

Polk State College's QEP – Explore To Complete Executive Summary

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The goal of Polk State College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Explore to Complete, is to increase retention and completion by engaging students in intentional curricular and co-curricular career exploration and planning activities. The QEP supports the next phase in the College's ongoing guided pathways initiative by ensuring all students develop a career goal early and select an appropriate academic pathway. The QEP also supports the goals and objectives of the College's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan – SOAR 2022, which seeks to increase student retention, completion, and celebrate achievement.

The QEP topic was identified through ongoing, comprehensive planning, and evaluation processes and has broad-based support from constituencies throughout the College. A 40-member Topic Selection Committee reviewed data generated by ongoing institutional research and effectiveness processes, conducted multiple surveys, and held focus groups to gain feedback from faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Based on this work, the Committee developed a final topic proposal, which focused on using career exploration and planning to help students get and stay on a path in order to increase completion rates.

Explore to Complete is designed to accomplish three student learning outcomes (SLO):

- SLO 1: Students will develop a career goal and a plan for achieving it that is based on their personal interests, aptitudes, and abilities.
- SLO 2: Students will utilize their career plan to select and complete curricular requirements and co-curricular activities.
- SLO 3: Students will demonstrate proficiency in NACE competencies for career readiness through applied and/or experiential activities.

The student learning outcomes are intended to maintain student engagement and will be achieved throughout a student's educational journey. This ensures that students not only identify a path but stay on the path, actively prepare for their future career, and complete their degree in a timely manner.

The action plan was developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature related to career exploration and planning themes. Best and promising practices were identified resulting in a seven-step action plan:

1. Implement a career assessment that students complete during the onboarding process.
2. Develop an online career exploration and planning resource center.
3. Redesign the career exploration and planning unit in SLS 1122 First-Year Seminar.
4. Develop toolkits for faculty to incorporate career-based assignments into courses across the curriculum.
5. Expand student clubs and organizations based on individual pathways and career fields.
6. Create additional and enhance existing opportunities for experiential learning.
7. Create a career readiness badging program.

The actions in the plan represent new initiatives and enhancements to existing strategies and includes a timeline that implements the action plan over a period of five years. The College has identified and committed the human, physical, and financial resources necessary to sustain the QEP and ensure its successful implementation. Lastly, the College has developed a comprehensive plan to assess the success and impact of the QEP using a combination of formative and summative, direct and indirect, and qualitative assessment measures.