



QEP Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?

A QEP is a course of action for institutional improvement that addresses one or more issues contributing to quality enhancement of student learning. SACS notes in their *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* that "student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning...Developing a QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity and an impetus for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning" (2004: 21). The QEP must emerge from the institution's current planning and evaluation processes and must be compatible with college's strategic plan. The QEP should not be seen as an "add-on" but rather it should become an integral part of the institution and its activities. For more information on QEPs, see the SACS *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation* at www.lfcc.edu/SACS.

What is meant by "student learning" in the QEP?

According to SACS, "student learning is defined broadly in the context of the QEP and may address a wide range of topics or issues. Student learning may include changes in students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values that may be attributable to the collegiate experience. Examples of topics or issues include, but are not limited to, enhancing the academic climate for student learning, strengthening the general studies curriculum, developing creative approaches to experiential learning, enhancing critical thinking skills, introducing innovative teaching and learning strategies, increasing student engagement in learning, and exploring imaginative ways to use technology in the curriculum. In all cases, the goals and evaluation strategies must be clearly linked to improving the quality of student learning." (SACS *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation*, 2004: 22). This means that formulating intended student learning outcomes that demonstrate the impact of the QEP on students will be an integral part of the plan.

What are the elements of a QEP?

The plan must be "forward looking" and "launches a process that can move the institution into the future characterized by creative, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences for students" (SACS *Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation*, 2004: 21).

When the plan is finished, it will have a brief descriptive title, a rationale for the plan, and evidence of support among campus constituencies. The QEP will also include a literature review supporting the plan, statements of goals and intended student learning outcomes, descriptions of the means of assessment and evaluation, a management plan with a detailed

timeline, and a fiscal plan indicating adequate resources and institutional support for the activities outlined.

What is the scope of the QEP?

The QEP may focus on a current institutional challenge; however, it can also focus on a strength that we would like to enhance. It can also focus on a limited population of students, although it should be broad-based enough so that all academic units can participate in the plan.

Evaluation of the QEP

At the time of our reaffirmation, the QEP will be evaluated based on its focus, our institutional capability and commitment to implement the plan, our assessment plan and the level of campus involvement in developing the plan. After five years, the College is required to provide a progress report to SACS.