

# INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

EAP Form 1.10 (Rev. 11/18)



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL PROGRAM  
P.O. Box 8366  
MADISON, WISCONSIN 53708-8366  
(608) 266-1996

The Educational Approval Program (EAP) is a postsecondary education agency that employs a regulatory model focused not only on compliance, but also institutional effectiveness. To facilitate an environment in which schools seek to be effective organizations that improve over time, the EAP requires schools to submit evidence that appropriate planning has been conducted. Although similar to a strategic or business plan, this information will enable the EAP and school officials to engage in a dialogue over time about the effectiveness and future of the school.

Schools that already have some type of strategic or business plan (e.g., schools that have either a corporate or accreditation plan) must adapt these documents to the following requirements and focus on Wisconsin operations and students. The EAP does not expect any school to divulge any sensitive, proprietary business information. The information must address the five elements identified below and provide the information requested.

## I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School:

Penn Foster Career School

## II. PLANNING ELEMENTS

**A. MISSION.** Describe your school's mission and vision, which identifies its purpose and its core values.

Penn Foster Career School mission is to enhance the lives of our students and clients through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and credentials that can help them work toward their goals of advancing in their chosen field, starting a new career, or pursuing lifelong learning.

Penn Foster Career School's vision is to create a better world through knowledge and skill. Penn Foster is the last mile leading from training to employment. Penn Foster Career School supports the need for individuals to access and participate in education that meets the following criteria:

Accessibility -able to engage with the curriculum, community, and instructors at any time and through any devices;

Employability-designed to support the changing needs and evolving experiences expectations of the employer marketplace; Speed -able to be executed at the speed the student wishes but one that is guided by best practices and cohort successes and milestones; and Affordability -affordable on the student's or sponsor's term with a lower cost model that uses that smart integration of technology, people, and process to deliver a strong educational solution.

**B. MARKET.** Discuss the nature of your school and the business in which it is engaged. Describe who your existing and/or potential customers are and what motivates them to enroll in your school. Explain how you let these customers know you are in business. Finally, identify who your competitors are and how you are different from them.

As noted previously, Penn Foster Career School helps students gain the knowledge, the skills, and the confidence to help them on their paths toward career and life success. Penn Foster Career School works to empower youth and adult learners to achieve their highest academic goals, so they may unlock their career potential, and ultimately better position themselves for success. A typical student is between the age of 25 and 44, is employed, but not working in their field of choice. The typical student earns an income of less than \$30,000. Many of our students did not have success in the traditional school setting and find it difficult to study or take tests. Students may choose to enroll in Penn Foster Career School because they want to work at their own pace and find that the program fits with current family/personal needs and/or work/professional needs. The top three reasons students enroll in Penn Foster is the flexibility of course offerings, pricing options and the accreditation offered. Advertising is through national media sources readily accessed by all states' residents (i.e. national print publications and online). There is no targeted advertising through local media (i.e. billboards, regional newspapers). Penn Foster competes with all online programs and is recognized for its decades of student advocacy and credibility through licensure and institutional and programmatic accreditation.

---

**C. MANAGEMENT.** Describe your management team and how it functions to lead, administer and position the school. If your school has advisory boards, describe how the school uses them for program and school improvement.

Penn Foster Career School's bylaws provide that its Board of Directors manage the company's "business, property, and affairs." In practice, this is accomplished in two ways: First, our Board exercises oversight and approval of the company's annual operating budget; major corporate transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, company financings, and mortgages; executive hiring and compensation arrangements; and large capital investments and other major company undertakings. Second, the Board actively monitors and guides the performance of the company's executive officers who are charged by the Board with establishing and implementing the company's business strategy (developed with the review and input of the Board), managing the company's operating budget and financial performance, and overseeing all facets of the company's operations, including the recruitment, hiring, and retention of company personnel.

Each program is represented by an Advisory Council comprised of administrative and practical subject matter experts in their field. They provide guidance about the current trends and skills within a field that are utilized to inform various administrative and curricular areas.

---

**D. SWOT ANALYSIS.** Identify your school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Based on the results of this SWOT analysis, provide the following:

- 3 to 5 goals for strengths/weaknesses and how they will be addressed by your school.
- 3 to 5 goals for opportunities/threats and how they will be addressed by your school.

The goals should have specific objectives, defined results, a timeline for completion and metrics (some type of evaluation or measurement) by which the institution can evaluate/measure their success. In developing its goals, the school may wish to refer to the Elements of Effective Institutions graphic that is included on the back page of this form.

#### Strengths

Penn Foster identifies characteristics that give the institution an advantage in the higher education marketplace. The following are strengths identified in Penn Foster, Inc's most recent SWOT analysis:

- Strong brand awareness and NPS scores.
- Strong and growing leadership team
- Program portfolio that aligns to high growth fields in need of new talent (healthcare, trades, veterinary)
- Strong mission alignment for staff including admissions, service and instructors to align to
- Strong community of High School learners, instructors and administrators

#### Weaknesses

Penn Foster identifies characteristics that detract from the value offered or places the institution at a competitive disadvantage. The following are weaknesses identified in Penn Foster, Inc.'s most recent SWOT analysis:

- The in progress effort to transition all learners to a single platform still require internal teams to use multiple system until the migration is complete.
- The in progress effort to streamline policies and procedures are not completed yet across all brands.

---

**D. SWOT ANALYSIS** *(continued)*

Opportunities

Penn Foster identifies elements within the higher education environment that it could leverage to better serve its student population. The following are opportunities identified in the Penn Foster Schools most recent SWOT analysis:

- Continue to improve learner outcomes
- Enhance career preparedness and placement
- Connect Penn Foster employer partners with learners in the existing programs

Threats

Penn Foster identifies elements within the higher education environment that could cause obstacles or limitations in achieving its strategic goals. The following are threats identified in the Penn Foster Schools most recent SWOT analysis:

- Fast moving changes in the skills needed for the jobs of the future requires Penn Foster to be agile in identifying new skills and preparing individuals for jobs
- Shrinking half-life of skills makes re- skilling and upskilling even more critical
- Low cost of technology makes barriers to entry low for competitors
- Varying State Regulatory requirements

---

**E. FUTURE VISION.** Describe your school 5 years from now. What will it look like and how will it be positioned in the marketplace.

Penn Foster will continue to engineer and refine a truly unique learning system customized for the at-risk learner in a self-paced, student-paid or sponsor-led environment. Through this system, Penn Foster will address: the evolving landscape of career readiness which puts an emphasis on life-long learning and ongoing skill building; the need for affordable and accredited education solutions that can be attained without student debt; the imperative to drive improved student outcomes from employability to graduation; and the design of a system that incorporates academic, motivational, and financial support systems designed specifically for the Penn Foster target student. In addition, Penn Foster will continue to invest in building a community of learners to connect students who are geographically dispersed and also proceeding through programs at the right speed for their individual needs. By building community and service around the educational experience, Penn Foster will help students reach their desired outcomes. Penn Foster has expansive plans to use new technologies to enable a personalized learning experience in a self-paced and self-directed environment while still staying true to the low cost and affordability that is the foundation of the Penn Foster business model. The institution and platform will be even more relevant in the context of a labor market where, for employers, regulators and students, competencies are the new currency in education.

---

**III. SUBMISSION**

***I hereby certify that the information contained on this form and any attachments to the form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.***

Signature of Authorized School Official:

*Alba Romero*

Print or Type Name and Title of Authorized School Official:  
Alba Romero - Director, Regulatory Compliance

Date:  
08/30/2024

---

---

# INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

