



University of Phoenix will be one of the few higher education institutions in the U.S. offering direct assessment competency-based education programs

By Sharla Hooper

Direct assessment learning model enriches University's skills-tagging work and will allow more flexibility and individualized approach for students

University of Phoenix announces the planned August 1, 2022, launch of two direct assessment competency-based education (CBE-Direct Assessment) programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels with students expected to commence studies in these programs in October 2022. The graduate program will be a Master of Science in Psychology (MSP) program, and the undergraduate program will be a Bachelor of Science in Health Management (BSHM) program. CBE-Direct Assessment in higher education is an innovative learning model with courses designed around competencies, or skills, and within a framework of authentic assessments for students to demonstrate a competency, or skill.

According to a report based on the 2019 National Survey of Postsecondary Competency-Based Education (NSPCBE) by the American Institutes for Research, 18% of 602 higher education institution respondents indicated they were approved for CBE-Direct Assessment. At launch of the programs, University of Phoenix will be one of the few higher education institutions in the United States offering CBE-Direct Assessment programs.

Accelerated by the pandemic and the Great Resignation, the workforce market is increasingly focused on recognizing and overcoming skills gaps as well as opportunity gaps for workers, as illustrated in the results of the University of Phoenix's Career Optimism Index® study. The new CBE-Direct Assessment programs at University of Phoenix complement the university's skills-tagged curriculum, and because the university structures its courses around real-world skills that employers need, it is a natural progression in program development for working adult learners.

“CBE-Direct Assessment will allow the University to provide students with even more flexibility in their pursuit of a degree program. Instead of waiting for the fixed end date of a course, students will be able to accelerate their learning through an individualized approach to consuming course content with the guidance of a faculty member, and completing a course once

all competencies are demonstrated,” states John Woods, Ph.D., provost and chief academic officer. “Being able to show employers finite and defined competencies or skills in courses has tremendous value for students – especially when students can progress in their courses and degree programs based on the demonstration of their competencies or skills in real-time instead of being bound to seat-time requirements.”

Over the next year and a half the University anticipates releasing six (6) more CBE-Direct Assessment programs to grow its footprint in the innovative learning space. The effort builds on the university’s success with credit-based CBE programs.

“We are thrilled to offer this individualized approach to learning here at the University of Phoenix as an evolution to our existing CBE programs,” says Marc Booker, Ph.D., vice provost of Strategy and leader for CBE program efforts at the university. “With the help of faculty, students will be able to move through CBE-Direct Assessment courses at their own pace determined by their individual ability to demonstrate competencies. This aligns with our University’s strategy to give working adult learners clear value as quickly as possible for their education so that they can give back to their workplace and communities.”

Under the CBE-Direct Assessment model, it will also be possible for students that are high performers to complete the degree at a faster pace.

To learn more visit: <https://www.phoenix.edu/degrees/competency-based-education.html>