



## Activities for Developing Competencies

### Purpose:

These recommended activities can help the college's faculty team to develop and validate competencies.

### Ensure Compliance and Alignment to State, Regional and Federal Standards

- **Collect and review existing requirements.**
  - All standard requirements to serve as a guide when developing competencies (e.g., requirements from Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), U.S. Department of Education, Chancellor's Office, etc.)
  - Industry- specific requirements (e.g., state reqs for Early Childhood, etc.)
- **Review and consider statewide efforts to define competency definitions and standards to ensure alignment.**

### Talk to Employers and Use Regional Labor Market Data to Guide Competency Development

- **Look for industry-specific competency sets created by industry associations for inspiration as the college considers what framework might work best for the college's program.** For example:
  - [“The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education .”](#) American Association of Colleges of Nursing , 2021.
  - [“Intel® Skills for Innovation.”](#) Intel, 2024.
  - [“OSHA Training Requirements by Standard.”](#) OSHA, 2023.
  - [Department of Labor Industry Models.](#) Department of Labor, 2024. Note: This resource includes 30+ models for different industries such as finance, IT, etc.
  - [“Six Sigma Training Guides & Full Edition Manuals for Six Sigma Professionals.”](#) The Council for Six Sigma Certification, 2024.

- **Ask employer partners and other industry partners what knowledge, skills, and abilities workers need, what would be nice to have, what isn't needed to ensure that program competencies align with industry needs.**
  - Develop an internal and external stakeholder engagement plan (See [Develop A Strategic Communications Plan](#)).
  - Create a small Advisory Committee to help review and vet the college's program's competency set or plan how to engage students and key stakeholders in vetting. Invite key external stakeholders including regional employers and other workforce development partners to foster their participation and commitment to the college's new program.
  - Ask individuals where they see the industry/field going in the future to determine if there are things that should be embedded into a competency to align with emerging trends.
- **Use labor market information (LMI) tools to support development of competencies.**
  - Build on the foundational use of LMI described in [Selecting a Program](#).
  - Consider using [Lightcast](#)'s pre-configured reports to extract skills from current job postings to develop a more comprehensive list of competencies.
  - Use other LMI tools such as [O\\*NET](#), Centers of Excellence, and Local Workforce Boards to ensure that the competencies developed are responsive to regional workforce demands.

## Write the College's Competencies

- **Use templates, exercises, and worksheets to structure the college's development process.**
  - Utilize resources developed by other colleges such as this [Competency Statement exercise](#) or [Competency Statements Template](#).
  - Review this [example of using raw skills data to develop a competency statement](#).
- **Consider both hard skills (technical abilities) and soft skills (interpersonal and soft skills).**
  - Ensure the college is partnering with general education faculty to ensure complementary development of competencies across the program.
- **Create a direct assessment CBE Program Map (crosswalk) that shows how newly defined competencies are related to traditional courses.**

## Evaluating and Refining Competencies

- **Vet competency statements with internal and external stakeholders.**
  - Include employers, partners at other higher education institutions, subject matter experts, faculty, staff, subject matter experts, and/or students/graduates to ensure there is alignment on definitions and understanding of the competency statements.
  - Consider using the [Competency Review Process Worksheet](#) to help guide these conversations.
- **Revisit employer engagement strategies to incorporate a more structured approach to involving employers in the competency validation process.**
  - Review this resource on [employer engagement](#).
  - Organize sessions where employers can provide feedback on whether drafted competencies align with real-world requirements and are inclusive of diverse employee needs and backgrounds.
- **Prepare faculty and staff to provide meaningful input.**
  - Consider offering training or orientation to the college's direct assessment CBE program goals, ensuring their feedback is informed by an understanding of the program model, target learners, and intended equity outcomes.
- **Use a standardized worksheet to document feedback in a structured way.**
  - Review this example of a [Stakeholder Feedback Template](#) in the Competency Review Process Worksheet.
- **Use interactive activities to engage developers.**
  - For example, make sticky notes with competency statements on one side and definitions on the other. Engage stakeholders in grouping these into potential domains during a workshop, which can facilitate dynamic discussions on relevance and equity. When grouping sticky notes into domains, encourage stakeholders to consider whether the competencies adequately address the needs of all potential students.
- **Develop metrics to assess the inclusivity of the competency validation process.**
  - Measure the diversity of stakeholders involved and the degree to which their feedback influences the final competency statements.
  - Ask participants if they were able to provide feedback throughout the process or if they wanted different formats for engagement.

## Ensuring Quality and Continuous Improvement

- **Consider using the “Coherent Program and Curricular Design” rubric in [C-BEN’s Quality Framework](#)** to assess how the colleges’ competency strategy aligns with quality indicators.
- **Establish an ongoing review cycle** that allows for continuous improvement of competencies based on stakeholder feedback.