

Summary of QEP Process and Theme

“Write Now: Equipping Christian Leaders to Speak to Tomorrow”

In January and February 2017, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Committee consulted with faculty members across the University to learn about areas in which Regent University could enhance student learning. Writing stood out, and follow-up faculty surveys confirmed the initial feedback: students need further support in foundational writing skills, which include grammar, mechanics, formatting, and thesis formation. Accordingly, the QEP Committee selected improving foundational writing as the QEP topic.

The topic emphasizes two components of the Regent University mission: excellent education and the development of strong Christian leaders. As such, it is the University’s privilege to help students achieve excellence in the foundational writing skills they will apply in their professions and other fields of influence upon graduation.

To gain a comprehensive perspective of the University’s writing climate, the QEP Committee took an inventory of current student writing and faculty development resources, and commissioned the University Writing Lab (UWL) to assess student papers in foundational writing skills (i.e., thesis development, formatting, grammar, and mechanics). Combined, the resources inventory and writing assessments indicated that the University’s writing infrastructure needs to be strengthened through the development of normed rubrics, increased collaboration between the UWL and the individual schools, faculty development, and refining the resources available to students.

In alignment with pedagogies described in the literature review and current UWL practices, the QEP prioritizes writing training for students—rather than strategies, such as rote correction of student papers, that do not facilitate learning—and faculty development. To measure student learning, the QEP Committee crafted five student learning outcomes that focus on foundational writing skills that students should be able to achieve by the conclusion of the QEP. In order to facilitate student achievement, academic and administrative units will implement six action items. The action items focus on the development of a sustainable writing culture through the use of well-developed rubrics, proactive training of faculty, the development of more robust writing resources, additional UWL writing tutors, and a thorough review of programs to integrate additional writing intensive courses where needed. These action items will be carried out under the supervision of the QEP Implementation Committee (QEPIC) and the Office of Academic Affairs.

The QEP Committee has identified the resources, faculty and staff commitments, and finances required to implement the QEP action items, which will begin in the 2018–2019 academic year. In Year 0 (2018–2019) and Year 1 (2019–2020), University stakeholders will establish the foundational resources and systems necessary for faculty and student training. From Year 2 through Year 4, student writing will be evaluated across the University.

QEP Facts

Who is SACSCOC?

The Southern Association for Colleges Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional accrediting body for southern, U.S. institutions that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

What is the SACSCOC Reaffirmation process?

Every 10 years, SACSCOC reaffirms the institutions that it accredits. During this reaffirmation process, an institution demonstrates its compliance with the SACSCOC standards of accreditation by writing documents called "narratives" that demonstrate that the institution adheres to the various standards. Combined, these narratives and their supplemental documents are called the Reaffirmation Report. The Reaffirmation Report is submitted to SACSCOC as one cohesive document. One element of this report is the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which is the element of the Reaffirmation Report with the most direct impact on students.

Regent University is in the process of renewing its SACSCOC accreditation. The University submitted its Reaffirmation Report in September 2018 and is in the process of implementing its QEP.

When is Regent's SACSOC site visit?

Regent University's SACSCOC site visit is Tuesday, February 26, 2019 to Thursday, February 28, 2019.

What is the QEP?

The QEP is designed to help the institution investigate areas of student learning that need to be improved. Once the institution researches and selects an area of student learning to focus on, it explains why the area is important and drafts a plan for assessment and improvement.

This plan becomes the QEP document, which is submitted to SASCOC. This document must include five elements:

- (1) includes a process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment,
- (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution,
- (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP,
- (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and
- (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement.¹

¹ <http://www.sacscoc.org/QEPsummaries.asp>

What is the purpose of the QEP?

The QEP is designed to help the institution engage in the continuous assessment and improvement of student learning in a manner that requires support and input from numerous areas of the institution.

What is Regent's QEP topic?

Following consultation with faculty members across the University to learn about areas in which Regent University could enhance student learning, the QEP Committee selected the improvement of student writing as the QEP topic.

More specifically, faculty surveys, student surveys, and an evaluation of student writing indicated that students need further support in foundational writing skills, which include grammar, mechanics, formatting, and thesis formation. Accordingly, the QEP Committee selected improving foundational writing as the QEP topic.

Which elements of the Regent University mission does the QEP impact?

The topic emphasizes two components of the Regent University mission: excellent education and the development of strong Christian leaders. As such, it is the University's privilege to help students achieve excellence in the foundational writing skills they will apply in their professions and other fields of influence upon graduation.

Who is involved in the QEP?

Various areas of the Regent University Community have been involved in the QEP at each stage of the process. The following faculty and staff members were on the QEP Committee (2016–2018):

- QEP Chair Jeffrey Brauch, J.D., Professor and Executive Director of the Center for Global Justice, School of Law
- Mark Jumper, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Divinity
- Patricia Lutz; Ph.D.; Assistant Professor; Science, Technology, and Mathematics; CAS
- Ryan Murnane, Ph.D., Director of Assessment and Compliance, Office of Institutional Analytics
- Jennifer Ripley, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, School of Psychology and Counseling
- Carrie White, Ph.D., Associate Professor, English and Communication and the Arts, CAS
- Elizabeth Palmer, Administrative Coordinator, UWL
- Rachel Smith, Assistant Director of Assessment and Compliance, Office of Institutional Analytics
- Joy Yaeger, Instructional Designer and Faculty Developer, CAS

The following staff members are on the QEPIC Committee (2018–conclusion of QEP):

- Chair, QEP Director: Douglas Cook, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Assessment representatives: Ryan Murnane, Director of Assessment & Compliance; Rachel Smith, Assistant Director of Assessment & Compliance
- Jeffrey Brauch, Professor, School of Law
- Dr. Carrie White, English Professor, CAS
- Dr. Michael Crews, Professor, CAS
- CAS faculty development representative: Joy Yaeger, Instructional Designer and Faculty Developer
- UWL representative: Beth Palmer, Administrative Coordinator
- Dr. Steve Firestone, Professor, School of Business & Leadership
- Library representative: Harold Henkle
- CAS, First-Year Experience: Elizabeth Dougherty
- Dr. Bill Brown, Professor, School of Communication & the Arts
- Dr. Brad Embry, Professor, School of Divinity

What are the student learning outcomes (SLOs) and action items for the QEP?

Student Learning Outcomes: The SLOs indicate the areas in which the University expects to see an improvement in student writing by the conclusion of the QEP.

By the end of their first year in the program, students will be able to:

1. Articulate a clear thesis or organizing principle
2. Demonstrate critical thinking skills through a logical presentation of adequate supporting information
3. Use formatting that follows a correct style and successfully avoids plagiarism
4. Use an effective voice and style that is appropriate for the audience, topic, and purpose
5. Demonstrate mechanics mostly free of errors in the conventions of the English language

Action Items: The action items are the steps the various departments and schools at the institution will take to ensure that the QEP's infrastructure is developed and that the implementation of QEP strategies occurs. Without this infrastructure, the QEP cannot be implemented successfully.

1. Each school or program will, under the direction of the dean:
 - a. Develop and promulgate standard rubrics, thresholds, and best practices for good writing within its discipline appropriate to degree level
 - b. Ensure that these rubrics, thresholds, and best practices are effectively communicated to both faculty and students
 - c. Engage, on a regular basis, in a norming process to ensure faculty consistency in the approach to writing and its grading

- d. Encourage faculty to provide incentives for students to use resources of the UWL and University Libraries
 - e. Train faculty to use Advise alerts in writing-intensive courses
- 2. CAS and the UWL will facilitate the training of all Regent adjunct and full-time faculty on best practices for writing teaching by:
 - a. Offering targeted professional development options for both adjuncts and full-time faculty (that all faculty must complete
 - b. Providing additional and regularly updated online resources (videos, writing tips, etc.) on best practices for writing and writing instruction
 - c. Disseminating information about UWL and University Library resources
- 3. The UWL will provide enhanced resources and services to students and faculty by:
 - a. Increasing the availability of tutoring appointments
 - b. Coordinating with Media Services to provide more video resources available to students
 - c. Designating a UWL representative to serve as a liaison with faculty to further communication and collaboration
 - d. Taking specific steps to increase awareness of UWL resources
 - e. Deans will decide if their school will make tutoring services optional, encouraged, or incentivized.
- 4. IT will:
 - a. Provide [Grammarly](#) for use by the whole Regent community
 - b. Make an annual determination of the best available writing assistance technology
- 5. The University Libraries will:
 - a. Develop resources directing faculty and staff to materials relevant to good writing and writing instruction
 - b. Increase program awareness through marketing and publicity of library resources and events
 - c. Integrate current programs such as Jump Start and Write In into the QEP
 - d. Deans will decide if their school will make these programs optional, encouraged, or incentivized
- 6. AA will create a University writing-focused committee to:
 - a. Implement the above plan (see below, Table 13, QEP Implementation Schedule, and the “Assessment Plan” section that follows)

- b. Based on implementation and assessment of these strategies, recommend other program modifications (such as adding writing intensive courses or requirements in existing courses) or actions that may be required of students, faculty, or staff
- c. Review UNIV 100, 101, 102, and 500, and associated faculty professional development offerings to ensure quality and alignment of writing expectations and training with University-wide best practices

When does the QEP start?

Technically, the QEP began in 2016 when the QEP Committee met to select a QEP topic. This committee concluded in Summer 2018 when the first draft of the QEP report was submitted to Academic Affairs. The QEP Committee then passed the “baton” to the QEP Implementation Committee (QEPIC), which finalized the QEP report and took initial steps toward informing the student body and other members of the Regent University community about the QEP, and then began implementing the QEP itself.

What’s the QEP Implementation Schedule?

The QEP Implementation Schedule records when the action items will be implemented from Year 0 (2018–2019) to Year 1 (2019–2020) of the QEP.

Dean(s) of Each School			
Action Item 1 Tasks	Y0 (2018–2019)	Y1 (2019–2020)	Ongoing
Develop rubrics			
Communicate rubric requirements to faculty and students			
Faculty offer student incentives			
Faculty training in Advise Alerts			
Norm rubrics			
College of Arts & Sciences			
Action Item 2 Tasks	Y0 (2018–2019)	Y1 (2019–2020)	Ongoing
Disseminates information about UWL and CAS teaching and learning resources			
Develops faculty professional development options			
Offers faculty professional development options			
Adds and updates online writing resources			
University Writing Lab			
Action Item 3 Tasks	Y0 (2018–2019)	Y1 (2019–2020)	Ongoing

Selects UWL representative to liaise with faculty			
Increase awareness of UWL resources			
Provides adequate number of tutoring appointments			
Coordinates with Media Services to provide more video resources			
Information Technology and CAS			
Action Item 4 Tasks	Y0 (2018–2019)	Y1 (2019–2020)	Ongoing
Provide Grammarly for entire Regent community	YEAR TBD		
Select best available writing assistance technology			
University Libraries			
Action Item 5 Tasks	Y0 (2018–2019)	Y1 (2019–2020)	Ongoing
Increase QEP awareness			
Integrate current programs (i.e., Jump Start and Write In)			
Develop resources that direct faculty/staff to writing materials			
QEPIC			
Action Item 6 Tasks	Y0 (2018–2019)	Y1 (2019–2020)	Ongoing
Implement Action Items 1–5			
Recommend modifications to QEP Plan			
Review UNIV 100, 101, 102, 500 and faculty development offerings			

How does the QEP impact faculty?

Faculty serve on the QEP committees (the initial QEP Committee and QEPIC). Additionally, faculty provided invaluable input about student writing skills that helped the QEP Committee select the topic.

As the QEP progresses, faculty members across the University will be integrated into various initiatives that target how faculty teach writing skills and inform students of writing resources available at the University. For example, faculty members will devote time to developing, using, and norming grading rubrics. Some will also assist CAS and the UWL in developing a faculty training course (in an online delivery format) concerning best practices in training students to be better writers. All faculty members will then be required to take this course.

How does the QEP impact students?

Because the goal of the QEP is to see an improvement in students' foundational writing skills, students should experience an increase in the quantity/quality of faculty feedback, receive more information about writing resources and good writing practices, and encounter other information/resources that should lead to an improvement in their foundational writing skills.

How does the QEP impact CAS and the graduate schools?

CAS and each graduate school will be involved in the development of rubrics that will be used to evaluate student writing, communicate rubric requirements to faculty and students, and will oversee the evaluation of student writing in specified courses. Specifically, CAS, which houses the staff member responsible for faculty development at the University, will be responsible for developing and offering faculty development resources.

Additionally, each school will evaluate student papers in specified courses to determine if the implementation of writing resources and faculty training helped to improve students' foundational writing skills.

The assessment cycle for CAS and the graduate schools is below. The schools that assess student writing first received the lowest scores in the initial writing assessment conducted by the UWL. When student writing is assessed for each school, students will also receive a survey in which they self-assess their writing skills.

Year	Assessment Task
Year 0 (2018–2019)	Implementation of action items.
Year 1 (2019–2020)	
Year 2 (2020–2021)	Evaluation of the undergraduate sample. QEPIC recommends actions for improvement based upon the evaluation.
Year 3 (2021–2022)	Evaluation of the School of Divinity, School of Communication & the Arts, and School of Business & Leadership. QEPIC recommends actions for improvement based upon the evaluation. QEPIC releases Student Self-Evaluation Survey to these schools.
Year 4 (2022–2023)	Evaluation of Robertson School of Government, School of Education, School of Law, and School of Psychology & Counseling. QEPIC recommends actions for improvement based upon the evaluation. QEPIC releases Student Self-Evaluation Survey to these schools.
Year 5 (2023–2024)	If student scores decrease in the post-evaluation or any areas of weaknesses are identified in the data, further action items will be established by QEPIC and foundational writing will be assessed again.

Are other areas involved in the QEP?

The University Writing Lab (UWL), University Library, and Information Technology are other areas involved in the QEP.

Under the oversight of the QEP Committee, the UWL evaluated student papers, which helped the QEP Committee pinpoint the specific areas in which student writing struggled. Beginning in the 2018–2019 academic year, the UWL is responsible for increasing awareness of UWL resources, providing enough tutoring appointments to meet student needs, and coordinating with Media Services to provide more video resources.

Implementing the QEP will require additional resources for the UWL. First, the University will hire additional tutors (exact number to be determined) as we expand the availability of one-on-one tutoring appointments. Full-time staff members will be devoted to the creation of video resources that will supplement the one-on-one tutoring. A staff person will serve as a liaison to faculty to ensure effective collaboration between the UWL and professors teaching writing.

Similar to the UWL, the University Library is responsible for increasing QEP awareness, integrating its current programs, such as Jump Start and Write In, into the QEP, and developing resources that direct faculty/staff/students to writing resource materials.

Information Technology is less involved in the QEP, but it is responsible for helping provide Grammarly to the Regent Community and helping QEPIC select the best available writing assistance technology.