



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

Quality Enhancement Plan – FAQs

Discovery-Based Learning: Transforming the Undergraduate Experience through Research



What is SACS?

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is the regional body for the accreditation of higher education institutions in the southern United States and Latin America. UH is accredited by SACS to award bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees. Reaffirmation of accreditation occurs every 10 years.

Why is accreditation important?

Accreditation is important to the maintenance of our reputation and essential for access to federal grants such as funding for student financial aid. SACS accreditation assures that UH and its programs meet or exceed the same minimum requirements or standards as other regionally accredited institutions.

<http://www.sacs.org>

When will SACS visit UH?

The SACS Reaffirmation Team will be on campus April 7-9, 2008. You may be selected to answer questions and provide feedback about the UH QEP.

What is a QEP?

As part of the reaffirmation process, SACS requires that we develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that will improve student learning.

How was the UH QEP developed?

The UH QEP planning process involved:

- Broad-based university committees
- 526 online submissions of ideas/feedback
- 145 preliminary plans submitted by faculty, departments, and colleges
- 16 student forums across all colleges

UH Discovery-Based Learning Initiative

What is the focus of the UH QEP?

The UH QEP topic is *undergraduate research* with elements of writing-in-the-disciplines and mentoring. The UH QEP is named the *Discovery-Based Learning Initiative*.

Why undergraduate research?

Students who engage in the research process will develop core competencies in critical thinking, information literacy, research ethics, and communication skills. Proficiency in these skills will benefit students in their future studies and careers.

What are the key elements of the plan?

1. Programs and resources to support research-related skills development:

Research-Supportive Curriculum - enhancing existing courses or developing new courses with research-based components

Co-Curricular Programs - resources and programs to support research skills development include: workshops and tutorials, expanded venues for research dissemination, a Work-Study Research Internship Program, a Real-World Team Projects Database, and a Reality Chats guest speaker program

2. Expansion of undergraduate **Research Opportunities** on and off campus:

Credit-bearing research, volunteer research, stipend-supported research, faculty grant-supported research, an On-Campus Research Opportunities Database, and a Houston Research Internships Database

Who are the implementation partners?

Faculty, departments, and colleges will be key partners in proposing and implementing curricular enhancements. The Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs will collaborate with partners to develop resources for students and faculty. Resource collaborators include: the Writing and Communication Skills Center, the UH Libraries, the Office of Educational Technology and University Outreach, the Office of Undergraduate Research, and the Office of Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness. Other partners include: UH alumni, the Houston community, non-profit organizations, local industry, etc.

When will implementation begin?

The Office of Undergraduate Discovery Programs will be established to coordinate implementation of the QEP. Resources and programs will be launched beginning in Fall 2008.

For more information or to submit feedback, please visit: www.uh.edu/discovery