



Open Pathway

Quality Initiative Proposal Panel Review Instructions

Review Process

The Quality Initiative proposal review occurs through a panel process. A panel of two peer reviewers evaluates the Quality Initiative proposal, provides observations and constructive commentary, and either approves with or without minor modifications, or, in exceptional circumstances, requests resubmission of the proposal. There is no penalty or negative action attached to a request for resubmission. As with all review processes, peer reviewers complete the appropriate Confirmation of Objectivity and Professional Confidentiality forms prior to conducting the review.

At the completion of the review process, the Commission notifies the institution of its approval or expectation for resubmission. Once the proposal is approved, the institution is free to begin its Quality Initiative.

Review Categories for the Quality Initiative

The panel evaluates the institution's Quality Initiative proposal based on sufficiency of scope and significance; clarity of purpose; evidence of commitment and capacity; and appropriateness of timeline. The report form below explicates these categories.

Instructions for Peer Review Panel Members

The panel reads the Quality Initiative proposal and completes the attached report template following the steps below. The review process should take no more than four weeks from receipt of the Quality Initiative proposal to submission of the panel's report.

1. On receipt of the Quality Initiative proposal, the lead reviewer contacts the other reviewer to schedule a phone conference.
2. **Individual Review.** Each reviewer evaluates the proposal independently, determining whether the response to each review category is acceptable or not acceptable and justifying the determination with two- or three observations per category. **Note:** Proposals may not align precisely with the review categories. Therefore, reviewers should consider the entire document as evidence for any category. Reviewers should evaluate holistically rather than point-by-point in the categories.
3. **Consensus Review.** The reviewers share their draft evaluations with each other and complete the report.
 - If the reviewers agree to approve the Quality Initiative proposal with or without minor modification, they finalize their report and submit it to the Commission (see point 4).
 - If the reviewers disagree on the proposal, the lead reviewer should contact the Higher Learning Commission's Pathways Transition Advisor, Kathy Nelson (knelson@hlcommission.org), who will schedule a consensus phone conference to reach agreement on the next step. In most cases, this will be a final report, which is completed and submitted following the instruction below (see point 4).

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- If the reviewers agree to request a resubmission of the proposal, the lead reviewer should contact the Higher Learning Commission's Pathways Transition Advisor, Kathy Nelson (knelson@hlcommission.org), who will schedule a phone conference with the reviewers and the institution if clarification is needed. The reviewers then finalize the report and submit it to the Commission.
 - If the institution is required to resubmit its Quality Initiative proposal, it may do so at any time within the approved time period for Quality Initiatives. If the institution resubmits a revised proposal within 30 days, Commission staff will send the resubmitted proposal back to the panel, who will review the proposal again and write a final report.
4. **Report Submission.** The lead reviewer submits the final report to the Commission office at pathways@hlcommission.org. The file name for the report should follow this format: QI Proposal Review <Name of Institution>.
 5. **Notification to Institution.** The Commission sends the report with a cover letter to the institution.



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Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

Date of Review:

Name of Institution:

State:

Institutional ID:

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):

Review Categories and Findings

1. **Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance**

- ◆ Potential for significant impact on the institution and its academic quality
- ◆ Alignment with the institution's mission and vision
- ◆ Connection with the institution's planning processes
- ◆ Evidence of significance and relevance at this time

Finding:

___ The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates acceptable scope and significance.

___ The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate acceptable scope and significance.

Rationale and Comments: (Provide two to three statements justifying the finding and recommending minor modifications, if applicable. Provide any comments, such as highlighting strong points, raising minor concerns or cautions, or identifying questions.)

2. **Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose**

- ◆ Clear purposes and goals reflective of the scope and significance of the initiative
- ◆ Defined milestones and intended goals
- ◆ Clear processes for evaluating progress

Finding:

___ The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates clarity of purpose.

___ The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate clarity of purpose.

Rationale and Comments:

3. Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

- ◆ Commitment of senior leadership
- ◆ Commitment and involvement of key people and groups
- ◆ Sufficiency of the human, financial, technological, and other resources
- ◆ Defined plan for integrating the initiative into the ongoing work of the institution and sustaining its results
- ◆ Clear understanding of and capacity to address potential obstacles

Finding:

_____ The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates evidence of commitment and capacity.

_____ The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate evidence of commitment and capacity.

Rationale and Comments:

4. Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

- ◆ Consistency with intended purposes and goals
- ◆ Alignment with the implementation of other institutional priorities
- ◆ Reasonable implementation plan for the time period

Finding

_____ The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates an appropriate timeline.

_____ The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate an appropriate timeline.

Rationale and Comments:

5. General Observations and Recommended Modifications: (Panel members may provide considerations and suggested modifications that the institution should note related to its proposed Quality Initiative.)

6. Conclusion:

_____ Approve the proposed Quality Initiative with or without recommended minor modifications. No further review required.

_____ Request resubmission of the proposed Quality Initiative

Rationale and Expectations if Requesting Resubmission

Timeline and Process for Resubmission (the Commission staff will add this section if the recommendation is for resubmission)