

# A Competency-Based Self-Assessment Tool: Needed or Not?

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**Introduction:** Evaluating the impact of Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Programs is crucial. To this end, the value of competency-based metrics to assess the professional growth of CTSA awardees is unknown. A needs assessment was conducted to determine the present use and potential need for a competency-based self-assessment tool (CBST).

**Methods:** A mixed methods retrospective analysis was conducted using data from live interviews and online surveys. Authors interviewed 21 CTSA administrators, and transcripts were independently analyzed by two study team members. Authors analyzed online survey results from 21 different CTSA institutions. The survey assessed the use of competency assessments and requested explanatory responses but did not explicitly evaluate need for a CBST.

**Results:** Overall, 29 unique CTSA hubs participated. Interview requests and surveys had a response rate of 21% (21 out of 102 contacted) and 33% (21 out of 63), respectively. Six institutions were doubly represented in both interviews and survey responses. Of interviewees, 33% reported existing use of a competency-based assessment tool, and 62%, inclusive of those already using a tool, indicated clear need for one. Of the survey respondents, 67% already use a CBST. Interviewees highlighted preferred features for a CBST: customization, soft skills assessment, and integration with local academic institutions. Both interview and survey results found that communication and teamwork were highly valued soft skills in a clinical research professional.

**Conclusions:** Among CTSA workforce development administrators, there is notable interest in a CBST, particularly one that is customizable, soft skill-focused, and integrated with local educational systems.

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