



FORM

Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative Proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

A blue ink signature of Dr. Hal Higdon.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Nov. 6, 2018

Date

Dr. Hal Higdon

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Ozarks Technical Community College

Name of Institution

Springfield, MO 65802

City and State

The institution completes the Quality Initiative Proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. The institution may choose to submit a brief implementation plan or supplemental charts or graphs as appendices to the template. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words. The Quality Initiative Proposal will be accepted beginning September 1 of Year 5 and is due no later than August 31 of Year 7. Submit the proposal as a PDF file to pathways@hlcommission.org with a file name that follows this format: QI Report No Name University MN. The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a title and brief description of the Quality Initiative. Explain whether the initiative will begin and be completed during the Quality Initiative period or if it is part of work already in progress or will achieve a key milestone in the work of a longer initiative.

Ozarks Technical Community College (OTC)'s proposed Quality Initiative (QI) initiative is titled, "CORE 42: Reassessing Gen Ed at OTC". Successful completion of this initiative will result in an adjustment to our current Assessment of Student Learning (AoSL) process in order to accommodate the new General Education (Gen Ed) competencies that were implemented with the 2018-19

academic year. This revised AoSL process will supplement our existing Gen Ed AoSL process. The project will begin during the Quality Initiative Period, with a start date of mid-term Fall 2018 and has an anticipated completion date of Fall 2019 for the first phase of the project. It is anticipated that the final phase of the project will be completed by Fall 2021 (please see project overview at the end of this document).

Although the specific focus of this project will be new for the College, this initiative is best understood to represent a milestone in the ongoing work of continuous improvement of our AoSL process. The project will be grounded in our existing foundation and framework of understanding about best practices in the AoSL, which we have built through our participation in the HLC's Assessment Academy.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

2. Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.

Signed into law in June 2016, Missouri Senate Bill 997 (SB 997) established the Higher Education Core Transfer Curriculum Act. With the goal of facilitating seamless transfer of academic credits between all Missouri public two-and four-year institutions, the act required the creation of a standard core transfer curriculum and common course numbering equivalency matrix for lower-division General Education (Gen Ed) courses. This core curriculum, called CORE 42, was mandated to be implemented with the start of the 2018-19 academic year. As is standard to all Gen Ed programs, the CORE 42 curriculum contains prescribed coursework in core knowledge areas and a set of overarching competencies which students are meant to obtain through completion of the prescribed CORE 42 coursework.

Senate Bill 997 allowed institutions to either implement CORE 42 as a standalone Gen Ed curriculum, or as an alternative alongside their existing Gen Ed curriculum. As OTC considered which route we would choose to implement CORE 42, we were simultaneously working through the process of developing of our newest institutional strategic plan. In alignment with our mission and vision of focusing on serving our communities' needs, we solicited feedback from community members, local industry, students, faculty, and staff for the development of our strategic plan. In the end, this feedback helped shape our decision on how we would implement CORE 42.

Specifically, local industry asked OTC to do further work to ensure graduates were gaining essential or soft skills, such as communication and critical thinking. Additionally, community members asked us to do further work to ensure the transferability of our courses. Finally, all constituents asked OTC to consider working toward bettering the perception of the value of a college degree. Taking into account the guaranteed transferability established by SB 997, alongside the alignment of the CORE 42 competencies with the above requests; we felt it incumbent that we replace our entire existing Gen Ed curriculum with the CORE 42 curriculum.

Beginning with the FA 18 semester, we have fully integrated the prescribed courses in the CORE 42 curriculum into our Gen Ed program (AA) requirements. We have also integrated the prescribed CORE 42 courses into the Gen Ed requirements of all of our other Associate's degrees, including those in our Allied Health and Technical Education programs.

Although the CORE 42 coursework was selected by a state-wide committee with the *intent* that upon completion of the curriculum students will have achieved the prescribed CORE 42 knowledge competencies, neither the committee nor SB 997 specified a mechanism to *confirm* students achieved those competencies. Without such a mechanism in place, we feel under-prepared to guide our students and faculty toward student achievement of these competencies. Thus, we feel it is

essential to adapt our current AoSL processes to meet this gap. Our proposed "Core 42: Reassessing Gen Ed at OTC" Quality Initiative is intended to address this identified need.

3. Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic quality.

Upon completion, we will have an AoSL process in place that will both demonstrate and ensure our Gen Ed curriculum is providing students with the CORE 42 competencies expected by other institutions in the state. Although SB 997 ensures transferability, as an institution we feel it important to ensure we can support that transfer with data that demonstrates the quality of our students' achievements. Completion will also establish a common language around Gen Ed outcomes, to better inform both our internal and external stakeholders about the alignment of our Gen Ed competencies to the soft, or essential, skills employers in our community have told us they need and expect from our graduates. This language will also help us better communicate the value of our degrees to our community at large.

Additionally, as we undertake this initiative, we will have the opportunity to continue our ongoing conversations with faculty about the value of the AoSL process. Based on our past experience in establishing processes for assessment, we have come to understand that setting clear expectations for anticipated student outcomes is typically associated with gains in student achievement. It is our intention that this would be an end result of this implementation process as well.

Finally, as can be the case at many Community Colleges, the classroom focus of our faculty can become narrowed on the specific knowledge or skill of their particular content area. This can be especially true for faculty who teach courses that are only a part of the general transfer degree. Implementation of this initiative this will provide a mechanism for us to have conversations with faculty about how their specific content fits into the larger context of students achieving the overarching CORE 42 competencies. Again, in our past experience, these types of conversations with faculty are typically associated with gains in student achievement.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The purpose for this initiative is to ensure the state-prescribed CORE 42 competencies are consistently and meaningfully embedded into the General Education experience at OTC. This alignment will serve both to ensure the quality of the academic experience of our students, and to help us better communicate the value of our degrees to the communities we serve. In order for us to be successful in this endeavor, we will need to establish an AoSL Committee. This committee will be primarily composed of, and led by, faculty. The committee will have adequate academic administrative support and resources. The responsibilities of this committee will be:

(1) To create an initial direct assessment plan for each CORE 42 competency. Each Competency Assessment Plan (CAP) will include (a) a sampling plan for data collection (b) a common tool for data collection (c) a plan for data collection (d) a plan for the evaluation of the data [such as a rubric, etc.] (e) a plan for data storage/retrieval by faculty [such as software], (f) a plan for the integration of data analysis and "closing the loop" into normal faculty activities [such as professional development activities] and (g) a plan for gathering feedback from faculty and students about the process to facilitate continual improvement of the AoSL process

(2) To pilot test and revise the initial CAPs based on feedback from impacted faculty and students

(3) Education of all faculty on the revised AoSL plan, including hands-on training in using the CAPs

(4) Implementation of the revised AoSL plan

(5) Ongoing review and revision of AoSL plan as needed

5. Select up to three main topics that will be addressed by the initiative.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Advising | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Retention |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Learning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistence and Completion | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Success |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Pedagogy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Underserved Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-Year Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Improvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Education | | |

6. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments and determine what has been accomplished.

The progress of the AoSL Committee work on this initiative will be monitored and evaluated by the creation of 10 project deliverables (please see project overview at the end of this document). These deliverables are designed to ensure timely progress toward accomplishment of the initiative goals by setting a timeline and a common focus for the AoSL Committee work. The deliverables have embedded mechanisms for feedback from across the College community and revision based on gathered feedback. The deliverables are as follows:

- 1 - Establishment of an AoSL Committee by FA 2018
- 2 - Creation of initial Competency Assessment Plan (CAP) for at least 2 of the 4 CORE 42 competencies by SP 2019
- 3 - Creation of initial Competency Assessment Plan (CAP) for remaining CORE 42 competencies by FA 2019
- 4 - CORE 42 Assessment process piloted in General Education Division in SP 2020
- 5 - CORE 42 Assessment process feedback gathered from impacted students and faculty
- 6 - Results from Spring 2020 pilot are analyzed by AoSL Committee
- 7 - CAPs refined based on pilot data
- 8 - AoSL trainings conducted for all faculty
- 9 - Full Implementation of CORE 42 Assessment process in all Divisions

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

7. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.

OTC's commitment to the AoSL process is demonstrated both by our allocation of staff and resources, and in our efforts to integrate the AoSL process into other College-wide planning processes.

Implementation of the AoSL process is a primary job duty designated to the Dean of Academic Services and all Department Chairs and Program Directors. Participation in the AoSL process is listed as a job responsibility of all faculty. Annually, funds are allocated for the purchase of software used for the collection and storage of AoSL data.

A review of the results of the AoSL process is currently embedded in the College's Strategic Planning process. As such, administration, faculty, and staff from across OTC College system review and provide feedback on these results annually. Additionally, the offices of Academic Services and Research and Strategic Planning continue to work to integrate results from the AoSL process into the planning process that is undertaken by all functional units at the College annually.

This initiative in particular, has the support of the following internal stakeholders: General Education faculty, the Dean of General Education, the Dean of Academic Services (who supports the AoSL efforts at the College), the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Chancellor. Externally, the administrative leadership of an equivalent faculty-led committee at a local four-year institution has agreed to share training and resources with OTC's AoSL committee.

8. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.

In addition to the AoSL Committee faculty and administrative membership, the following groups and individuals will be directly involved in implementing this initiative:

- OTC's Strategic Planning Council – Throughout the implementation of this project, the AoSL Committee will share progress and seek feedback from the SPC at the quarterly meeting devoted to the topic of the AoSL.

- OTC's Academic Affairs Council – Throughout the implementation of this project, the AoSL Committee will share progress and seek feedback from this Governance Council. Leadership of the Academic Affairs Council is committed to this cooperation.

- OTC's Faculty Senate - Throughout the implementation of this project, the AoSL Committee will share progress and seek feedback from this key group. Leadership of Faculty Senate is committed to this cooperation.

- OTC's Office for Faculty Development – Once the CORE 42 Assessment Plan has been finalized, the AoSL Committee will coordinate with the Office for Faculty Development to use existing faculty professional development days to educate faculty on the new AoSL process. Leadership of this office are committed to this cooperation.

- OTC's Academic Deans, Program Directors, and Department Chairs – Throughout the implementation of this project, the AoSL Committee will share progress and seek feedback from these individuals. Formally, it will be ensured this communication happens at least once a semester. However, individual members of the AoSL committee will work with these groups more informally during both the initial CAP creation, pilot testing, and educational phases of the project, as needed.

9. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.

For faculty, participation in the AoSL committee counts toward annual professional development requirements. Additionally, budgetary dollars have been approved to provide additional training and travel, as needed, for these faculty as they create and implement this AoSL process.

Oversight of the AoSL process is one of the primary job responsibilities of the Dean of Academic Services, and budgetary dollars have been approved to provide additional training and travel, as needed, for this initiative.

Institutional dollars have also been allocated to support software (such as Strategic Planning Online, and Power BI) which can be used as central repositories for AoSL data.

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

(The institution may include a brief implementation or action plan.)

10. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline for implementing them.

The primary activities of this initiative will be the creation of an active AoSL Committee and the revision of OTC's current AoSL process to incorporate the newly adopted CORE 42 competencies.

This initiative will take place in five phases (please see project overview at the end of this document):

- During Phase 1, the Creation Phase (FA 18 to FA 19), the AoSL committee will be established, and the initial CAPs for all 4 CORE 42 competencies will be established.
- During Phase 2, the Pilot & Revision Phase (SP 20 to FA 20), the initial CAPs will be piloted in General Education courses and feedback from impacted faculty and students will be gathered.
- During Phase 3, the Education Phase (SP 21), education and hands-on training will be provided to all faculty
- During Phase 4, the Implementation Phase (FA 21), the new AoSL process will be implemented across all courses
- During Phase 5, the Ongoing Assessment & Revision Phase (SP 22 and beyond), the AoSL committee will continue to meet and evaluate and revise the AoSL process as needed

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

Name and Title: Vivian Elder, Dean of Academic Services

Phone: 417-447-8114 Email: elderv@otc.edu

	Internal Committee Work	Sharing Information/Progress with Campus community	Project Deliverables due
Phase 1: Creation	Fall 2018		
	Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee	AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Strategic Planning Council in December related to Institutional Learning Outcomes	Establishment of an AoSL Committee composed and led by faculty
	Spring 2019		
	Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee	AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed	Creation of initial Competency Assessment Plan (CAP) for at least 2 of the 4 CORE 42 competencies
	Fall 2019		
	Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee	AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Strategic Planning Council in December related to Institutional Learning Outcomes	Creation of initial CAP for remaining CORE 42 competencies

Phase 2: Pilot & Revision

Spring 2020

Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee	<p>AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester</p> <p>AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed</p>	<p>CORE 42 Assessment process piloted in General Education Division</p> <p>CORE 42 Assessment process feedback gathered from impacted students and faculty</p>
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Fall 2020

Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee	<p>AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester</p> <p>AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed</p> <p>AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Strategic Planning Council in December related to Institutional Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>Results from Spring 2020 pilot are analyzed by AoSL committee and impacted faculty</p> <p>CAPs refined based on pilot data</p>
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Phase 3: Education

Spring 2021

Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee

AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester

AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed

Education and Training for faculty in all Divisions on CORE 42 Assessment process

AoSL trainings conducted for all faculty

Phase 4: Implementation

Fall 2021

Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee

AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester

AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed

AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Strategic Planning Council in December related to Institutional Learning Outcomes

Full Implementation of CORE 42 Assessment process in all Divisions

Ongoing work to re-evaluate and revise AoSL process, as needed

**Phase 5:
Ongoing
Assessment &
Revision**

Spring 2022 and ongoing

Monthly meetings of AoSL Committee

AoSL Committee continues to shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Academic Affairs Council, Dean's Council, General Education Department Chairs, and Faculty Senate meetings, at least once a semester

AoSL Committee members share progress with and seek feedback from General Education Departments, as needed

AoSL Committee shares progress with and seeks feedback from the Strategic Planning Council in December related to Institutional Learning Outcomes

Ongoing work to re-evaluate and revise AoSL process, as needed