Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report
Institutional Template

The institution uses the template below to complete its Quality Initiative Report. The institution may include a report it has prepared for other purposes if it addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the narrative in the template. This template may be used both for reports on initiatives that have been completed and for initiatives that will continue and for which this report serves as a milestone of accomplishments thus far. **The report should be no more than 6,000 words.**

Submission Instructions

The report must be submitted by June 1 of Year 9.

Submit the report as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name of the report should follow this format: QIReport[InstitutionName] [State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

Date: June 3, 2025

Contact Person for Report: Mark Woolsey, Director of Assessment and Accreditation

Contact Person's Email Address: MWoolsey@MissouriState.edu

The enclosed Quality Initiative Report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor   *Date*

Dr. Richard Williams, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Missouri State University

Name of Institution

Springfield, MIssouri

City and State

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Report Categories

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a one-page executive summary that describes the Quality Initiative, summarizes what was accomplished and explains any changes made to the initiative over the time period.

The last few years have seen substantial changes at Missouri State, including a new president and provost, a change in assessment personnel and the university growth into a new Carnegie classification (Professions-focused Undergraduate/Graduate-Doctorate Large institution) with the commensurate increase in graduate offerings. Accordingly, the quality initiative also adapted to these changes and the challenges presented by COVID during its pilot phase (2020-2021) and through its completion in 2025.

When the initiative was first piloted, the post-commencement May workshop format that had been used in the university's assessment of the Public Affairs mission involved a full three-day commitment for participating faculty and graduate students. While this format had been successful, it was not an option in 2020, and teams necessarily met using Zoom. Awkward though this was at first, we learned how to make the process work in the context of virtual meetings. This obstacle also presented an opportunity: while the virtual-only workshops felt insufficient for achieving the sense of collaboration and sharing that previous efforts had achieved, they also had some obvious advantages. Simply put, while the 3-day workshops provided a strong sense of ownership and cohesion between faculty and staff who might normally not work with one another, they could also be exhausting, and they made the faculty stipend for participating seem less substantial. Another inescapable realization was the vastly reduced cost in space and catering needs.

With the proposal approved and the new hybrid approach in place, we were able to offer a more flexible approach to this initiative that faculty have expressed appreciation for:

- **Team and Project Selection**: Teams of 3 to 5 faculty members and an optional graduate student. Projects were self-selected by teams and reviewed with assessment consultants.

- **Team meetings**: At least three group meetings, virtual or in-person, that optionally included assessment consultants as partners in the process.

- **Presentation day**: An in-person session with all teams participating. This was an opportunity for faculty to share their work with other teams by summarizing their work with the presentation template. It was also a chance for groups to discuss their presentations, share similar experiences, and otherwise have an interdisciplinary experience that encouraged collaboration. As a perk of the event, it was catered with specially chosen menus and held off-campus in local businesses. We were able to accomplish this on a relatively small budget.

- **Feedback**: Participants were regularly asked to provide feedback during and after the workshops. During the workshops, this could be used to adjust schedules or tweak how events were conducted. From year to year, faculty feedback informed our efforts to meet the larger goals of the initiative.

The results of the workshop take several forms. The most tangible is our online library of more than 50 presentations from teams representing Missouri State's six colleges—College of Business; College of Education; College of Natural and Applied Sciences; Darr College of Agriculture; McQueary College of Health and Human Services; and the Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities. While more difficult to quantify, we also saw results in the

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community- and culture-building effort around assessment at the university that has been a priority of the Office of Assessment & Accreditation. The positive participant feedback we have received that is shared throughout this report suggests that we continue to make progress on this front by providing support to faculty efforts, incentivizing the work in small but meaningful ways, and doing what we can to make assessment less burdensome.

Scope and Impact of the Initiative

2. Explain in more detail what was accomplished in the Quality Initiative in relation to its purposes and goals. (If applicable, explain the initiative's hypotheses and findings.)

The purpose of this initiative was to maintain our existing culture of assessment and expand into graduate programs as the institution has done in undergraduate programs. The goals were as follows:

1. **By 2025, at least 50% of graduate programs will participate in the QIP.**

   At the conclusion of the 2025 workshop, Missouri State offered 75 graduate programs. Of these programs, teams from 56 attended at least one workshop (75%). Of these, 46 unique programs were represented (61%). This includes five of seven (71%) professional doctoral programs that were active during the initiative (**Appendix A**). An additional seven programs participated in the pilot years of the initiative (2020 and 2021, both impacted by COVID).

2. **100% of participant programs will review student learning outcomes.**

   Teams were provided with a post-workshop survey each year, which asked if they reviewed student learning outcomes. Of the 47 responses we received, 45 (96%) reviewed student learning outcomes. While we did not reach the target goal of 100%, we believe the teams that did not review student learning outcomes were assessing programs to determine how to improve student success outcomes. Examples include assessment of ways a program might move from certificate programs to an accelerated master's offering or potentially merging one program with another to better serve student needs.

3. **85% of participant programs will agree/strongly agree that their team made progress in improving assessment in their discipline.**

   In the post-workshop survey, 39 of 47 teams (83%) indicated that they agreed/strongly agreed that their team made progress in improving assessment in their program. Based on these results, assessment staff reached out to all respondents who selected something other than "disagree" or "strongly disagree" to determine what could be done to improve the workshop in the future and offer an opportunity to further assist the program if they were facing challenges. In each case, faculty indicated that the response was in error. The final figure could be 83% or 89%, depending on the exclusion of identified error, but renders us unable to provide conclusive data regarding this particular goal.

4. **Faculty learn how to assess student learning.**

   One of the most important elements in our consultative model of assessment is working with faculty to help them realize how they are already doing the work of assessment so that they are neither duplicating effort nor setting unrealistic assessment goals. The workshops provide an opportunity to do just that in several ways.

   I.   Engaging with faculty teams as "thinking partners" who help with setting ambitious but achievable goals and timelines, evidence collection and review, and building constructive relationships through a service-oriented office culture.

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II. Providing time, space, and a comfortable environment to focus on team assessment work. Workshops were held the week after spring graduation. This helps avoid the view of assessment as 'extra' or an afterthought, putting it front and center after the semester ends and final grades are submitted.

III. Establishing a model of assessment through the project template (**Appendix B**). This is instrumental in providing focus and clarity in effectively addressing assessment projects by outlining the most salient elements. This helps participants to function as teams, avoid mission creep, and set realistic objectives.

IV. Fostering implementation of a continuous improvement mindset by:

    a. Offering ongoing assessment office services

    b. Following the workshop with check-ins and feedback requests

    c. Promoting internal assessment "mini-grants" that help teams build on their workshop projects or take on additional projects

    d. Modeling a realistic program-level assessment strategy sustainable through institutional change

3. Evaluate the impact of the initiative, including any changes in processes, policies, technology, curricula, programs, student learning and success that are now in place in consequence of the initiative.

The stated purpose of the project was to "maintain our existing culture of assessment and expand [it] into graduate programs," and this effort built on our previous quality initiative project in refining and expanding the Office of Assessment and Accreditation's annual workshop structure for university-level assessment projects and continuing to build on the office's consultative approach to working as faculty partners and incentivizing the work of assessment. Unanticipated changes in leadership in the Office of Assessment and Accreditation and the university highlighted both the importance and the difficulty of accomplishing this during a time of expansion that also proved to be a time of great change.

One of the beneficial outcomes has been a normalization of collaborative assessment processes within the university's annual rhythm, and crucially as a process with visible support from university administration in terms of providing time, space, and resources for the work of assessment. It provides the assessment team an opportunity to demonstrate our consultative model as partners available to help them achieve their student success goals rather than compliance officers.

The initiative also resulted in a wide range of concrete and measurable changes within the university, as highlighted in the shared team presentations that were a part of the workshop's in-person final sessions. Specific examples and the programs responsible for their creation are below, though all presentations are posted online and available to all faculty.

Processes

- Remediation framework for graduate students (Physician's Assistant Studies, 2024)
- Developing an effective transition for new graduate students (Industrial & Organizational Psychology, 2022)

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Policies

- Evaluating the program's position within the college and viability as a master's or a graduate certificate (Health Promotion & Wellness Management, 2025)
- Developing more objective and holistic graduate admissions procedures (Dietetics, 2023)

Technology

- Revising Graduate Student Exit Surveys (School of Nursing, 2024)
- Onboarding and training of Teaching Assistants (Kinesiology, 2023)

Curricula

- Alternative research requirements for graduation (Master of Applied Second Language Acquisition, 2024)
- Assessing content and delivery methods of Foundation Courses (MBA, 2025)

Programs

- Revising student competency assessment following 11- to 9-semester program change (Audiology, 2025)
- Development of Graduate-level student learning outcomes (Criminology, 2023)
- Strategic update to the School of Earth Environment and Sustainability program (SEES, 2025)

The Office of Assessment and Accreditation reached out to faculty members who attended the workshops by sending them a brief survey six to 12 months after the workshop. The purpose was to find out whether the team had made any changes as a result of the assessment activities initiated during the workshop. A sample of responses are below in the words of participating faculty:

Did you make any changes to your program based on the assessment work you did for the workshop?

- "Yes, we made curriculum changes and we now approach admissions in a new way."
- "Yes, we created an exit survey for our graduate program and revised our SLOs."
- "Yes, we spent the time during the workshop on better aligning LO and course activities. We then implemented the changes during the next academic year."
- "Yes. We made curricular changes designed to implement ideas and suggestions that came up in our Graduate Assessment discussions."
- "Yes. Developed and added a new course for incoming students that should result in strengthening our current SLO's. Developed and submitted grant to address specific SLO's. Changed comprehensive exam format. Increased tracking of research progress of graduate students such that formal proposals are now being developed and assessed in their second semester."
- "[Y]es, changed the graduate program survey"
- "Yes. We reassessed where we measure student achievement of program learning competencies."

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What impact did the assessment work you completed for the workshop have on your program?

- "The assessment really helped us appreciate what we've already built and to take steps to make our curriculum and graduate student experience even better."
- "It streamlined the process for gaining feedback from graduates about the DNP program. We are grateful for the opportunity this provided."
- "The workshop helped us to envision a new program that better aligns with the needs of our students. As we searched for a new faculty member, we had our vision in mind. We will have a new colleague who will direct our graduate program and design a Master of Arts in English Education based upon the thinking we did during the workshop."
- "We are still in the pilot phase of using the new process, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it has already provided a broader perspective and beneficial information from external reviewers to our program."
- "It facilitated our discussions on where to take the program going forward. We've made specific curricular changes already based on those discussions (and that research), and we have plans for making longer-term changes to strengthen the program based off the Grads Assessment process."
- "The assessment data we collected had a direct impact on our program by highlighting areas where candidates desired more practical, classroom-focused support. In response, we revised the content of a course to better align with educator standards and the needs of future teachers. Based on student feedback, we increased emphasis effective lesson planning. These adjustments have helped ensure our coursework is more relevant, applicable, and supportive of candidates' success in real classroom settings."
- "The assessment workshop allowed our team to come together to begin this massive project. It was a great opportunity for us to jumpstart our work. Thank you!"

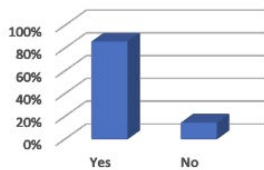4. Explain any tools, data or other information that resulted from the work of the initiative.

Tools, data and information resulting from the initiative were program-level artifacts coming out of a faculty needs assessment which were then shared in group sessions. In addition to the program assessment presentations, follow-up surveys were sent to all participants, one immediately after the workshop and one six-12 months after the workshop. The results of these surveys consistently show that the workshop has an impact on faculty and helps to keep student success a main focus of their assessment efforts.

This report does not allow for a complete review of tools, data, and other information, but by sampling projects from each calendar year of the initiative, we can provide a representative overview of workshop results. These are fully laid out in each team's final presentation, including the project, participating faculty and students, data reviewed, next steps, and resources needed for success. A sample of data discussed by teams is found below.

2022

MSEd—Literacy Research Revival, Readings, Foundations, and Technology

The team surveyed 99 students who have graduated in the past two years or who are currently enrolled in RDG 795 – Research Seminar in Literacy regarding the connection between this course and the previous course, SFR 780 – Educational Research Methods.

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Did you find that the curricular model/research paper impact you as an educator (i.e., affect your teaching, increase your knowledge, improve writing skills)?
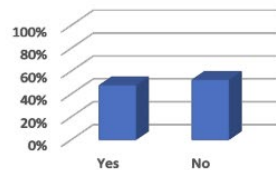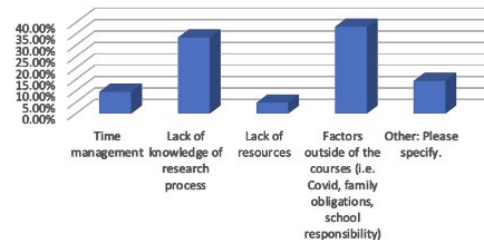
Did you take SFR 780 – Educational Research Methodology in the summer? If so, do you think the class would have been more manageable in the fall or spring semester?

What would have helped you in SFR 780 – Educational Research Methodology?
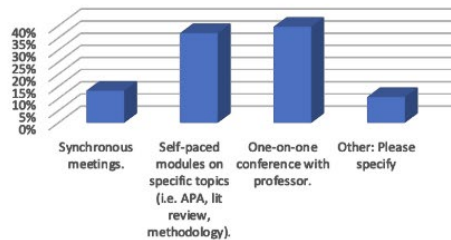
What would have helped you in RDG 795 – Research Seminar in Literacy?

What was your biggest challenge when writing your curricular model/research paper?

Transitions: Evaluating Conditions that Support an Effective Transition for New Grad Students, Industrial/Organizational Psychology

The team looked at data to determine if students were equipped for academic and social transitions, first year satisfaction rates regarding both the academic program and social integration, and graduate student retention.

2023

Graduate Assessment Workshop--MAT Didactic, Athletic Training MS—Didactic

The team reviewed their curriculum matrix and the distribution of standards by class and method of assessment; faculty, student, and preceptor perspectives, graduating student exit interviews, practicum course evaluations, and the recent accreditation site visit for the program.

Inclusive Practices in Graduate Admissions, Nutrition and Dietetics

Reflection of current process for student admissions	Reviewed rubrics aligning with program values
• Initial review of application (program director) • Application review • Interview • Admission decision	• American Association of Colleges and Universities • Drexel University: Professionalism • University of Michigan: Creating Rubrics for Assessment

Master of Arts in Teaching: Benchmarks, Barriers, and Balloons; Master of Arts in Teaching

The team reviewed the admission workflow and identified potential barriers, retention by reviewing advising checkpoints, recruitment, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Teaching Standards, the pass rate and incomplete grades of the comprehensive exam
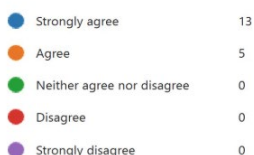
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during course SFR 781, and the results of the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES) during the final practicum and student teaching.

2024

Curriculum Review MFA in Dramatic Writing, Department of Communication, Media, Journalism, and Film

The team discussed outcomes by reviewing rankings, awards, festivals, and job placements, the MFA reps' assessment of curriculum, focus groups of two sections of current MFA students, teaching assistant evaluations from 2021-2023, and a survey of current MFA students and alumni.

The MFA in Dramatic Writing program at MSU helped (or is helping) me become a better writer.

● Strongly agree	13	
● Agree	5	
● Neither agree nor disagree	0	
● Disagree	0	
● Strongly disagree	0	

In general, my writing instructors taught me valuable information about their specialty areas.

● Strongly agree	12	
● Agree	6	
● Neither agree nor disagree	0	
● Disagree	0	
● Strongly disagree	0	

Math Department Graduate Program Review 2024: Insights and Enhancement, Department of Mathematics

The team conducted a survey of graduate students in the Mathematics Department to obtain insights regarding demographics, application processes (potential barriers), academic experiences (academic support from the department, what is beneficial and what needs improving), teaching assistantships (challenges, usefulness of the preparations provided by the department and university), financial, career preparation, (improvements that the department needs, Visa support for international students), and future studies.

Revise Peer Evaluation Process in Occupational Therapy Program to Enhance Student Learning, Department of Occupational Therapy

The team discussed faculty and student feedback of peer evaluation forms, reviewed requirements for assessment of program outcomes, recent peer evaluation submissions, Missouri State Office of Assessment Graduate Assessment feedback, and student feedback on the course evaluation form.

Assessment of Integrating Professional Responsibility and Outcomes in Medical Human Anatomy in First Year Physical Therapy Students, Department of Physical Therapy

The team discussed first-year, first-semester courses in the MSU DPT Program as well as student characteristics and demographics and strategies or mechanisms to promote self-reflection and accountability during the learning process. The team also discussed strategies and mechanisms to facilitate learning for long-term retention and clinical application.

2025

DNAP Program Evaluation Overview Entry (RN) and Completion (CRNA) Programs, School of Nurse Anesthesiology

The team reviewed survey practices to determine if there is a more effective way to assess student learning and success. The program currently uses the Qualtrics system by distributing via email from a faculty member with a direct link. Surveys were found to go to spam folder if distributed through Qualtrics. The survey questions were decreased and changed to a matrix view to make the survey more user-friendly.

Mapping Success: A Strategic Update to the SEES MS Program Assessment Plan, School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability

The team drafted a new assessment plan with competencies and skills and identified key outcomes. The team reviewed a common evaluation rubric, and alumni and student exit surveys.

SEES Draft Assessment Plan
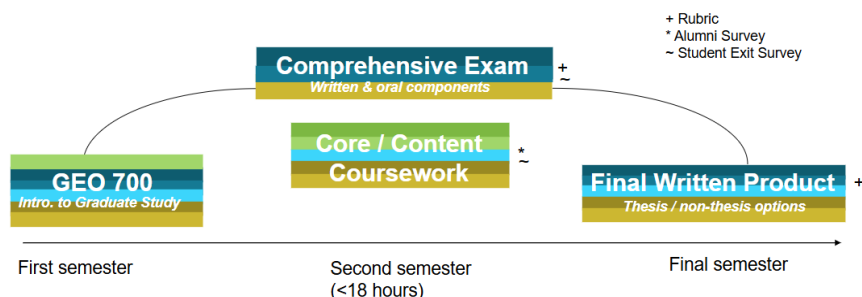
Doctor of Audiology—Bridging the Gap Between Onsite and Offsite Evaluations of Clinical Performance, Audiology

The team reviewed data from Current Syllabi Addendums, Clinical Grade Sheets (On-site & Off-site), Graduate Student Clinical Handbook/Academic Handbook, KASA (CFCC) and Accreditation (CAA) Standards, and other programs clinical evaluations/expectations and handbooks.

5. Describe the biggest challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the initiative.

As suggested in the Overview, the biggest challenges of the project were not foreseen at the time of the proposal. While university life was returning to normal as the pandemic abated, the years since 2022 have seen leadership changes that could have been detrimental to the project's success. This includes the Director and personnel within the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, but also the university's President, Provost, and three college deans.

This did not alter the project's stated purpose of maintaining assessment culture as well as expanding it in graduate education. Instead, it served as a lodestar to help university assessment navigate a period of change. University leadership has been consistently supportive of this initiative and the project's purpose, demonstrating to faculty that the university is willing to "put its money where its mouth is" in showing a commitment to assessment as essential.

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Other significant challenges will be familiar to those working in assessment. Recruitment of teams could be difficult for faculty we had not personally worked with, though over the duration of the initiative more than 20% of participating teams asked (and were permitted) to return to subsequent workshops to build on previous efforts or take on additional projects that had been sitting on their assessment "to-do" lists. We received active and enthusiastic support from the Office of the Provost to make workshop participation an agenda item on leadership councils and committees and to emphasize the importance of program participation. What might have been a hurdle in completing the initiative instead saw our largest single enrollment in 2024, necessitating two of our in-person sessions to accommodate all participants.

Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative

6. Describe the individuals and groups involved at stages throughout the initiative and their perceptions of its worth and impact.

This proposal was initially reviewed by the HLC Steering Committee, the Academic Leadership Council (provost and deans), and the Assessment Council. The initiative was led by the Provost and the Director of Assessment and Accreditation with the help of the Assessment Council.

The workshops were coordinated by the Office of Assessment and Accreditation who report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The Director of the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, one assessment consultant, and one assessment specialist worked with the following people to implement the initiative:

• The **Deans** and **Associate Deans** who oversee graduate programs for the university's colleges.

• **Academic Leadership Council** (Renamed **Administrative Council** during the course of the project.)

• The **Assessment Council**, which includes representatives from all colleges. These faculty representatives serve as liaisons between the Office of Assessment & Accreditation and their respective academic areas.

• **Faculty**—coordinators requested a minimum of two to five faculty per team to attend the workshops along with one to three graduate students. The institution's goal was to include enough faculty to participate who could securely and confidently return to their colleagues and present on changes to programs. Faculty developed assessment plans and curriculum and evaluated student learning outcomes. Missouri State created a space for this work to happen and provided a modest financial incentive.

• **Graduate students**, who are recruited by faculty from their programs. Graduate student participation was incentivized by offering gift cards to the students (more cost-effective and simpler than establishing them as contract workers) and increasing the stipend amount for teams that included a student member.

• The **Provost** and current **HLC Oversight Committee** monitored progress to ensure that the Office of Assessment and Accreditation had the resources needed to write the final Quality Initiative report. The Provost also assisted with recruitment at Dean's Team meetings and via emails to faculty encouraging participation.

7. Describe the most important points learned by those involved in the initiative.

A regular feature of the workshops is obtaining participant feedback. While we have used feedback to make real-time adjustments to workshop amenities and timing, it is also a way to

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determine where faculty are in terms of program-level assessment and what they took away from the experience. Item 3 above provided some examples of responses received from faculty regarding changes in the following academic year that resulted from the initiative.

While we know what we were trying to accomplish through the initiative, respondent feedback is still an excellent means to get a broad sense of faculty reaction to their participation in the workshop, the opportunity to collaborate with faculty across campus, and the initiation of assessment projects. Key insights from the workshop, as reflected in the post-workshop survey, highlighted important project outcomes and reflections on workshop collaboration. Examples of faculty comments across the lifespan of the project are below:

- "I gained a broader perspective of how different people view our evaluation process and instruments."

- "We worked well together as a team, and everyone contributed equally to the project. I am glad I could trust them on this, as it builds trust for future projects."

- "I learned more about the process for making changes to the grad program, the steps necessary for creating new grad courses, and the importance of articulated and shared SLOs. This was not something I was familiar with at the university I was at previously."

- "We are not in this alone and other departments have found creative ways to handle the same issues."

- "We developed specific SLOs for our graduate program and created a graduate exit survey during the workshop. We plan to have the graduate faculty who could not participate in the workshop approve the SLOs and the survey. Furthermore, once we have received approval for the new course (the survey) and the change in program requirements (students must complete the zero-credit survey course to graduate) paperwork, we are hoping to be able to begin deploying the exit survey by the end of 2023."

- "We are changing the application process slightly. We are also making a course change to include accelerated masters as part of the program so students can take MAT courses as part of their undergraduate coursework."

- "Collectively, we have a lot of great ideas to accomplish our objectives."

- "We collaborated and talked though the strengths of the program and hashed out what changes we could make to best utilize our existing resources"

- "How to consider more quantitative data to really look at and understand our program and goals (for next time!)"

- "I learned that my colleagues want to help the students to succeed and basically pay it forward by making a different to be better teachers and for the new teachers like myself to fulfill my dream to become a teacher but also to make a difference in my future students' lives."

- "Ideas for peer-to-peer teaching/classroom evaluations. Engaging graduate students."

- "From the other presentations, it helped me to understand that journal entries would be something that students to stay connected with the program while they are taking research methods classes in other fields."

- "Early identification of barriers to learning and early intervention to facilitate student success."

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- "We are updating all student assessments for our program. We are also aligning assessments and syllabi to new standards from our accrediting body."

- "We are changing the objectives to more accurately reflect the levels associated with the new 3-year curriculum in clinical skill building."

- "The project we brought to the workshop was creating more effective course evaluations; as a result of the workshop, we were able to identify the need for changes, incorporate student feedback throughout the process, and develop a new set of questions that were streamlined and effective."

- "We have updated our assessment procedures as they have not been updated since 2011. We've also completely changed the way our comprehensive exams are conducted and created a rubric that will be used on both comps and thesis defense assessments. This streamline the assessment and help students prepare."

- "Each member of our workshop team had a unique approach for solving the issue based on their own experiences and areas of expertise. By setting aside time to collaborate, we were able to explore the root issues and develop a strong infrastructure for creating change."

- "Each of us brought different knowledge and ideas to the table so it was helpful to all work together to come up with the best solution for reaching our goal."

Another indicator is our presentation to the HLC Annual Conference in 2025, which included a faculty participant who shared their team's thoughts on the initiative and the learning that came from being a part of it **(Appendix C)**.

Another interesting finding from participant feedback was contained in word clouds automatically generated in Microsoft Forms from faculty responses. The image below is representative of those graphics. While this does not present hard evidence of what participants took away from the workshops, it is nonetheless encouraging to see the primacy of students in their responses to questions about their experience in the assessment workshop.
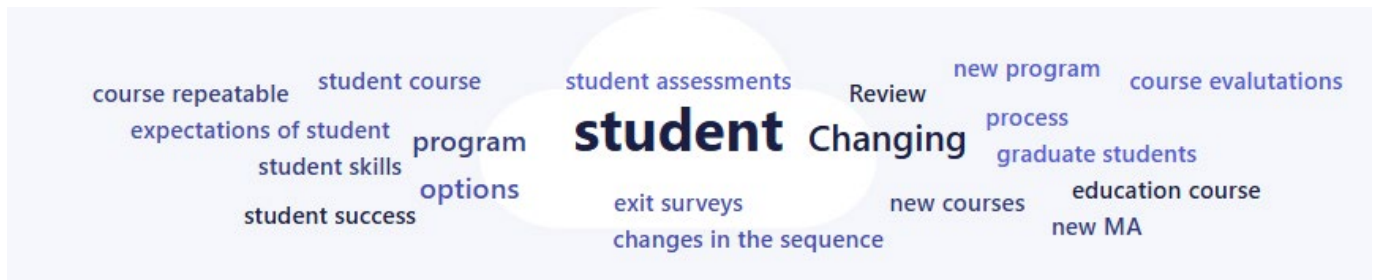
Resource Provision

8. Explain the human, financial, physical and technological resources that supported the initiative.

Human Resources

As mentioned above, the University committed a great deal of human resources to this initiative to ensure maximum participation across campus. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation worked with the Office of the Provost to promote the QIP workshop to the Deans and Associate Deans. The Assessment Council was also utilized to remind their representative colleges and faculty of the opportunity for participation in the workshop for their programs.

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Many faculty and graduate students also helped make the workshop a success. They promoted the initiative to their fellow peers and suggested programs/ideas that would be good candidates.

Financial Resources

In 2022, when Missouri State first held a graduate-focused assessment workshop, the Office of Assessment and Accreditation provided financial support from their budget to allow for a faculty participant stipend ($500-$600), with student participants receiving $125-$150 for a minimum of 10 hours to work with faculty on the workshop presentation.

An average workshop with 40 faculty and 8 graduate student participants requires an average of $30,000 on the part of the university for stipends, fringe, student payment, and facilities.

A small but crucial part of the process is funding the final-day presentation session. This is meant to be a celebration of the work faculty do on behalf of students, and a way to show our gratitude. As noted in our presentation on the initiative at the annual HLC conference in 2025 (**Appendix C**), dedicating a bit more time to finding a fun off-campus site and selecting a menu from a quality catering service goes a long way to making faculty feel appreciated while not requiring a large additional outlay of funds.

Technological Resources

The workshops utilized a broad range of technology. Participants use either in-person meetings or Zoom to meet with their colleagues and our office to work through their projects. At the in-person final session of the workshop, teams present to their peers using PowerPoint presentations. The presentations are then uploaded to the university's Assessment and Accreditation website as shared resources and reference points for future assessment work and to provide ideas and approaches for use in their own discipline.

Plans for the Future (or Future Milestones of a Continuing Initiative)

9. Describe plans for ongoing work related to or as a result of the initiative.

Several programs are following up with their areas about the viability of programs and how to be more supportive of students (e.g., continuing with a low-enrollment program, moving from a certificate program to a degree program). It is an important role of the Assessment Office to follow through on projects that come out of the annual workshops. The goal is to establish a cycle of continuous improvement in graduate program assessment, and we use several tools in pursuit of this goal.

- The continuing use of internal assessment "mini-grants" that normalize faculty and graduate students doing assessment work as a regular part of the job rather than an additional burden.

- Follow-through with participants on the mechanics and utility of the workshop format. Gathering feedback and making changes in response to participant feedback shows participants that they are part of the process.

- Building relationships, which can include:

    o Our relationship with faculty (administration-faculty relations)

        ▪ Maintaining a service mindset in the Office of Assessment has helped to build a culture in which we are seen as partners to faculty, rather than a group who occasionally show up with new tasks. This is not an effort that

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has a finish line, but an ongoing means to help faculty focus on student success.

- o Interdisciplinary collaboration between faculty

  - ▪ Sharing team projects in a standardized, in-person, and casual event is intended to spur conversation about the commonalities programs share in assessment matters that transcend differences in subject matter. Programs participating in the workshops are from all the university's colleges by design.

- Expanding the workshop approach: using the connections we've made through the initiative to build collaborative and constructive relationships with faculty, we intend to continue hosting workshops and one-off events that help faculty manage the work of assessment knowing that they have support from our office and from their colleagues. Topics of interest include program review, external accreditation, and incorporation of the university's public affairs mission into their program. This is in addition to our day-to-day work as assessment consultants.

10. Describe any practices or artifacts from the initiative that other institutions might find meaningful or useful and please indicate if you would be willing to share this information.

Workshop Information: https://www.missouristate.edu/Assessment/graduate-assessment-workshop.htm

The workshop structure itself has been revised over the last decade to overcome obstacles familiar to anyone in higher education assessment: faculty buy-in, normalizing the work of assessment, the often-siloed nature of university office structure, and making the most of limited resources.

Workshop Presentations: https://www.missouristate.edu/Assessment/graduate-assessment-workshop-presentations.htm

The template used by participating teams and hosted on Missouri State's website provides several dozen examples of graduate-level assessment projects selected by faculty across all the university's colleges. The findings of the participating teams are not always generalizable across disciplines and settings, but the issues they sought to address are widely recognizable.

Assessment Grants: https://www.missouristate.edu/Assessment/assessment-grants.htm

As noted above, these "mini-grants" normalize faculty and graduate students doing assessment work as a regular part of the job rather than an additional burden. They also provide opportunities for faculty to continue the work that they began at the workshop.

HLC conference presentation: Appendix C

Our initial step in disseminating our approach and the 'assessment toolkit' was to think through the potential utility to other institutions and present our findings at the 2025 HLC Annual Conference. Given our focus on building a constructive culture around assessment, we asked participating faculty members to volunteer as co-presenters in order to present a faculty perspective on the workshop experience and the broader goals of the quality initiative. While several faculty expressed interest only to be unable to join us on the conference dates, we did team up with Professor Richard Amberg (Media, Journalism, and Film) to accomplish this. As with our efforts to include student participants on faculty teams, we hoped this would exemplify our commitment to community building and collaboration.

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Appendices

Masters Programs	2022	2023	2024	2025
Agriculture (MS)				
Hospitality Administration Graduate Certificate				x
Plant Science (MS)				
Applied Second Language Acquisition (MASLA)			x	
Art Education (MAE)			x	
Communication (MA)				
Criminology and Criminal Justice (MS)		x		
Defense and Strategic Studies (MS)				
Dramatic Writing (MFA)			x	
English (MA)				
History (MA)				
Master of International Affairs (MIA) (formerly Master of Global Studies)				
Music (MM)				
Public Administration (MPA)				
Religious Studies (MA)				
Visual Studies, Master of Fine Arts (MFA)			x	
Writing (MA)				
Secondary Education: English Area of Emphasis (MSEd) (English Education)			x	
Accountancy (MAcc)				
Business Administration (MBA)				X
Cybersecurity (MS)				
Healthcare Administration (MHA)			x	
Information Technology (MS)			x	
Project Management (MS)				
Child Life Studies (MS)	x			
Early Childhood and Family Development (MS)	x			
Early Childhood Special Education (MSEd)	x			
Educational Administration (MSEd)	x			
Educational Technology (MSEd)	x	x		
Elementary Education (MSEd)	x			
Literacy (MSEd)	x		x	
Secondary Education (MSEd)	x			
Special Education	x			
Student Affairs in Higher Education (MS)	x			
Teaching (MAT)	x	x	x	
Teaching and Learning (MATL)	x			
Educational Administration (EdS)	x			
Special Education and Assessment (EdS)	x			
Teacher Leadership (EdS)	x			
Athletic Training (MATC, MS)		x	x	
Behavior Analysis and Therapy (MS)				
Biomedical Sciences (MS)				x
Communication Sciences and Disorders: Speech-Language Pathology option (MS)				
Counseling (MS)	x			
Health Promotion and Wellness Management (MS)				x
Kinesiology (MS)	x	x		x
Nursing (MSN)			x	
Nutrition and Dietetics (MS)		x	x	
Occupational Therapy (MOT)			x	
Physician Assistant Studies (MS)			x	x
Psychology--Experimental (MS)				
Psychology--Industrial-Organizational (MS)	x			
Public Health (MPH)			x	
Social Work (MSW)				
Biology (MS)			x	
Natural and Applied Sciences degree (MNAS)				
Chemistry (MS)	x			

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Computer Science (MS)				
Geography and Geology (MS)				x
Materials Science (MS)				
Mathematics (MS)			x	
Interdisciplinary Studies (MS)				
Professional Studies (MPS)				
Secondary Education: Mathematics Area of Emphasis (MSEd)			x	
Secondary Education: Agriculture Area of Emphasis (MSEd)				
Secondary Education: Family and Consumer Sciences Area of Emphasis (MSEd)				
Secondary Education: Physical Education Area of Emphasis (MSEd)				
Secondary Education: Social Science Area of Emphasis (MSEd)				
Doctoral Programs	2022	2023	2024	2025
Audiology, Doctor of (AuD)				x
Nurse Anesthesia Practice, Doctor of (DNAP)				x
Nursing Practice, Doctor of (DNP)			x	
Physical Therapy, Doctor of (DPT)	x		x	
Psychology, Doctor of (PSYD) (New Program)	x			
Defense and Strategic Studies, Doctor of (DDSS)				
Pharmacy, Doctor of: cooperative degree with the University of Missouri-Kansas City (PharmD)				

Title

DEPARTMENT

Participants

Thursday, May 15, 2025

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Assessment Questions

Missouri State
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Workshop Objectives

SUBTITLE

Data Discussed

SUBTITLE

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Conclusions Reached

SUBTITLE

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Items Chosen for Action

Follow-up Plans & Next Steps

Items that Need Action at Higher Levels than the Department

Questions?

Public Affairs Assessment

"On June 16, 1995, Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan signed into law Senate Bill 340 which gave Southwest Missouri State University a statewide mission in public affairs."

- Ethical Leadership

- Cultural Competence

- Community Engagement

Graduate Program Assessment

From the 2021 Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal:

"Our current proposal is to hold an annual graduate and professional-doctorate level assessment workshop where faculty-student teams can confer on and update student learning outcomes and assessment of student learning projects relevant to their programs. "

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First, what *hasn't* changed?

I. Who was there?

- o Determining stakeholders: faculty, staff, students

II. What evidence was reviewed?

- o Relevant and actionable

III. What changes resulted?

- o Learning outcomes, curriculum, partnerships, etc.

IV. Rinse and repeat

- o Using findings and lessons learned to inform the next cycle

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Nuts and Bolts: The Workshop Timeline

Fall

- Recruitment
- Registration
- Reservations

Spring: January-March

- Consultations
- Templates
- Catering

Nuts and Bolts: The Workshop Timeline

Spring: April & May

- Teamwork

- Close registration

- Final details

- The workshop

- Survey

- Report

Following Fall

- Six months after workshop

- Assessment grant opportunity

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Adaptation

1. The early years:
   In-person,
   In-tense,
   In-terminable?

2. The "You're Muted" Era

3. A new approach

4. The common denominator: student participation

Why the Workshop?

- Interdisciplinary Communication
  - Collaboration across fields

- Incentivizing the extra work of assessment

Why the Workshop?

Showing that We Care

Why the workshop?

Building relationships beyond campus

- Part of Missouri State's mission
- Community partnerships

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Faculty Participant Perspective

The Set Up and Characters

- Missouri State's Screenwriting Program

- MFA in Dramatic Writing approved by MDHE in May 2020

- We Welcomed Our First Cohort in FA 2020

- Three Full-Time Tenure Track Professors (+ Per Course & GAs)

Missouri State

Faculty Participant Perspective

The Inciting Incident

- Dean Recommended We Take Part in the QIP Graduate Assessment

- Department Head Appoints me as Committee Chair

Faculty Participant Perspective

Potential Obstacles and Challenges

- Feeling We're Inherently Different from "Typical" Academic Programs

- Over-committee-d Faculty

- No real understanding of QIP, expectations, or our roles

- Moderate Fear of Assessment and External Interference

- Extreme Fear of External Solutions in Search of Problems

- Would Presenting to Upper Administration Bias Our Findings?

Faculty Participant Perspective

How the Office of Assessment made it easy for us

1. Compensation
   - Faculty and GAs
2. Project Flexibility w/ a dash of focus
   - Allowed Us to Make It Useful
   - Set Dates, Presentation length, and Loose Template
3. Team Autonomy
4. Timing

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Faculty Participant Perspective

An Opportunity Arises

- A Chance to Evaluate Our Own Program

- Collect Real Information on What's Working and Not Working

- Learn Potential Weaknesses or Omissions Obscured By Our Strengths

- Make Data-Driven Decisions About Any Elements of the Program That Might Need Strengthening.

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Faculty Participant Perspective

Preparation

- Comprehensive & Anonymous Surveys for Alumni and Students

- Open Forums for Current Students During Exam Period

- GA teaching evaluations

- Outcomes: Awards, Festival Placement, Job Placement.

- Curriculum/SLOs/Syllabi/Resources

- Application Data (numbers, locations, demographics, media focus)

- Retention Rates, Class Sizes, Credit Hours,

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Faculty Participant Perspective

Our Findings

- Confirmation of What We Knew We Knew

- Valuable Feedback About What We Knew We Didn't Know and What We Didn't Know We Didn't Know

Later Outcomes

- Curricular Changes

- Course Differentiation

- New Class

- Discussions of Some Longer-Term Possibilities

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Faculty Participant Perspective

The Event Itself

- Friendly and collegial. Fun and collaborative.

- Diverse range of approaches and scopes

- There were a lot of commonalities, but it was great that programs could focus on their own specifics

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Faculty Participant Perspective

The Elevator Pitch

- **Compensation** got us onboard from day one, but if we'd known how useful it would be, we (probably) would've done it for free

- The **Flexibility** allowed us to assess our program on its own terms rather than a one-size-fits-all checklist

- The **Autonomy** allowed us to assess internally without fear of external changes being foisted on us.

- The **Timing** allowed us to collect information at our own pace, then focus our discussions without distractions or delays.

Q and A