

# Reflective Guide for the Design of Guided Pathways

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), in consultation with experts and partners from across the system, have developed a series of reflective guides for the design of Guided Pathways to ensure racial and social equity are at the core of pathways development and implementation. This guide is designed to assist colleges in implementing the full breadth and depth of Guided Pathways practices while helping institutions center the array of knowledge, skills, strengths, and experiences that are learned and shared by people of color and minoritized groups in support of the Washington State Board's Vision and Strategic Plan Goals:

## SBCTC Mission

*Leading with racial equity, our colleges maximize student potential and transform lives within a culture of belonging that advances racial, social, and economic justice in service to our diverse communities*

*Our goal in this strategic plan is to double completion rates across-the-board for all students by 2030, and to improve completion rates faster for students of color.*

## SBCTC Strategic Plan Goals

*The strategic plan identifies three goals:*

- 1. Achieve educational equity for students who are historically underrepresented in higher education. Eliminate inequities in college access, retention and completion for students historically underserved in higher education. Eliminate inequities in wages and university transfers.*
- 2. Improve completion rates for all enrolled students across all types of programs and credentials — workforce degrees, transfer degrees, certificates and apprenticeships.*
- 3. Increase access and retention among populations who can benefit the most from college access. This includes young adults, working adults, low-income people, people of color, immigrants, and single parents.*

The Washington State Legislature has passed several pieces of legislation over the last several years that provide direction and additional guidance relating to equity and access in higher education. The text of the legislation is another set of key resources to aid in your reflection on the development and implementation of equity-centered Guided pathways Development.

- HB 2158 Creating a workforce education investment to train Washington students for Washington jobs: Section 5 authorizes funding for Guided Pathways implementation and outlines area of focus
- [E2SSB 5227 Diversity in Higher Education](#): **Requiring diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism training and assessments at institutions of higher education.**
- [SB 5194 Equity & Access in Higher Ed.](#), Section 3 – DEI Strategic Plans: **Providing for equity and access in the community and technical colleges. Section 3: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC 7 PLAN.**

- [SB 5194 Equity & Access in Higher Ed.](#), Section 5 - Full-time Positions: *Providing for equity and access in the community and technical colleges*. Section 5: TENURE-TRACK FACULTY.

### **Washington Guided Pathways Reflective Guides**

The Washington Guided Pathways Reflective Guides are intended as a tool to support practitioners to critically review the Guided Pathways planning, development, and implementation at their college, identify and appreciate the positive work that has been accomplished, and consider how the institution can improve equitable practices and service delivery to students. These reflection guides are intended to be both flexible and iterative, allowing colleges to choose, change, or expand the questions to meet their needs. This is not to be a one size fits all exercise, rather a set of reflective questions that help each individual and college using the guide to deepen their understanding of what has been accomplished and generate other questions, consider alternative approaches, and make use of the depth of data and resources available.

### **Available Reflective Guides for the Design of Guided Pathways:**

- Intake/Onboarding Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways
- Advising Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways
- Engagement Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways
- Program Mapping Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways
- Math Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways
- Exploratory Experience Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways (TBD)
- Scheduling Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways (TBD)
- Gateway Programming Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways (TBD)

# Intake/Onboarding Reflective Guide for Guided Pathways

Based on national best practice and research on increasing the rate of students who earn college-level credits, the WA Guided Pathways coaches, EDI leaders, SBCTC and College Spark WA leadership have developed a suggested self-assessment for **designing, reviewing and refining quality models of Intake/Onboarding** to serve as the basis for the development of an equity-focused intake and onboarding system designed as a coherent series of curricular and co-curricular experiences that enable students to explore program options; network with faculty, students, and industry professionals in fields of interest; take program-specific courses; and create an educational and financial plan that they and their advisors can use to monitor progress toward completion.

These components have been shown to have significant impact for students of color and marginalized populations. Key metrics such as financial support and planning, retention, credit accumulation, math and English completion, and completion are considered from the standpoint of equity. The following design elements or standards may be helpful for colleges and coaches to use as a reflection tool, and have been derived from Community College Research Center's on-going work: <sup>i ii</sup>

**Reflective Questions:** Use the following questions to evaluate your progress of systematic change to change the student experience and codify it in procedure, process, and training for each element in the description column:

- How is equity clearly centered in the student experience?
- Are **all** students succeeding in each element of the description? How are you prioritizing student success for your most marginalized/minoritized students in each element.
- Are all staff knowledgeable and engaged in each element? How are all staff supported to continuously develop relevant knowledge and remain engaged? Have steps been taken to create both access and opportunity for meaningful engagement of front line and other staff?
- How are all staff supported to develop relevant knowledge and remain engaged in each element?
- What change is necessary based on the college's evidence, both leading and lagging indicators, related to each element in the description?

## ORGANIZING AND INTRODUCING PROGRAMS BY FIELD OF INTEREST

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE	REFLECTIVE RESPONSES
<p>1. Onboarding and intake activities are mandatory for students across all college mission areas, including Basic Education for Adults including English Language Learners and designed to build a sense of belonging, clarify student career and college goals, and create a comprehensive individual educational and financial plan based on program/degree maps.</p>	
<p>A. The student onboarding experience, from application to program selection and foundational program/course selection, is designed around meta-majors to help all students explore their interests and options.</p>	
<p>B. All entering students are engaged in conversations and activities that explore and identify their interests, strengths, and future career and life plans.</p>	
<p>C. All students, including those enrolled in Basic Education for Adults programming, choose at least a preliminary meta-major and develop a customized pathway map/academic plan in line with the established college policy on when a student must identify a pathway.</p>	
<p>D. Every student is assisted in developing a customized academic plan that supports their goals and needs early in the intake/onboarding process. This includes specific bridges or connections to credit pathways for students in Basic Education including English Language Acquisition.</p> <p>Guiding information is clearly available on the college website.</p>	
<p>E. Students participate in new student orientation that includes a focus on meta-majors so they can meet faculty, existing students, and others in programs of interest to</p>	

them.	
F. In Intake/Onboarding experiences are customized to meet the needs of various student populations (ex. Historically Underserved Students of Color, first generation college students, students receiving need-based aid, Veterans, etc.)	
G. Intake/Onboarding processes are designed to be flexible, particularly around orientation and advising to accommodate with competing obligations and those who enter the college at times other than the fall term.	
<p>2. Every student is advised of all financial supports available to them (e.g., FAFSA, WASFA, ability to benefit, etc.) at each step of the pathway and work with college staff to develop a comprehensive financial plan.</p> <p>The college has policies and processes that distribute funds equitably. Since funding sources are dictated by other systems and often lead some into unsustainable jobs, college staff advocate for students and link financial aid to pathway selection, distributing the funding in direct and creative ways. Three percent financial aid funds are leveraged to this end.</p> <p>Students are aware of the link between financial aid and pathway selection or pathway changes.</p>	
3. Entering students are provided with structured exploratory experiences informed by labor market information. (See separate Reflective Guide on Exploratory Sequences.)	
4. Advisors are conscious of their own bias as they encourage students to consider occupations or majors alongside their	

<p>initial goals; they open possibilities for students and create opportunities for students to dream and reach. Emphasis is on high demand high wage programs that provide a sustaining wage.</p>	
<p>5. Intake/Onboarding staff use proven advising strategies such as Appreciative Advising, Trauma-informed Advising, etc. that place the student at the center of conversation, build a safe and comfortable environment, understand what has impacted their educational journey, etc. and respond in a manner that helps the student to progress.</p>	
<p>6. Practices and processes are designed to meet the needs of the student populations that the college data has identified as most challenged (e.g., minoritized populations). This design foundation then allows all students to succeed.</p>	

<sup>i</sup> CCRC: How to Achieve More Equitable Community College Student Outcomes; Lessons from Six Years of CCRC Research on Guided Pathways [equitable-community-college-student-outcomes-guided-pathways.pdf](https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/equitable-community-college-student-outcomes-guided-pathways.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> CCRC: Redesigning Community College Student Onboarding Through Guided Pathways <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/redesigning-community-college-onboarding-guided-pathways.pdf>

<p>7. The college examines the impact of using traditional measures of student “readiness” (e.g., Standardized tests on minoritized and marginalized student populations) and intentionally implements other measurements that inform college placement (i.e., HS GPA, self-directed placement, etc.).</p>	
<p>8. Intake/Onboarding staff clearly outline the pathway to completing college-level Math and English courses within the first year.</p> <p>College policies establish expectations for students to complete college-level Math and English within the one-year timeline. Math and English faculty have streamlined pathways, determined the correct courses for each map, and</p>	

<p>implemented strategies that support student achievement.</p> <p>All college staff use equity focused growth mindset approaches that assist students in overcoming barriers related to Math and English.</p> <p>Faculty and staff have examined personal bias regarding their own barriers and feelings about math and English to guard against deficit thinking as to who will and won't achieve in these courses.</p>	
<p>9. Intake/Onboarding staff assist with meeting students' non-academic needs such as housing and food insecurities. They are familiar with all resources and supports available to students.</p>	
<p>10. Maps form the basis of Intake/Onboarding conversations and the development of a customized academic plan. Each student understands how to use it to move forward with the initially selected pathway and their options to change.</p>	



<p>Student plans are captured and monitored by the college to make sure the students are making progress toward their particular goals.</p> <p>Plans are used for scheduling, monitoring progress, and keeping students on their path.</p>	
<p>11. New Student Orientation is focused on engagement and pathways, assisting students in making early and meaningful connections.</p>	

## IMPROVING NEW STUDENT INTAKE AND ONBOARDING

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE	REFLECTIVE RESPONSES
<p>1. Intake/Onboarding staff assess all practices using leading and lagging indicators and/or qualitative measures to determine the full student experience. They disaggregate data and collaboratively discuss the results with other relevant college departments and plan for change to ensure a consistent student experience.</p> <p>For example: Intake/Onboarding staff regularly Identify who is benefitting and who is harmed by the various elements of the intake/Onboarding process. Staff collaborate across Student</p>	

Services to make adjustments to policy and practice.	
2. Intake/Onboarding staff regularly examine disaggregated data to assess career pathway choice by students of color, first generation students, etc. to identify gaps in the student experience, and make data informed decisions that change processes to better support students.	
3. Administrative leaders create an environment where a culture of assessment, data-based decision making, and change thrives. All departments see the relevance of their assessment to the full student experience.	
4. Intake/Onboarding staff have a system to receive student feedback about all key elements of the process that provides evidence of impact.	

## EXPANDING CAREER AND TRANSFER ADVISING TO ALL STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE	REFLECTIVE RESPONSES
1. There is intentional connection of students of color with racially diverse faculty and peers early in their college experience. If faculty and peers are not diverse, the college reaches out to alumni and others, clubs, events, etc., so that students of color can see others who have successfully reached their career goals.	
2. The college's First Year Experience course engages students with the Guided Pathways experience and connects learning to their meta-major or area of interest. The faculty partner with the Intake/Onboarding staff to both align and revise curriculum based on student feedback and achievement of outcomes and revise the Intake/Onboarding process.	
3. All students planning on transferring develop at least a preliminary full-program education plan aligned with the requirements of the transfer institutions of interest to the student. Students understand the implications of preparing for	

transfer.	
4. All career and technical students develop at least a preliminary full-program education plan aligned with the requirements for continued training, employment, or transfer. Students understand the implications of preparing for next steps.	
5. Students have direct connection to transfer advisors from the time of entry and are provided with the requirements of the institutions they are interested in transferring to.	
6. The college has developed a process to ensure the transition of Basic Education for Adults students into college/credit-bearing programs.  Students in Basic Education for Adults programming are retained and articulate into a college pathway.  Onboarding/Intake staff connect with Basic Skills faculty to integrate experiences into the curriculum and visit classrooms.	
7. All entering students, including students in Basic Education for Adults programming, are introduced to career and transfer opportunities associated with their area of interest.	

## DESIGNING CREDIT ENROLLMENT AS AN ON-RAMP TO COLLEGE

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE	REFLECTIVE RESPONSES
1. The college works with local school districts and youth reengagement providers to align college meta-majors with the K12 programs of study and career clusters and uses and updates the students High School and Beyond Plan when helping the student to select a pathway.	
2. The college extends the guided pathways approach into local school districts and youth reengagement programs using dual credit course-taking and advising to help high school students and opportunity youth explore academic and career interests and	

<p>plan their college pathway. Pathway options are available to students who are not part of Local school districts and your reengagement programs via the college website and advisor meetings (virtual and face-to-face).</p>	
<p>3. The college works with high schools, districts, and youth reengagement faculty to establish course equivalencies that can meet high school graduation requirements as well as students' career pathway. The college regularly connects with the high school and youth reengagement program counselors, advisors, and caseworkers to educate them on all relevant elements of guided pathways.</p>	
<p>4. College staff work directly with local high school and youth reengagement program staff to engage students, introduce them to the various meta-majors, inform them of what they need to do to enroll in college, and connect them with resources to mitigate any barriers to enrollment. College staff also connect students to various student services, supports, and affinity groups at the college to establish a sense of belonging.</p>	