

H. Quality Focus Essay

Continuous quality improvement is a mark of institutional effectiveness. As an institution evaluates its programs and services in the continuous cycle of data analysis, planning, resource allocation, and evaluation, it examines its effectiveness in accomplishing its mission **in the context of student learning and student achievement**. During that examination, it identifies areas of needed change, development, institutionalization, and expansion. Within the accreditation focus on continuous quality improvement, the institution will identify two or three areas coming out of the institutional self evaluation on which the institution has decided to act (action projects), and which will have significance over a multi-year period. These will be described in a Quality Focus Essay (QFE). The Essay will have a 5,000 word limit and will discuss in detail the identified areas to be acted upon, including responsible parties, timeline, and anticipated outcomes, and the impact on academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The Essay will be related to the Accreditation Standards; institutions should select the “action projects” for the QFE from college data and analysis. The projects described in the QFE should be realistic and culminate in a set of observable and measurable outcomes. The Essay should be consistent in its factual basis and analysis with the other portions of the college’s Self Evaluation Report. It will provide the institution with multi-year, long-term directions for improvement and demonstrate the institution’s commitment to excellence. The areas identified in the Essay will become critical focal points for the institution’s Midterm Report. Evaluation teams and the Commission will comment on the institution’s QFE and may offer constructive advice or assistance.