

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
OUACHITA TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

**SUBJECT AREA: Academic Policies and Procedures**  
**POLICY/PROCEDURE: Instructional Program and Course**  
**Evaluation System (IPES)**

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**Introduction**

A growing mismatch between the quality of the workforce and the skill requirements of new jobs being created through changing technology and aggressive economic development is well documented. Ouachita Technical College, in its role as the primary provider of two-year post-secondary occupational and technical education in its service area, is keenly aware of this growing mismatch.

Through its support of business and industry training and its formal occupational and technical education programs, OTC has played and will continue to play a significant role in area economic development. In a continuing effort to be responsive to the needs of its clientele the College has designed a system of periodic curriculum review embracing the following tenets:

- A. Work is a central defining element of human existence. Work builds self-respect and contributes to the economy.
- B. Economic competitiveness depends upon developing a competitive workforce.
- C. Creating a competitive workforce requires partnerships and private-sector participation.
- D. Basic education levels are prerequisite to educating a competitive workforce.
- E. Education for a competitive workforce must be of sufficient breadth and depth to avoid built in obsolescence.
- F. A solid foundation in general education is an essential component in a lifelong learning environment.

More than ever, workers must be competent in what have traditionally been considered the basic skills. However, many people involved in business and education realize that the traditional list of basic skills - reading, writing, and computation - has expanded to include communication skills, working in teams, computer literacy, problem-solving, and higher order thinking skills.

The College mission is to provide the knowledge, skills, and understandings necessary and supportive of the social, cultural, and personal development of the individual. To fulfill this mission in the context of today's economic and social environment, the College must make a more responsive and relevant curriculum available to its constituents.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Instructional Program and Course Evaluation System (IPES) is to provide accountability measures for the instructional process of the College and to provide a basis to improve the quality and availability of occupational and technical education offered by the College as it attempts to fulfill its mission.

## **Scope**

The IPES has been developed primarily to serve the internal needs of the College to assess accountability for its instructional process through the examination of several key performance indicators. The system also incorporates the requirements of external agencies for program evaluation.

The IPES offers opportunity for faculty, staff, and advisors to participate in the improvement of education and training offered at the College. For College administrators, the system identifies the perceived strengths and areas needing improvement within programs, in order to provide a basis for overall planning and allocation of resources.

Time and resources available at OTC do not permit in-depth evaluations of every program every year. Moreover, unnecessary duplication and redundant evaluation is to be discouraged. The College approach is, therefore, intended to concentrate efforts where attention is most needed while avoiding the unnecessary cost of in-depth evaluation of programs which are basically effective.

## **Evaluation System - Summary Description**

The IPES has two major components, the **Annual Program Review** and the **Comprehensive Program Review**. The former is designed to meet the internal requirements of the College to assess accountability and to develop a basis to make decisions concerning instructional programs as they relate to the Strategic Plan. The latter incorporates the requirements of certain external agencies, principally the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE).

### **Annual Program Review**

The annual review process is intended to provide data for continuous program improvement. Problem areas within a program may be identified by the key performance indicators as a first step toward changes in that program. It is recognized, moreover, that individual program faculty may wish to identify and develop additional indicators to more completely measure the performance of their area(s) or to meet state mandates, and may provide a narrative section in which the indicator scores are analyzed.

### **Identification of Key Performance Indicators and Evaluation Process**

Each academic program will be evaluated annually using, at a minimum, the following key performance indicators:

1. Enrollment versus capacity for the program.
2. Attainment of minimum enrollment standards.
3. Retention rates in the program.
4. Graduation rates from the program.
5. Graduate placement rates from the program.
6. Cost of the program.
7. Diversity within the program.

The following scales are used to measure each key performance indicator. Points are summed over the seven (7) indicators with a maximum of twenty-eight (28) points possible. Based on the total points scores and any additional narrative, an annual report by will be presented to the Vice President and Dean for Instructional and Student Affairs (VP/DISA).

### **Indicator Measures**

#### **1. Enrollment Versus Capacity**

This ratio is calculated by comparing the number of students enrolled in the program during the Fall semester to the possible capacity of the program during the same time period. Program Capacity is determined by mutual agreement between the Department Chair and the VP/DISA each Spring semester for the following Fall. Points are assigned based on the following ranges:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
90-100%	5
80-89	4
70-79	3
50-69	2
30-49	1
0-29	0

#### **2. Minimum Enrollment Standard**

This indicator is measured using the number of student semester credit hours (SSCH) necessary for a program to break even. This figure is typically interpreted to mean 225 SSCH per full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty member. Enrollments are measured using Fall semester data. (Reference **COPP 4.26**)

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
Program Breaks Even	3
Program does not Break Even	0

#### **3. Program Retention**

Program retention is measured by the number of students that remain in the program over time. For degree programs this figure is measured using Fall to Fall data. For certificate programs it is measured from semester to semester. Based on Arkansas Department of

Higher Education (ADHE) Productivity Funding Levels, the following ranges are in vogue:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
>60%	3
46-59	2
40-45	1
0-39	0

#### 4. Graduation Awards

This indicator measures the number of awards granted by the program within the academic year.

<u># Awards</u>	<u>Points</u>
> 4	4
3	3
2	2
1	1
0	0

#### 5. Graduate Placement

This indicator is defined as the percentage of graduates employed in their primary area of training or are pursuing further higher education within one year after graduation. These data are collected in a graduate follow-up study.

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
85-100%	5
70-84	4
50-69	3
30-49	2
10-29	1
0- 9	0

#### 6. Program Costs

This indicator is derived by comparing the cost of a Ouachita Technical College program per full-time equivalent (FTE) student to the state average cost. It is recognized that these data run a calendar year behind the review cycle.

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
0- 70%	5
71- 90	4
90-110	3
111-130	2
131-150	1
> 150	0

**7. Diversity Within the Program**

This indicator compares the percentage of minority student enrollment within a program to the service area minority density. This figure is currently published at 10.7%.

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
> 11%	3
8- 9	2
5- 7	1
< 5	0

**8. Minority Retention Rates (Fall to Fall)**

<u>Range</u>	<u>Points</u>
> 60%	3
46-59	2
40-45	1
< 40	0

**9. Narrative Report on Program Activities**

Each academic program may provide a narrative description of evaluation activities undertaken by the program during the evaluation period. This narrative section also provides a forum for analyzing the indicator scores, either on an annual basis or as a trend.

**Comprehensive Program Review Guidelines**

[Associate of Arts Degree (AA), Associate of Applied Science Degrees (AAS), Technical Certificates (TC), and Certificates of Completion (CP)]

The comprehensive review process involves a systematic investigation of the structure, functions, and outcomes of an academic program in an attempt to evaluate and improve academic programs. An academic program is defined as a plan of study leading to an award. The comprehensive program review is undertaken as a self-report examination within a program and any changes recommended, internally or externally, are designed to improve the quality of the program by pointing the way to improved performance. Reviews will also provide valuable input into decisions regarding institution-wide planning and policy development.

The benefit of the review lies in the process itself. This process includes preparation, data collection, discussion, analysis, questioning, and planning. Therefore, it must be properly planned and responsibly executed. The specific points of the review concern each program's mission, objectives, course offerings, personnel, teaching, professional activities, administration, future plans, and students' needs, input, and success, as well as community needs and recommendations.

Guidelines for program reviews are provided. In order to facilitate a systematic evaluation it is incumbent upon each academic program to provide, analyze, and form conclusions about data, formal and informal, relative to the mission, goals, and objectives of the program in relation to that of the College. Detailed analysis of each of these categories is essential. Judgments should be constructive, interim, and forward-looking. These guidelines should be used to develop a comprehensive self-study report for each program. Program faculty should supply data and documentation wherever possible.

The General Assembly of the State of Arkansas has charged the State Board of Higher Education with the responsibility for periodic review of academic programs at Arkansas state-supported colleges and universities. As the staff agency for the State Board, the ADHE follows an established 7-10 year schedule of program review. Completion of Ouachita Technical College's (OTC) comprehensive program review, as described in this document, will follow the same ADHE schedule. However, a OTC comprehensive program review could be triggered prior to the ADHE scheduled review based on the outcomes of the **Annual Program Review** described in the first section of this document.

## **I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

- A. Provide a general description of the program. Include a description of any transitions the program has made since the last program review.
- B. Explain how the program's philosophy is congruent with that of the College. Explain how General Education is integrated across the curriculum. Give examples of library assignments and any other evidence to support these statements.
- C. Give specific program goals and objectives and tell how they relate to OTC's Mission statement. Provide examples and documentation.
- D. Explain how the program serves the economic and workforce needs in the College's service area. Include such information as employer satisfaction surveys, participation of advisory committees (membership, attendance, recommendations, and how these recommendations were or were not implemented and the effects they had on the program), the number of completers, graduates, and job placement rates. In addition, list the off-site offerings, dates, locations, faculty, and enrollment. List specific changes made in the curriculum as a result of specific economic and workforce needs.

## **II. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

For the following areas, please provide objective data on the program's current status and any future plans:

- A. **Facilities** - Describe facilities used in the program, including classroom space and laboratory or shop facilities. Are the facilities satisfactory? List strengths and weaknesses and provide documentation.

- B. **Equipment** - Include references to the adequacy of equipment financing and acquisitions. Describe any sharing of equipment to improve cost effectiveness. Describe the extent to which equipment is current or is otherwise similar to equipment found in business and industry. Make suggestions for improvement.

Provide a three- to five-year plan for the future acquisition of equipment. State if the equipment is for replacement of old equipment or for new equipment to keep pace with technology. Provide justification and documentation to substantiate any projected needs for equipment. State sources of financing for these purchases and ways in which the faculty might help the College obtain financing or donation.

- C. **Curriculum and Course Content** - Describe the process used in planning and updating the program curriculum. Attach copies of the curriculum, course descriptions, and course syllabi.

How frequently is the curriculum revised? How recently was the curriculum reviewed? Include any internal or external information sources used to support any curriculum revisions. What has the faculty done to address any issues mentioned in previous reviews? Discuss any action that has been taken based on the last findings. What prompted the changes. Evaluate the impact of the changes. State which courses in the program are articulated through a contract with other institutions. Describe the process of transferring courses and programs from any contracting institution. Relate how course content is meeting student needs, including developmental. Describe how developmental and college courses in English/writing, math, and reading form sequential and cohesive courses of study in the program. Describe the sequence of courses within the degree programs and the rationale for each prerequisite. Include rationale for why some courses require prerequisites and others do not.

- D. **General Education** - Describe how and to what extent general education skills and competencies are integrated and/or reinforced in the technical courses. Include critical thinking skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, team-building, human relations, and communications, both oral and written. Include a statement of the College's general education philosophy and goals and give specific references to the program.

Attach a completed copy of the General Education Skills Checklists for each course and a completed program checklist for each program. Describe how any lack of integration has or will be addressed.

- E. **Library Holdings** - Describe library holdings related to the program including the currency and adequacy of books, periodicals, multi-media, and data bases. Include suggestions of ways to meet library needs in any discipline which does not currently have adequate holdings. List the resources requested by each faculty member within the past three (3) years.

- F. **Program Continuation** - Explain the process or procedure, including types of data, used to justify the continuation of a program or the updating of an existing program to the Associate degree level.
- G. **Financial Resources** - Attach a completed copy of the Departmental Budget Request Forms and the approved Departmental Budget for the past three (3) years. Discuss how financial resources have affected the program(s) within the department.

### **III. FACULTY**

- A. Provide the following for each faculty member: full- or part-time, degrees and institutions granting degrees, field or specialty of degrees, length of time employed by the College. Include any national/state certification and/or specialized training. Attach teaching schedules and class sizes for the past two (2) years.
- B. Describe future plans for hiring additional faculty. Include developmental education faculty.
- C. List all professional development activities attended by each faculty member, including dates and locations. Give specific examples of how professional development activities have affected methodology and led to curriculum revisions. Describe how the program has included information from the professional development activities. Include suggestions for further professional development.

### **IV. STUDENT SERVICES**

Describe the following items as they relate to the program under review and make recommendations for improvements.

- A. Describe the program's role in recruitment processes and procedures relative to entrance and placement testing, advising and counseling, transfer agreements, and retention. Include discussion of what has been done, by whom, how, results, and plans for improvement of the program.
- B. Provide data and an analysis of the data which relates to retention and job placement of students in technical programs.
- C. Provide data on current and projected enrollment for AA/AAS degrees.
- D. Include information on how students progress through developmental courses and enter traditional and/or technical courses. In addition, include data relative to students' academic success rates in terms of course completion, completion of courses in major, and award completion.

## **V. PUBLIC/PRIVATE LINKAGES**

- A. Describe the extent to which the program actively provides specialized instruction/training that addresses the needs of business and industry within the service area. Provide examples and evidence that the program makes a difference for the community.
- B. Describe any partnerships that have been developed for sharing resources with business and industry. Include all formalized agreements and discuss the agreements, shared resources, and future plans.
- C. Describe the advisory committee system used in the program. Include information and analysis regarding the number of members, their positions, who they represent, frequency of meetings, attendance at meetings in the past two (2) years, and when and how members suggestions have influenced curriculum changes, equipment purchases, and enrollment. Provide suggestions for enhancing the role of the committee in improving the program.

## **VI. PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

- A. Discuss program outcome measures and how they coincide with the College's overall assessment strategy. Include the following:
  - 1. Number of graduates for the past three (3) years.
  - 2. Retention rate by course (within the term, from term to term, and annually from fall to fall).
  - 3. General characteristics of students, such as full- part-time enrollment, gender, age trends, and ethnicity.
  - 4. Headcount, FTE, and SSCH generated for the current year and past two (2) years.
  - 5. Graduate and non-completer (students employed in the field but who did not graduate) employment rates. Include data and discussion regarding whether students, as a result of program completion, are hired in the field at a higher rate than individuals who do not complete the program, and whether such students are paid at a higher rate than if they had not completed the program.
  - 6. Employer satisfaction with program graduates.
  - 7. Attainment of general education competencies as measured by the Rising Junior Examination.
  - 8. Attainment of technical competencies as measured by licensure examinations and state-mandated testing.

## **VII. PROGRAM SUMMARY**

Provide details regarding the following:

- A. Program strengths

- B. Concerns
- C. Recommendations - Address specific concerns with plans and a timeline for improvement. Include a recommendation and discussion regarding program continuation or termination.

**VIII. FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM**

- A. Provide information of future plans to overcome concerns, fulfill recommendations, and fully develop the transfer function of the College. This section should provide elaboration of the recommendations in VII(C).
- B. Provide a timetable and cost estimates for any planned improvements.
- C. Describe any additional needs beyond the planned improvements in the areas listed in item VIII(B) above and their projected costs.

**Summary**

The IPES has been established as a model for ensuring instructional quality through "Benchmarking." It will be used for evaluating and improving institutional performance in the areas of cost, quality, and customer service. The model incorporates data elements from all major institutional units, the individual Operational Plans, and the Cost Information Study. Results of the IPES will be incorporated into the College Strategic Plan.

AUTHENTICATION (Signature):		COPP
<hr style="width: 25%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 5px;">President</p>	7/25/00 (Date)	<b>4.05</b>