

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.

Rationale and Notes:

The *Principles of Accreditation* attests to the commitment of the Commission on Colleges to the enhancement of the quality of higher education and to the proposition that student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a component of the accreditation process that reflects and affirms both of these commitments. Developing a QEP as part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity and an impetus for an institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning.

The QEP describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) directly related to enhancing student learning. Student learning is defined broadly in the context of the QEP and may address a wide range of topics or issues but, in all cases, the goals and evaluation strategies need to be clearly and directly linked to improving the quality of student learning. In order to ensure that the QEP is implemented, the institution integrates it into its ongoing planning and evaluation process.

Note: The QEP is a course of action that is specific to an institution and its mission. It is intended to be customized and designed to meet the needs of the particular institution. It is an opportunity for an institution to be creative in an area related to compliance with the *Principles*. Therefore, although an institution may want to study QEPs completed by other institutions, an institution's QEP should reflect the needs of the institution and be customized to accomplish its goals.

At the time of the on-site review, the Commission expects an institution to have in place all components that are characteristic to any workable plan: (1) a focused topic (directly related to student learning), (2) clear goals, (3) adequate resources in place to implement the plan, (4) evaluation strategies for determining the achievement of goals, and (5) evidence of community development and support of the plan.

Relevant Questions for Consideration:

- Has the institution identified and provided a clear and concise description of a significant issue(s) directly related to student learning?
- What are the goals of the QEP and how do they relate to student learning?
- What are the intended benefits of the QEP to the institution and to the student?
- What resources (personnel, financial, physical, academic, etc.) are necessary for the successful implementation of the QEP?
- How will the progress of the QEP be monitored? (timelines, administration and oversight of its implementation by qualified individuals, etc.)
- What are the evaluation strategies identified by the institution that will determine the success of the institution's QEP? How will the evaluation findings be used to improve student learning?
- How has the QEP been integrated into the institution's ongoing planning and evaluation processes?
- How has the institution demonstrated that a cross section of its community has been involved in the development of the QEP?