

# Competencies

Competencies help track information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities learners acquire as they participate in courses or other learning experiences. Competencies are an inventory of skills and knowledge rather than measures of how good learners are at something. Other vocabulary used to describe competencies can include proficiencies, learning outcomes, standards, objectives, and skills. Examples of competencies can include:

- Certification to operate a forklift
- Expertise on how to troubleshoot a network
- Essential teaching skills acquired from a teacher education curriculum
- License to operate a motorboat after successful completion of a boating safety course
- Understanding and using proper scientific method to design an experiment

The types of competencies you create and track depend on your organization and what you ultimately want to do with the information.

**Note:** Separate competency structures in the same org unit overlap if they contain the same competencies, learning objectives, or activities. This is ideal for elements that are relevant to completing multiple competency structures.

## Requirements

The following are required to use the Competencies tool:

- To see and use the Competencies tool, you must have the required [Competencies permissions](#) applied to your role. These permissions can only be accessed by your organization administrator.
- To add the Competencies tool to your course navbar, you must have the required [Navbar permissions](#) applied to your role. For more information about how to add a tool or link to your course navbar, refer to the [Customize your course navbar](#) topic.

**Note:** You can also locate available course tools by navigating to **Course Admin** from your navbar. If you cannot find the Competencies tool in your Brightspace instance, contact your organization administrator to obtain required permissions.

## Visual tour of the Competencies tool

From your course navbar, click **Competencies**.

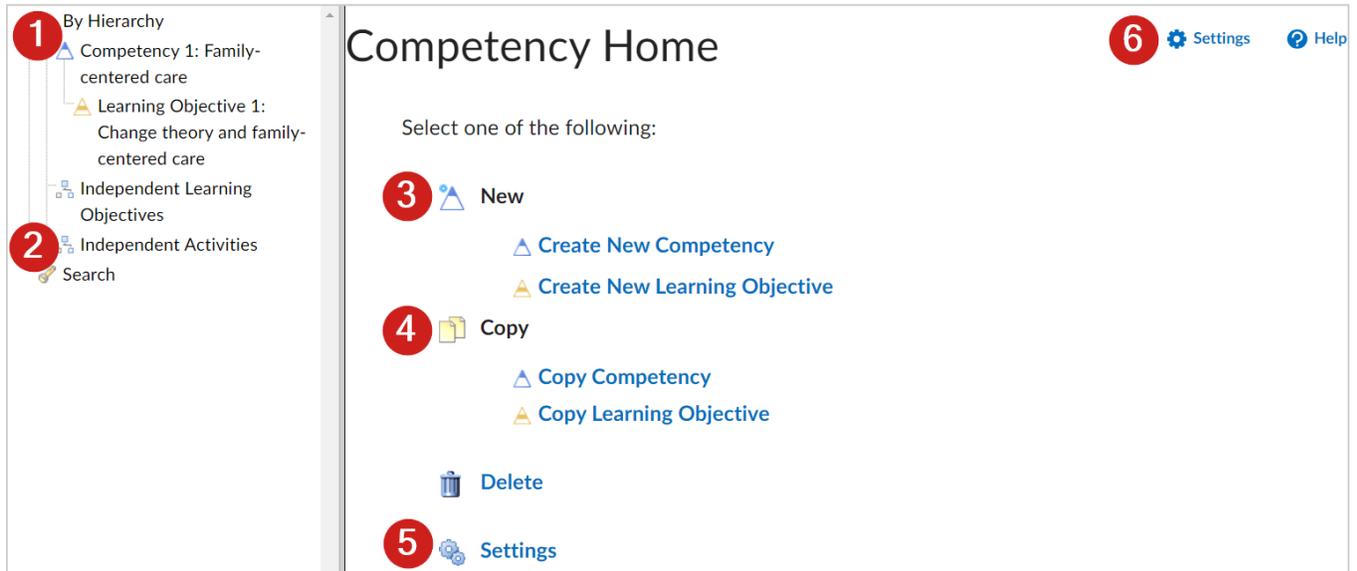


Figure: Use the Competencies tool to review or copy existing, or create new competencies and learning objectives.

1. Select to expand the tree and view a hierarchy of competencies and learning objectives.
2. Select **Search** to search for existing competencies and learning objectives.
3. Create new competencies or learning objectives.
4. Copy existing competencies or learning objectives.
5. Select **Settings** to set up the Competencies tool.
6. Select **Help** to learn more about competencies and learning objectives.

### Understanding competency structures

A competency structure is a hierarchy composed of three basic elements:

- Competencies
- Learning objectives
- Activities

Although you can create multiple activities, learning objectives, and competencies within a competency structure, the most fundamental structure must contain at least one competency, one learning objective, and one activity.

If you share a competency structure with a child org unit, the child org unit must be associated with its own activities since activities cannot be shared between org units.

The following table describes the three basic elements of a competency structure.

Competency structure elements and descriptions.	
Element	Description
Competency structures inside and beyond your course	<p>If you create a competency structure as part of a course offering, it is available only within that course offering. For example, you can create a competency to represent the entire course, learning objectives to represent specific units, and associate activities to each unit.</p> <p>You can create competency structures inside org units such as departments, semesters, or the organization to track users' achievements beyond a course offering. You can also share these competency structures with multiple course offerings and evaluate the competencies and learning objectives within specific child org units. This enables users to complete the competency in stages over time, working on different learning objectives within different courses. If a competency structure is large and complex, acquiring all the knowledge and skills associated with it might involve many learning experiences across several courses.</p>
Learning objectives	<p>Learning objectives are the skills, abilities, or knowledge a person must acquire to become competent in a given domain. Create learning objective statements that are directly measurable through related activities. Other vocabulary used to describe learning objectives can include indicators, criteria, requirements, and learning outcomes.</p>
Activities	<p>Activities are the only elements that can be graded in a competency structure. You can use existing tools in Brightspace to create activities, and you can create external manual assessment activities such as a concert performance or an oral presentation.</p> <p>You can associate activities with relevant learning objectives, and have users complete them so you can evaluate their learning objective</p>

	<p>achievements. Activities include quizzes, surveys, assignments, discussion topics, grade items, manual assessments, and content (including LTI and SCORM content)</p> <p>You can add measurable criteria to the activity and set the assessment method as a requirement to completing the learning objective. If a user's activity assessment meets the minimum required threshold set for that activity (for example, minimum rubric level score, minimum numeric score), then the user achieves or is on the path to achieving the associated learning objective.</p>
--	--

### About parent-child relationships between competency structure elements

When you create a complete competency structure you must first create the elements that make up the structure and associate those elements together. Associated elements have a parent-child relationship. For example, if an activity is associated with a learning objective, the activity is the child and the learning objective is the parent.

If you want to create more complex structures (for example, a learning objective associated with two competencies in different levels of a nested structure), consider creating all of your elements first before adding parent-child relationships.

You can create the following element associations:

Parent and child associations between elements.		
Element	Parents	Children
 Competency	Other competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning objectives</li> <li>• Other competencies</li> </ul>
 Learning Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competencies</li> <li>• Other learning objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Other learning objectives</li> </ul>
 Activity	Learning objectives	

### About nested competency structures

You can nest competencies and learning objectives by adding a parent-child association between competencies or between learning objectives.

If you have one learning objective that is very broad in scope, dividing it into simpler learning objectives and nesting them beneath it allows users to complete the learning objective in smaller parts. This might also provide a more detailed view of the experiences involved to achieve the overall learning objective.

Nested competencies are ideal if competencies are prerequisites for achieving an overarching competency. For example, if you want to distinguish multiple levels of proficiency, a user might complete a basic level proficiency competency by achieving two learning objectives, then complete an intermediate level proficiency competency by completing two more learning objectives.

If users can view competencies, nested competencies are displayed individually and within their parent-child associations.

## Manage Competencies

Use the Competencies tool to create competency structures that help you assess users' learning outcomes and determine if they have acquired the intended knowledge, skills, and abilities from a learning experience. The transparency and accountability of competency structures have an advantage over traditional grading mechanisms because they do not mask gaps in learning with overall grade averages.

### Switch your view in competencies

The Competencies tool interface has two different views: **Standard View** and **Advanced View**.

The **Advanced View** contains a navigation pane that enables you to view competency structures, as well as independent learning objectives and activity assessments that are currently not associated with a competency.

### To switch your view

1. Navigate to **Competencies**.
2. On the **Competency Home** page, click **Settings**.
3. Under **Personal Settings > Competencies Tool View**, select your view.

# Competency Settings

## Personal Settings

### Competencies Tool View

- Standard View  
 Advanced View

Figure: Switch your view in competencies.

### **Set visibility for competency structure elements**

You can choose which elements are visible to course participants. For example, you can set competencies to only display activities to users if you want to provide a list of activities for them to view without seeing the learning objectives and competencies they might be associated with.

#### **To set visibility**

1. Navigate to **Competencies**.
2. On the **Competency Home** page, click **Settings**.
3. In the **Org Unit Settings > Display to User**, select the check boxes beside each type of element you want course participants to see.

## Org Unit Settings

Display to User

- Competencies
- Learning Objectives
- Independent Learning Objectives
- Activities

Figure: select the check boxes beside competency structure elements.

**Note:** Learning objectives are only visible if they are attached to a competency that course participants can see. You must attach learning objectives to competencies with the **Make competency and its children visible to users** check box selected in order for users to view them.

### Allow users to add competencies to their Brightspace ePortfolio

You can allow users to add competencies to their Brightspace ePortfolio as artifacts.

1. Navigate to **Competencies**.
2. On the **Competency Home** page, click **Settings**.
3. In the **Org Unit Settings** section, select the **Allow users to add their competencies to their Brightspace ePortfolio** check box.

### Evaluate manual assessment activities

Enter evaluations for manual assessment activities on the **Activity Results** page. Manual assessment activities are labeled with the **Manual Rubric Assessment** icon.

1. Navigate to **Competencies**.
2. On the **Competency Home** page, click a desired competency or learning objective.
3. Click **Structure**.

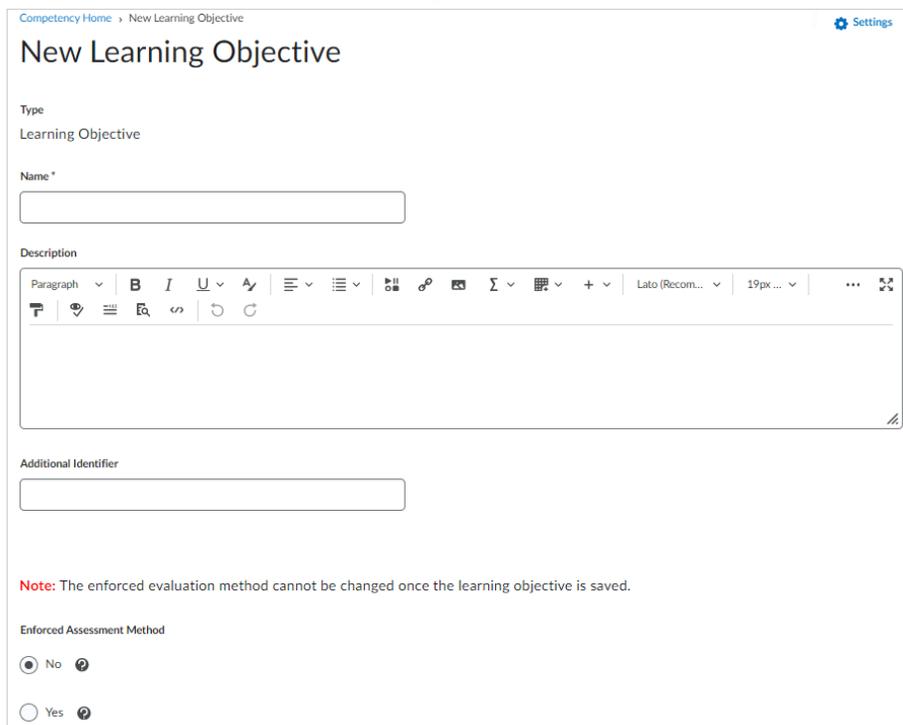
4. In the **Structure Summary** tab, click the **View Results** icon for the manual assessment activity you want to evaluate.
5. On the **Results** page, click the **Assess** link for the user you want to evaluate.
6. Fill in the rubric.
7. Click **Save**.

## Create a learning objective

Use learning objectives to represent the things that a person needs to learn to acquire a competency or become competent in each domain.

### To create a learning objective

1. On the navbar, click **Competencies**.
2. On the **Competency Home** page, from the **New** button, click **Learning Objective**.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "New Learning Objective" with a breadcrumb "Competency Home > New Learning Objective" and a "Settings" link. The form includes a "Type" field with the value "Learning Objective", a "Name\*" text input field, and a "Description" field with a rich text editor toolbar. Below the description is an "Additional Identifier" text input field. A red note states: "Note: The enforced evaluation method cannot be changed once the learning objective is saved." At the bottom, there is a radio button selection for "Enforced Assessment Method" with options "No" (selected) and "Yes".

Figure: Use the **New Learning Objective** page to name and setup your learning objective.

3. Enter your new learning objective details.

4. If you are ready to allow users access to the learning objective, in the **Ready for evaluation** section, select **Yes**.

You can also create a learning objective from an element's Structure area. In the **Edit Structure** tab, expand the **Add Parent** or **Add Child** option and click **New Learning Objective**.