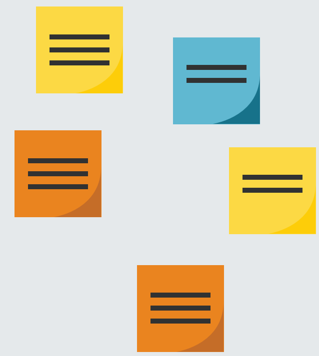
Step-by-Step Guide to

Creating a Process Map for Higher Education

A process or jouney map is a visual representation of a process that lists each step from start to finish. Higher education institutions can use process maps to help identify the barriers preventing students from achieving a desired outcome. A process map can be used to guide changes to a process that will reduce the barriers students face.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE PROCESS

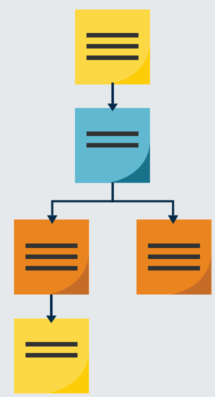
- Draft a clear and neutral problem statement, focusing on a measureable outcome (for example, “Too few students are registering full time in the spring semester”). Using this problem statement, identify the process associated with the challenge you are facing.
- Brainstorm the activities involved in the process. Gather multiple perspectives from a variety of staff members (for example, faculty members and administrators) and students.
- Write each step on a separate sticky note, using differently colored notes for the different types of steps, so that you can easily add and move around steps.



STEP 2: DRAFT YOUR PROCESS MAP

- Begin with the sequence of steps you want students to follow.
- Write down the details of each step (for example, “student submits online application”) and place them in the order they occur.
- Indicate the points where a decision must be made and identify the decision maker (for example, when a student recieves a reminder to register for classes, or when a faculty member must review an appeal application).
- Include details about required meetings, forms, and decision points for each participant.

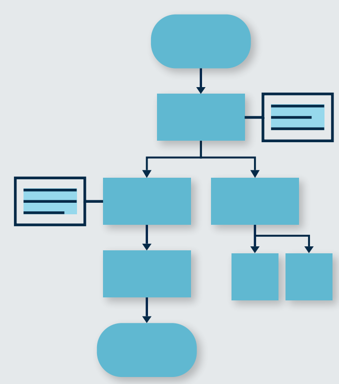
*For more guidance on **drafting your process map**, refer to “DRAFT YOUR PROCESS MAP: TIPS FOR STEP 2” on the next page. For an example, see the LA College Promise draft process map on page 3 of this document.*



STEP 3: REFINE YOUR PROCESS MAP

- Speak to multiple students to create a more realistic representation of the process.
- Edit the existing stages or add new branches to incorporate new information.
- Use different paths to represent different actors involved in making the student experience happen.
- Highlight parts of the map where you are missing information about the realities of the process, such as decision points or in-between stages.
- Note how you plan to gather this information (for example, by interviewing three students, three faculty members, and two administrators).

*For more guidance on **refining your process map**, refer to “REFINE YOUR PROCESS MAP: TIPS FOR STEP 3” on the next page.*



TIPS

- Step 1 is most effective when staff members work together in one place. If possible, try to convene a group of staff members to brainstorm and create early drafts of the process using sticky notes.
- For Step 3, use a diagramming program like Microsoft Visio or PowerPoint to document what you have learned.
- Expect to develop multiple versions of a process map as you collect more information and as your process changes.
- Use your latest process map version in discussions with participants to help refine the map and to understand the participants’ experiences better.

Example and Additional Tips

To create a useful process map, you must draw the entire process, take the perspective of a student, and incorporate aspects of both the intended and actual processes. After you have developed and refined your map, you will use it to identify the barriers preventing participants from reaching the desired outcomes.

DRAFT YOUR PROCESS MAP

REFINE YOUR PROCESS MAP

Generic process map in higher education

Draft your process map	Generic process map in higher education	Refine your process map
Write a student's first interaction with the institution (for example, receiving an email about a program or requirement). If there are multiple possible first interactions, make multiple adjacent sticky notes.	1 Student receives a letter with information about the program.	When refining your process map, write down other ways the student may first hear about your institution (for example, by word of mouth).
Record each of the steps the student must take to stay on track for the opportunity or requirement (for example, submitting an online application).	2 Student expresses interest in the program to the appropriate department.	What happens if the student does not complete this step?
Note who in your institution (for example, a faculty member or department head) communicates next steps to students, how that person communicates with students, and how much time the communication may take.	3 Student receives forms required to participate in the program.	
Enter the required meetings, forms, or other activities the student must complete to move forward and advance toward the desired outcome.	4 Student reads and understands materials and completes the paperwork.	What happens if the student does not follow these instructions? How does he or she get back on track?
Continue to map every action and communication between your institution and the student until he or she reaches the intended goal. Add details about required meetings and forms.	5 Student attends a required program meeting. ✓	What happens if the student does not complete each action? How does he or she get back on track?

! REMEMBER

Continue to develop new versions of your map as you learn more about the student experience. To get a more realistic view of the process, ask students the following questions:

- Does this map represent your entire experience in the process? What steps are missing?
- Are there any steps or experiences you have had that are not represented on this map?
- Which steps are the most challenging for you? Which steps are the easiest?

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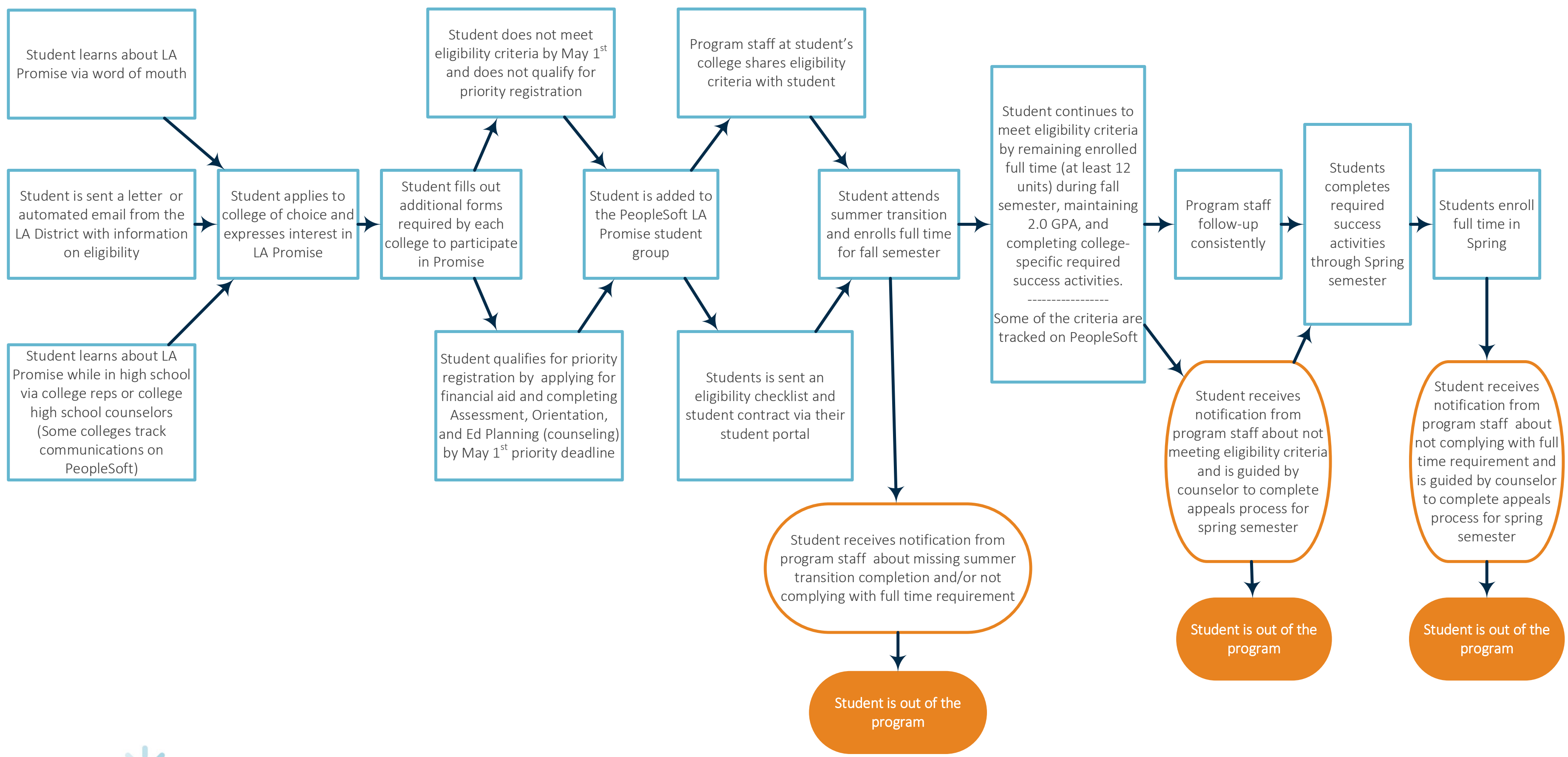
PROCESS MAP
LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



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