



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.

Michael Crow

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

4/18/19

Date

Michael M. Crow, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Arizona State University

Name of Institution

Tempe, Arizona

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.

Arizona State University Quality Initiative

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.

ASU General Education Authentic Assessment Initiative

Over the past three decades, Arizona State University (ASU) has been engaged in developing assessment policies and practices to ensure that the faculty are able to determine the impact of its instruction on learning outcomes; some of these assessment strategies which were successful, and some not. Nevertheless, ASU faculty has not been deterred in its work toward continuous curriculum improvement and measurement of student learning outcomes. ASU's assessment program has evolved and significantly improved as the institution (1) developed and implemented a faculty-driven approach for measuring academic program outcomes and (2) investigated alternatives for assessing the attainment of general education learning outcomes using advancing technologies. This Quality Initiative will focus on one component critical to the success of ASU's general education reform - the assessment of authentic student work products as it relates to the learning outcomes for general education.

History

With the aid of technology, ASU developed Early Intervention Strategies, as well as an in-house software portal for assessment planning and reporting, both of which are described below. The Quality Initiative Proposal is designed to augment assessment of General Education learning outcomes. Assessment is a core practice for ASU faculty at both the classroom and academic program level, and it includes assessment planning, data collection specified in the plan, and analysis of the assessment data for curricular and programmatic decision-making.

Previously, ASU conducted two longitudinal studies using externally-developed testing instruments to assess select general education learning outcomes (i.e., written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning). The goals of both studies were to provide student learning data to inform decision-making for curriculum, instruction, and academic support services.

From 2008 to 2012, ASU conducted a longitudinal study using the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to assess gains in institution-level learning outcomes. A value-added, constructed response approach to assessment, the CRA included performance and writing tasks that required students to analyze diverse and complex materials and solve realistic problems. Students responded to prompts and were assessed on their ability to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems, and write clearly. In 2011, ASU transitioned to the ETS

Proficiency Profile, an integrated, multiple choice assessment tool designed to measure the academic skills students develop in college rather than the subject matter taught in general education courses. It was expected that the Proficiency Profile would provide more specific quantitative detail and would permit a more precise analysis of ASU's institutional learning outcomes and targeting of teaching and learning efforts than the CLA. Also, the Proficiency Profile included an assessment of quantitative reasoning not included in the CLA.

These external testing approaches proved unsuccessful as they were quite expensive and did not provide the type and level of student learning data required for making curricular and academic support decisions. As such, ASU has begun to develop and implement this authentic assessment process embedded in students' coursework that provides a more accurate reflection of student knowledge and skills gains, and that provides a rich data set useful for faculty and academic support professionals.

ASU is engaged in a revision of undergraduate education through a reframing of its general education curriculum accompanied by further implementation of a systematic process for direct assessment of associated student learning outcomes. Together, these efforts, connected at multiple levels, constitute a major undertaking on the part of the institution to improve the quality of undergraduate education, leading to a coherent learning experience for all undergraduate students. This Quality Initiative, focused on authentic assessment of general education student learning outcomes, is a core part of ASU's continuous quality improvement.

ASU's Charter states that "*ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.*" The ASU Quality Initiative will further ensure that the major tenets of the charter will be embedded in the general education of all undergraduate learners at ASU, and that student learning outcomes are adequately assessed and evaluated for continuous institutional and academic improvement.

At ASU, we believe an undergraduate education should prepare graduates to pursue careers or advanced degrees, and participate fully as citizens in a robust democracy based on values of individual freedom, self-reliance, and equality under the law. Graduates should be prepared to pursue diversity, inclusion, and constructive dialog through civil discourse. Course content and activities should lead them to think critically, innovatively, and creatively, to reason quantitatively, to communicate effectively, to understand and use rhetorical skills, and to collaborate in solving problems. ASU wants students to be empowered with the knowledge, skills, and intellectual habits that will become their foundation for a lifetime commitment to learning, persistence, resilience, and adaptability.

Early Intervention Strategies

ASU researchers have found that early intervention in first-year courses is key to student success, and class attendance is an early and effective indicator of successful student engagement. ASU has developed methods for ensuring student success through early intervention strategies. Students who skip classes are more likely to fail than students who go to class. This understanding was the impetus for an early intervention project launched in fall 2016. Faculty in select first-year courses reported all absences during the first two weeks of the semester, and using the technologies in ASU's Student Success Suite – an integration of the student information system (PeopleSoft), learning management system (Blackboard/Canvas), customer relation management (Salesforce) and analytic model (Civitas) – cases were created to notify advisors and to facilitate individual intervention.

Using data from the early intervention strategies at ASU, researchers are now correlating academic status reports with other retention indicators for refining retention strategies. Faculty evaluate the impact of these early interventions on student outcomes to understand the significance of multiple early warnings for an individual student in a class. Researchers will use the results to develop a set of best practices that will focus on student engagement and learning in specific courses highlighted by Civitas's Illume. Civitas provides predictive analytics nightly on every student. If a significant change has occurred, the appropriate personnel will be alerted through Salesforce for immediate action.

Academic Program Assessment

ASU's robust program assessment process involves developing and/or refining assessment plans containing learning outcomes, measuring student performance on those outcomes, and using the information to refine curricula, instructional practices and support services to improve student learning and experience. These assessment plans include a minimum of three desired learning outcomes with corresponding measures and performance criteria for each degree program. Each academic year's assessment cycle provides information about program success for that year and informs decisions and activities in subsequent semesters. A robust assessment plan is required for every academic program, and all new programs develop assessment plans as part of the program approval process. These plans focus on measurable and essential knowledge and skill outcomes with the aim of producing accurate information about student learning at the program level.

Academic units report on and update program assessment plans at the end of each academic year. Units submit annual assessment reports describing learning outcomes and related assessment practices; results for the academic year; factors to which faculty have attributed the results; and any planned curricular or instructional changes, support activities, or other changes that specifically target the improvement of student learning on the stated outcomes.

Presently at ASU, program-level assessment plans are under examination to expand the number of components assessed to include general education learning outcomes. While all new academic programs must plan for these concepts and competencies in the design of their initial program

proposals; existing programs will expand upon their existing program-level assessment plans in advance of their next Academic Program Review (APR) cycle, or before.

Assessment of General Education Student Learning Outcomes

Recently, ASU broadened the expectations for program assessment plans to include general education concepts and competencies that students develop through their curriculum in addition to program-specific knowledge and skills imparted within their major. This necessitates the development of an assessment process to rate student success by actual work produced. This Quality Initiative will focus on one component critical to the success of ASU's general education reform - the assessment of authentic student work products as it relates to the learning outcomes for general education. This initiative will leverage existing ASU processes, including early intervention strategies, academic program assessment, and the use of digital portfolios currently employed in the sequenced foundational general education courses.

The general education curriculum is designed to provide students with a solid core of knowledge. The sequencing of courses provides learning opportunities across a student's entire undergraduate education – general education and chosen major – to build upon each other in an integrative manner that promotes the cumulative progression of skills acquisition and a substantial body of knowledge that constitutes an educated person. Knowledge areas include literature, fine arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, American institutions (including the study of economics theory and U.S. history), natural sciences, composition, communication and rhetoric, mathematics and quantitative reasoning – and education around questions related to ethics, civility, diversity, and inclusion. Skills/competencies include written and oral communication, critical thinking, cultural competency, and application of ideas to real-world situations. General education at ASU also includes the teaching of life skills for the realities of the 21st century to include information and data literacy, differentiation among fact, inference and judgement, as well as civic engagement and civil discourse.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

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

Despite a fairly comprehensive set of sequenced general education courses, they remain largely disconnected and there is no point in time where the faculty can conduct a holistic, comprehensive assessment of competencies in the general education curriculum. To address this issue, ASU is proposing an initiative to increase the quality and impact of its general education curriculum by implementing an authentic assessment of student learning outcomes measured through the scoring of actual student work products over the course of their undergraduate career. This process will involve the scoring of student work on particular assignments designed to measure the acquisition of general education knowledge and skills as defined with the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE Rubrics. Faculty members will identify or design assignments to serve as benchmarks over the course of the undergraduate

experience to demonstrate acquisition of skills such as written and oral communication, critical thinking, etc.

ASU's Quality Initiative will complement ongoing development of innovative practices related to general education and will include developing a robust and authentic means for direct assessment of learning outcomes and the advancement of analytics to ensure students build strong skills in foundational learning.

The Quality Initiative will:

- Identify a set of learning outcomes using guiding principles of the Essential Learning Outcomes developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as part of the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) campaign.
- Develop and implement a General Education Assessment Plan that maps to the curriculum and other student experiences.
- Provide an analysis of the assessment data to inform appropriate curricular improvements.
- Produce additional data to combine with technologies already in place in ASU's Early Intervention Strategies.

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

The goal of the ASU Quality Initiative is to enhance the validity of the assessment of undergraduate students' general education learning. The initiative will:

- Provide mechanisms for authentic assessment and continuous improvement of general education curricula and student achievement.
- Enhance the validity of the assessment of undergraduate students' general education learning by assessing actual student work products.
- Train faculty members to identify and/or develop benchmark assignments for each academic program to evidence student's acquisition of general education competencies.
- Train faculty members to rate evidence supporting students' learning and understanding of a defined set of general education concepts and applications.
- Develop best practices in holistic assessment of general education through the employment of ePortfolios to store the student work products for the benchmark assignments as evidence of work that demonstrates the application of the principles taught in ASU general education courses. Student work will be scored against the research-validated AAC&U VALUE rubrics, with a possible external review by experts using the VALUE rubrics.

In addition to the use of analytics for early intervention, the Quality Initiative at ASU intends to supplement existing data with data that demonstrates the application of the principles taught in general education using actual student work products. The intention of the initiative is to develop practices that focus on the use of the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics, to evaluate student learning as evidenced by the students' benchmark assignments.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

ASU's refinement of the general education curriculum will enable a broad set of student learning outcomes: creative thinking, communication skills, problem solving, quantitative reasoning, collaborative skills, and ethical behavior. General education contributes to the whole of the educated person, providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to work across disciplinary boundaries and solve complex societal problems. Coupled with the larger learning environment of the university that includes speakers, clubs and other opportunities to engage in ideas, activities, and issues, ASU produces well-rounded and engaged citizens.

A primary goal of this initiative is to develop and implement an authentic assessment process, including a set of rubrics for assessing general education outcomes. ASU plans to modify and apply the AAC&U VALUE rubrics for assessing student outcomes in the general education curriculum. The VALUE rubrics were selected due to the substantial research conducted confirming their validity for measuring general education outcomes.

A second goal of this Initiative is to improve the quality of undergraduate education leading to a coherent learning experience for all undergraduate students. All of these efforts combined are designed to assure that general education concepts and competencies are being taught with sufficient rigor, depth, and breadth to realize the graduation of educated persons and engaged citizens. The Quality Initiative will add a strong set of data to show how students are succeeding at ASU. It will also provide data for continuous academic improvement over the course of the undergraduate experience.

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

- Advising
- Assessment
- Civic Engagement
- Curriculum
- Diversity
- Engagement
- Faculty Development
- First-Year Programs
- General Education

- Leadership
- Learning Environment
- Online Learning
- Persistence and Completion
- Professional Development
- Program Development
- Program Evaluation
- Quality Improvement
- Retention
- Strategic Planning
- Student Learning
- Student Success
- Teaching/Pedagogy
- Underserved Populations
- Workforce
- Other:

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

Progress of the Quality Initiative will be determined by the following:

- Extent to which the institution develops and implements an authentic assessment process with faculty members using the AAC&U VALUE rubrics to rate students' assignments completed at benchmark points in their degree programs.
- Assessing the learning outcomes of the participating students. Assessment will be based on a random sampling of portfolios scored with rubrics based on the VALUE rubrics.
- Development of recommended best practices for teaching, documenting, and assessing general education principles and practices for undergraduate students at ASU.
- Each year, leadership of the Initiative will review all survey and assessment data so that appropriate adjustments to the initiative and general education curriculum can be made.

Approach

Our pre- and post-test methodological approach will further address how ASU has contributed to the acquisition of general education learning outcomes. It is assumed that general learning skills are developed through repeated exposure to relevant learning objectives in general education

courses, elective courses, and in courses required of the major. The Quality Initiative will be structured to collect formative data at the beginning of students' undergraduate enrollment to be compared with summative data at the end of their undergraduate career. In the initial phase of this initiative, ASU will look at gains in written communication as follows:

- An initial assignment [e.g., English Composition or The Human Event course (honors students)] will be collected and stored for a sample of First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen. The assignments will be structured such that the VALUE rubric will be easily applicable, and scoring will be completed by the course instructors. Students will be introduced/instructed to write in ways that reflect the learning goals selected for the VALUE rubric.
- Every academic program will designate a final senior-level assignment that is structured such that assessment using the VALUE rubric will be easily applicable. Additional benchmark assignments will be scored as appropriate. Programs may modify the VALUE rubric to include additional disciplinary competencies, if desired. The final assignment could be a research paper, a thesis or an extensive class assignment. Scoring using the VALUE rubric will be completed by the course instructors. Definitions will be further refined during the Quality Initiative to assure appropriate benchmark data collection.
- A representative sample of students will be drawn from students who we expect to graduate within 6 years. Their final assignments will be evaluated using the VALUE rubrics by trained ASU specialists.
- The students from the representative sample will have their performance (as determined using the VALUE rubric) on the final assignment compared to the initial assignment collected during formative assessment, and any other benchmark assignments identified as appropriate.
- A representative sample of final assignments also will be scored by the AAC&U's VALUE Institute as an external validation and to provide inter-rater reliability as well as a national comparison of data collected by the VALUE Institute Calibration Training and Scoring.

Results from each assessment exercise will be stored and will be available to the institution for comparative analysis of student learning, and to units for continuous improvement of their students' learning outcomes.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

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

ASU administrators and the faculty senate have charged a faculty committee to review its general education curriculum and to revise it around a thematic framework that better reflects ASU's charter. A major component of the committee's work will be organizing the general education curriculum around themes related to societal issues and concerns. ASU has also

invested considerable effort into evaluating student success in first year classes and developing intervention strategies using ASU's Student Success Suite of e-tools. Furthermore, ASU launched its digital portfolio pilot in 2013 with 300 students in one program. Presently there are over 62,000 users as a result of its use as a standard tool for more academic units and classrooms. With a robust system in place, the digital portfolio system will be further developed with an emphasis on assessment of general education learning goals.

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

The overarching design and implementation of the General Education Authentic Assessment Initiative at ASU is being overseen by Dr. Stefanie Lindquist, Deputy Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Fred Corey, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education; and Dr. Arthur Blakemore, Vice Provost for Student Success.

The day-to-day coordination of the Quality Initiative will be overseen by Dr. Andrew Webber, HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer and Executive Director for Accreditation and Academic Program Review, and Dr. Pamela Garrett, Associate Director for Accreditation and Academic Program Review. They will work with key support units to ensure that the Quality Initiative implementation meets the specified goals and timeline, and will work closely with the technology and assessment teams to ensure collection and analysis of the appropriate data.

Dr. Shelly Potts, Senior Director of the University Office of Evaluation and Educational Effectiveness, will lead the formative and summative assessment aspects of the Quality Initiative, and ensure effective incorporation of the VALUE rubrics into the process.

Charles Kazilek, Chief Technology Innovation Officer for the Provost, will continue to lead the technology implementation platform for digital portfolios.

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

General Education is a key university-wide activity reflecting core components of ASU's charter and as such has appropriate personnel and financial support from the University Provost and Executive Vice President.

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

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

ASU's general education curriculum fulfills a major component of its Charter and Design

Aspirations as a New American University. Benchmarks and assessment are important and necessary components of ASU's commitment to Arizona citizens that its goals are being achieved and improved. Over the past several years, ASU has committed substantial effort to assessing its general education learning outcomes with mixed success. The initiative was launched to integrate more effective ways of both implementing general education learning and assessing outcomes by using digital portfolios. Thus, our Quality Initiative will help ASU advance the general education curriculum and the use of authentic student work product assessment approaches to meet student needs and outcome assessment goals.

Timeline:

Spring 2019

- Develop implementation plan, timeline, and personnel commitment for Quality Initiative
- Present General Education Quality Initiative to key university leadership and revise as necessary
- Present the Quality Initiative to Deans, assessment representatives, and curriculum committees for each unit participating in the Quality Initiative
- Develop guidelines of the general education curriculum for distribution to faculty.
- Define process for assessment of learning outcomes
- Communication to colleges about Quality Initiative
- Initiate faculty training for selection of benchmark assignments or development of new assignments to assess student learning of general education
- Initiate RFP for appropriate Assessment Technology for the actual Rubric Scoring and assessment data collection processes

AY 2019-20

- Select the first group of students and faculty to pilot ePortfolios in selected general education areas
- Start formative assessment (Collection of Student Work Products)
- Train faculty in the use of the VALUE rubrics
- Assess portfolios using chosen VALUE Rubrics
- Survey faculty participating in the Quality Initiative
- Interview random sampling of participating students regarding implementation of the initiative and suggestions for improvement

AY 2020-22

- Expand the use of digital portfolios
- Continue surveys of participating faculty members & curriculum committees
- Implement summative assessment data collection (Collection of Student Work Products)
- Implement external assessment (for inter-rater reliability) scoring of student work by VALUE Rubric assessment professionals
- Present preliminary findings

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

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

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