# State of the Field: Postsecondary CBE in the US

In 2018, **American Institutes for Research**, in partnership with **Eduventures® Research** *(a division of the National Research Center for College and University Admissions®)*, **surveyed institutions of higher education across the United States to better understand how they are adopting and using competency-based education (CBE).**

This survey builds on the 2016 & 2017 Deconstructing CBE reports, based on research conducted by Eduventures®.

Who were the **501** institutions that responded?

54% public	41% private non-profit	5%

private for-profit

69% 4 year institutions	31% 2 year institutions

of these
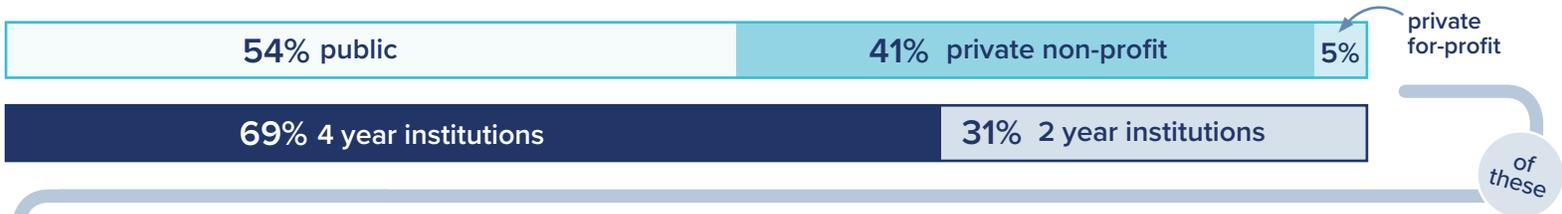
430 are in the process of adopting or interested in adopting CBE

- at the **planning stage**
- offer **competency-based courses** only
- offer at least one **full CBE certificate** or **degree program**
- say CBE is the **predominant mode** at their institution

of these

51%
3%
14%
32%
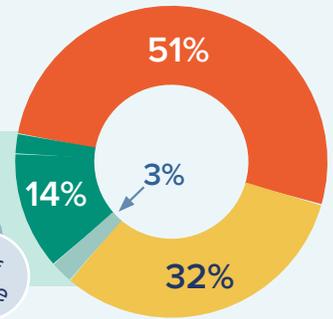
Institutions with programs offer a total of **512** certificate and degree programs

of these

427 Undergraduate programs

85 Graduate programs

Nursing and **computer sciences** were the most commonly reported CBE program disciplines.

Which students are being served by CBE programs?

50% reported students of **color**

75% reported adults age **25 or older**

50% reported students with **prior credits**
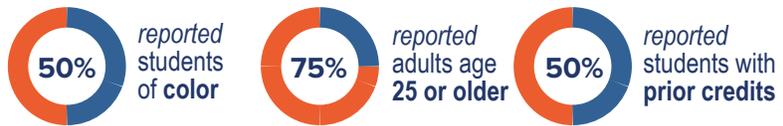
. . . make up at least half of their student population

In the last academic year . . .

44% had fewer than 50 students enrolled

16% had more than 1000 students enrolled

Note: to capture the diversity of CBE programs, we defined these as entire programs of study typified by at least one of the following: learning is measured in competencies; students advance between courses or complete the program based on mastering all required competencies; or courses or programs are substantially "self-paced" by students, with support.

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What do schools think are the **benefits** of CBE?
What do institutions think are the **barriers** to adopting CBE?

The top benefits of CBE are perceived differently by institutions with programs and those without.

With CBE programs	Without CBE programs
Increasing the **quality of students' learning** by requiring students to demonstrate mastery of each competency	Allowing students to **make their own choices** about pacing throughout the program
Allowing institutions to **innovate** with teaching and learning	Allowing institutions to **clarify the competencies** associated with courses/programs

Barriers to CBE are perceived to be similar except for the *lack of on-campus expertise* among institutions without programs.

	With CBE programs	Without CBE programs
Federal student aid regulations	57%	53%
Institution's business processes	56%	60%
Program start up costs	50%	53%
Lack of on-campus expertise	36%	58%

■ With CBE programs   ■ Without CBE programs
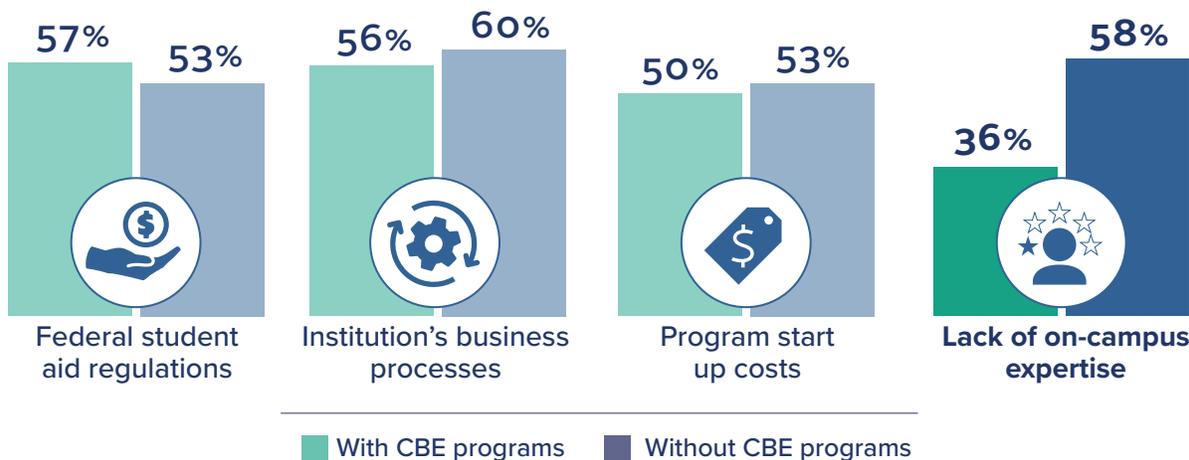
What might CBE look like in the future?

78% of respondents believe the number of CBE programs nationally will grow in the next 5 years.

Has CBE implementation changed since 2016?

89 institutions participating in this survey completed the Deconstructing CBE survey in 2016 fielded by Eduventures® and funded by Ellucian.

Among these 89 institutions . . .

- Adoption of the core elements identified in Deconstructing CBE has increased, although adoption remains below 33%
  - Direct Assessment
  - Mapping competencies to seat time
  - Learning outcomes at the program or course level
  - Prior learning assessment for credit
  - Self-pacing of courses and programs.

- Institutions describing themselves as "in the planning stage" of CBE implementation remained consistent around 38%
  - The share offering between one and five CBE programs increased by 10 percentage points.