

AQIP Systems Portfolio software

A wish-list prospectus

This chart outlines some potential features and benefits of software that would permit any college or university that is participating in AQIP to maintain its Systems Portfolio as a web document on the institution's website. (Making the Portfolio "public" is a required element of the Academic Quality Improvement Program, The Higher Learning Commission's alternative program for maintaining accreditation.) The chart also suggests additional features and applications for the software, enhancements that would make it of greater use to institutions and to AQIP. (The numbers at the left are to make discussion easier.)

| | Basic essential features: | Uses and Benefits for AQIP Institutions |
|----|---|--|
| A1 | Allows a Systems Portfolio (<i>and</i> the data or information collected to produce it) to be available via the Web to (a) all employees of the institution, (b) the public, and (c) accrediting and regulatory agencies (like AQIP and MnSCU). | Gives employees and stakeholders of the institution an accurate, up-to-date, common understanding of how key goals and processes approached, the resulting performance, and what drives improvement |
| A2 | Basic package is inexpensive or free, and requires no other expensive software (e.g., Microsoft Project, 4 th Dimension) to run | Everyone becomes used to the same software, making it easier for any institution to learn from others' portfolios |
| | Access, security, and technical features: | Uses and benefits: |
| B1 | Provides internal security to the institution hosting the Systems Portfolio (so that only authorized personnel can change information), and provide a variety of levels of password-controlled access to people who are not employees of the organization | The institution can control, through easily understood and adjustable settings, which audiences have access to which data. |
| B2 | Can run on any computer system, regardless of platform (Windows, Mac, Linux, etc.) | Works in any institution regardless of operation platform. |
| B3 | Web pages generated can be read and used by people employing the full variety of browsers and versions now in use and available free (albeit older versions of browser may provided curtailed features) | People wanting to study portfolios can do so from within an institution or from outside |
| B4 | Avoids features or code that would host viruses or block access to those with strong virus checking protocols. | People working from institutions with virus protections won't be blocked from viewing others' portfolios |
| | Desirable hyperlink features: | Uses and benefits: |
| C1 | The Systems Portfolio can contain within itself hyperlinks to other documents on institutional servers (that are available to employees but not to others) as well as hyperlinks to other pages on the institution's websites, thereby storing (or referencing the storage locations of) the primary evidence on which the Portfolio was based. | The Systems Portfolio becomes a "portal" through which a broad collection of institutional information can be viewed (by employees and/or outsiders, as the institution wishes). |
| C2 | The software would access the current set of lettered and numbered items from the nine AQIP Categories. When the institution's Portfolio was viewed, a short reference could introduce each section (e.g., 1P5, "Selecting a Course of Study"), but more detail would be a click away. | Someone viewing an institution's Portfolio can, with a click or two, read an explanation of each AQIP Category (1, 3, etc.) or item (1P4, 3R1, 7I2, etc.), perhaps via a popup screen. |
| C3 | Selected terms used repeatedly in the AQIP Category items (e.g., <i>alignment</i> , <i>metrics</i> , <i>stakeholder</i>) would appear in a distinctive font or color. | Clicking on a term so identified would cause a popup screen to appear with a gloss or explanation of the term. Reading a Portfolio would help introduce the reader to the language and thinking of continuous improvement. |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| C4 | Institutionally-unique terms and acronyms (e.g., Old Main, the CTPR Council) would appear in a distinctive font or color. | Clicking on a term so identified would cause a popup screen to appear with a gloss or explanation of the term. A separate “Glossary of institutional jargon” would be unnecessary. Outsiders could understand what’s being talked about. |
| | Systems Appraisal enhancement features: | Uses and benefits: |
| D1 | The software will allow those portion(s) of the Systems Portfolio that have been designated “top-level” by the institution (i.e., the equivalent of approximately 100 pages of text, diagrams, tables, charts, etc.) to be saved to an Adobe PDF file that would be created dynamically from the current version of the Portfolio, and saved with the current date. | Visitors to the institution’s website — and AQIP Systems Appraisers — could export a current, complete version of the Portfolio for further study. (Links within the material used to create the PDF would be saved, but not the hyperlinked pages or documents from other sources (e.g., on other institutional servers or webpages) that are referenced within the portfolio.) |
| D2 | The software would allow institutions to identify easily which of the Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation and Core Components is supported by the text of the Systems Portfolio and other materials stored on the institution’s website (e.g., by highlighting a section of Portfolio text and selecting from a pull-down menu the Criterion and Core Component) | AQP institutions would not have to prepare a separate “Index” demonstrating compliance with the Criteria. The Portfolio would contain this index implicitly, and Appraisers could easily view or reorder the Portfolio information to check Criteria compliance. (PEAQ institutions could use the software to prepare Self-Study Reports and electronic Resource Rooms.) |
| D3 | Institutions could self-evaluate their status on individual AQIP items, indicating whether they believe the item is currently a strength (SS or S) or opportunity (OO or O) for them. Institutions could write very short comments for the Portfolio on items they self-identify as opportunities for the future. | Appraisers could acknowledge briefly items where they agree with the institution’s self-assessment. Appraisers would know when they need to explain more fully a different between their perception and the institution’s. |
| | On-going Institutional Development features: | Uses and benefits: |
| E1 | The software would allow an institution to note, in connection with any item, unresolved issues (e.g., “we couldn’t agree on how to segment our stakeholders”) that will require future internal discussion, or ideas for future improvement initiatives. | These notes would create an agenda for future internal discussions within the institution. Good ideas that arise when creating the Portfolio would be recorded and not lost. |
| E2 | The software would allow an institution to note, in connection with any item or Category, the names of the individuals or groups who worked on reviewing the area and writing the comments that appear in the Portfolio. | These notes would allow the institution to assign writing or maintaining pieces of the Portfolio to individuals or groups. The notes would also permit others in the institution to see who composed the group that reviewed each item, allowing improvements by adding additional perspectives not originally represented. |
| E3 | The software would record the date and time each item was last revised. | People viewing the Portfolio could be permitted to select an option allowing them to “Read what’s changed since I last looked” |
| E4 | The software would allow Portfolio readers to submit notes tied to specific items. These notes could be stored as comments that other readers could view, or could be sent to a central file for Portfolio writers and editors to review. | The Portfolio could become a feedback system to collect ideas, suggestions, and perceptions from employees, and comments from outsiders (a US Department of Education requirement for accredited institutions). |
| E5 | The software would allow an institution to reference, in connection with any item, current initiatives (such as current Action Projects) that could impact the description and self-evaluation of the item. | Appraisers and other readers would be able to understand that current improvement work is underway. Institutions could use these notes in regularly revising the Portfolio. |









AQIP Category Item Worksheet (sample)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---------|-------------|---|
| AQIP Category | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Item type | Process | | | | | | Results | Improvement | |

Item number and text:

1P5 How do you help students select programs of study that match their needs, interests and abilities? In providing this help, how are discrepancies between the necessary and actual preparation of students and their learning styles detected and addressed?

Inventory of current practices relevant to judging current state for this area (add as many rows as needed)

| Name/Title | Description | Purpose | Owner | Evidence |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Major Selection Policy | Students must declare major in order to register for 61 st credit. | To make undergraduates to choose a major in time for them to satisfy major requirements before graduation | VPAA, Deans, Faculty senate |  |
| Freshman career fair | Orientation week event in which departments host tables providing information on majors and career opportunities | To familiarize freshmen with the range of choices available, to get them thinking about careers, and to allow departments to recruit majors | VPAA, academic departments |  |
| Trends in majors | National and institutional trends in choosing majors, 2004-5 | To identify potential low-demand programs for planning purposes | Institutional Research |  |
| Advisement staff | Photographs and biographical sketches of each advisement staff member | To provide students seeking advisement with information that let's them schedule appointment with an advisor with whom they will have rapport | Director of Advisement |  |
| Requirements for majors | Web pages that list requirements for each major offered by the institution | To provide students, faculty, and advisors with clear and unambiguous information on what each major requires | Director of Public Information, Academic Departments |  |
| Freshman readiness exams | Examinations required of students before they can register for English 101, Math 101, or Speech 111. | To assure that students understand whether their level of preparation matches that expected in basic required courses. | VPAA, Deans, Faculty senate |  |
| Developmental course policy | Advisors can recommend, but not require, that students take developmental courses | To encourage underprepared students to remediate deficiencies before they take basic required courses | Director of Advisement, VPAA |  |
| Student success with and without remediation | Analysis of data on the success levels of students taking basic courses | To find out whether improved students success justifies requiring remedial courses | VPAA, Institutional Research |  |

Participants who examined and discussed evidence and self-evaluated this item for institution

Titus A. Drum (Director of Advisement), Urban Sprawl (Administrative Assistant, Student Records), Warren Peace (Assistant VP for Academic Affairs, Wendy City (Associate Professor, Sociology), Sue Perficial (Assistant Director, Financial Aid), Paige Turner (Chair, Accounting), Tristan Shout (undergraduate history student)

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|-------|---|-------|--------|
| Self-evaluation of this area | 5 (SS) | 4 (S) | 3 | 2 (O) | 1 (OO) |
|------------------------------|--------|-------|---|-------|--------|

Current Projects that would affect this item:

Advisement Manual Task Force, Action Project Study Group on Developmental Education Policies

Summary evaluation and rationale:

Overall, we offer a variety of programs and resources to help students select a major that fits their interests; it is less clear whether our students' choice of a course of study fits their abilities and preparation. We have good information on the needs of underprepared students (in English, math, and speech), but no systematic process for making sure that those who need remediation get it before they take basic required courses. We have no measures of either the effectiveness of our systems for helping students choose majors, and only sketchy, incomplete data on the effectiveness of our current approaches to the placement of underprepared students.

Unresolved issues and ideas for future projects that would affect this item:

- No data was available on what happens to students who declare majors late or change majors
- Much anecdotal testimony from faculty that underprepared students bring down the level and expectations of freshman courses, but no hard, systematic evidence that this is true
- We could examine policies and practices of peer institutions who have mandatory placement of underprepared students into developmental courses.
- It is unclear whether we can staff and afford developmental classes for all those who would need to take them if we made them mandatory.

Instructions – AQIP Category Item Worksheet

AQIP Category

Circle the number of the AQIP Category from which this item comes

Item Type

Circle a word to indicate whether this is a C, P, R, or I item

Item Number and Text

Copy, verbatim from the AQIP Categories, the item number and text of the item.

Inventory of Evidence relevant to determining the current status of this area

List all of the institutional activities, programs, policies, structure, etc. that together constitute your institution's ways of addressing the issues or needs included in this item. For each practice listed, indicate:

- Name – give the practice a short name that everyone can use to refer to it (e.g., Annual Personnel Review, Student Housing Office, No Smoking Policy, Fall In-Service Day)
- Description – write a sentence that concisely describes the practice (who does it, when, where, how). If the Name says it all, skip the description.
- Purpose or goal - summarize in a sentence the objective of the practice – what it is supposed to accomplish or achieve. (this may not be clear — if so, write “unsure”)
- Owner – identify the owner or controller of this practice: the person, unit, or group that could change it if it needed to be changed.

Some practices you need to include in this inventory are:

- Activities (e.g. Convocation Day, Finals Week, Tuesday Night Movies)
- Programs (e.g. Freshman Composition, Advisement, Staff Development)
- Policies (minimum requirements for a bachelors degree, tenure and promotion policies)
- Structures (Student Affairs, the Chemistry Department, The Humanities Division, College of Art)

If this is an R (Results) item, you might include in your inventory data sets (and the methods by which they are collected) measuring stakeholder needs, satisfaction, and outcomes, or institutional performance.

If this is an I (Improvement) item, you might include in your inventory information on systematic procedures the institution uses to identify improvement opportunities and capitalize upon them, as well as data on specific improvements made as a result of these procedures over the past few years.

Who participated in examining the evidence and self-evaluating this area?

Record the names and position titles of all participants.

Current self-evaluation of this area

Evaluate the area, overall, on a five point scale: SS to OO with neutral midpoint (neither a strength nor an opportunity).

Current projects that would affect this item

If work is underway on changes that would materially affect how you judge this item, note them here, and discuss their impact in your summary evaluation.

Summary evaluation

Summarize your self-evaluation and the reasoning behind it, identifying the practices or factors that were the major pluses and minuses in your overall judgment. Identify practices that weighed the most heavily on your self-evaluation.

Unresolved issues and ideas for future projects:

Note here any issues that remain unresolved from your deliberation (e.g., where evidence was missing that prevented you from including a practice in your self-assessment) as well as ideas for future improvement projects related to this Category item.

AQIP Category Summary Worksheet (sample)

AQIP Category 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Context Item numbers and emphases:

Circle the Items you have addressed in depth in this Category

Process: P1 P2 P3 P4 P5 P6 P7 P8 P9 P10 P11 P12 P13

Results: R1 R2 R3 R4 R5

Improvement: I1 I2

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| Tally the self-evaluations of <i>all</i> items in this Category | SS | S | Neutral | O | OO |
| | | | | | |

Circle the Rubric (or range) on which you would place our institution on this Category:

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|----------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Beginning | Developing | Maturing | Proficient | Accomplished | Commendable | Outstanding |

Summarize the reasons for your self-evaluation in drafting the text (or notes) for the Context items in this Category:

Names and position titles of those who participated in examining the evidence and self-evaluating this Category

Instructions – AQIP Category Summary Worksheet

AQIP Category

Circle the number of the AQIP Category from which this item comes

Item Type

Circle a word to indicate whether this is a C, P, R, or I item

Item Number and Text

From the AQIP Categories, enter the Context item numbers for this Category, and a word or two identifying the emphasis for each item.

Tally the self-evaluations of all items in this Category

Look at each AQIP Category Item Worksheet for this Category (including those you addressed in depth, and those where you self-evaluated status as an “OO”), and tally the sums of your self-evaluations for all items in the boxes.

Inventory of Evidence relevant to determining the current status of this area

List all of the institutional facts, demographics, and descriptions (e.g., organizational structure, service region, mission, etc.) important in providing readers of your Systems Portfolio with the context they need to understand clearly how and why your institution’s ways of addressing the issues or needs expressed by this individual process, results, and improvement items in this Category. This context might include demographic description of your stakeholders or customers, data on the needs, desires, and satisfaction of your stakeholders or customers, and current performance measures and performance data (e.g., outputs and outcomes)

Do **not** include here information already discussed in those individual Category items you have chosen to address in depth.

Names and position titles of those who participated in examining the evidence and self-evaluating this Category

Record the names and position titles of all participants in the discussions.

Summary of current self-evaluations of all items within this Category

Evaluate the area, overall, on a five point scale: SS to OO with neutral midpoint as neither a strength nor an opportunity

Summary Evaluation

Summarize the reasoning behind your self evaluation on this Category, identifying the factors that were the major pluses and minuses in your overall judgment by writing paragraphs (or notes) for addressing the AQIP context items for this Category. Make sure your Context item responses will include the information someone unfamiliar with your institution would need in order to understand your responses to the items that you addressed in depth, and that they answer the following questions:

- What led you to select a particular AQIP Rubric (or range of Rubrics) as your self-evaluation of your institution’s overall quality progress on this Category? What do you believe you lack (and therefore what you need to work on) to move your institution to the next level of the quality in the AQIP Rubrics?
- Why did you choose to address in depth the items you circled above at this stage in your quality progress? (Include specific reasons you had for addressing in depth items where you have current Action Projects, and/or items on which you want to focus attention for the immediate future.)
- To what degree do you have concrete results data on the performance of your processes in this Category? Or (if you chose not to address the R items in depth at this time) your progress in developing performance measures with an estimate of the time at which you will begin to have a reliable stream of performance results data. (Note: if you haven’t addressed the R items in depth, you must address in depth the last P item in this Category.)