misses a timeline goal by 3+ days	**Failed Assessment** Student fails to pass competency demonstration **Non-enrollment** Student not registered for next term with <5 days left	• Trigger email, then phone call with coach • Connect student with peer mentor
Academic Indicators Student is struggling with course content	**Faculty Trigger** Faculty flag student for behavior or performance **Repeated Failure** Student needs 2+ attempts to demonstrate mastery	**Missed Goals** Student misses a timeline goal by 3+ days **Lower Utilization** LMS use in 80th percentile without faster progress	• Send note to instructor for follow-up • Have coach arrange tutoring or one-to-one support
Engagement Indicators Student is procrastinating in ways that could harm progress	**Low Course Activity** Student goes 4+ days without an LMS log-in **Low Participation** Student does not use course forums	**Student Unresponsive** Student skips check-in or does not answer 2+ emails **Course Withdrawal** Student withdraws from course without warning	• Trigger phone call from coach to assess issue • If continually unresponsive, engage administrator to discuss academic withdrawal
Financial Indicators Student is dealing with financial aid or administrative issues	**Bursar Issue** Late payment or account balance past due	**Non-enrollment** Student not registered for next term with <5 days left	• Trigger call to discuss alternative payment plans • Engage administrator to discuss grant opportunities

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Appendix A

Links to CBE Resources from Around the Web

CBE PLAYBOOK

Appendix A: CBE Web Resources

CBE Debates

Carnegie Credit Hour

- Elena Silva, Taylor White, Thomas Toch. "The Carnegie Unit: A Century-Old Standard in a Changing Education Landscape" *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.* January 2015.
- http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/resources/publications/carnegie-unit/

CBE and Higher Education Disruption

- Chris W. Gallagher. "Disrupting the Game-Changer: Remembering the History of Competency-Based Education" *Change Magazine*. March 2015
- http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00091383.2014.969177

CBE and the Liberal Arts

- Johann N. Neem. "Experience Matters: Why Competency-Based Education Will Not Replace Seat Time" *Liberal Education*, AACU. Fall 2013.
- https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2013/fall/neem

Competency Frameworks

US Department of Labor Career OneStop

- Competency Model Clearinghouse
- http://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/

Lumina Foundation

- Degree Qualifications Profile
- http://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/dqp

CBE Program FAQ Pages

College for America

- FAQ for Students
- http://collegeforamerica.org/about/entry/faq

WGU

- "Why WGU—Competency-Based Learning"
- http://www.wgu.edu/why_WGU/competency_based_approach

Capella

- "How FlexPath Is Different"
- http://www.capella.edu/about/flexpath-self-paced-learning/the-difference/

NAU

- "Personalized Learning—Frequently Asked Questions"
- http://pl.nau.edu/HowItWorks.aspx/

Appendix A: CBE Web Resources

CBE IT and Vendor Profiles

WGU's IT Infrastructure

- Heather Staker. "The Engine Behind WGU: Configuration of a Competency-based Information System" Innosight Institute.
- http://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-engine-behind-WGU.pdf

Blog Post Profiles of FlatWorld and LoudCloud LMS

- Phil Hill. "LoudCloud Systems and FASTRAK: A Non-Walled-Garden Approach to CBE"; "Flat World and CBE: Self-Paced Does Not Imply Isolation" e-Literate. Feb 2015
- http://mfeldstein.com/loudcloud-systems-fastrak-a-non-walled-garden-approach-to-cbe/

Adaptive Learning Vendor Landscape Overviews

Ithaka S+R

- "Mapping the Adaptive Learning Landscape"
- http://www.sr.ithaka.org/blog-individual/mapping-adaptive-learning-landscape
- **Tyton Partners**
- "Learning to Adapt: Understanding the Adaptive Learning Supplier Landscape"
- http://tytonpartners.com/library/understanding-the-adaptive-learning-supplier-landscape/

Resource Websites for New and Fully Operational CBE Programs

Next-Generation Learning Challenges

- "Resources on Competency-Based Learning"
- http://nextgenlearning.org/topics/competency-based-learning

Competency-Based Education Network (CBEN)

- "A National Consortium for Designing, Developing, and Scaling New Models for Student Learning"
- http://www.cbenetwork.org/

EDUCAUSE

- Library of competency-based education articles and resources
- http://www.educause.edu/library/competency-based-education-cbe

CBEinfo

- Resource site by WGU and partner community colleges
- http://cbeinfo.org/

Appendix A: CBE Web Resources (cont.)

Accreditor CBE Policies

Institutions should contact their individual accreditors to determine the most accurate and up-to-date requirements for CBE program approval. Accreditation requirements and standards vary, and in some cases consistent policies for CBE programs have not yet been established.

The Higher Learning Commission:

- Competency-based programs using direct assessment are required to submit a substantive change request. More information can be found on the commission's website on the "Overview of Substantive Change" form located here:
- http://www.ncahlc.org/Monitoring/institutional-change.html

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges:

- SACS-COC requires institutions to follow the commission's substantive change processes when implementing a direct assessment program. An overview of the commission's policy for direct assessment programs is located here:
- http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/DirectAssessmentCompetencyBased.pdf

Middle States Commission on Higher Education:

- To request approval for a direct assessment program, MSCHE members must complete the commission's Direct Assessment screening form and the commission's complex substantive change request processes. An overview of the commission's policies on direct assessment is available here:
- http://www.msche.org/documents/DirectAssessmentandMiddleStates.pdf

New England Association of Schools and Colleges – Commission on Institutions of Higher Education:

- Competency-based programs using the direct assessment method are covered under the commission's standard substantive change policies, as outlined here:
- https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/files/downloads/POLICIES/Pp72_Substantive_Change.pdf

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities:

- NWCCU members developing a competency-based program using direct assessment should follow the commission's standard substantive change policy, as outline here:
- http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Policies/PolicyDocs/Substantive%20Change%20Policy%20-%20revised.pdf

Western Association of Schools and Colleges – Senior College and University Consortium:

- WASC members developing a direct-assessment program should complete the commission's substantive change template for competency-based or direct assessment programs:
- http://www.wascsenior.org/subchangetemplates

EAB

Clarifying Prior Learning and Portfolio Processes

PLA PLAYBOOK

Tool 15: Prior Learning Primer

The application of prior learning terminology and assessments varies widely across the higher education landscape. Not only do institutions use different terms for prior learning practices—experiential learning, prior learning assessment, credit for prior learning—some also use credit for prior learning (CPL) and prior learning assessment (PLA) interchangeably or conflate portfolio assessment with PLA as a whole. This makes it difficult for institutions to benchmark their programs and creates confusion for institutions new to PLA and wondering where to start.

This primer is a resource for quickly educating campus stakeholders. It clarifies prior learning terms, draws distinctions between different methods of assessing prior learning, and introduces the main organizations offering PLA assessment or implementation support.

CPL vs. PLA

As noted above, some institutions use Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) interchangeably. While they are related, these two terms refer to different aspects of the prior learning process: PLA refers to the methods used to evaluate whether prior learning meets college-level standards, whereas CPL means the actual recognition and award of credit to students for their prior learning.

Institutions will assess and award credit for experiences that can range from military or corporate training to extensive volunteer service. In some cases, students have received credit for their learning from MOOCs. There are different PLA methods for different learning experiences, and the following Prior Learning Assessment Taxonomy lays out the different methods used by institutions and third parties to assess a student's prior learning and ultimately award credit.

Prior Learning Assessment Taxonomy

Standardized Examinations

What it is:

Subject tests that assess entry-level college material. They are generally the easiest and often the least expensive way to earn credit through PLA. On average, students earn three credits per passed exam. Required scores to gain credit vary by institution.

The most common standardized examinations include:

- Advanced Placement Examinations (AP)
- College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
- UExcel Exams, and Excelsior College Exams – Nursing Theory

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 15: Prior Learning Primer (cont.)

Advanced Placement Examinations (AP)	College Level Examination Program (CLEP)	DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)	ECE – Nursing Theory & UExcel Exams
College Board	College Board	DSST	Excelsior College
• 36 exams • 2-3 hours long • Multiple choice and essay • 1-5 scoring scale	• 33 exams • 90 minutes long • 100 questions each • Multiple choice • 20-80 scoring scale	• 38 exams • 2 hours long • 100 questions each • Multiple choice • Two scoring scales: norm-referenced 20-80, criterion-referenced 200-500	• 52 UExcel exams • 10 ECE exams • 2-3 hours long • Multiple choice, essay, mixed format • Letter grade scoring
$91/exam[1]	$80/exam	$80/exam[2]	$40-$440/exam
For high school students	For adult learners with work experience	Primarily targets military personnel and veterans	For nursing students and adult learners

[1]Low income students are eligible for a $29 fee reduction/exam and schools retain a $9 rebate/exam.
[2]Exams are fully funded for active-duty military and their spouses, and veterans are reimbursed for exam and testing fees by the VA.

Course Challenge Examinations

What it is: Course challenge examinations are versions of final exams developed and administered by faculty, usually at the departmental level. While some institutions, departments, and/or programs allow students to gain credit and calculate their score into their overall GPA, others allow students to use them only for testing into higher-level courses. The challenge exam is one of the least standardized forms of PLA not only because it varies widely from institution to institution, but because its use and application also vary from department to department.

Course Challenge Examinations	
Required Score	Most institutions require a score of 70% or higher to place out or gain credit
Credits Awarded	On average, students gain three credits
Cost to Student	$20-$100/exam, either flat fee or based on number of credits
Additional Costs	Some institutions also charge proctoring fees
Who Uses It	Well suited to all types of students

Source: The College Board, clep.collegeboard.org; The College Board, apstudent.collegeboard.org/home; DSST, getcollegecredit.com; Excelsior College, www.excelsior.edu/exams; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 15: Prior Learning Primer (cont.)

Evaluated Trainings, Certifications, and Licenses

What it is: Evaluations of trainings, certifications, and licenses for academic credit (academic program reviews) are conducted by internal subject matter experts at an institution or by an outside organization such as the American Council on Education (ACE) or the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS, formerly National PONSI). While the evaluation services of ACE and NCCRS overlap in many areas, they have several different areas of focus. ACE is the main evaluation service for military trainings, and NCCRS has a strong regional focus in the New York Area. While over 2,000 institutions use ACE and over 1,500 use NCCRS, some institutions prefer to conduct their own program reviews. Individual institutions may house anywhere from a handful to several hundred in-house evaluations, while ACE holds over 35,000 and NCCRS has completed approximately 5,200.

Once trainings, certifications, and licenses have been evaluated, the process works similarly to the award of transfer credit. As with transfer credit, it is critical for students to have as much information as possible about potential credit awards. Below is an example of a student-facing professional and military credit database.

Example University Evaluated Trainings, Certifications, and Licenses

Reviewed Program/Credential	Applicability	Potential Credits
Army Warrant Officer MOS 251A	BS, Information Technology	Up to 12 credits
Registered Nurse	BS, Health Care Management BS, Nursing	Up to 60 credits
Police Academy Training	BS, Criminal Justice	Up to 15 credits

Who uses it: Targets active-duty military, veterans, and those with professional work experience.

Portfolio Assessment

What it is: Students compile evidence of skills and knowledge acquired outside of the classroom based on set criteria. Most institutions require students to write essays and assemble documentation such as HR records or completed projects from a training course to demonstrate how their prior learning aligns with the outcomes of a particular course. This process is commonly called "course matching." Portfolios are typically writing intensive and require students to have a strong mastery of the English language.

Common portfolio components include:

- Resume
- Written narrative of how learning applies to course(s) or learning outcomes
- Demonstration of learning (essay, project, etc.)
- Documentation of learning (HR records, letters from managers or colleagues, photographs, receipts, etc.)

Source: American Council on Education, www.acenet.edu/Pages/default.aspx; National College Credit Recommendation Service, www.nationalccrs.org; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 15: Prior Learning Primer (cont.)

Portfolio Development Course

Most institutions require students to complete a credit-bearing, online portfolio development course that guides them through the process of assembling a portfolio. These courses create a structured environment for students to reflect critically on their prior learning experiences and ensures they assemble verifiable documentation of college-level learning. Students may not submit a portfolio without first completing this course.

Outsourcing Fees to Institution:
- **$2,795 start-up fee**
- **$3,500-$10,500 annual fee**
- **$510-$875 CAEL membership**

Institutions often waive portfolio fees if students submit portfolios soon after completing the portfolio development course

	Outsourced Portfolios		In-House Portfolios[1]	
	LearningCounts	**KNEXT**	**Portfolio Course**	**No Portfolio Course**
Cost to Student	• $625 for CAEL 100 course + 1st portfolio assessment • $254 DIY course • $125 each additional portfolio assessment • Transcription fee (varies)	• $999 all-inclusive	Ranges: • $95-$1,038/course • $150-$400/portfolio assessed* • $40-$100/ credit transcripting fee	Ranges: • $100-$158/portfolio assessed[2] • $50-$85/credit transcription fee
Time to Credit	• 6-week portfolio course • 2-week assessment period	• Self-paced portfolio course (~10-12 weeks) • 3-4 week assessment period	• 8-14 week F2F, proctored online, or self-paced online course • 3-16 week assessment period	• Up to 15 weeks for portfolio compilation • 3-10 week assessment period

[1]Information for in-house portfolios provided on the this table is not an exhaustive comparison. Other variations likely exist that fall outside the examples included in this table.

[2]While some institutions charge a flat fee for portfolio evaluation, others calculate costs on a per-credit basis starting as low as $35/credit.

PLA Portfolios at the Graduate Level

While some graduate programs allow their students to pursue credit for prior learning through portfolios, it is far less common. Graduate-level portfolios bear tighter credit caps and usually limit application of awarded credits to introductory-level courses.

Source: Learning Counts, learningcounts.org; KNEXT, www.knext.com; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 15: Prior Learning Primer (cont.)

Major Prior Learning Organizations and Services

The American Council on Education (ACE): A national third-party organization that provides leadership and advocacy in higher education. ACE evaluates military, workforce, and other training and exams completed outside the traditional degree program, and recommends what should count for credit through the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT).

National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS): Formerly known as the National PONSI, the NCCRS is a service of the University of the State of New York Regents Research Fund. Like ACE, they evaluate and recommend college credit equivalencies for training and education programs outside of the college and university classroom.

Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL): An organization with a broader COE focus that offers research and information on PLA and a paid service, Learning Counts, that partners with schools to provide a portfolio-building platform, instruction to students, and portfolio assessments by trained faculty to students.

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support: A division of the Department of Defense that specifically provides educational support to veterans and members of the military. DANTES issues transcripts for military training and service, and acts as a clearinghouse for training programs and information about military education benefits.

Source: American Council on Education, www.acenet.edu/Pages/default.aspx; National College Credit Recommendation Service, www.nationalccrs.org; Council on Adult and Experiential Learning, www.cael.org; DSST, getcollegecredit.com.

Tool 16a: PLA Portfolio Process and Risk Maps

Many institutions with new or growing PLA programs struggle to establish an organized portfolio review process, which can prevent them from scaling portfolio PLA to more students. This process map walks through a streamlined portfolio review process, from the first student conversations with advisors to the final credit recommendation, identifying key campus stakeholders involved at each step of the way. Institutions can use this map as a benchmark to simplify or standardize their existing portfolio review procedures.

	Steps in Portfolio Process	Description of Step	Staff/Faculty Involved
1	Student learns about PLA eligibility and portfolio assessment	• Most students learn about PLA options during advising or admissions conversations • Student connected with PLA office or individual(s) overseeing portfolio process	• Admissions counselor • Advisor • Program chair/dean • Prior learning director
2	Student receives permission to pursue PLA portfolio	• Student seeks official approval to begin portfolio PLA from program chair or prior learning director • Approval process can range from a simple conversation to a more formal application	• Program chair/dean • Director, Office of Prior Learning
3	Student enrolls in portfolio development course	• Student enrolls in a credit-bearing, online portfolio development course • Portfolio created and submitted upon course completion	• Faculty member(s) teaching course
4	Student submits portfolio for assessment	• Trained faculty assessor evaluates portfolio for credit award • Assessment typically takes 4-6 weeks	• Faculty member(s), program chair/dean • Office of Prior Learning
5	Assessor reports credit recommendation	• Assessor reports credit recommendation to director of PLA or program chair • Student notified of credit award decision • If credit awarded, report sent to registrar	• Faculty member(s) assigned portfolio • Registrar
6	Student responds to credit recommendation	• If credit awarded, student pays transcription fee to registrar and credits applied to transcript • Students dissatisfied with credit recommendation can appeal	• Program chair/dean • Director, Office of Prior Learning • Registrar
7	Student begins appeals process	• Student applies to resubmit portfolio to different faculty assessor • If granted appeal, student may make minor changes to portfolio and resubmit	• New faculty member(s) assigned portfolio

Appeals Process

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 16b: PLA Portfolio Process and Risk Maps

Even a well-established portfolio assessment process can create obstacles for students pursuing portfolio PLA. Research contacts report that without access to clear information, policies, or assessment protocols, students give up on the process and miss out on valuable credit awards. This risk map alerts administrators, faculty, and staff to the most common obstacles students encounter during PLA portfolio assessment, with tools and advice to address potential problems at every step.

Steps in Portfolio Process	Student Obstacles	Safeguards/Solutions
1 Student learns about PLA eligibility and portfolio assessment	• Student never learns about PLA eligibility, due to incomplete or hard-to-find information • Student fails to understand PLA policies, not realizing PLA ineligible for financial aid and may not apply toward degree progress	✓Tool 21: PLA Landing Page Template • Expert tip: Routinely incorporate PLA into early advising sessions
2 Student receives permission to pursue PLA portfolio	• Student must navigate multilayered approval process to pursue portfolio • Student becomes discouraged while shuffling between departments	✓Tool 17: Sample PLA Org. Models • Expert tip: Assign student a single point of contact
3 Student enrolls in portfolio development course	• Student does not know how to document prior learning because institution does not require portfolio development course • Student unaware of additional fee and time commitment of portfolio course	✓Tool 19: PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual
4 Student submits portfolio for assessment	• Student struggles to compile sufficient evidence of learning for portfolio • Student abandons effort because portfolio development course lacks clear guidelines	✓See Appendix B for links to portfolio course syllabi
5 Assessor reports credit recommendation	• Untrained faculty assessors give inconsistent credit awards • Faculty fail to report credit recommendation to the right units	✓Tool 20: Faculty Assessor Training Curriculum
6 Student responds to credit recommendation	• Student never learns of credit recommendation absent a communication protocol for PLA faculty and staff • Credit not applied or misapplied to record due to lack of communication with registrar	✓Tool 18: PLA Policy Builder
7 Student begins appeals process	• Student unaware of option to appeal credit award • Student does not know how to initiate appeals process	• Expert tip: Include information about option to appeal credit awards in portfolio development course

Appeals Process

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 17: Sample PLA Organizational Models

Institutions starting or growing a PLA program often find it difficult to determine the appropriate level of staffing and organizational structure. Including too many stakeholders spread out across campus can create inefficient and inconsistent PLA practices, but restricting PLA responsibilities to a limited group can strain staff resources or invite pushback from excluded parties.

These sample PLA organizational models lay out two different types of organization used by institutions with successful PLA programs: one for small-scale, decentralized programs and one for large-scale, centralized programs. Members can use these models as a template or benchmarking tool when deciding whether to reorganize or how to staff PLA initiatives.

Decentralized Model

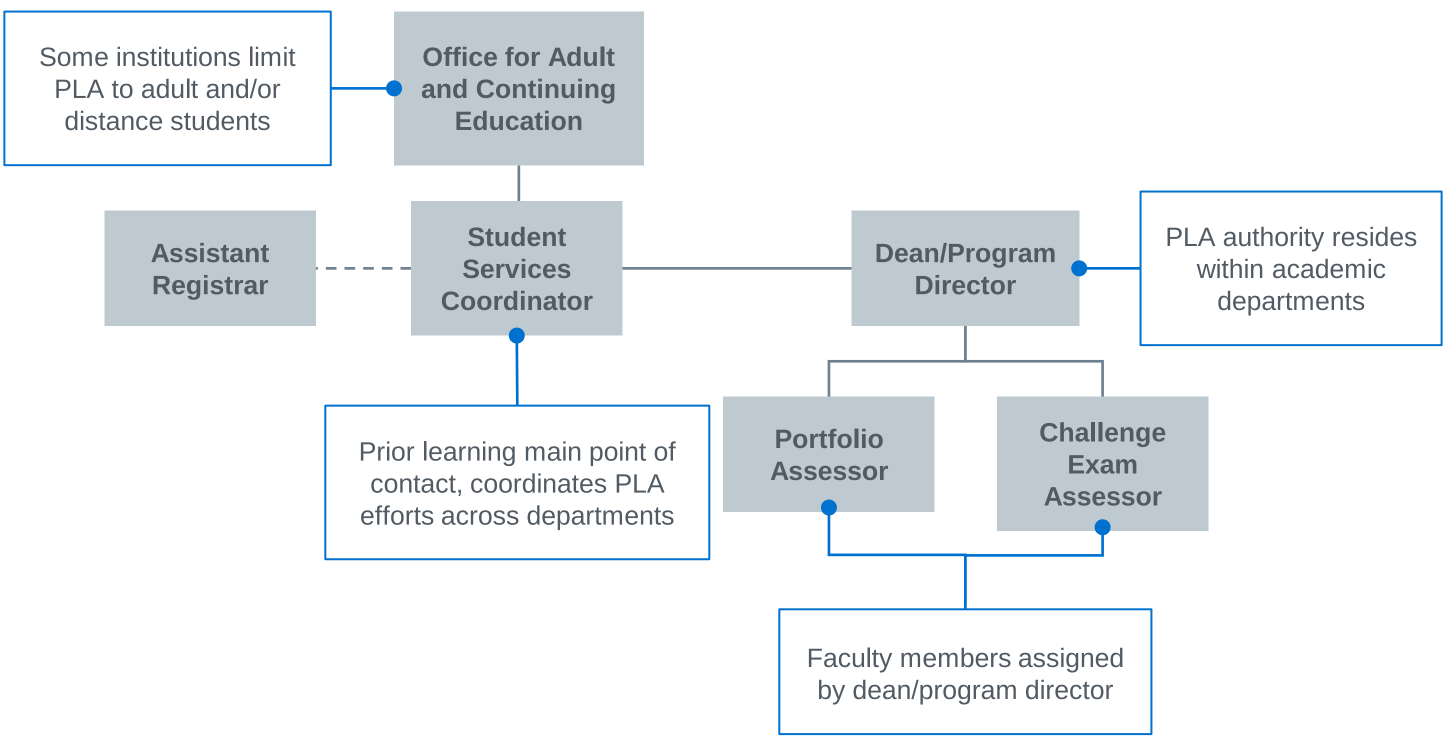
The schematic below outlines a decentralized PLA organizational model that relies on existing institutional resources. The key to success with decentralized PLA organization is designating a main point of contact to coordinate communication across departments.

Benefits of a Decentralized Model:

- Promotes faculty buy-in by giving academic units authority over all assessments and awards
- Single point of contact facilitates coordination
- Supports PLA programs using existing resources

Ideal for:

✓ Institutions where PLA not yet well-established
✓ PLA pilot programs
✓ Small-scale programs looking to reorganize using existing resources



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 17: Sample PLA Organizational Models (cont.)

Centralized Model

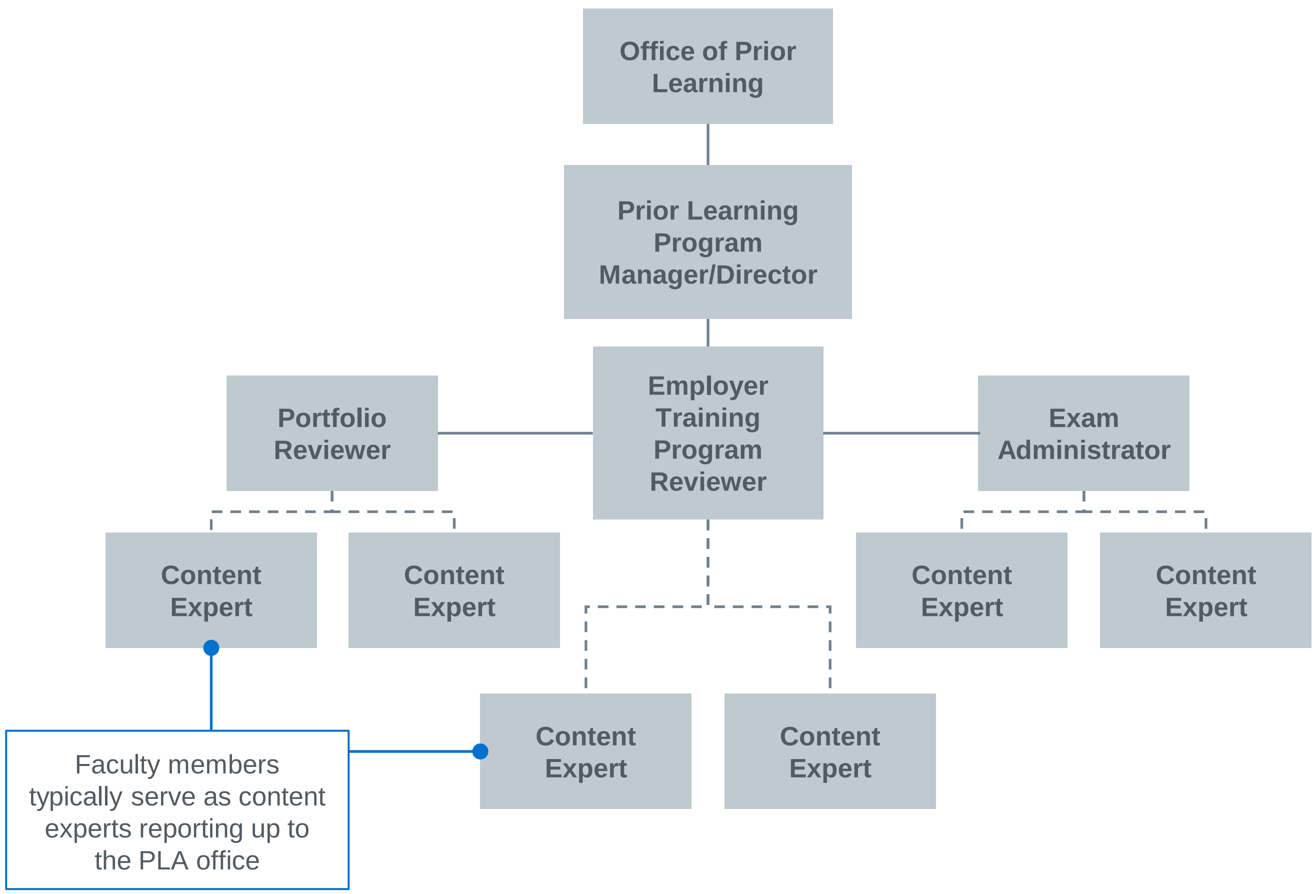
A centralized PLA organizational model is best suited for institutions where PLA is widely accepted and in high demand among students. This model organizes all PLA functions under a central Office of Prior Learning. Faculty serve as content experts who perform assessments and advise on credit recommendations in their fields of expertise. However, authority over credit recommendation and awards resides within the Office of Prior Learning and not within individual academic units.

Benefits of Centralized Model:

- Sufficient staff to handle hundreds of PLA students each year
- One-stop shopping for students pursuing PLA
- Uniform standards for credit evaluation in central office minimizes varied credit awards

Ideal for:

✓ Institutions where PLA already well-established
✓ Large-scale programs offering multiple forms of PLA
✓ Institutions looking to expand and standardize PLA offerings across campus



Source: EAB Custom Report, "Developing A Credit for Prior Learning Program", 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 18: PLA Policy Builder

Most institutions have an existing prior learning policy, but these policies are often outdated or hidden away in student handbooks. Members looking to expand their PLA offerings have discovered that the absence of a clear and accessible PLA policy often deters students from pursuing PLA options and invites resistance from staff and faculty who are confused about the process and standards for awarding PLA credit. Additionally, recent state degree completion initiatives often require institutions to develop and publicize formal PLA policies, adding urgency to the task of creating or revising a PLA policy. Nearly 20 states have passed legislation addressing credit for prior learning.

The PLA Policy Builder helps institutions develop or overhaul their PLA policies by laying out the essential components of an effective policy and providing resources for existing PLA standards.

What should my institution's PLA policy achieve?

Inform Campus Stakeholders

- ❑ Explain the purpose and scope of PLA at your institution
- ❑ Supply definitions for prior learning terminology

Provide How-To Instruction

- ❑ Detail PLA procedures and protocols
- ❑ Establish training requirements for faculty assessors

Guide Program Regulation and Management

- ❑ Lay out leadership structure, responsibilities, and program review policies and processes
- ❑ Present a collection of prior learning best practices

What should my institution's PLA policy include?

Most institutional policies and reports contain the following core components:

Inform Campus Stakeholders

Purpose and scope of awarding credit for prior learning

Many institutions include information from studies about the potential benefits of credit for prior learning, such as improved retention rates and time-to-degree among at-risk student populations.

✓ *Please see the Appendix B for links to relevant studies*

Definitions for prior learning and assessment methods

An official set of definitions removes ambiguity and variation in internal and external communication about prior learning.

✓ *Please see Tool 15: Prior Learning Primer, for sample definitions of prior learning terminology*

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 18: PLA Policy Builder (cont.)

What should my institution's PLA policy include? (cont.)

Most institutional PLA policies contain the following core components:

Provide How-to Instruction

Breakdown of Policies and Procedures

Removes uncertainty about prior learning processes and application of credit. Institutions typically provide the following detail:

- Student eligibility
- Student responsibilities
- Credit limits
- Application of credits
- Assessment procedures
- Appeals processes
- Transcription and coding
- Fees and processing
- Credit transferability

Some institutions include process guides and required forms

Links to sample process guides and forms:

PLA Student Checklist[1]
http://www.polk.edu/wp-content/uploads/PLA-Student-Steps.pdf

Credit Recommendation Form – Credit by Exam[2]
https://www.utoledo.edu/call/pdfs/Credit%20Recommendation%20Form.pdf

Portfolio Application Form[3]
http://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/pla/portfolio-new-undergrad-registr-4-14_0.pdf

Training Requirements and Resources

Mandatory training for faculty and staff is critical to standardizing PLA processes across campus. Institutions that require in-house training normally provide information about when and where team members can go to complete required training. Institutions that outsource faculty training include links to third-party resources.

Sample Excerpt

(8): Faculty and Staff Development

All faculty assessors and prior learning staff must successfully complete two workshops on credit for prior learning and portfolio development and assessment. Workshops are offered bi-annually by the Center for Adult and Experiential Learning. Fall workshops are on the first Thursday of September, and spring workshops are on the first Thursday of March. Contact the PLA Coordinator for further information.

1) Polk State College, "Student Process Steps/Checklist 2014-2015" http://www.polk.edu/wp-content/uploads/PLA-Student-Steps.pdf.
2) University of Toledo, "Steps for the Faculty Advisor – Credit by Exam" https://www.utoledo.edu/call/pdfs/Credit%20Recommendation%20Form.pdf.
3) University of Southern Maine, "Undergraduate Portfolio Registration Form" http://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/pla/portfolio-new-undergrad-registr-4-14_0.pdf.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 18: PLA Policy Builder (cont.)

What should my institution's PLA policy include? (cont.)

Guide Program Regulation and Management

Leadership Structure and Responsibilities

Even if an institution uses a decentralized model, creating an official organizational structure will clarify PLA responsibilities across campus.

✓ *See Tool 17 for examples of PLA Organizational Models*

Many institutions lay out the roles and responsibilities associated with prior learning.

8. Prior Learning Roles and Responsibilities

PLA Coordinator: Specially trained administrator who coordinates and oversees prior learning assessment, approves or denies student applications for prior learning, and guides students through the process. The PLA Coordinator reports to the dean of Adult and Continuing Education.

Faculty Advisor: Educates students about prior learning opportunities and helps students decide which type of prior learning assessment is right for them.

Faculty Assessors: Faculty members with expertise in the subject area for which a student is requesting credit. They evaluate and provide feedback on student portfolios and industry credentials. Assessors ultimately decide the credit a student will receive.

Faculty assessors are selected by the dean of the department and must have taught at least three courses in the discipline or be tenured to be eligible.

PLA Best Practices

A number of institutions have included a set of best practices for PLA policy transparency, efficiency, and success. The most commonly cited is CAEL's Ten Standards for Assessing Learning.

Program Evaluation and Review Policies

These policies provide metrics for evaluating the success of the program and establishes processes around program review and modifications. Common metrics include student retention, completion rates, and time-to-degree.

Tool 18: PLA Policy Builder (cont.)

The resources linked below provide examples of various state prior learning policies, advice on what to consider when creating or reforming a prior learning policy, and the PLA guidelines for every regional accreditor. Use the information to aid in revising current policies or to inform the creation of future policies.

Prior Learning Policy Resources

Council on Adult and Experiential Learning
- "State Policy Approaches to Support Prior Learning Assessment"
- http://www.cael.org/pdfs/college-productivity-resource-guide2012
- Provides a range of factors state and university leaders should consider when creating or reforming policies
- Supplies numerous examples state prior learning policies

Lumina Strategy Labs
- "Award Credit Through Prior Learning Assessment"
- http://strategylabs.luminafoundation.org/higher-education-state-policy-agenda/core-element-three/action-17/
- Profiles six state prior learning policies
- Gives general advice about what a prior learning policy should aim to achieve

Regional Accreditor Prior Learning Policy Resources

Higher Learning Commission
- http://policy.ncahlc.org/Policies/assumed-practices.html
- See section A.5.d and section B.1.g for prior learning policies

Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- http://www.msche.org/publications/CHX-2011-WEB.pdf
- See Standard 13 for prior learning policies
- http://www.msche.org/documents/Transfer,-Prior-Learning,-Articulation---1110.pdf

WASC Senior College and University Commission
- https://www.wascsenior.org/files/Credit_for_Experiential_Learning_Policy.pdf
- Specifically lays out policies for prior learning credit through portfolios

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- http://www.nwccu.org/Pubs%20Forms%20and%20Updates/Publications/Standards%20for%20Accreditation.pdf
- See section 2.C.7 for credit for prior learning policies

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAcreditation.pdf
- See section 3.4 and 3.5.2 of Principles of Accreditation for prior learning policies

New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/files/downloads/Standards/Standards_for_Accreditation.pdf
- See Standard Four for credit for prior learning policies

Source: Higher Education Coordinating Board, "Review: Regional Accreditation Organization Statements on Prior Experiential Learning", 2011; EAB interviews and analysis..

EAB

Building and Staffing a PLA Program

PLA PLAYBOOK

Tool 19: PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual

Communicating with Students and Faculty

Members report that communicating key information about PLA to students and faculty is critical to building a well-established PLA program on campus. Without clear and accessible information about PLA policies, students will not understand what PLA is and they may fail to recognize the financial and time commitments involved in pursuing PLA. Faculty who do not have accurate information about PLA may question its rigor or benefits to students. This PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual identifies commonly asked questions about PLA from both students and faculty, offering sample scripting and advice for answering these questions. Please note that sample scripting appears in italics and should be updated to reflect your institution's specific PLA policies.

General Student FAQs

What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?

Students can use PLA to earn credit for significant learning experiences outside of a traditional classroom, including military training, work experience, and nontraditional courses that would otherwise be ineligible for transfer credit. Different methods are used to assess a student's prior learning depending on each type of learning experience. Assessment methods can include standardized exams, final exams given by an academic department, portfolio assessment, and evaluation of training, licenses, and certificates. Contact your advisor to learn more about your PLA eligibility and assessment options.

How do I know if I'm eligible?

Specify your institution's prerequisites and conditions. These often include:
- Enrollment status
- Number of credits student has completed at your institution

Identify which student segments are permitted to pursue PLA:
- Undergraduates/Graduates
- On-campus/Off-campus
- International

How many credits can I earn through PLA?

Use your institution's PLA policy and your state's credit cap to determine the maximum number of PLA credits allowed.
- Highlight any policies that limit or alter the process of credit application for specific student segments (e.g. graduates can apply credits only to lower-level courses
- Clearly identify any programs or courses to which prior learning credits cannot be applied
- For portfolio PLA, give the number or range of credits students typically receive

How much does PLA cost?

Itemize all student costs associated with PLA. These may include:
- Application fee
- Testing fee
- Portfolio development course fee (and any related material fees)
- Assessment fee (also called a submission fee)
- Transcription fee

Does financial aid apply to PLA?

Make sure students understand that most costs associated with PLA are ineligible for federal financial aid
- Note any exceptions in state financial aid and institutional aid policies
- Indicate whether students can use federal or other types of aid for credit-bearing portfolio development courses

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 19: PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual (cont.)

General Student FAQs (continued)

How long does it take to earn PLA credit?

The typical length of time to earn credit can vary widely by PLA method. Include information for different PLA methods and process steps:

- Application process
- Internal and external testing dates
- Portfolio course (if applicable)
- Assessment period
- Transcription of credit

How will PLA credits appear on my transcript?

Explain how PLA credits appear differently on student transcripts. Also note any differences in credit transcription by PLA method. Depending on your institution's policy, PLA credit can appear on transcripts as:

- Transfer credit
- PLA-specific credit with a letter grade
- PLA-specific credit without a letter grade
- Pass/Fail course credit

Will PLA credit transfer to other institutions?

Explain how transfer policies differ for PLA credit compared to traditional course credit earned at your institution, noting any existing articulation agreements with special provisions for PLA credit transfer.

Where can I learn more about my PLA eligibility and options?

Direct students to in-person and online resources, providing the name and email for students' main point of contact for PLA at your institution in addition to web links. Potential student contacts include:

- Advisor
- Admissions counselor (for prospective students)
- Student services coordinator
- Director of Prior Learning Office

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 19: PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual (cont.)

Portfolio PLA Student FAQs

Why do I need to take a special course to build a PLA portfolio?

Students often think they can successfully build a portfolio on their own. The following points help them understand the importance of taking a portfolio development course:
- Give an overview of course structure and objectives
- Identify instructor assistance available to students through the course
- Share metrics that show improved chances of a successful credit award after taking the course

Who will assess my portfolio for credit?

Explain your institution's process for selecting assessors and matching them to student portfolios:
- Faculty members vs. trained third-party content experts
- Matching by subject expertise
- Dean appointments
- Role of Prior Learning Office
- Number of assessors reviewing each portfolio

If I'm dissatisfied with the result of the assessment, can I appeal?

Outline your institution's credit recommendation appeals policy. This should include the following information:
- Steps in the appeals process
- Policies governing portfolio resubmission
- Contact information for individual or office overseeing appeals
- Time limits for appeals

How many portfolios can I submit?

Identify the number of unique portfolios students can compile and submit,
- Over the course of a semester
- Over the course of their degree

Also explain whether portfolio policies allow students to reuse documents in more than one portfolio.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 19: PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual (cont.)

General Faculty FAQs

What is my role in the PLA process?

Typically faculty are most involved in PLA as content experts and assessors of student portfolios. They evaluate student documentation of prior learning in their field of expertise and determine whether, or how much, credit students should receive. Faculty also play a role in deciding student eligibility for departmental challenge exams, selecting the appropriate exam to administer and evaluating student performance on the exam. Faculty who think a student may be a good candidate for PLA can direct students to the right resources to begin the PLA process.

How do you decide which students are eligible for PLA?

Explain how your institution evaluates potential PLA candidates:
- Advising conversations
- Initial evaluation of outside learning experiences, training, and work history
- Portfolio approval processes

Who establishes PLA policies and requirements?

Outline the leadership structure for PLA at your institution and provide information about prior learning program review processes, including:
- Organizational charts
- Links to PLA policies

How do you select faculty assessors?

Make the process for faculty assessor selection as transparent as possible, sharing:
- Whether faculty are appointed or must apply to participate
- Eligibility requirements
- Any policies for required faculty training
- The office or individual responsible for selecting faculty assessors

What should I tell a student who asks me about PLA?

Identify PLA resources for faculty members to share with students:
- Contact information for advising office or Prior Learning Office
- Link to institution's PLA website
- Policy information relevant to students

Are faculty members compensated for PLA responsibilities?

Show compensation policies for challenge exams and portfolio assessment, indicating whether faculty are compensated:
- Per portfolio
- Per exam
- Per hour

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 19: PLA Stakeholder Communication Manual (cont.)

Faculty frequently voice concerns that PLA will lower the quality of education or fear that PLA credit awards will supplant faculty-taught courses. Addressing faculty resistance to PLA is an essential step when starting or growing any PLA program. This tool identifies the most common faculty challenges to PLA and provides sample scripting to answer tough questions and convince faculty that PLA benefits students and the institution alike.

Top 5 Faculty Challenges to PLA—Answers to Their Toughest Questions

1. Why do students need PLA in the first place? Wouldn't they be better off taking a course taught by a faculty member?

Often students, and especially adult learners, have had rich and varied learning experiences prior to enrolling in a formal degree program. PLA allows students to earn credit for this learning, which helps them save on tuition costs and progress toward their degree more quickly. Awarding credit through PLA validates multiple forms of student learning and studies have shown that students who earn PLA credit have improved retention rates, a shorter time-to-degree, and higher completion rates. A 2010 CAEL study found that 43% of students who received credit for prior learning completed their bachelor's degree compared to only 15% of students with no credit for prior learning.

2. How do we know that nontraditional learning experiences evaluated for PLA are as rigorous and high-quality as the education they receive from faculty members?

Students may pursue portfolio assessment or challenge exams only with the permission of the Office of Prior Learning or department chair, pending an initial review of their learning experiences. Portfolios and challenge exams are evaluated for credit by trained faculty assessors in their field of expertise. Students can earn PLA credit only for portfolios and challenge exams on the recommendation of a trained faculty member. Our institution accepts test scores only from nationally recognized standardized exams.

3. If we give away credits for "life experience" won't we be turning our school into a credit mill?

Our institution does not award PLA credit for general life experience. Additionally, not all students and nontraditional learning experiences are eligible for PLA. The learning experiences most likely to be eligible for PLA credit demonstrate sustained engagement with content in a specific field, typically drawing on professional or military experiences.

4. What if students use PLA to bypass faculty-taught core requirements for their major?

Generally, students cannot use PLA credit awards to bypass degree requirements. The vast majority of PLA credit awards apply as elective or general education credit. Only rarely do credit awards apply toward a student's major requirements, and only then at the advice of one or more faculty members.

5. How can we be sure that documents in a portfolio are really the student's own work?

Students must provide verifiable documentation of learning experiences, for example HR or military transcripts, in addition to written essays that connect their learning experiences to specific course outcomes. Portfolios are assembled and created during a credit-bearing portfolio development course under the direction of a trained faculty member. Student portfolios must meet quality and verification standards before they can be submitted for faculty assessment and are subject to the same standards of academic integrity governing traditional course work.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 20: Faculty Assessor Training Curriculum

Individual faculty members are responsible for making portfolio PLA credit recommendations. Institutions that do not require faculty training report wide variation in how portfolios are assessed. Inconsistent credit awards leave students questioning the fairness of assessment and faculty questioning the quality standards of portfolio PLA. Most institutions with successful PLA programs require faculty assessors to attend training on portfolio PLA standards. Emphasizing quality standards and rigor during the training has the added benefit of addressing faculty concerns about PLA, and messages about the benefits of PLA further promote faculty buy-in. This tool outlines a sample curriculum featuring common topics covered during faculty assessor training. Institutions can choose the topics most relevant to their portfolio assessment practices to create their own training program.

Portfolios for Prior Learning Assessment: Faculty Assessor Training

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

1. Gain familiarity with PLA and why it is important to your institution
2. Learn and demonstrate best practices for high-quality, rigorous portfolio assessment
3. Identify role and responsibilities of faculty assessors in the PLA process
4. Understand how PLA helps meet student and institutional goals

TRAINING MODULES

Introduction to PLA Terminology and Pedagogy
- Definition of common PLA terms
- Overview of PLA methods by field and type of prior learning
- Frameworks for prior learning pedagogy

PLA as an Institutional Priority
- Enrollment, retention, and degree completion goals for adult learners
- Common degree completion challenges for adult learners
- PLA's role in promoting success of adult learners at Example University

Understanding the Needs and Pathways of PLA Students
- Demographics of PLA students
- Prior experiences, training, and knowledge eligible for PLA
- Successful PLA student profiles

Connecting PLA to institution goals and student success promotes faculty buy-in

Roles and Responsibilities of the Faculty Assessor
- Working with portfolio guidelines, assessment metrics, and evaluation standards
- Guidelines for evaluating student work and providing feedback
- Protocol for coordinating with departmental leadership and administrators
- "Who's Who" of PLA administration

(continued)

Source: Valdosta State University, "Faculty Assessor Training Resources," http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/amp/prior-learning-assessment/pla-assessors.php; Academic Impressions, "PLA: Outreach to Faculty," http://www.academicimpressions.com/news/pla-outreach-faculty; EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 20: Faculty Assessor Training Curriculum (cont.)

TRAINING MODULES (cont.)

Portfolio Assessment Policies and Procedures
- Timeline for Portfolio Assessment
- Applying course matching policies
- Grading and transcription of PLA credit
- Guidelines for appeals and portfolio resubmission

Ensuring Quality, Rigor, and Consistency in Portfolio Assessment
- Standards for demonstrating college-level learning
- Establishing consistent criteria for portfolio guidelines and assessment
- Types of documentation and evidence of learning
- Verifying authenticity of portfolio documentation

Working with Assessment Rubrics
- Defining learning outcomes from course syllabi
- Evaluating direct and indirect documentation of learning
- Distinguishing between unsatisfactory, satisfactory, and superior demonstration of learning

Address faculty concerns about PLA quality by showing a commitment to assessment standards

Common Portfolio Assessment Challenges
- Identifying learning gaps in documentation—what to do and when
- Determining how much support and feedback to provide students
- Making decisions about portfolio resubmission

Hands-On Portfolio Assessment Activity
- Practice evaluating sample portfolio elements using assessment rubric
- Compare individual faculty assessments in small groups

Interactive sessions keep faculty engaged

Student Portfolio Showcase
- Examples of successful student portfolios
- Variety of documentation types across different disciplines

Highlighting exemplary student work demonstrates portfolio rigor

Open Forum Q&A
See Tool 19 for common faculty questions and concerns about PLA

See the Appendix B for additional training resources and links to third-party faculty assessor training services.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 21: PLA Landing Page Template

Providing accurate and timely information is essential for capturing and supporting the right students for PLA. Most institutions, however, have incomplete, incorrect, or disaggregated information about prior learning on their website, forcing students to search across multiple webpages and contacts for the necessary information. This tool highlights the resources institutions should aggregate and make available to students to ensure they understand their PLA options and the various PLA processes involved in earning PLA credit.

Making Your PLA Website a One-Stop-Shop for Information

1. Provide a brief explanation of prior learning and the various methods that may be used to gain credit. As noted in Tool 15 Prior Learning Primer, prior learning terminology and assessments are applied differently across institutions. This paired with students' own misconceptions about prior learning can leave them confused about what qualifies as prior learning, how to approach the process, and how it can help them earn their degree.

2. Supply links to internal and external resources about PLA and the PLA process. Including links to internal resources can save students from searching through multiple sites to find what they need. These links may include detailed FAQs, a self-assessment to help students determine if they are good candidates for a portfolio, and links to assessment and testing agencies. Some methods of PLA, such as standardized examinations, require the student look outside the institution for assessment. Linking students to outside resources will help them decide what they need and where they need to go, especially if the institution does not, for example, have a testing center.

3. Include links to internal resources like transfer and military & veteran services. Student visitors to PLA websites are often in need of other related student services either instead of PLA or in addition to PLA. Including links to these services redirects students who have found themselves in the wrong place and provides one-stop shopping for students who need both PLA resources and other overlapping services.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Tool 21: PLA Landing Page Template (cont.)

PLA Landing Page Screenshot

exampleuniversity.edu/priorlearning

EXAMPLE UNIVERSITY LOGO

Search

Home | **About** | **Academics** | **Admissions** | **Tuition & Financial Aid** | **Current Students**

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Standardized Tests

- Advanced Placement
- CLEP Examinations
- DSST Examinations

Course Challenge Examinations

Portfolio Assessment

Military & Professional Training

Helpful Links About PLA

PLA Self-Assessment

Portfolio Assessment FAQ

CLEP Testing Centers

American Council on Education (ACE)

Related Alternative Credit and Support Services

Transferring Credit

Disability Support Services

Military & Veteran Services

What is PLA?

[Enter university name] recognizes that learning occurs in many places. Therefore, we allow students to earn credit for prior learning by demonstrating college-level knowledge they have gained outside the classroom using a variety of methods known as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) outlined below.

Standardized Tests

Look over our list of acceptable standardized tests and the scores required for credit.

Portfolio Assessment

See if you are a good candidate for portfolio assessment and learn about next steps.

UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE

Call out differing policies for particular student groups

Military & Professional Training

Browse a list of evaluated military and professional trainings.

Licenses & Certificates

Peruse licenses and certificates evaluated by Example University.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

EAB

Appendix B

Links to Prior Learning Resources from Around the Web

PLA PLAYBOOK

Appendix B: Prior Learning Web Resources

Major Prior Learning Organizations

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)
- http://www.cael.org/pla.htm

American Council on Education (ACE)
- http://www2.acenet.edu/credit/?fuseaction=browse.main

National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)
- http://www.nationalccrs.org/

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- https://clep.collegeboard.org/

DSST
- http://getcollegecredit.com/

Studies on Prior Learning Outcomes

CAEL, "Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success"
- http://www.cael.org/pdfs/pla_fueling-the-race

CAEL, "Holding Tight or at Arm's Length"
- http://www.cael.org/pdfs/cael_pla_accreditation

Prior Learning Best Practices

CAEL 10 Standards
- http://www.cael.org/pla.htm

Tennessee Recommended Standards in Prior Learning Assessment
- https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Recommendations%20for%20Standards%20in%20PLA%20-%20Final%20Version%201-1.pdf

Ohio PLA with a Purpose
- http://www.cael.org/pdfs/college-productivity-resource-guide2012

Frameworks for Evaluating Prior Learning

Bloom's Taxonomy
- University of Toledo, "PLA Faculty Assessment Guide", see page 12
- http://www.utoledo.edu/call/pdfs/PLA%20Faculty%20Assessment%20Guide.pdf

Kolb's Model
- University of Toledo, "PLA Faculty Assessment Guide", see page 12
- http://www.utoledo.edu/call/pdfs/PLA%20Faculty%20Assessment%20Guide.pdf

Appendix B: Prior Learning Web Resources (cont.)

Frameworks for Evaluating Prior Learning (cont.)

Ten-by-Five Framework

- The Ten-by-Five Framework combines the CAEL ten standards with the five critical factors outlined by Hoffman et al. (2009). Together they create a matrix designed to help identify both the ways in which a prior learning program is successful and the ways in which it could be improved.
- http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ913874.pdf

PLA Portfolio Examples

University of Toledo

- "Prior Learning Assessment: Portfolio Sample"
- https://www.utoledo.edu/call/pdfs/UT%20Sample%20Portfolio%2010.16.13.pdf

Central Michigan University

- "PLA Assessment: Undergraduate Sample"
- http://global.cmich.edu/prior-learning/handbook/UG-PLA-Assessment.pdf
- "PLA Assessment: Graduate Sample"
- http://global.cmich.edu/prior-learning/handbook/Graduate-PLA-Assessment.pdf

NOVA Southeastern University

- "Prior Learning Handbook Sample Portfolio"
- http://www.nova.edu/registrar/forms/sample_portfolio.pdf

Faculty and Staff PLA Handbook Example

Community Colleges of Spokane

- "Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Faculty and Staff Handbook"
- http://www.ccs.spokane.edu/Forms/District-Forms/Prior-Learning-Assessment/ccs-8428.aspx

Prior Learning Faculty Training Resources

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning

- Prior Learning Assessment Workshops
- http://www.cael.org/professional-development/workshops
- Online PLA Certification
- http://www.cael.org/professional-development/certification#Online PLA Certification

University of Southern Maine

- "Faculty Undergraduate Portfolio Guidelines and FAQ"
- https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/Office%20for%20Prior%20Learning%20Assessment/faculty-undergrad-guide-FAQ-timeline-2-11.pdf

Appendix B: Prior Learning Web Resources (cont.)

Prior Learning Transcript Policies and Practices

Washington Student Achievement Council

- “Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup: 2014 Progress Report,” see Appendix B
- http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2015.PLA.Report.pdf

Central Michigan University

- “Chapter 1: PLA Student Handbook,” see Award Notification and Applying Credits (p.7)
- http://global.cmich.edu/prior-learning/handbook/PLA-Student-Handbook-Chapter-1.pdf

Excelsior College

- “Prior Learning Assessment FAQ,” see page 5
- https://my.excelsior.edu/documents/78666/102207/Prior_Learning_Assessment_FAQ.pdf/5e169ec0-37cb-43c6-8c55-51831bae0e06

Prior Learning Appeals Policy Examples

University of Tennessee at Martin

- See Portfolio Evaluation Appeals Process
- http://www.utm.edu/departments/pla/portfolio.php

Central Michigan University

- “Chapter 1: PLA Student Handbook,” see Re-evaluation Requests (p.8)
- http://global.cmich.edu/prior-learning/handbook/PLA-Student-Handbook-Chapter-1.pdf