

**University of North Florida
Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
Full Proposal Preparation Guidelines**

1. Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP): Definition and Development at UNF

The University of North Florida has been accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, commonly referred to as “SACS,” since 1974. In order to have its accreditation continued without interruption, the university must by 2009 demonstrate compliance with various SACS “core requirements,” one of which mandates the development of an “acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan.” This is Core Requirement 2.12, as articulated in the “Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.”¹

According to this manual, the challenge of developing a QEP offers each university the opportunity to demonstrate its dedication to “enhancing the quality of its programs and services within the context of its mission, resources, and capabilities, and to creat[ing] an environment in which teaching, public service, research, and learning occurs” (p. 3). Furthermore, SACS, in requiring a QEP, “presumes each member institution to be engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission” (p. 3).

To meet the challenge of developing a QEP as we approach the SACS re-affirmation process, our university has assembled a team of volunteers, the QEP Planning Team. This group of thirty individuals, including faculty, administrators, students, staff members, and alumni, has been charged with helping to identify the topic which will be the focal point of our university’s QEP.

The QEP Planning Team in spring 2007 conducted a university-wide survey, asking respondents to identify one change that could contribute substantially to student learning at UNF and collected hundreds of responses, representing every constituency at the university: administrators and students, faculty, staff, and alumni. On analysis, these responses suggested seven broad themes that might underpin productive QEPs.

Seeking further to involve the whole university community in the process of identifying the best QEP for UNF, the QEP Planning Team in March of 2007 sent out a general call for QEP Pre-Proposals: brief arguments for QEP designs. The call specified the SACS-mandated goals for a QEP and invited designers to present plans addressing any of the seven themes identified in the university-wide survey or introducing additional themes.

The QEP Planning Team has now examined all 22 pre-proposals submitted; and—in light of the SACS-mandated criteria for QEPs—has identified the 6 most promising of these. Authors of these 6 pre-proposals are now invited to produce full proposals.

¹ Available from <http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp>

This document presents guidelines for the preparation of full QEP proposals. It specifies the scope and structure for full proposals, describes the submission process, and details the criteria to be employed in their evaluation.

2. Proposal Scope and Structure

In addition to the cover page required by the submission process, each full proposal must comprise five sections, and each section must address the challenges specified below.

Section 1: Goals:

- Specify the goals for the QEP you have designed.
- Make clear how these goals relate to the university's mission.
- Be precise about the connection between these goals and student learning outcomes (which are to be elaborated in Section 3.)

Section 2: Benefits and Broad-Based Involvement:

- Specify the benefits your design will secure for the university and its students.
- Make clear how the implementation of your design will involve multiple university constituencies.

Section 3: Student Learning:

- Identify the importance of your design to student learning.
- Specify the student learning outcomes your design will enable.
- Make clear precisely how your design will support student learning.

Section 4: Institutional Capability and Implementation:

- Make the case for the practicality of your design. Demonstrate “institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion”² of the design you propose.
- Detail all the resources—whether human, material, academic, or financial—necessary to develop, deploy, and monitor the design you propose.
- Present a plan for initiating your design and monitoring its progress.

Section 5: Assessment and Continuous Improvement:

² Quoted from SACS “Executive Summary of Changes to the Principles of Accreditation - Section 2 - Core Requirements - Core Requirement 2.12”.

- Present a plan for the productive assessment of the progress and the effectiveness of the design you propose. Make clear precisely how you will assess the movement of your plan toward the attainment of its goals.
- Make clear how assessment findings will be put to use to secure continuous improvement.

3. Submission Process

Each proposal is limited to 15 pages, including a cover page, and an appendix (if necessary) of no more than 10 pages. Left and right margins are to be 1 inch. The document must be single-spaced, employing a 12 point font.

The cover page should provide the following information:

- Proposal Title
- Identifying information—name, department, college—for lead applicant
- Contact information—telephone number and e-mail address—for lead applicant
- Identifying information—name, department, college—for all co-applicants
- Contact information—telephone numbers and e-mail addresses—for all co-applicants

Please submit each proposal, including appendix, if any, as a single document. The preferred form of submission is a PDF or Word attachment to an email, addressed to spaulson@unf.edu. Alternatively, the proposal may be submitted as a printed document and delivered to Dr. Steve Paulson, Coggin College of Business; anyone submitting a printed proposal must provide eleven copies. Each copy is to be a single stapled document. Stapling is the only acceptable form of binding.

The deadline for proposal submission is 5:00 p.m., Friday, June 1, 2007. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.

4. Proposal Evaluation

The QEP Planning Team will assess full proposals in light of these guidelines, determining the degree to which each proposal is successful in meeting all the challenges specified for each section. The Team will employ a four-level scale (“Strongly Agree,” “Mostly Agree,” “Somewhat Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree”) to indicate the degree to which each challenge is convincingly met. These evaluations and rankings will be an important component in the careful and thorough consideration of all full proposals, after which the QEP Planning Team will select three full proposals to send forward to the UNF Leadership Team, who will make a final selection from among these three. One proposal will be chosen to give shape to the University of North Florida’s Quality Enhancement Plan. A UNF Development Team will be formed to see to the implementation of this QEP, to be presented to SACS in December of 2008.

5. Additional Resources

The “SACS Reaffirmation 2009” website maintained by Academic Affairs contains additional resources and can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/IE/SACS.html>

In particular, links to SACS official documents can be found at the bottom of said page under “Useful Links.” The navigation bar on the left offers additional options. Proposal authors might also be interested in reading the presentation “What is a QEP?” which summarizes the UNF QEP process, available from:

<http://www.unf.edu/acadaffairs/IE/QEPPlanMin/QEP%20Introduction.ppt>

Acknowledgements

QEP documents of various kinds from the University of Central Florida have been useful to us as examples, in our preparation of QEP materials designed expressly for UNF.