Designing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements: A Framework for State Educational Agencies and Postsecondary Institutions

Establishing a Stakeholder Team and Defining Goals

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE
NOVEMBER 2016

Introduction

The *Designing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements Facilitator's Guide* provides state educational agencies (SEAs) a step-by-step process for developing articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions that incorporate competency-based education (CBE). The articulation agreements will formalize the process of allowing students to participate in a competency-based educational program that stretches across the secondary and postsecondary levels of education, resulting in a degree or certificate aligned with state- or industry-identified needs. This guide will address how states will define the competencies that students need to learn and be able to demonstrate to become college and career ready. The guide provides a process for engaging stakeholders in developing competency-based articulation agreements.

Establishing the Stakeholder Team and Defining Goals at a Glance

This section introduces the facilitator to the process of creating competency-based articulation agreements by emphasizing the importance of establishing a stakeholder team, building stakeholder knowledge of competency-based education and articulation agreements, establishing a shared vision, and assessing the readiness of the team to build an agreement.

Table 1 shows the objectives, activities, and handouts for establishing a stakeholder team.

Table 1. Establishing the Stakeholder Team Objectives, Activities, and Handouts

Objectives	Planning and Preparation Tasks	Facilitation Activities	Handouts
1. Build knowledge of competency-based education and articulation agreements.	▪ Develop facilitator background knowledge of CBE and articulation agreements.	*None*	▪ Slides 8–15
2. Establish a team representing K–12 and higher education, business, and industry.	▪ Identify stakeholders for the competency-based articulation agreement planning process.	*None*	▪ Handout 1A: Identifying the Team
3. Clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.	▪ Recruit stakeholders through outreach and communication. ▪ Consider team roles and responsibilities.	*None*	▪ Handout 1A: Identifying the Team ▪ Slides 16–24
4. Convene the competency-based articulation agreement stakeholder team.	▪ Plan the meeting.	▪ Build team's background knowledge of CBE and articulation agreements. ▪ Confirm stakeholder commitment to the project and their roles. ▪ Explore competency-based articulation agreements within the state policy landscape. ▪ Set a vision for competency-based articulation agreements. ▪ Assess the readiness to design and develop competency-based articulation agreements. ▪ Determine next steps.	▪ Handout 1A: Identifying the Team ▪ Handout 1B: Key Terms and Concepts ▪ Handout 1C: Detailed Agenda for Stakeholder Convening ▪ Handout 1D: Contextualizing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements ▪ Handout 1E: Setting a Vision for Competency-Based Articulation Agreements ▪ Handout 1F: Competency-Based Articulation Readiness Assessment ▪ Slides 25-38

OBJECTIVE OF THE GUIDE

Designing a competency-based articulation agreement will require a variety of stakeholders, including representatives of higher education, business and industry, state educational agency (SEA) staff, and subject-matter experts. These stakeholders set the vision for the state and lead the design and development of the competency-based articulation agreement.

As shown in Table 1, there are four objectives for this guide:

- **Objective 1:** Build knowledge of CBE and articulation agreements.
- **Objective 2:** Establish a team representing K–12 and higher education, business, and industry.
- **Objective 3:** Clarify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders for designing competency-based articulation agreements.
- **Objective 4:** Convene the competency-based articulation agreement stakeholder team.

This guide is written for a facilitator at an SEA who will lead a team of stakeholders from secondary and postsecondary education, policymakers, business and industry, and individuals and community members involved in developing a competency-based articulation agreement. This guide includes the following components:

- Relevant background and contextual information
- Facilitation tips
- Slide presentations with notes
- Exercises, handouts, and supplemental resources

This facilitator will identify and form a team, establish roles and responsibilities, establish a shared vision for a competency-based articulation agreement, assess the state's readiness to conduct this work, and develop a plan for designing the competency-based articulation agreements. For those states already in the process of developing their own similar agreements, the materials provided in the guide can be tailored to that audience to enhance or refine processes.

The resources and tools found in the *Facilitator's Guide* do not promote any particular career cluster, articulation model, approach to competency-based education, or address teaching and learning strategies or curriculum resources.

BEFORE USING THE GUIDE

In preparation for using this guide and developing competency-based articulation agreements, a state needs to, at a minimum, have adopted flexible credit policies, such as seat-time waivers, to allow students the option of earning credit outside of traditional course schedules and participation. As many as 35 states as recently as 2015 have adopted this policy, allowing some or all districts in the state to apply for a waiver or implement their own flexible credit policies (Blumenthal & Rasmussen, 2015). School districts using this guide may need to identify resources aligned to a set of student competencies, such as standards; assessments, including performance assessments; evaluations; and related supports, such as student learning objectives or other concepts aligned with competency-based education.

For partnering higher education institutions, an interest in competency-based approaches and willingness to recognize and award credits for competency-based experiences and diplomas is necessary before designing and developing competency-based articulation agreements.

For states that are newer to the CBE concept, developing a common understanding of CBE and its core components (e.g., flexible credit policies, defining competencies, assessing competencies, and approaches to personalized education) is an important first step. States can use many resources and tools to pursue this work, including briefs and reports from the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, iNACOL, the Council of Chief State School Officers, Jobs for the Future, Achieve, and others.

Planning and Preparation Activities

DEVELOP FACILITATOR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE OF CBE AND ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

Before states can lead a group of stakeholders to design a competency-based articulation agreement, they must first develop an understanding of competency-based education and articulation agreements. This section of the guide provides a facilitator with some general background knowledge on competency-based education and articulation agreements that will help inform the facilitator in leading this work.

States and districts are redefining what students need to know and be able to do to be considered college and career ready. These definitions are reflected in more rigorous college- and career-ready standards, such as newly adopted individual state standards, the Next Generation Science Standards, and the Common Core State Standards. New definitions of student learning have led to additional challenges for states and school districts in recognizing the multiple ways that students can acquire and demonstrate mastery.

One emerging approach to promoting college and career readiness and success is competency-based education (CBE). This approach to personalized education allows students to pursue learning with flexibility from a traditional class structure and to demonstrate mastery of individualized learning objectives at their own pace. "Competency-based education" goes by many names, including "proficiency-based," "mastery-based," and "performance-based" (Patrick, Kennedy, & Powell, 2013). This guide will refer to these sets of concepts as CBE. In practice, these concepts "[refer] to educational approaches that prioritize the mastery of learning objectives regardless of how long it takes" (Le, Wolfe, & Sternberg, 2014). These learning objectives are the competencies that students are expected to master. In this specific application, the guide is directed toward students at all levels of achievement rather than a specific subset of students.

Although CBE goes by many names, it also looks different in its application across states and even across districts within the same state. At its core, however, is a set of shared characteristics. In nearly all applications, CBE includes:

- Demonstration of mastery of learning
- Advancement upon mastery of learning instead of seat time
- Personalized instructional approaches (Le et al., 2014).

States, districts, and national organizations are adopting definitions of CBE that also include other features, such as:

- Flexible and authentic assessments, such as performance tasks or portfolio assessments, that simulate the type of experiences that students would likely encounter in college and careers in settings that might include presentations, projects incorporating multiple disciplines, demonstration of technical skills, and others

- Learning that occurs outside of the traditional classroom or school day, such as online or blended learning, apprenticeships, service learning, work-based learning, or afterschool programs

- Granting course grades and/or credit equivalencies based on demonstration of mastery in lieu of course participation, such as assessment of prior learning or testing out of a subject

- Acknowledgment of mastery in alternative formats, such as through credentials or badges in lieu of course credits or grades

- Concurrent or dual enrollment in postsecondary education (adapted from Sturgis, Patrick, & Pittenger, 2011).

There are, of course, many ways to promote college and career readiness and success. Another approach that states and districts are adopting are articulation agreements to establish a path for students to advance through levels of education. Articulation agreements are formalized agreements between institutions of education that outline a sequence of courses and agreed-upon metrics that learning has occurred and that students are qualified to transition between institutions. These agreements can align high school graduation requirements with college entrance requirements, thereby removing barriers to college admission (College and Career Readiness and Success Center, 2013; Miller & Imel, 1987).

Current secondary to postsecondary articulation agreements are based on a set of courses with credit measured in traditional Carnegie Units. Carnegie Units include seat-time requirements and are "defined as 120 hours of contact time with an instructor, which translates into one hour of instruction on a particular subject per day, five days per week, for twenty-four weeks annually" (Silva, White, & Toch, 2015). The Carnegie Unit assumes that a set amount of time studying a subject can be used to recognize that student learning has occurred. This has been the approach to granting course credit among secondary and postsecondary institutions for the past century. In this approach, students must spend a predetermined amount of time in a classroom to earn credit. A career pathway and, by extension, an articulation agreement, that is built on the foundation of the Carnegie Unit is limited in its approach to recognizing student learning and the pace at which students may demonstrate mastery of academic, technical, and employability skills.

A competency-based approach to articulation agreements can enable students to progress in a more flexible, individualized, and even accelerated fashion along their career pathway by removing time requirements. This competency-based approach would allow students to progress based on their demonstrated mastery of competency. The CBE model offers students the opportunity when they are prepared to advance. This can result in students being able to move more at their own pace for their chosen course of study.

States that have invested significant time and resources in developing CBE may find an opportunity to help students progress through secondary and postsecondary education that recognizes and incorporates individual competencies. One way to do this, the subject of this guide, is to define and incorporate competencies into articulation agreements as possible steps in a strategy for promoting a more flexible and efficient approach to college and career readiness and success. This is the meaning of a competency-based articulation agreement. Table 2 offers examples of different types of competency-based articulation agreements.
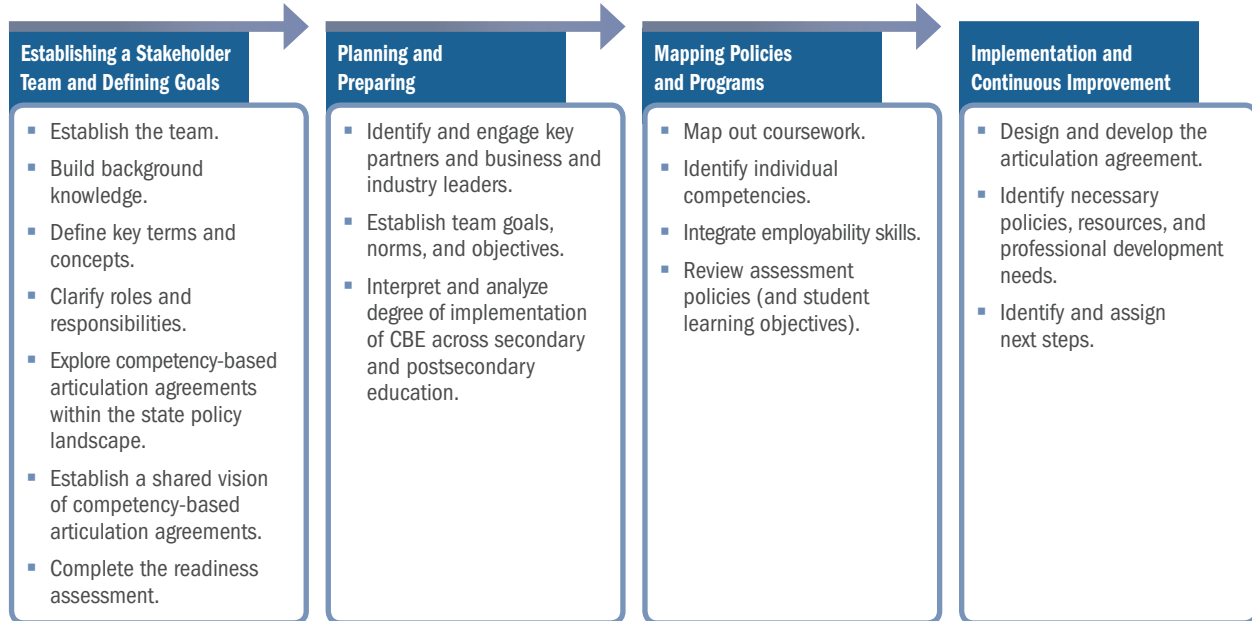
Table 2. Approaches to Competency-Based Articulation Agreements

	Traditional Articulation Agreements	Hybrid-Flex Approaches		Competency-Based Education Approaches
P–20 Alignment	Students participate in a nonduplicative sequence of courses between secondary and postsecondary levels.	Students participate in a nonduplicative sequence of courses with one or more of these courses able to be satisfied by students demonstrating competencies. The demonstration of competencies is considered the equivalent of a traditional course credit in the sequence.		Students demonstrate mastery within a nonduplicative sequence of defined competences, earning the equivalent of course credit for each competency they meet.
Instructional Model(s)	Traditional, classroom-based experiences (e.g., all students learn at the same pace, test at the same time, etc.). Instruction ends at the end of the traditional academic calendar (e.g., at the end of a grading period).	A few selected and preapproved workplace, applied learning, online or blended-learning courses, and other personalized educational experiences may be taken in lieu of a traditional, classroom-based course. Students must still demonstrate mastery on an approved competency-based assessment before earning credit. May take place within or outside of the traditional academic calendar.		Students learn at their own pace through a range of options (e.g., traditional courses, work-based learning, applied learning, and online or blended learning environment) as they strive to gain competencies. Students can demonstrate mastery at any time.
Evidence of Learning	Student performance on coursework and/or end-of-course assessments result in grades and/or credits for specified courses.	**Multiple options for earning credit**		Students are assessed through a variety of preapproved assessments that might include traditional tests as well as performance tasks, portfolios, observations, and/or earning badges/certificates.
		Credit awarded in the form of grades and/or credits for completion of traditional or specified courses. **OR**	Students test out of a course and earn credit by demonstrating competency through demonstrating proficiency on an approved test or other type of assessment in lieu of taking the course.	
Transitions	Postsecondary institution(s) approve of courses and accept grades/credits for these courses, leading toward a degree or certificate.	Postsecondary institution(s) approve of courses and a set of assessments that can be used in lieu of courses to recognize competencies equivalent to these courses. Both approved courses and approved assessments that serve as credit equivalents lead toward a degree or certificate.		Postsecondary institution(s) approve of the assessments for required competencies that serve as credit equivalents, leading toward a degree or certificate.

The process that states could follow to design any of these types of articulation agreements is outlined in Exhibit 1. This guide will provide step-by-step instructions for the first phase in this process, which is establishing a stakeholder team and defining goals.

Exhibit 1. Overview of the Process for Designing a Competency-Based Articulation Agreement

Establishing a Stakeholder Team and Defining Goals	Planning and Preparing	Mapping Policies and Programs	Implementation and Continuous Improvement
▪ Establish the team. ▪ Build background knowledge. ▪ Define key terms and concepts. ▪ Clarify roles and responsibilities. ▪ Explore competency-based articulation agreements within the state policy landscape. ▪ Establish a shared vision of competency-based articulation agreements. ▪ Complete the readiness assessment.	▪ Identify and engage key partners and business and industry leaders. ▪ Establish team goals, norms, and objectives. ▪ Interpret and analyze degree of implementation of CBE across secondary and postsecondary education.	▪ Map out coursework. ▪ Identify individual competencies. ▪ Integrate employability skills. ▪ Review assessment policies (and student learning objectives).	▪ Design and develop the articulation agreement. ▪ Identify necessary policies, resources, and professional development needs. ▪ Identify and assign next steps.

States may enter this process at any point, depending on where they are at implementing competency-based articulation agreements.

IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE COMPETENCY-BASED ARTICULATION AGREEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The next step in developing competency-based articulation agreements is identifying and convening a stakeholder team that represents a variety of perspectives, experiences, and expertise. The facilitator identifies potential team members whose perspectives are crucial to setting a vision for the state. This team could include individuals or representatives from influential organizations (e.g., the Governor's Office, community college representatives, etc.). The facilitator's goal is to form a team that has diverse representation and an understanding of the issues creating the need for alignment between competency-based education and articulation across levels of education. The members of the team should have the authority to make decisions and commit their respective organizations to completing the work and an understanding of related policies that might complement or compete with the work.

The agreements developed through this process will have broad implications for many organizations, including K–12 education and career and technical education (CTE), two- and four-year colleges and universities, workforce and economic development, and businesses and industries. The initial stakeholder team gathering will bring together voices from these groups to set a vision for the end product, the competency-based articulation agreement, and to assess the readiness of the state to get to work. Table 3 illustrates six categories of stakeholder groups at the state level that can play a vital role in designing and developing effective competency-based articulation agreements that should be represented within the team. These stakeholder groups will likely vary based on the specific state context.

Table 3. Stakeholder Categories and Example Groups

Stakeholder Group	Example Representatives
K–12 Education	▪ State board of education ▪ SEA ▪ School administration ▪ Teacher-leaders ▪ Educator professional organizations
Postsecondary Education	▪ State-level coordinating board, agency, or commission ▪ Representation from public and private four-year institutions ▪ Representation from community or technical colleges
Career and Technical Education	▪ State CTE policy governing bodies ▪ CTE teacher professional organizations (Association for Career and Technical Education, Association of Career and College Readiness Organizations, etc.) ▪ Representation from apprenticeship state board
Business/Industry/Workforce	▪ State agencies representing commerce, economic, and workforce development and labor ▪ State workforce investment board representative ▪ Statewide chamber of commerce and trade associations ▪ Representation from a range of businesses and industries
Policymakers/Legislators	▪ Governor/legislative representative ▪ State government officials ▪ State legislature officials
Individual/Community Members	▪ Students ▪ Parents ▪ Advocacy organizations

Using **Handout 1A: Identifying the Team,** the facilitator can identify representatives from appropriate agencies, organizations, and perspectives to determine who they would like to include in the stakeholder team. Part 1 of the handout can be used to generate a list of potential committee members from among the groups listed in Table 3 above.

- **Facilitator tip:** Review the list of potential stakeholders who have been identified. In collaboration with the stakeholders, in particular those who have a decision-making role within their organization, add or remove individuals from the list.

- **Facilitator tip:** In collaboration with key decision makers, consider reaching out to influential individuals and/or organizations within the state whose participation and/or approval will be necessary for conducting the work of meeting, organization, designing, and developing the competency-based articulation agreements. This outreach may include an in-person meeting, a phone call, or simply a courtesy message.

Diverse representation on the team includes both organizational affiliation or perspective of members and their personal attributes and characteristics. Team members should include a mix of different roles within their organizations. After completing Part 1 of **Handout 1A: Identifying the Team,** the facilitator should review the individuals identified to ensure that a diverse and representative team is being assembled. As part of

that team, individuals with decision-making authority as well as those who will be assigned to follow up on the plans and discussions that take place will need to be represented.

Consider the following personal characteristics of individuals who will be a part of the team:

- Stakeholders who have demonstrated experience in their field and can commit the time necessary to fulfill their responsibilities to the team as well as community or political representatives best positioned to advocate for the competency-based education system within and across the organization they represent.

- The level of collaboration necessary for this project to succeed. (For example, the state agency responsible for granting seat-time waivers to individual districts may be housed within an office of secondary education that may or may not also include members of the office of CTE.)

RECRUIT STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

After developing a comprehensive list of stakeholders, the facilitator will recruit these individuals to participate in the project. The facilitator should be prepared to communicate key information to stakeholders, such as:

- Rationale for why the state is looking to develop competency-based articulation agreements

- Description of the expected outcomes of this work and how it will affect the key stakeholders

- Identification of any incentives or supports the stakeholders will receive based on their participation

- An overall timeline or deliverable schedule and/or key dates that stakeholders will be expected to meet

CONSIDER TEAM MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To design competency-based articulation agreements, the facilitator will need to secure a number of resources, both human and financial, to support the stakeholder team. After identifying which agencies and organizations will participate, think about what roles stakeholders will play and when in the development process they will be engaged. Some stakeholders may play a critical role at the beginning of the initiative, such as the initial vision setting and readiness assessment, while other stakeholders may play a critical role during the implementation and continuous improvement phases. Exhibit 2 and Table 4 identify key roles that stakeholders need to play for the initiative to be successful. Please refer back to Exhibit 1 for additional information on the work that will be done to design the competency-based articulation agreement.
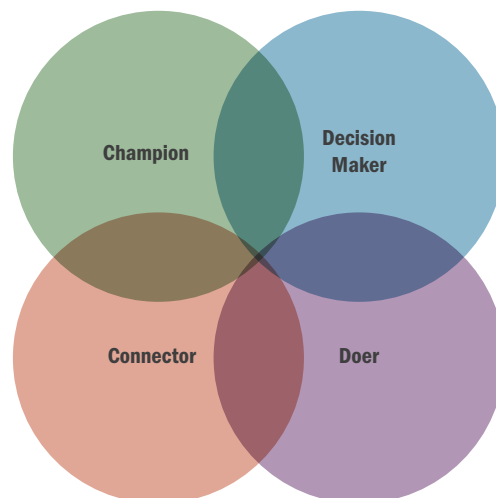
Exhibit 2. Key Stakeholder Roles

Table 4. Key Roles for Stakeholders

Role	Responsibilities	Considerations
Champion	- Advocate for a statewide competency-based system and/or articulation agreement covering a statewide system of higher education. - Leverage position or relationships to build buy-in for the initiative. - Share information with other stakeholders outside of the team. - Represent the interests of the team at all levels, such as teachers, program administrators, and policy advisors.	At some level, everyone involved in this work should be a champion within their own organization or among their own stakeholder group. The team will need certain key individuals, however, who have authority, visibility, and/or influence to secure the resources and move political will to complete the work. Not all champions will necessarily participate throughout the entire process and may designate representatives or staff from their office.
Connector	- Make connections between people, initiatives, and organizations. - Identify and leverage resources. - Share information with other stakeholders.	A few key people outside of the team need to be aware of the context in which the work is happening as both competency-based education and articulation agreements cut across levels and systems. Knowing about related policies and initiatives will greatly enhance the ability of the team to design and develop agreements that can work.
Decision Maker	- Review materials, make critical decisions, and approve decisions. - Contribute to the work as a consultant and/or expert. - Advise others on approach and next steps. - Provide initial considerations or insights for the work.	Decision makers are experts that are able to set the vision and direction of the work. At least one decision maker from each stakeholder category should be a part of the team.
Doer	- Lead and complete major pieces of the support work. - Gather and present critical information. - Keep activities and projects moving forward.	Several members of the team, perhaps one from each stakeholder group, need to actually write drafts, gather information about policies and initiatives, and generally drive the support work throughout the course of the initiative. They may also bring additional resources to the team in the form of staff or programs.

After identifying the roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder, consider what phase(s) of the design and development of the competency-based articulation agreement each particular stakeholder might be most helpful. The following phases can occur concurrently:

- **Process and Logistics:** Managing the work during the course of the initiative and gathering key information for specific activities. Example responsibilities include:
  - Coordinating across state agencies
  - Establishing a vision and setting objectives for the work
  - Developing a budget and securing resources
  - Facilitating meetings
  - Gathering, analyzing, summarizing, and reporting information to stakeholders
  - Communicating with stakeholders throughout the process

- **Policy Development:** Drafting policies or guidance to align with the goals and objectives of the stakeholder team. Example responsibilities include:
  - Writing and reviewing draft policies and regulatory and nonregulatory guidance
  - Reviewing related policies to ensure alignment across state agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, individual schools, etc.

- **Capacity Building:** Providing professional development (PD) and support to affected individuals and organizations (e.g., school districts or admissions offices of colleges and universities) for implementation of the articulation agreement. Example responsibilities include:
  - Providing training on policies, regulatory and nonregulatory guidance, and tools and techniques for serving students participating in a competency-based education program
  - Gathering and helping maintain support from education, business, and industry leaders across the state
  - Establishing mechanisms for ongoing communication between stakeholders
  - Leveraging information from other state models, research, evaluation, and input from experts

- **Evaluation:** Assessing the process of developing the competency-based articulation agreements and potential and actual impact of articulation to students and affected organizations on an ongoing basis to gather evidence of success. This might include evaluating the successes and challenges of developing the competency-based articulation agreement in addition to achieving the intended outcomes of the work in terms of the number of students served, increase in institutional capacity, and other outcomes. Example responsibilities include:
  - Developing methods to evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of the competency-based articulation agreement
  - Developing a continuous improvement process to revise and improve the agreement

Using Part 2 of **Handout 1A: Identifying the Team,** indicate which stakeholders would serve in the team roles and responsibilities, and identify in which stages of the initiative each stakeholder will be most involved (i.e., Process and Logistics, Policy Development, Capacity Building, and/or Evaluation). This step will help the facilitator plan needed resources and identify gaps in expertise or knowledge.

  - **Facilitator tip:** This is another place where the roles and responsibilities can be shared with certain key members of the stakeholder team to make adjustments based on the strengths, personalities, and characteristics of the individuals.

PLAN THE KICKOFF MEETING

After the facilitator has recruited sufficient representation, planning the in-person stakeholder team meeting commences. This meeting has several intended outcomes, including to build a common understanding of what CBE is and why articulation agreements are needed, contextualize these concepts within the state setting, establish a vision for the work, and complete the state's readiness to develop a competency-based articulation agreement.

Prior to the meeting, the facilitator will need to secure several logistical items to ensure a successful convening. Some of these items include the following:

- Agenda (see **Handout 1C: Detailed Agenda for Stakeholder Convening**) and accompanying background material
- Confirmed presenters (e.g., a keynote speaker)
- Customized College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center) presentation slides
- Meeting space
- Food and beverages
- Audio and visual equipment (e.g., a projector and screen)
- Presentation materials (easel pads, sticky notes, markers, etc.)
- Copies of all handouts and materials

Facilitation Activities

After the facilitator has secured participation from the stakeholders, the next step is to plan and host the initial stakeholder team meeting. Participating stakeholders will commit to participate on the team, build their understanding of CBE and articulation agreements, set a vision for competency-based articulation agreements, and assess the readiness of the state to conduct the work.

BUILD TEAM'S BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE OF CBE AND ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS (SLIDES 8–15)

During the kickoff meeting, the facilitator:

- Defines CBE and articulation agreements, describes the various approaches to CBE implementation at the school and classroom levels, and highlights how states and districts approach CBE and articulation agreements throughout the country.

- Shares **Handout 1B: Key Terms and Concepts** and presents various definitions of CBE, articulation agreements, and related terms and concepts.

- Creates a list of differing approaches to CBE from the stakeholders by writing down responses on an easel pad or chart paper.

CONFIRM STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT AND THEIR ROLES (SLIDES 16–24)

Prior to the meeting, the facilitator:

- Recruited various stakeholders from different organizations and contemplated assignment to the roles and responsibilities each would play.

- Shared information about the intended purpose of the work, impact the work may have, stakeholder roles, and level of engagement required.

During the meeting, the facilitator:

- Reviews the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

  - **Facilitator tip:** Use Slides 20–23 and Part 2 of **Handout 1A: Identifying the Team** to review the roles and responsibilities of individual members. A discussion about the contributions that each member of the stakeholder team may be expected to fulfill will help individuals commit to their assigned roles.

- Gains acceptance of participants' roles.

Note: The degree of commitment required will vary depending on the state, with some states requiring verbal confirmation for formal participation on a team, written confirmation, or through an act of the state legislature. The facilitator should determine what the appropriate materials should be for this step of the work.

EXPLORE COMPETENCY-BASED ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS WITHIN THE STATE POLICY LANDSCAPE (SLIDES 25–32)

During the kickoff meeting, the facilitator:

- Shares **Handout 1D: Contextualizing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements** and facilitates Part 1.

  - **Facilitator tip:** If the group of stakeholders includes six or more people, consider dividing them into smaller teams of three to five members, with each team having a diverse representation of different stakeholder groups (see Table 3 for a list of stakeholder groups).

- Creates a list of supportive policies by writing down responses on an easel pad or chart paper. Supportive policies would identify and support the adoption of instructional models and collection of evidence of student learning necessary to implement a competency-based education model (either traditional, hybrid-flex, or fully competency-based) in a classroom, school, or district.

  - **Facilitator tip:** When brainstorming policies, it is possible that some policy suggestions are tangential to the topic at hand or may not fit the vision being crafted. Check with the team to make sure that any approaches being removed from consideration are acknowledged and an explanation is provided. One way to do this is to create a separate "parking lot" list of topics that are important but that the team agrees will not be considered *today.* The objective is to get the list of all available approaches down to a manageable amount, between five and 10, depending upon the size of the team.

- Identifies any barriers to expanding competency-based education and articulation agreements.

  - **Facilitator tip:** Barriers to expansion might occur across multiple domains, such as policies (e.g., limited number of days of PD available to educators in a given year), politics (e.g., lack of buy-in from key individuals and organizations, such as administrators or unions), funding streams (e.g., restrictions placed on use of funds from certain federal or state statutes), and more. While Activity 1 prompts individuals to list barriers, consider discussing the various domains from which barriers might stem.

- Facilitates Part 2 of **Handout 1D: Contextualizing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements.**

  - **Facilitator tip:** While stakeholders are in working groups, listen in on the discussions and connect concepts and ideas across the working groups.

- Engages the full team in a discussion about the related policies, resources, and PD that may support the expansion or development of CBE and articulation agreements.

Note: The purpose of this section of the agenda is to identify the policies, supports, and resources already in place in the state that can support the development of competency-based articulation agreements. The facilitator should capture stakeholder responses and listen for connections to existing priorities of individual representatives or organizations as well as those shared by more than one organization.

ESTABLISH A SHARED VISION OF A COMPETENCY-BASED ARTICULATION AGREEMENT (SLIDES 33–35)

After the stakeholder team members have identified related policies, resources, and PD to support a competency-based articulation agreement, the facilitator:

- Revisits the list of approaches to CBE and articulation agreements that was generated during the previous section of the agenda and leads a large-group discussion to identify any additional approaches that should be added.

- Reviews the list with the stakeholder team to remove any duplicate approaches that are specific to CBE and articulation agreements and have already been accomplished or enacted.

- Divides the stakeholders into small groups to discuss the prioritized approaches. Each small group receives **Handout 1E: Setting a Vision for Competency-Based Articulation Agreements** and is instructed to score each approach based on importance, feasibility, and overall priority. Using the results of **Handout 1D: Contextualizing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements** and the listing of policies that support CBE and articulation, the small groups will write down comments about connections to existing initiatives or priorities. The small groups will write down their top priorities and connecting policies and supports on an easel pad or chart paper.

  - **Facilitator tip:** Before releasing the small groups to the activity, have each group identify a note taker who will write down the group's scores for each approach and a summary of team members' comments. The group should also nominate a person to write down the top priorities and connections on chart paper.

- Leads a large-group discussion after the small groups have recorded their responses. As groups share their responses, the facilitator can note how frequently approaches and connections are mentioned. The frequency of mentions might result in the small group adjusting the priority score. Table 5 provides an example list of priorities in which the score from each small group is tallied and summarized.

  - **Facilitator tip:** Throughout this conversation, refer to any approaches previously discussed and those approaches noted in the "parking lot" of ideas. At this point, it may be helpful to reconsider ideas previously mentioned to ensure that the stakeholder team is prioritizing the most relevant approaches to competency-based articulation agreements.

Note: Throughout this guide, several sample tables (see Tables 5 and 6) are presented to demonstrate how the final product might look during the meeting. Consider sharing examples of these tables on an easel pad or filling out a completed table in a sample handout and sharing it with the stakeholder team members when asked for clarification on an activity. The facilitator can draw on these examples to prompt discussion or items for consideration.

Table 5. Sample Prioritized Competency-Based Articulation Agreement Approaches

Approach	Importance				Feasibility				Overall Priority			
Group	1	2	3	Avg	1	2	3	Avg	1	2	3	Avg
Entrance requirements will be based on course content.	3	2	3	**2.7**	1	1	2	**1.3**	3	3	3	**3**
Every student will have access to dual enrollment.	3	3	3	**3**	2	2	3	**2.3**	2	2	3	**2.3**
Every student will complete an accelerated learning opportunity.	2	2	1	**1.7**	3	3	3	**3**	2	1	2	**1.7**

ASSESS THE READINESS OF THE STATE TO DESIGN AND DEVELOP COMPETENCY-BASED ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS (SLIDES 36–38)

The last step before assigning tasks and developing a plan of action is to determine the group's readiness for starting this work.

During the meeting, the facilitator:

- Shares **Handout 1F: Competency-Based Articulation Readiness Assessment.**

- Divides the stakeholder team into small groups to complete one or more phases of the activity.

  - **Facilitator tip:** Have a representative mix of individuals in each small group such that every group includes at least a champion, a connector, a decision maker, and a doer and as diverse a representation of stakeholder categories as possible. Larger stakeholder teams can be split into small groups that are assigned to review just one or two phases. Smaller stakeholder teams may complete the review of all four phases within each small group.

- Leads a large-group discussion after the small groups have had time to complete the readiness assessment. Using Table 6 as an example, the facilitator identifies phases that are ready, in progress, and not ready and any notes from the small groups. As the groups share information, the facilitator will note the summary of readiness for each phase across the groups, areas of disagreement, and any important notes that the groups feel are important to share.

  - **Facilitator tip:** As the small groups share out their results, facilitate a conversation as a large group about any areas of disagreement. Consider asking the small groups to express their assumptions behind their ratings.

Table 6. Sample Summary of Readiness Assessment

Phase	Ready	In Progress	Not Ready
Planning	- Agreed on graduation and college entrance requirements - Approved process for developing articulation agreements	- School districts conducting outreach about CBE	- Postsecondary programs reviewed high school transcripts - Technological capacity to share students' mastery not in place
Policies	- State adopted seat-time waivers for individual districts	- Developing uniform approach to dual enrollment - K–12 and higher education are coming up with shared definition of competency	- Review existing policies that will be affected by CBE - Research other state policies for CBE, articulation yet to be conducted
Practices	- Teachers, districts have access to PD on designing assessments - Graduation requirements aligned with learning standards	- Teachers receiving PD on CBE - Postsecondary programs reviewing district graduation requirements with CBE	- Different programs do not yet use same approach to CBE - Districts have not identified graduation requirements by content area
Partnerships	- K–12 and postsecondary have committed to CBE	- Teacher preparation programs integrating CBE into curriculum, instruction	- State, districts have to develop outreach on CBE to stakeholders

RECAP AND NEXT STEPS (SLIDES 39–43)

With so many different interpretations and permutations of CBE in use by individual states, districts, and schools, understanding local practices is not only helpful but also imperative to designing competency-based articulation agreements that meet the particular needs of the state. For example, the stakeholder team can administer a survey as part of a study of CBE practices in place within the state or within specific schools or districts.

During the meeting, the facilitator:

- Discusses which members of the stakeholder team will be responsible for items assigned as next steps during the meeting, such as analyzing the results of the readiness checklist.
- Sets a date or discusses a timeline for completing the next steps.

After the meeting, the facilitator:

- Organizes notes, collects the readiness assessment and other activities, and distributes them to the team members.
- Lists next steps, the person(s) responsible for completing each, and the timeline for when the steps are due in a message to all team members.
- Schedules the next meeting of the stakeholder team and sends out invitations.

Summary and Outcomes

By the end of this section, the facilitator has convened a stakeholder team with the influence, expertise, and capacity to work collaboratively to design and develop competency-based articulation agreements. The facilitator has shared information about competency-based education and articulation agreements. Stakeholders have committed to support the work and come to a shared vision of competency-based articulation agreements and determined the priorities and feasibility of conducting this work. Finally, the team has conducted a readiness assessment before beginning the work of developing the competency-based articulation agreement.

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