Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative Proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor   Date 5/26/22

Dr. Hugh Sherman, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Ohio University

Name of Institution

Athens, Ohio

City and State

The institution completes the Quality Initiative Proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words. The institution may choose to submit a brief implementation plan or supplemental charts or graphs as appendices to the template. The Quality Initiative Proposal will be accepted beginning September 1 of Year 5. Effective September 1, 2019, it is due no later than June 1 of Year 7. Prior to September 1, 2019, the proposal is due by August 31 of Year 7.

Submit the proposal as a PDF file to pathways@hlcommission.org with a file name that follows this format: QIProposal[InstitutionName][State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). 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.

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The Student Experience: Achieving Success with Advising, Experiential Learning, and Career Engagement through the OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plan.

The Guarantee+ Graduation Plan emerged out of several coordinated planning initiatives. In 2018, the University Student Success Planning Group (USSPG) was convened, consisting executive leadership across multiple divisions, including the Office of Information Technology, Instructional Innovation, Student Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion, University College (student academic support and advising), Enrollment Management, Instructional Effectiveness and Analytics, Regional Higher Education, and representatives from Faculty Senate. The group was charged with reviewing student success data and consulting with their constituencies to identify gaps and barriers, culminating in this group identifying one over-arching goal: to close the gaps in student success rates. To achieve this goal, four areas of focus were identified: 1) provide authentic, meaningful, and deep learning experiences to all students; 2) provide appropriate student support services for all students to challenge and support students to go further academically, personally, and professionally; 3) identify and remove institutional barriers to student success; and 4) collect and analyze data to refine and develop data-based progress indicators to support the above goals.

At the same time, Ohio University (OHIO) was working with eleven other Ohio public four-year colleges and eighteen community colleges on a Strong Start to Finish (SSTF) grant through the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), which was one of four funded sites nationwide, to support college completion while also addressing attainment gaps for historically underserved populations. Two of the goals for the SSTF grant were for institutions to develop clearly structured programs of study for all majors (a guided pathways model), and to build advising structures to ensure all students register for coursework to graduate on time.

Simultaneously, ongoing discussions about the highest impact uses for the career and experiential learning fee (CELF, implemented fall 2018) raised opportunities to reimage the interaction between academic and career advising. The OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plan emerged in fall 2019 from the interaction of these three projects—USSPG, SSTF, and CELF—as a way to embed evidence-based practices that close equity gaps in a personalized guided pathway model that also incorporates experiential learning and career preparation. Further development came through discussions with many academic departments.

In 2019, the Guarantee+ Graduation Plan became part of the strategic plan articulated by former President Nellis, falling under the theme of Student Success and Transformation (one of four strategic themes). In summer 2021, the Guarantee+ Graduation Plan continued as a key university initiative under new President Sherman's first priority: Continue Improvement of Student Experience and Success.

The Guarantee+ Graduation Plan re-conceptualizes the student experience by offering an individualized curricular and co-curricular graduation plan for each student, with a clear timeline for completion and clear indicators of progress. This new initiative also provides customized support structures tailored by academic program. From the start of their first semester, students meet with a professional advisor, while also immersed in meaningful experiences that will help them explore and reflect on the career exploration process. These three distinct areas of advising, career, and experiential learning are embedded throughout the undergraduate journey and redefine the student experience at Ohio University.

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The Guarantee+ Graduation Plan Initiative began in fall 2020 with a pilot of 28 undergraduate degree programs. In January 2021, the Career and Leadership Development Center, the Allen Student Advising Center, and the Center for Experiential Learning were reorganized under a new associate vice provost to support this initiative. In Fall 2021, a total of 107 programs were participating, and OHIO will scale the program to all undergraduate degree programs by Fall 2023 prior to our Proposal Report due June 1, 2024.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

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

As a Research II through 2021 and now as a Research I institution, OHIO has long balanced its commitment to developing new knowledge with a strong access mission, especially for students from Appalachian Ohio and the surrounding states. As a result, OHIO has had a long commitment both to the transformative power of higher education and the importance of prioritizing our students' success.

Recently, a confluence of issues, including affordability and shifting student demographics, has made it imperative for OHIO to undertake a bigger and bolder strategy to ensure our students' success both at the university and in their future careers. Additionally, we must ensure university resources are used efficiently and effectively. The Guarantee+ Graduation Plans initiative re-conceptualizes the student experience by offering individualized curricular and co-curricular graduation plans for all undergraduate students, with a clear timeline for completion. The overall concept stems from national research and best practices regarding guided pathway models. OHIO designed graduation plans for students to graduate on-time and on-plan, typically in four years or less. These plans are customized by academic program and personalized for each student -- they integrate required touchpoints in academic advising, career coaching, and experiential learning.

This strategy comprises three critical elements that position a student for success during their education and throughout their life. First, a personalized academic, career, and co-curricular plan is developed during a student's first semester to meet their goals with customized support at key student milestones, including integrated career preparation and signature experiential learning opportunities. Second, it shows our commitment to our students to give them a clear plan to help them achieve their educational goals, complete their degree, and successfully launch into their career. Third, it reinforces our commitment to financial transparency by expanding on our tuition and fees guarantee by clearly showing the student their timeline to completion.

This initiative is relevant for OHIO's continuing commitment to the success of our students and has and will require significant investments by OHIO in financial and human resources, institutional reorganization, and technological development. While the investments for the initial phases of the project have already been made, OHIO is committed to the continuing investments necessary to ensure the success of this initiative.

To meet the goals of this new initiative, OHIO created a new unit under the Provost's Office, the Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning by reorganizing three previously distinct offices from University College and the Division of Student Affairs. Additionally, OHIO has added additional staffing,

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financial resources, and a new central campus location for the new unit ensuring that Athens-based, residential students can easily access these new services. OHIO is committed to building the team and providing the resources needed to succeed in realizing the vision of providing every undergraduate student an individualized graduation plan combining the academic, co-curricular, and career experiences that they need to be successful both now and in the future. Regional Higher Education (RHE) and OHIO Online students will be included in the initiative for Fall 2023. To support these student populations, a new infrastructure will be implemented before the RHE and OHIO Online launch.

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

The use of graduation plans will formalize and operationalize a holistic approach to the student experience by explicitly recognizing that learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom. This initiative is intended to take OHIO's already strong student success and completion metrics to great by increasing retention and graduation rates and reducing or eliminating retention and completion gaps for underrepresented student populations. This initiative will also increase the quality of our students' academic and co-curricular experiences by providing individualized guidance and support for all undergraduate students and not just those with the college-going cultural capital to know how to take full advantage of college support systems. Improving our students' educational experience, increasing retention and completion rates by closing equity gaps, and enhancing career and post-graduation success will also improve OHIO's attractiveness to students, strengthen our financial position, and align with our mission to serve our Appalachian communities. It also increases certainty for students and families by providing a clear timeline for degree completion that dynamically adjusts as students alter their degree or career pathways.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plans initiative aims to help improve our students' educational experience and career preparation while also helping them graduate on time through co-created graduation plans that incorporate both curricular and co-curricular experiences. Adding support and structure to the undergraduate student experience encourages persistence while ensuring that students graduate with a variety of experiences – inside and outside of the classroom – that contribute to their personal, professional, and academic growth.

The following goals were embedded into the OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plan initiative to promote a new vision for student success.

> Advising: Create cohesion and consistency in academic advising by shifting some advising responsibilities to professional advisors who guide students through the curricular and co-curricular milestones in their graduation plan. College-specific success advisors support students with a declared major or graduation plan, while central academic advisors assist students who are

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exploring new majors or are unsure of their academic path. Under this new model, we leverage faculty's strengths by increasing the importance of their mentorship role, where they offer students professional development, subject matter expertise, and academic guidance. Course scheduling and planning is now handled by professional student success advisors who work closely to integrate and update students' co-curricular and experiential interests into their graduation plan. Software tracks progress on the student's graduation plan, including monitoring milestones and flagging students who are "off plan," allowing advisors to proactively work with students to adjust their plan and move back "on plan."

- Career: Offer structured early career support through an industry model for career success. Academic and professional milestones in students' graduation plans encourage them to think about their professional development early in their college career and be intentional about career exploration. The industry model utilizes career strategists who provide career coaching, plan employer engagement events, and serve as the employer relations point-of-contact for their respective industry. This tailored approach provides individualized guidance to assist students in achieving their post-graduation goals.

- Experiential Learning: Establish structure around experiential learning and provide authentic, meaningful, and deep learning opportunities through signature programs and the experiential learning requirement that is newly part of the general education curriculum. Establish experiential learning awards and grants to increase access and remove barriers to these opportunities.

Ultimately, Ohio University intends to create a graduation plan for every undergraduate major through a collaborative process with faculty, advisors, and staff. Currently, specialized graduation plans have been created for 270 academic programs and students can opt-in to the OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plan program at Bobcat Student Orientation. As of this date, 90% of eligible students have chosen to opt in.

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

☒ Advising	☐ Leadership	☐ Retention
☐ Assessment	☐ Learning Environment	☐ Strategic Planning
☐ Civic Engagement	☐ Online Learning	☐ Student Learning
☐ Curriculum	☒ Persistence and Completion	☐ Student Success
☐ Diversity		☐ Teaching/Pedagogy
☐ Engagement	☐ Professional Development	☐ Underserved Populations
☐ Faculty Development	☐ Program Development	☐ Workforce
☐ First-Year Programs	☐ Program Evaluation	☐ Other:
☐ General Education	☒ Quality Improvement	

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

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The new Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning (ACEL) has developed an integrated planning and assessment process consistent with the University's Academic and Support Unit Review (ASSUR) process. For the full plan, please see Appendix A. As this initiative is new, we will be monitoring both the effectiveness of our strategies and the effectiveness of our implementation steps. By identifying our strategic initiatives in support of each strategic goal and identifying the key outcomes, their means of assessment and setting the criteria for success (targets), we will be able to clearly identify which initiatives are on-track or off-track and make the necessary adjustments to ensure the overall success of this initiative. Please see below for a few examples.

Strategic Initiative	Outcomes	Means of Assessment	Criteria for Success (Target)
Strategic Goal 1: Advance the value and uniqueness of an OHIO education through expanded advising, career services, and experiential learning.			
Increase participation in Graduation Plans and the ACEL services	1. Stakeholders will be able to find resources, points of contact, and ACE opportunities via website, information provided by ACE staff, and other interactions with students 2. Students will decide to opt-in to OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plan (OG+) 3. OHIO faculty and staff will know to refer students to ACE for services.	1. Percent of participants in focus groups that are able to find resources, contacts, etc. 2. Opt-in rate of new (to the institution) undergraduate students to graduation plus 3. Number of referrals (for all three areas and combined) 4. Quality stories/videos, news stories, student ambassadors of how G+ impacted their student success	1. 90% of stakeholder focus group participants can find resources, contacts, and opportunities (measure separately and combined) 2. 90% of new (to the institution) undergraduate students opt-in to graduation plus 3. 10% increase in referrals
Strategic Goal 2: Lead the development of OHIO's new advising model.			
Advance early intervention efforts, communications, and outreach.	Students will be accountable for course progress/status and will take action to remediate their deficiencies.	1. Percent of students receiving a flag reporting acting upon the flag received. 2. Percent of critical action flags closed within two weeks by advisors.	1. 50% of students receiving flags annually report acting upon flag received. 2. 100% of critical action flags are closed within two weeks by advisors.
Strategic Goal 4: Increase participation in OHIO's portfolio of experiential learning opportunities.			
Identify barriers to engagement in experiential learning	Able to identify barriers	1. Identify student barriers via survey to all undergraduate students 2. Identify faculty barriers via survey to all faculty	1. Identify at least three actionable barriers for students 2. Identify at least one actionable barrier for faculty

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		3. Identify student and faculty barriers to specific subpopulations via follow-up focus groups of specific groups of both students and faculty	3. Identify at least one actionable barrier for specific subpopulations

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

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

Throughout the ideation and implementation of the OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plan, internal stakeholders contributed time, funding, operations support, and additional staffing needs. As a university level initiative, the Guarantee + Graduation Plans have required broad institutional support from diverse stakeholders, including faculty and students.

The Guarantee+ was born out of an initiative from Provost Sayrs to make student success a strategic priority. With the support of the President, various offices from the Division of Student Affairs and University College were realigned in order to support the infrastructure for this initiative. This larger team then merged and moved to a central location on College Green in McGuffey Hall. In the summer and fall of 2019, the Provost and Associate Vice Provost for OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation plans socialized a guided pathway model and graduation plan concept to deans, department chairs, faculty, staff, various departments, along with students and parents. Socializing this concept was essential for early feedback for planning, operationalizing, and implementing the program.

Additionally, the offices of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, the Registrar, Information Technology, and Human Resources have committed time and resources to guide the success of the program. External stakeholders include OHIO's alumni network, who have committed to engage with students and our partner-employers.

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

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University Student Success Planning Group (USSPG)	• This group consists of both executive leadership across divisions and Faculty Senate representation. After reviewing student success data and collaborating with constituents, this group decided to establish closing equity gaps as a university priority, and recommended multiple practices embedded in the OHIO Guarantee + Graduation Plan initiative.
Executive Leadership	• Executive Leadership provides support for implementation including the President, Provost, Deans, and their leadership teams.
The Center for Advising, Career and Experiential Learning	The three units of The Center include: • Allen Advising: provides academic advising to students who are exploring majors or are unsure of their academic path. Allen advisors can show students how changing their major impacts their graduation plan. • Career Network: A team of industry-focused career strategists provide career coaching and employer engagement events to encourage early career exploration and assist students in meeting professional development milestones. • Experiential Learning: educates students on ways to learn by doing and funds these opportunities through grants and awards. This unit provides structure to the holistic undergraduate college career, so students graduate with a variety of meaningful experiences, lessons, and reflections.

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Success Advisors	• These college-specific academic advisors help students move through their graduation plans and complete required milestones, which include curricular and co-curricular experiences. Success advisors work with students who have a defined major or academic program. Success advisors are embedded in academic units but centrally coordinated by The Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning.
Faculty	• Faculty work with The Center for Advising, Career, and Experiential Learning to build graduation plans and appropriate academic milestones for each major. They may also serve as faculty mentors (in a non-academic advising role) to provide guidance, support, and professional development to students and refer students to the Center for Advising, Career and Experiential Learning.
Office of Information Technology (OIT)	• OIT supports the grad plan infrastructure by creating a user-friendly system where advisors, students, and other constituents can track milestone completion.
Registrar	• The registrar's office ensures academic progress is made and communicates this information with OIT to update graduation plans accordingly.
Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics (IEA)	• The team that helps to build out metrics and key performance indicators for the new office. • Created a dashboard in order to evaluate success.

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

The university has committed the following resources to OHIO Guarantee+ Graduation Plans

- ~$1.36 million in the form of Career and Experiential Learning Fee (CELF)
- $448,342 previously allocated to the Allen Advising Center
- $625,366 previously allocated to the Career and Leadership Development Center
- $149,425 previously allocated by CELF to the Experiential Learning Office
- 5 executive staff
- 35 full time staff
- 14 student staff
- Development hours from OIT and Registrar to create an in-house graduation plan system

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- Additional significant hours across operations units

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 program, as described above, has rolled out on an aggressive timeline:

2019:
    Planned stages of graduation plan roll out

    Researched guided pathway models; benchmarked against other institutions

    Socialized the guided pathway concept and pilot stage with deans, department chairs, faculty, staff, and students

    Developed in-house technology for pilot launch

2020:
    Continuation of 2019 primary activities

    Launched fall 2020 pilot of Graduation Plans after developing graduation plans for 28 academic programs

    Launched technology in fall 2020

2021:
    Combined three departments into one, executed reorganization to create the Center for Advising, Career and Experiential Learning

    Trained 35 professional staff and various campus partners began in fall 2021

    Launched stage two of graduation plans by adding 106 academic programs

    Reviewed student opt-in rates and revised orientation messaging

    Reviewed students who are off and on plans; made necessary changes in automated on/off plan procedures

    Mapped required milestones for students in plans and determined processes on how to mark a student on/off plan

    Fall 2021: reviewed metrics and KPI on student success for each academic program and made adjustments as necessary

2022:
    Continued process-improvements for technology, on/off plans for students, and socialized new team, functions, and process to engage

    Will review metrics and KPI on student success for each academic program and make adjustments as necessary

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Will launch stage three of graduation plans by adding 107 academic programs

Faculty mentors to be implemented in Fall 2022

2023:   Will launch stage four of graduation plans by adding ~40 regional academic programs; and OHIO Online programs

Continued process-improvements for technology, on/off plans for students, and socialized new team, functions, and strategies to engage students

2024:   Will launch remaining graduation plans

Continued process-improvements for technology, on/off plans for students, and socialized new team, functions, and strategies to engage students

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES	OUTCOMES	MEANS OF ASSESSMENT	CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS (TARGET)	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
STRATEGIC GOAL 1: ADVANCE THE VALUE AND UNIQUENESS OF AN OHIO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION THROUGH EXPANDED ADVISING, CAREER, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.				
Increase participation in OG+ and ACEL services	4. Stakeholders will find resources, points of contact, and ACEL opportunities via website, information provided by ACEL staff, and other interactions with students 5. Students will decide to opt-in to OG+ 6. OHIO faculty and staff will know to refer students to ACEL for services.	5. Percent of participants in focus groups that are able to find resources, contacts, etc. 6. Opt-in rate of new (to the institution) undergraduate students to graduation plus 7. Number of referrals (for all three areas and combined) 8. Quality stories/videos, news stories, student ambassadors of how the OG+	4. 90% of stakeholder focus group participants can find resources, contacts, and opportunities (measure separately and combined) 5. 90% of new (to the institution) undergraduate students opt-in to graduation plus 6. 10% increase in referrals 7. One story about one student in at least each college by the	

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		impacted their student success	end of AY2022-23	
Promote the connection between academic, career, and experiential learning.	Students will be able to co-create their graduation plan by selecting their academic journey and career and experiential learning experiences each semester to progress toward fulfilling their post-graduation goals	Percent of OG+ students on plan each semester.	70% of OG+ students on plan each semester	

Implement consistent advising training, communications, and professional development.	1. Advisors will know and use the six steps of appreciative advising 2. Advisors will be able to use the advising tools consistently	1. Percent of correct response on advisor evaluations of training 2. Percent of identified usage of six steps of appreciative advising on student assessments. 3. Percent of advisors who have two times the number of notes per advisee in the advising center	1. 83% of correct responses on post-advisor training 2. 83% identified usage on student assessment 3. 90% or advisors will have two times the number of notes per advisee in the advising center.	
Increase primary pathways for students to reach post-graduate success	Advisors will be able to co-create graduation plans that reflect successful path to post graduation goals.	Percent of satisfactory graduation plans completed by advisors by performing five DARS comparisons for each advisor annually in May	80% satisfactory graduation plans completed by advisors	
Advance early intervention efforts, communications, and outreach.	Students will be accountable for course progress/status and will take action to remediate their deficiencies.	3. Percent of students receiving a flag reporting acting upon the flag received. 4. Percent of critical action flags closed within two weeks by advisors.	3. 50% of students receiving flags annually report acting upon flag received. 4. 100% of critical action flags are closed within two weeks by advisors.	

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Operationalizing the industry hubs	Students will be able to Identify at least one industry of interest	The percent of new (to the institution) first-year undergraduate students who opt-in to an industry hub(s) by the end of their first year.	90% of new (to the institution) first-year students will have identified an industry hub of interest by the end of their first year	

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: Increase participation in OHIO's portfolio of experiential learning opportunities.

Identify barriers to engagement in experiential learning	Students and faculty will be able to identify barriers	4. Identify student barriers via survey to all undergraduate students 5. Identify faculty barriers via survey to all faculty 6. Identify student and faculty barriers to specific subpopulations via follow-up focus groups of specific groups of both students and faculty	4. Identify at least three actionable barriers for students 5. Identify at least one actionable barrier for faculty 6. Identify at least one actionable barrier for specific subpopulations	
Expand access to experiential learning opportunities	Experiential learning staff will be able to develop additional experiential learning opportunities through infrastructure, projects and partnerships that provide greater experiential learning opportunities for students.	1. Percent increase in partnerships and projects 2. Percent increase in number of positions & resources (infrastructure) 3. Percent increase in experiential learning opportunities annually for 3 years	1. 25% overall increase in number of project and partnerships. 2. 25% increase in number of positions and resources. 3. 15% overall increase in number of experiential learning opportunities annually for 3 years.	
Lead civic initiatives under Guarantee Plus programs	Experiential learning staff and partners will be able to track and assess civic milestone engagement via one of two possible platforms.	Number of metrics available to track and assess civic milestone engagement: 1. Number of students completing one or more civic milestone(s)	Four out of six (67%) of metrics available to track and assess civic milestone engagement.	

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| | | 2. Number of civic milestones achieved, per milestone and in total
3. Diversity profile of students who complete Immersive Professional/Civic Experience milestones
4. Community engagement hours served
5. Economic value of total hours served
6. Outcomes achieved through engagement in civic milestones | | |

Add or delete rows as needed

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

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

Name and Title: Jennifer Murphy, Associate Provost, Guarantee+ Graduation Plans

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