

# The CBE Equity Collaboratory

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## Action Plan



COMPETENCY-BASED  
EDUCATION NETWORK 

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THE EQUITY COLLABORATORY

# The CBE Equity Collaboratory Action Plan

## ACTION PLAN

The CBE Equity Collaboratory Action Plan is a resource meant to support active participants in either developing or revising their CBE programming. This action plan builds on the previous months workshops, highlighting the following in particular: Problem Identification, CBE Theory of Change, Resources Needed, and Methods & Strategies. Specifically, this action plan will ask participants to think critically around their next steps for developing and launching a CBE program or revising their current CBE program to best reach and support students.

It is important to note that this action plan is meant to serve as an initial framework for developing and revising CBE program development. There are several areas not included in this action plan (accreditation, faculty unions, communication and engagement, advising, etc.) that will be important for participants to still consider as they continue with their program development.

## 1. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Identify the nature and extent of the problem or opportunity you plan to address or continue to address through CBE programs. Include qualitative and quantitative data on the scope and magnitude of the barriers students currently face.

*This section will help institutions clearly identify who is not well served by the current program model(s), what aspects of the current program model(s) are not working for this student group, and what additional barriers to success should be considered in the program design.*

### Discussion Prompts

What aspects of your traditional program structures/ current CBE model pose the greatest barriers for your target population? What data informs your answer?	
If you already have a CBE program in place, what aspects of the current CBE model pose the greatest barriers for your target population? What data informs your answer?	
What else do you know about the barriers faced by the population(s) you have identified? What data informs your answer?	
How do the problems identified align with your institution's strategic priorities and overall mission?	

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## Action Planning

Priority	Key Action Steps	Who is Responsible?	Milestones and Deadlines
Gather disaggregated data on enrollment and completion to understand where there are equity gaps			
Conduct student surveys or focus groups to gather qualitative data on the student experience			
Conduct a process mapping exercise to identify common barriers to success across the student experience (connection through completion)			
Facilitate sensemaking sessions to define the problem using the data gathered.			
<i>Add other priorities below</i>			

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## 2. THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change (TOC) is a participatory process whereby stakeholders identify their long-term goals and conditions they believe are necessary in order to achieve their desired change. TOC development typically includes inputs (resources needed), outputs (actions), key activities, outcomes (anticipated results), and the overall impact this change would have. Develop a comprehensive description or statement of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.

*This section will help college teams develop or revise their TOC as it relates to their CBE programming. Participants will be asked to think about key components of a theory of change statement: inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact.*

For TOC examples, please [click here](#).

### Discussion Prompts

<b>INPUTS</b> What resources (financial, human, material) are needed to activate your new or redesigned CBE Theory of Change?	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b> What key activities are associated with this CBE Theory of Change?	
<b>OUTPUTS</b> What actions need to take place in order to work towards your CBE Theory of Change?	
<b>OUTCOMES</b> What short-term changes do you anticipate occurring as a result of your CBE Theory of Change?	
<b>IMPACT</b> What overall long-term effect(s) do you anticipate occurring as a result of your CBE Theory of Change?	

### THEORY OF CHANGE STATEMENT:

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## 3. METHODS AND STRATEGIES

Please use the sections below to think through CBE methods and strategies that are needed in order to support your CBE program development. This section builds on content addressed through the Equity Collaboratory workshops, including defining CBE, utilizing Labor Market Information, creating student-centered design and supportive systems, and job placement.

### A. Definitions

How does your institution or system define the following? Is there an official definition, or does one need to be created?

Competency	
Competency-Based Education	
Mastery/Proficiency	
Equity	

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## B. Core Program Features

Consider how your CBE program is distinctively different from current academic offerings. What are the hallmark features? You might consider this from multiple viewpoints—student, faculty, student services staff, etc.

Feature	Traditional/Current CBE Academic Offerings	CBE Program OR Redesigned CBE Program
Flexibility in Pacing		
Personalization of Content		
Curriculum Development Process		
Consistency Across Faculty and Sections		
Assessment Approach		
Faculty Model		
Employer Engagement		
Coaching/Advising Model		

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## C. Labor Market Information

Consider how your CBE program is distinctively different from current academic offerings. What are the hallmark features? You might consider this from multiple viewpoints—student, faculty, student services staff, etc.

	<b>What data sources inform this?</b> (e.g. labor market data, student data, employer input)	<b>How will the data be used?</b>
Program/ credential selection		
Competencies and level of mastery needed		
Assessment strategy		
Program refinement		

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## D. Recruitment

What are your learner personas for the CBE program? How does this learner population differ from your traditional offers? How will you reach this learner population with your marketing message?

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<p>How will you reach this learner population with your marketing message?</p>	



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## E. Curriculum Development & Learning

<p>1. Describe your approach to competency-based curriculum development (e.g. backward design). If you have a CBE curriculum development process, how can that process be improved?</p>	
<p>2. Describe how learners have/will have meaningful access to faculty subject matter experts.</p>	
<p>3. How are learners made aware of what is needed to demonstrate competence and earn a credential?</p>	
<p>4. How is learner progress monitored? How is learner progress made visible to the learner?</p>	
<p>5. How will the institution/system communicate what graduates can do beyond course listings and grades to external stakeholders? If you have an existing program, please include examples.</p>	

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## F. Supporting Students in CBE Programs—from Awareness through Completion and Beyond

**Pre-program supports** might include onboarding, orientation, and advising to help students select the right program, help with financial aid, and other pre-program coaching.

**Supports during enrollment** might include proactive advising, coaching, tutoring, career exploration, referrals for non-academic supports, counseling, childcare, etc.

**Post-program supports** might include resumé prep, mock job interviews, job search assistance, internships, career fairs, and other ongoing coaching.

	<b>Describe the supports available</b>	<b>What departments/ roles/ partners are involved?</b>
Pre-program		
During enrollment		
Post-program		

### Discussion Prompts

How are students made aware of the support available at each phase?	
What data can you use to assess the effectiveness of these supports?	
What professional development might advisors and support staff need to put your plans into action?	

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## ACTION PLANNING

Priority	Key Action Steps	Who is Responsible?	Milestones and Deadlines

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## 4. RESOURCES NEEDED

Please use the questions below to identify key resources needed to support your CBE program development and delivery. You may draw on your answers to section two (Theory of Change) to complete this section. Key resources include but are not limited to program timeline, evaluation, key stakeholders, and budgeting. This section will also allow you to expand on what potential barrier(s) may surface and proposed solutions.

*This section will help institutions think through the specific programmatic resources that are needed in order to develop and/or maintain CBE programs at the institution.*

### A. Program Evaluation

Please use the chart below to consider how you will track and analyze key metrics that can give you insight into the efficacy of your CBE program. Some of these may already be regularly collected and reported on, but others may be new metrics. Consider which are highest priority for your institution.

[cberesearch.org/outcomesdata](http://cberesearch.org/outcomesdata)

#### Early Evidence About the Efficacy of Postsecondary Competency-Based Education Programs

<b>Key Metrics for CBE Practitioners</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Areas of Improvement</b>	<b>Key Next Steps</b>
Race/Ethnicity/ Gender			
Retention			
Completion			
Pell Status			
Time to Completion			
Pacing			

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Key Metrics for CBE Practitioners	Current Status	Areas of Improvement	Key Next Steps
Median Cumulative Tuition			
Employment within 6 months in field of study			
Employer Satisfaction			
Student Satisfaction			
<b>Add other key metrics</b>			

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## B. Key Stakeholders

Please provide detailed information on the various key stakeholders who will be integral to your CBE program development. Be sure to include the individuals' qualifications and experiences which make them a right fit for the success of the project.

See [C-BEN's Quality Framework for CBE Programs User's Guide](#)

See [C-BEN's Employer Engagement Best Practices Toolkit](#)

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Interest &amp; Issue Areas</b> (Areas of expertise or interest that this stakeholder represents)	<b>Next Steps for Engagement</b>
Registrar		
Financial Aid		
IT		
Institutional Research		
Student Services		
Admissions		
Employer Partners		

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<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Interest &amp; Issue Areas</b> (Areas of expertise or interest that this stakeholder represents)	<b>Next Steps for Engagement</b>
External Audiences such as Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Boards, etc.		
Add other key metrics		

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## C. Budgeting

Please consider reviewing the following links to help you think through core elements of a CBE budget, including resources needed for successful implementation and completion.

### [NCHEMS Competency-Based Education Cost Model](#)

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) has developed a cost tool related to developing competency-based education programs for institutions, with support from the Lumina Foundation. This cost model is designed to help institutional leaders unpack the activities, costs, and revenue related to starting and maintaining CBE programs. (NCHEMS, 2021)

### [C-BEN ROI Estimator User Guide](#)

The Return on Investment (ROI) Estimator was designed to help calculate and predict the ROI and break-even point for CBE programs and potential new workforce partnership programs.

#### **Things to consider when budgeting:**

- Personnel costs, including faculty release time
- Consultants
- Data access (e.g. Burning Glass)
- Technology

## Discussion Prompts

<p>What resources do you need now to get the work started?</p>	
<p>What is your comprehensive budget for long-term sustainability?</p>	



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## D. Program Timeline

Based on the information identified above, please use the chart below to map out your program timeline

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Key Action Steps</b>	<b>Who is Responsible?</b>	<b>Milestones and Deadlines</b>	<b>Progress to Date</b>

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## 5. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Discussion Prompts

<p>How do you plan to evaluate this project? How will you monitor your expected outcomes and any applicable quantitative metrics? How will you assess progress and adjust the timeline, as needed?</p>	
<p>What are some potential barriers which could hinder or slow project completion? What are your proposed solution for overcoming these barriers?</p>	
<p>What are some dependencies that will dictate the kind of CBE program you are developing and your overall next steps? For example, is there a particular industry your program is trying to target? What kind of employers will you work with as a result, and how will this inform your curriculum development, support services, etc.?</p>	