



Exemplary Student Pathways
An initiative of The University of Texas System

EXEMPLARY STUDENT PATHWAYS PROJECT

ACTION PLAN

Project Title:

Institution Name:

ESP Team Leader:

ESP Team Members:

UT System Facilitator(s):

Date:

PREFACE

The Exemplary Student Pathways (ESP) Project is an initiative of the University of Texas System that aims to improve student success by redesigning curricular pathways at each of the UT System's nine academic institutions. The ESP project combines the power of data with a proven change model to design new pathways to support more students to enter and complete quality degree programs.

The ESP project:

- **Positions the curriculum as the locus of change to achieve equitable student success**, a domain that has been traditionally siloed from student success offices and initiatives.
- **Cultivates data agency through an iterative change model**—the ESP change model—that brings together institutional teams, referred to as “ESP teams,” to dive deep into data and develop and implement action plans designed to close gaps in outcomes, remove barriers to student success, and re-envision curricular structures and disciplinary pathways ([Fingerson & Troutman, 2019](#)).
- **Identifies institutional projects and action plans that align with longer-term institutional goals** and include concrete strategies for implementation, assessment, and stakeholder engagement.

The goal of the Action Plan template is to 1) provide ESP team members with the opportunity to reflect on their process and progress, including the learning, data discovery, and planning achieved over the last 6 months; and 2) develop a comprehensive approach to resolving and acting on their identified problem statement(s). Action Plans should align with longer-term institutional goal(s) as well as the overall ESP goals to close gaps in student outcomes by advancing data agency and the redesign of a curricular pathway.

The template below asks you for concrete actions and strategies, data- and metric-focused assessment, and stakeholder engagement. Responses in the narrative sections can be brief.

While we ask that ESP teams attend to all sections of the Action Plan, we understand that some ESP teams may need to customize their responses.

I. IN RETROSPECT

1. **Starting Point:** Please describe your original problem statement, why it was chosen, and how it *did* or *did not* evolve during the ESP Team process and development of the action plan. Be sure to include the original student outcomes gap(s) and curricular component(s) at the center of your chosen problem.

2. **Territory Covered:** Please describe the territory you have covered since the Exemplary Student Pathways project began, including the work your ESP Team has done, in terms of the three project phases: **Data Discovery**; **Connecting the Dots**; and **Develop an Action Plan**. Identify early actions, changes, and interventions already taken, and include the table below that teams were asked to use along the way. Please provide any artifacts and attachments within section three: artifacts and appendixes.

DATA DISCOVERY Please provide a list of data sources used during your data discover process as well as the relevance, questions and insights generated, and potential actions identified.			
Brief description of the data set	Why was this data relevant to the project?	What questions, insights, and findings were generated?	What potential actions were identified from the data?
Data Source 1			
Data Source 2			
Data Source N			

3. **Lessons Learned:** Please indicate lessons learned over the last six months in terms of data agency, analyzing gaps in outcomes, and redesigning a pathway or curriculum. Please also provide information on any discovery beyond project goals, unexpected findings, barriers, revised metrics, and reflections on change management in terms of the processes engaged in, silos spanned, and relationships built as well as resistance to change you may have encountered.

Consider the following as you respond:

- Findings or changes—expected or otherwise—encountered through data discovery in the nature of the gaps in outcomes your project set out to explore and address when you submitted your proposal.
- The change management process with consideration of the pre-mortem exercise your team did at the ESP project launch: did you continue to pay attention to the obstacles and failures brainstormed together as you moved through the dot-connecting stage and into action planning? Did new ones emerge?

II. PROSPECTION: THE ACTION PLAN

1. **OVERALL AIM:** Please describe the overarching aim or goal of the action plan, with a focus on the student outcome gap(s) and curricular component(s) to be addressed. Address how this action plan will further advance the following goals central to the Equitable Student Pathways grant project: cultivating data agency, equitable student success, curricular redesign, and alignment with institutional and unit-level (college/departmental) strategic goals or vision. After completing the three tables below, you will be asked to consider what success will look like across multiple dimensions of the project's impact.

2. ACTION PLANNING

Collectively, the three tables below—Action Strategies, Assessment, and Stakeholder Engagement—should result in action strategies that are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). They should lead throughout the implementation phase to additional and more specific actions that can be enumerated through preferred planning methods as the work moves forward with a goal towards customization, sustainability, and institutionalization of the ESP change model.

Action strategies should have a clear connection or through-line to overall project aims including ongoing efforts to advance equitable student success through data agency and curricular redesign. They will cover ongoing data analysis and data-informed interventions, curricular components, stakeholder engagement, removal of barriers, policy changes, and robust assessment over time. Assessment plans should include sustained attention to metrics, evidence of impact, and sustainability. Attention should also be paid to clear and shared accountability by stakeholders.

ACTION STRATEGIES <i>What are the most important actions you need to take? What will need to be accomplished over the next year?</i>					
Action Strategy (Please list your action strategies).	Reason(s) or Driver(s) (What is/are the reasons or driver(s) motivating the action(s)?)	Population (What population is being addressed? How will the action address equity gaps?)	Owners (Who is the responsible person(s)/owners for completing the action? Please include any offices or units that will contribute to the effort?)	Action Timeline (When will the action take place?)	Resources (What funding, staff or other resources will be needed to implement the action?)

Action 1					
Action 2					
Action 3					
Action 4					
Action 5					
Action N					

ASSESSMENT <i>Assessing the action strategies: How will you assess the impact of the action and what evidence will you use? How will you know when you have met your goal?</i>				
Action Strategy (Please list your action strategies provided in the action strategies table).	Baseline Performance (What are the baseline and/or efficiency metrics?)	Target (How will you determine if your action strategy is successful?)	Data Collection (Please describe what/how/when data will be collected on your action.)	Owners (Who is responsible for the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the results?)

Action 1				
Action 2				
Action 3				
Action 4				
Action 5				
Action N				

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Maintaining and Deepening Relationships to Accelerate Progress

Questions to consider when completing the table below:

- Have we accounted for all our key groups/individuals? Who is directly impacted and/or indirectly affected? How complex are these relationships?
- Do we understand and agree about the sources of potential resistance?
- How does our core “why” of this work resonate with the motivations & interests of those implicated?
- Who needs to hear what? Who needs to be listened to?
- Do we have structures in place for both effective communication and effective engagement?
- What does our analysis suggest with respect to sequencing and timing of engagement activities? Who should be engaged when, in what ways and with what frequency?

Stakeholder / Stakeholder Group (Who are your key stakeholders?)	Key Messages (What is your 'elevator pitch' or core message when communicating with the stakeholder?)	Potential Resistance (What are the primary risks, threats, or fears?)	Communication Channels (Will the communication be formal and/or informal?) Please describe.	Timeline for Engagement (Who should be engaged when and with what frequency?)
Stakeholder 1				
Stakeholder 2				
Stakeholder 3				
Stakeholder 4				
Stakeholder N				

3. WHAT WILL SUCCESS, SUSTAINABILITY, AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION LOOK LIKE?

Stepping back, as you complete the action plan and look at the totality of your action strategies enumerated above, please address the following.

Success: What will success look like for your institution?

Student Experience: How will the student experience be changed if you are successful?

Departmental, Academic and Institutional Culture: How will departmental/academic/institutional culture change if you are successful? How will your project help to advance institutional strategic goals and priorities?

Sustainability, Institutionalization, and Future Work: How will the work be sustained? Please reference problems to be solved and models or approaches to be applied longer-term and in the future, stemming from the project aim and connected to overarching institutional goals and plans. Please also indicate the ways in which your project will contribute to institutionalizing the change work you have done in terms of data agency, and student-centered pathways and curriculum redesign. How will you leverage the strategies and actions in the plan to advance other institutional and/or UT System goals, priorities, and initiatives? How will your action plan contribute to institutionalization of the ESP change model?

III. Artifacts and Appendices

1. Provide any attachments/links associated with the Territory Covered during the ESP activities.
2. Provide links to any publicly available data sources used in the analysis, including qualitative data or programs that were reviewed as a part of the ESP Team process, Curricular Analytics diagrams, degree maps or recommended course sequences, etc.
3. Provide links to or PDFs of collaborative workspaces (Miro boards, shared work sites, driver diagrams or other visualizations) and/or other project-capture tools.
4. Provide links to relevant institutional plans, projects, programs, and initiatives that will support the implementation of your action plan. These might include performance indicators with baseline data, policy analyses, and a stakeholder matrix.