Competency?

• A competency is a clearly defined and measurable statement of a knowledge, skill, and/or ability that a student has acquired within a program.

• According to C-RAC, competencies are statements of what students can do as a result of their learning.
Structure

- Course/credit based approach
  - The demonstration of competencies is embedded in a conventional curriculum composed of courses to be completed to earn credits toward a degree or credential.
  - Institutions can allow students to progress at their own pace and may even offer alternate ways of transcripting credit.
• **Direct Assessment Approach**
  • DA is a term used by USDoE and defined as a program NOT based on semesters or credits. There are no conventional courses and the program only uses achievement to evaluate student learning. There are no conventional grades and no term length. The institution must establish credit hour equivalencies.
Structure

• Hybrid
  • Hybrid combines course based approach and the direct assessment approach to complete a program leading to a degree/credential.
  • Only eligible for Title IV if the institution has joined the Experimental Sites Initiative.
What is and isn’t CBE

Institutions are encouraged to look at their program offerings and distinguish CBE from other initiatives such as prior learning assessment, and/or correspondence education. The differences are important to know since it will help you and your liaison figure out what needs to be submitted to HLC for approval.
When to Submit to HLC?

1. Any direct assessment program, regardless of credit.
2. Any hybrid program if the institution is eligible.
3. All CBE course based programs that exceed 51% OR any of the general education program OR major courses are being converted to CBE and the program is organized around competencies.
Characteristics of Good CBE Programs

1. Faculty interactions are initiated on a regular basis
2. Faculty have subject matter expertise
3. Faculty interactions are explicit and can be documented
4. Programs can demonstrate credit hour equivalencies for the competencies and student learning outcomes of the program
Elements of Good Practice

Philosophy and Framework

• Do you have a clearly defined purpose and a framework that ensures program quality and student learning?
Elements of Good Practice

Structure and Coherence

• Does your program have a beginning, middle and an ending that is clear to students and faculty?

• Do the competencies reflect a unified body of knowledge that is consistent with career path or degree program?
Elements of Good Practice

Application of Academic Policies

• Do you have policies in place to support CBE programs that include satisfactory academic progress, probation, and/or suspension?
• How is the student moved to a course based traditional program when they have not made satisfactory progress?
Elements of Good Practice

Student Eligibility

• Do you have processes in place during recruitment to determine if the student has the capacity to complete a CBE program?
• Are they different or the same for your traditional program?
Elements of Good Practice

Student Support Services

- Do you offer support services that appropriately guide students in these programs?
- How do you assist students on a variable time schedule?
- How do you council and support students to transition out of the CBE program and into a traditional program if needed?
Elements of Good Practice

Assessment of Student Learning

• Is the institution prepared to evaluate students solely on competencies?
• Are the outcomes reviewed regularly and reflect current concepts agreed on by the related disciplines?
Elements of Good Practice

Billing and Title IV

• Is the institution prepared to follow laws and regulations on billing and CBE?
Elements of Good Practice

Evaluating Student Work

• How is the work shown on a transcript?
• Is it easily understood by employers?
• Is the work equivalent or superior to work performed in traditional classes and how do you know?
• Is the application of student learning outcomes (portfolios, projects, etc.) equivalent or superior to the outcome assessments in traditional classes?
Elements of Good Practice

External Contractors

• Is the institution using an external contractor for implementation of some or all of the CBE program?

• Does it maintain control of the development and implementation of the program?

• Does it need to seek prior approval for contractual relationships with the HLC?
How to Submit an Application to HLC

So your program meets the thresholds for approval and you are ready to apply to offer a CBE program?

Great!

Got to:

https://www.hlcommission.org/Monitoring/competency-based-education-programs.html
Processes

Things to consider:
1. Consider the previous questions above before you apply
2. Check to see that you actually need to apply given the HLC criteria and thresholds
3. Allow at least 6-9 months to get approval.
4. Call your liaison BEFORE you apply just in case you missed something
Questions

Good luck and if you have questions, ask your liaison or write to:

tbordenkircher@hlcommission.org

You can call me directly at 312-881-8122