

C-BEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN)?

A: C-BEN is a group of regionally accredited two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities working together to address shared challenges aligned with designing, developing, and scaling competency-based education (CBE) programs.

Q: What is CBE?

A: CBE is a flexible way for students to get credit for what they know, build on their knowledge and skills by learning more at their own pace, and earn high-quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials that help them in their lives and careers. CBE focuses on what students must know and be able to do to earn degrees and other credentials. Progress is measured by students demonstrating through valid, reliably assessed learning objectives that they have acquired knowledge and skills required to earn degrees or other credentials in a particular academic discipline or field of study, regardless of the amount of time spent.

Q: Who are C-BEN Members?

A: C-BEN members are field leaders from colleges and universities from across the nation who have created or are on their way to creating high-quality programs with well-defined learning outcomes and rigorous assessments. Members are dedicated to resolving the challenges aligned with designing and developing scalable CBE programs.

Q: How Does C-BEN Work?

A: C-BEN members share a vision of working together to help competency-based learning become a stronger, more widely understood option for students seeking degrees and credentials. United by the goal of advancing CBE and new models of higher education through responsible innovation, C-BEN institutions work collaboratively to accelerate progress toward solutions to common problems by:

1. Conducting policy outreach to improve communication and collaboration (e.g. education on direct assessment, CBE experimental sites).
2. Using a flexible series of work cycles to help guide the work. These work cycles provide a practical and effective structure for managing work scope, collaboration, and accelerated knowledge generation across institutions. While C-BEN has been structured in this way, the Network has recently taken into account that this is a rapidly evolving field and it has been assessing future needs and may adapt, change or expand the way it operates in pursuit of its primary purpose.

Participants from C-BEN member institutions are divided among themed strands. The participants in the strands work together to build better data and information for developing CBE programs, including diagnostic tools such as checklists, frameworks, and other information that can be used by these institutions and shared widely. The Network is also supported by key stakeholders, including: higher education experts; experts in fields such as communications and business; and faculty, staff, and students. The C-BEN Steering Committee, consisting of innovators from several participating institutions, help guide the work.

3. Continuing to adapt to meet the field's changing needs.

Q: How Do Colleges and Universities Join C-BEN?

A: The Network was launched in 2014 and currently includes 30 institutions and four public systems with 82 campuses.

Visit the C-BEN website (www.cbenetwork.org) to learn more about upcoming calls for applications.