

2.4 Definition of Research

Working from commonly accepted dictionary definitions, and placing special emphasis on its outcomes, we define research for the purposes of our QEP:

Research is a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover facts or principles, and increase the sum of knowledge, enhance design, or enrich artistic ability.

2.5 QEP Goals & Student Learning Outcomes

In pursuing undergraduate research as the topic for our QEP, the University of Houston has identified the following goals:

- Undergraduate research should be a signature program for UH, one that makes the University more attractive to potential students with records of strong academic achievement.
- Undergraduate students at UH will participate in some level of research activity by the time they receive their bachelor's degrees.
- By the time they graduate, UH students will have a fundamental understanding of research and its importance to society.
- The number of students participating in a research-related group project will grow.
- A growing proportion of undergraduate research opportunities will be interdisciplinary in nature.
- The number of students participating in research experiences who are selected for presentation will grow.
- Undergraduate student retention will improve.
- The six-year graduation rate of first-time in college students and the four-year graduation rate of transfers beginning with 60 or more credit hours will improve.
- External funding for undergraduate research will grow.

Based on our QEP goals, we have identified the following student learning outcomes:

- Students will be able to formulate a research question or problem.
- Students will be able to identify basic principles and knowledge related to their research question or problem.
- Students will be able to develop a research plan to address or resolve a specific question or problem.
- Students will be able to collect and interpret data and information in an attempt to resolve the question or problem.
- Students will demonstrate awareness of the responsible conduct of research.
- Students will be able to articulate their research findings through written, performance, and/or oral presentations.

These learning outcomes directly translate to the commonly recognizable core competencies of critical thinking, information literacy, research ethics, and communication (Table 2).

Table 2

Mapping Student Learning Outcomes to Core Competencies

QEP Student Learning Outcomes	Core Competencies			
	Critical Thinking	Information Literacy	Research Ethics	Communication Skills
1. Students will be able to formulate a research question or problem.	•			
2. Students will be able to identify basic principles and knowledge related to their research question or problem.	•	•		
3. Students will be able to develop a research plan to address or resolve a specific question or problem.	•			
4. Students will be able to collect and interpret data and information in an attempt to resolve the question or problem.	•	•		
5. Students will demonstrate awareness of the responsible conduct of research.		•	•	
6. Students will be able to articulate their research findings through written, performance, and/or oral presentations.				•

