Ohio | Department of Higher Education

John R. Kasich, Governor
John Carey, Chancellor

How-To Guide: **Sharing Courses/Programs at Ohio's Colleges and Universities**

Background

Ohio Revised Code Section 3333.90 requires the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to establish a course and program sharing network that facilitates the sharing of curricula for existing courses and academic programs among Ohio's community colleges, four-year universities, and adult career centers. Furthermore, the statute requires the Chancellor to adopt rules to administer the course and program sharing network. The purpose of the network is to increase course and program availability across the state and to avoid unnecessary duplication by allowing institutions to share courses and programs upon agreement.

Course and program sharing is an academic collaboration that provides the opportunity for credit to be more accessible and affordable while maintaining the quality of the curricula. Establishing new academic or training programs is often expensive and time consuming, particularly when striving to meet student demands or local industry needs in a timely fashion. The concept allows two or more campuses to work in collaboration to deliver programming that specifically addresses student, business, and/or industry needs and to meet those needs quickly and efficiently.

ODHE defines course and program sharing as the delivery and management of curriculum offered between two or more institutions of higher education. The "home" institution is where the student receives his/her degree or certificate, and the "host" institution is the collaborating partner where a student takes a course outside of his/her home institution.

Research

Given the statute and focus on efficiency practices to ensure affordability and completion within higher education, ODHE set out to better understand the practice as well as identify tools, resources and examples that would be useful to institutions seeking to share courses or programs. Using the colleges' and universities' efficiency reports, ODHE developed an initial list of courses and programs administered collaboratively amongst two or more institutions of higher education. The efficiency reports showed there are several institutions sharing programs, as noted below. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and there are likely additional programs that Ohio's colleges and universities are offering collaboratively.

Program	Partnering Colleges and Universities	Program Name (If Applicable)
Aviation Engineering	Southern State Community College and Great Oaks Career Center	
Chemical Operation	Belmont College and Washington State Community College	
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	Sinclair Community College and Southern State Community College	
Creative Writing (Master's)	University of Akron, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, Youngstown State University	Northeast Ohio Master's in Fine Arts (NEOMFA)
Judicial Court Reporting	Clark State Community College and Stark State College	
Library Paraprofessional	Belmont College and Clark State Community College	
Public Health (Master's)	Bowling Green State University and University of Toledo	Northwest Ohio Consortium for Public Health
Nursing, Post-Master's Doctor of Nursing Practice	Wright State University and University of Toledo	Doctor of Nursing Practice Wright State University and University of Toledo Consortium

Program	Partnering Colleges and Universities	Program Name (If Applicable)
Occupational Therapy Assistant	Northwest State Community College, Marion Technical College, Rhodes State College & Clark State Community College	Northwest Ohio Allied Health Education Consortium
Occupational Therapy Assistant	Lorain County Community College and EHOVE Adult Career Center	
Process Control	Belmont College and Washington State Community College	
Public Health (Master's)	University of Akron, Cleveland State University, Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED), Ohio University, Kent State University, Youngstown State University	
Radiographic Imaging	Northwest State Community College, Marion Technical College, Rhodes State College & Clark State Community College	Northwest Ohio Allied Health Education Consortium
Respiratory Care	Marion Technical College, Northwest State Community College, Rhodes State College & Clark State Community College	Northwest Ohio Allied Health Education Consortium
Respiratory Therapy	Marion Technical College and North Central State	Northwest Ohio Allied Health Education Consortium
Social Work	Wright State University and Miami University	

Once a list was compiled, ODHE reached out to faculty and staff at the partnering institutions to discuss the collaborations. ODHE conducted interviews with the following individuals:

- Kevin Boys, president at Southern State Community College
- Linda Myers, financial aid director at Southern State Community College
- Carl Brun, assistant vice president for university curricular programs at Wright State University

- Peggy Michener, executive in residence at Lorain County Community College
- Jim Hull, dean of health sciences at North Central State College
- Robin Snider-Flohr, dean of allied health and public services at Eastern Gateway Community College
- Chris Gase, dean of health technologies at Marion Tech College
- Tish Hatfield, dean at Rhodes State Community College
- Michael Geither, professor from the Northeast Ohio MFA program (NEOMFA) at Cleveland State University
- Aimee Belanger-Haas, dean at Clark State Community College
- Kathy Klay, financial aid at Clark State Community College
- Lori Robison, dean with the Northwest Ohio Allied Health Education Consortium at Northwest State Community College
- Robyn Hennigan with the judicial court reporting program at Clark State Community College
- Rene Eneix with the judicial court reporting program at Stark State College
- Dr. Lada Gibson-Shreve, provost at Stark State Community College
- Dr. Donald Allensworth-Davies with the Master of Public Health program at Cleveland State University
- Dr. Amy Lee with the Master of Public Health program at the Northeast Ohio Medical University
- Dr. Sheryl Milz with the Northwest Ohio Consortium for Public Health between Bowling Green State University and University of Toledo
- Sandra Walker, dean of health services at Central Ohio Technical College regarding their program collaboration with Licking County Career Center
- Dr. Rebecca Kurtz, vice president of academic affairs and student learning on the process control program between Belmont College and Washington State Community College
- Dr. Tracy Brewer, associate professor, Wright State University, with the Doctor of Nursing Practice, Wright State University and University of Toledo Consortium

Framework

The information, tools, and feedback from the institutions were invaluable to producing this guide. ODHE reviewed the research, coded the data, and began to notice patterns. Several common elements arose from the research. They are:

- Governance Structure
- Application and Enrollment/Financial Aid
- Course Registration
- Course Delivery
- Marketing
- Revenue Management/Cost Allocations
- Evaluation/Metrics

In addition, common steps for establishing successful and healthy course and program sharing collaborations were noted in the interviews and are identified below:

1. Identify the need.
2. Consider both the benefits and challenges of sharing a course or program with a partnering institution.
3. Establish an agreement to ensure terms of conditions are defined.
4. Identify and establish the needed tools to manage the collaboration.
5. Provide guidance on policies and procedures to each participating student.

The framework and steps are explained in the remainder of the Guide.

Recommended Steps to Implementing an Institutional Course/Program Collaboration

1 **First, identify the need.**

The interviewees were consistent in their response that the development of the collaboration came from identifying and assessing a need. One specific need often identified was low enrollment. Several respondents said that their program experienced a low amount of student participation, and by collaborating, the program was able to continue.

For example, Belmont College and Washington State Community College (WSCC) collaborate on a process control program. At the time, Belmont College had a local power plant, and WSCC had an online program. WSCC wanted to increase enrollment, and Belmont was concerned about the expense of starting a new program. The two colleges were already collaborating on a library paraprofessional program, so the campuses were familiar with the model and felt comfortable that it worked.

Another example is the collaboration between Stark State and Clark State with the judicial court reporting program. Both campuses experienced challenges with enrollment. An idea was brought forward to their accreditation body expressing the desire of the two colleges to collaborate on the program, and it was embraced. They have been offering the program jointly for almost two years, and the results have been positive and encouraging.

In addition, several respondents said the collaboration arose from the need to increase the local workforce. Chris Gase, dean of health technologies at Marion Tech College from the Northwest Allied Health Education Consortium, said the collaboration is beneficial to Marion Tech because the school's partners have clinical labs his students are able to use. Another example is the shared public health programs. In the late 90s, the faculty at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) and the University of Toledo (UT) developed a collaborative program recognizing a need for more public health degrees.

The collaboration between Lorain County Community College (LCCC) and the EHOVE Adult Career Center in Milan, Ohio is designed for students in the occupational therapy assistant degree partnership program. They created the partnership because establishing new academic or training programs can be costly and a time-consuming process. Students need not travel to LCCC; all processes can be done online or by meeting with an LCCC advisor at the EHOVE Career Center. LCCC grants the credential for the degree, but classes are offered at the Center.

Southern State Community College collaborates with several different educational institutions on academic programs. One example is aviation engineering, on which Southern State collaborates with Great Oaks Career Center. Great Oaks reached out to Southern State regarding the program, recognizing that a partnership would benefit both institutions. The collaboration is working well, and both entities see benefits of the shared program.

Finally, a common thread when looking at the development of course/program collaboration is the cost savings and efficiencies gained. Dean Hatfield at Rhodes State chose to collaborate on programs because of the cost savings while ensuring that Rhodes State is still able to offer certain programs. Dean Robison at Northwest State responded that the collaboration is useful because Northwest State is a small, rural college and does not have the resources to support or sustain needed allied health programs.

2 **Second, consider both the benefits and challenges of sharing a course or program with a partnering institution.**

Before agreeing to collaborate on courses or a program, it is important to recognize the challenges that might arise. Yet, there are many benefits to consider as well. The following benefits and challenges arose from the research and were cited by the interviewees.

Benefits
- Academic benefits to the students
  - » Students have access to programs that would otherwise not be available.
  - » Students do not have to relocate in order to obtain the education or degree they are seeking.
  - » They are more likely to be retained in employment in their home communities.
- Students have access to faculty in multiple areas and multiple locations
- Students have the opportunity to learn different skill sets
- Students have a variety of networking circles
- More resources are available
- Students have access to additional faculty members
- Students have multiple course options
- Shared infrastructure
- Increased enrollment

Challenges
- Lack of awareness and/or unfamiliarity with the concept
- Bureaucracy in working with two different organizations
- Two different learning management systems

- Different personalities
- Working through different policies
- Additional effort needed to manage the program
- Reliable technology
- Communication
- Different calendars
- Too many parties involved in the collaboration
- Ensuring collaboration benefits both partners

3 Establish an agreement to ensure terms of conditions are defined.

An agreement between the institutions is crucial when sharing courses and/or programs. There is no right or wrong way to establish the collaboration; however, terms and conditions must be discussed and agreed upon by all parties before implementation. Each of the elements needs to be reviewed and determined. One institutional representative commented that establishing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two partners may seem like a daunting task at first, but is really not as cumbersome and difficult as one might think.

The key to the agreements is establishing the proper conditions. Agreements between institutions for the purpose of course and program sharing should specify the following:

- The name of the course(s) or program(s) being shared;
- How the shared course(s) or program(s) will be governed and managed;
- Explanation of how the course(s) or program(s) will be delivered;
- How students will enroll into the course or program;
- How credit will be articulated between the multiple institutions;
- How revenue will be collected, managed, and/or distributed;
- Determining which institution will report student data to the Ohio Department of Higher Education via the Higher Education Information System.

Each element of the model is further explained below, and examples are provided.

Governance Structure: Successful partnerships include an oversight body, such as an advisory committee, that frequently meets to review the collaboration. The research showed variances on how the collaborations are structured, but there is some sort of oversight consistently among the collaborations. Management is a crucial component to ensuring the successful sharing of courses and programs, and having a program director seems to be a healthy practice. Many of the examples reviewed have committees that oversee and provide guidance to the program director, such as a curriculum committee.

For example, Stark State and Clark State's judicial court reporting program has an advisory board, which meets once in the spring and once in the fall. The advisory board includes faculty and staff from both campuses as well as court reporter and captioning practitioners from the industry. For the Northwest Ohio Allied Health Education Consortium, the deans and program chairs meet once a year to review the collaboration. As for the Northeast Ohio MFA program, the governing structure includes an executive committee, program coordinators, governing council, and a program director.

Application/Enrollment and Financial Aid: The research shows this element varies across the collaborations. In some cases, the students apply to only one institution. In other cases, students are dually enrolled. Yet, one element is crucial – students must designate a "home" institution. A student's home institution is crucial because financial aid is allocated through the home institution. One common practice identified from Southern State Community College is using a Financial Aid Consortium Agreement. The form asks for information from the student, the home school, and the host school. The home school is where the student receives his/her degree or certificate as well as financial aid, and the host school is the collaborating institution, other than the home institution, where the student is taking a course or courses as defined in the agreement between the two institutions. The Financial Aid Consortium Agreement allows the student's financial aid to also be used at the host school. An example of the Financial Aid Consortium Agreement form is available at **https://www. ohiohighered.org/institutional-collaboration**.

Registration: One of the most challenging elements of sharing courses and programs is registering students for courses. The main reason for the challenge is due to the different student management systems. One successful practice is the creation and use of a cross-registration form. As an example, the NEOMFA program uses a cross-registration form.

Another example is Clark State's and Stark State's judicial court reporting program. Courses were added to both registration systems, allowing students to see the full program curriculum at either institution's website. This also allows students' grades to be entered as earned grades at both institutions rather than transfer credit. Another example is the Northwest Ohio Consortium for Public Health between BGSU and UT in which a code was created for BGSU courses in UT's system. Students register through the University of Toledo system by entering BGSU courses into the UT registration system. Note - students apply and enroll at the University of Toledo only for the program so they are already in UT's student management system.

Course Delivery: Again, there are wide variances across the collaborations when it comes to delivering the courses to students. For example, for the library professional program, students take their general education courses at their home institution and then take technical courses online through Belmont College, since Belmont developed the technical courses.

Another example is the Northwest Consortium of Public Health, for which a course schedule is established. All of the classes are offered at night and/or on Saturdays and vary in format: 70% of the courses are in-person and 30% of courses are online. The research showed that in order to be successful in delivering courses, collaborating institutions need to determine the best format for the students.

Student services: As with anything in education, the students are the most important. Given the intricacies of the collaboration, it is important to ensure students have the tools and resources they need. Several interviewees cited advising as a critical tool to ensuring successful program collaboration. The following are commonly identified tools:

• Comprehensive and ongoing advising
• Curriculum worksheets (or a course map of program)
• Checklists
• FAQs
• Cross-registration form

As an example, the Northwest Allied Health Education Consortium, and the judicial court reporting and process control programs all offer career charts for students to think about their path post-graduation.

A form of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is also encouraged. One example is that used by LCCC and EHOVE Career Center's occupational therapy assistant program. The schools established the FAQ with clear and comprehensive information for the student. The FAQ can be found at **http://www.ehove.net/content/galleryphotos/InnovatEdStudentFAQsEHOVE41013.pdf**.

Marketing: Based on the research, this was the most informal element of the collaboration. This element was also shown to be the most organic. Common marketing strategies are website, social media, word-of-mouth, community stakeholders, advisory board, and brochures. For example, the Northwest Allied Health Education Consortium has a website located at **http://www.ohioalliedhealth.com**, the Northwest Ohio Consortium for Public Health has a website located at **http://www.nocphmph.org**, and the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts program's website is located at **http://neomfa.org**. As another example, several programs discussed sharing booth space at industry conferences to recruit for the program.

Revenue Management/Cost Allocations: This element is often viewed as the most challenging when it comes to sharing courses and programs. However, interviewees confirmed that the component is not as challenging as one might think, although there is no magic formula. The most common practice has each institution collecting tuition and fees based on enrollment at the home institution and then State Share of Instruction (SSI) based on completion at the degree-granting institution. For example, for the Northwest Allied Health Education Consortium, revenue is collected institutionally based on enrollment and degree completion. In this type of scenario, each institution maintains its own budget for the program. In addition, students are responsible for paying the host institution for courses they take. In this instance, <u>students must be informed and aware that they are required to pay the tuition and fees at the host institution</u>. The Financial Aid Consortium Agreement, as mentioned in the application and enrollment section, is helpful in this regard.

However, there are several examples of institutions agreeing to a payment structure in which one college reimburses the collaborating partner. This will often go in tandem with the establishment of a program budget. As an example, for the Northwest Ohio Consortium for Public Health program, students do NOT pay BGSU tuition. Instead, UT collects all revenue and tracks BGSU courses taken. Remember, as stated earlier, students enroll only at the University of Toledo. Then UT reimburses BGSU for the courses taught at BGSU based on a formula established by their agreement. As another example, for the NEOMFA program, revenue is allocated amongst the four universities through the following formula: 25% goes to the home institution, 15% goes to the program budget, and 60% is allocated by weighted enrollment.

Another example is Lorain County Community College, which has implemented an established method for revenue management. Lorain collects the revenue from the programs and then distributes the funding to its partners based on the agreement between the institutions.

Evaluation and Metrics: The final element is continuing to evaluate and monitor the collaboration to determine its vitality. All of the interviewees agreed that students benefit from this type of collaboration. While most of the respondents said that the collaboration has both strengths and weaknesses, overall the model does work. Program leaders are best able to identify metrics for their program, but common metrics include:

- Enrollment
- Completion
- Employment
- Student feedback

As stated earlier, the governing body is important for overseeing and ensuring this element is addressed.

4 Identify and establish the needed tools to manage the collaboration.

In order to be successful with this type of collaboration, it is important to make use of several of the tools that arose from the research. The interviewees suggested the following and discussed their important role in ensuring a healthy partnership. The following is a categorized list.

- Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding
- Assessment tools
- Process matrices
- Implementation plan
- Video technology capability
- Working and trusting relationships
- A share drive such as Google Drive
- Staff support

Specific tools and resources are on the ODHE website at **https://www.ohiohighered. org/institutional-collaboration**.

5 Provide guidance on policies and procedures to each participating student.

The model can be confusing for students if guidance and procedures are not communicated properly. One of the healthiest practices identified is a student handbook. Examples of handbooks include the NEOMFA and the Northwest Allied Health Consortium programs, which are highlighted on ODHE's website at **https:// www.ohiohighered.org/institutional-collaboration**.

Based on the research, the following are suggestions for the type of information that collaborating institutions should provide to their students. This list is not exhaustive.

- A point of contact for the program at each participating institution
- A description of the program
- A curriculum map outlining the courses needed to complete the program
- Designation of which institutions will deliver the required courses
- Detailed instructions advising students on the collaboration, including but not limited to how to enroll, registering for courses, and paying tuition and fees as per the agreement between the participating institutions
- Explanation of how student grade reports will be shared and transcribed among the institutions

On a final note, students entering the shared program sign the forms, given the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that allows the institutions to share their educational information, including transcripts. Clark State Community College and Stark State College provided examples of the forms, which are included in the resources section of the agency's institutional collaboration webpage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this type of academic partnership requires a specific skill set to ensure effective collaboration. Two of the most important characteristics are leadership and communication skills. Most of the interviewees commented on the importance of these two qualities. In addition, strong administrative and project management skills will help drive the partnership. Several interviewees stressed the need for strong coordination of the program to capture efficiencies and student benefits.

Two of the most important policy metrics within higher education are affordability and completion. Students must have access to an affordable education in order to attain and complete a credential. One vehicle to help students meet this objective is efficiency. Collaborating and sharing courses or programs between institutions is one type of efficiency, and ODHE encourages faculty and administrators to consider this type of model. Given the increased focus on duplicative programs and low-enrolled courses, this strategy might be a useful solution to address a need.

This how-to guide is meant to be a resource, and we hope you find the material useful. ODHE would like to thank the interviewees for their candor and thoughtful responses, without which this guide would not be possible. ODHE looks forward to learning more about this work and continuing to dialogue about this important efficiency practice.

For questions, please contact Sara Molski, policy analyst at the Ohio Department of Higher Education, at 614-728-8335 or **smolski@highered.ohio.gov**.

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