

QEP Curriculum Development Grant Program Guidelines FY11 Competition

Proposal Deadline
March 7, 2011

Notification of Award
April 25, 2011

Implementation Semesters
Summer 2011, Fall 2011, or Spring 2012

Contact
Veronique Tran, Ph.D.
Director, UH Learning through Discovery (QEP)
discovery@uh.edu
713.743.5099

A. Introduction

In Spring 2008, the University of Houston developed a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) for reaffirmation of accreditation. The plan was the result of a two-year planning effort involving faculty, staff, and students. The QEP Report, "Discovery-Based Learning: Transforming the Undergraduate Experience through Research," set forth a vision for integrating research and inquiry-based learning in the undergraduate experience at multiple levels, including developing university-wide initiatives, college and department-wide initiatives, building a research-supportive curriculum, and expansion of mentored research. The Research-Supportive Curriculum component of the *Learning through Discovery Initiative* provides a mechanism to teach research skills to the majority of our undergraduates by the time they graduate. Call for Proposals for the QEP Curriculum Development Grant Program will take place annually through 2013.

In its first year (FY09), twenty-three (23) projects were funded ranging from new course development to department-wide enhancements and impacting approximately 6,500 enrolled students. In FY10, nineteen (19) projects were funded impacting over 7,400 enrolled students. The list past and current QEP-funded projects can be viewed on the Discovery website.

These QEP grant guidelines provide background information, outline requirements for submission of proposals, and discuss criteria for evaluating requests for funding for fiscal year 2011 (FY11). Approximately \$250,000 will be available to fund competitive proposals. New ideas and models are encouraged. Previously funded PIs and Co-PIs may submit proposals for new projects that are significantly different from prior funded projects. Proposals for continuation of previously QEP-funded projects will require matching funds as specified in section G of these guidelines.

The full QEP report and these grant guidelines are available online via the Discovery website: www.uh.edu/discovery. In addition, resources/tools and best practices have been compiled in the Curriculum Toolbox section of the Faculty & Staff Gateway to assist faculty and staff in their QEP planning activities. It should be emphasized that not all enhancements will require funding to implement. Programs and course instructors are encouraged to review best practices in their discipline as well as the list of resources and best practices and implement changes throughout their undergraduate programs. QEP Curriculum Development proposals should be submitted for those significant enhancements that would require funding to develop and pilot. Proposals involving interdisciplinary and collaborative learning experiences are encouraged.

Research Definition and QEP Student Learning Outcomes

The following definition of research was adopted by the UH QEP Planning Committee to be broadly inclusive of research in all disciplines:

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.

The Committee also defined the following QEP Student Learning Outcomes:

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.*

In Spring 2009, a set of six disciplinary QEP Rubrics were developed by faculty and assessment specialists to assist in applying these student learning outcomes to various disciplinary areas. PIs and Co-PIs are encouraged to review the rubrics and meet with their assessment specialists during the QEP proposal development and assignment design stages. The QEP rubrics can be viewed at:

<http://uh.edu/discovery/QEPGrantGuidelines.html>

These QEP student learning outcomes are illustrated graphically in the Research Cycle graphic:



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www.uh.edu/discovery

B. Purpose

The purpose of the QEP Curriculum Development Grant Program is to support the enhancement of existing undergraduate courses or develop new courses that incorporate inquiry-based pedagogy or research practicum training.¹ Faculty members are also encouraged to consult pedagogical best practices in their field. Following is a summary of categories of courses that qualify for funding:

- **Core Course** – curricular enhancements at the core course level may involve improvement in one or more of the QEP Student Learning Outcomes. In addition, new interdisciplinary core courses or introductory research courses at the core level for non-majors are encouraged.
- **Course in Major** – at the intermediate level, instructors may incorporate activities that reinforce research-related skills into courses in students' major fields of study. Examples include discipline-specific incorporation of problem-based or case-study assignments, enhancements in information literacy skills, and reinforcement of student mastery of various forms of communication, whether written, oral, visual, digital, or performance.
- **Writing in the Discipline** – programs may propose developing writing in the disciplines (WID) courses that are inquiry-based and address some of the QEP Student Learning Outcomes in addition to the writing component. Such courses can be designed so that they qualify for the university's WID Core designation. WID Core courses may be restricted to a specific major or open to non-majors.
- **Research-Intensive Course** – enhancements in advanced, upper-division courses offering students the opportunity to engage in research projects that will improve their competencies in *all six* of the QEP student learning outcomes. Different pedagogical approaches include: Advanced Research Methods, Project-Based Laboratory, Investigation in the Community, Research Service Learning, Capstone Design and Practicum, Collaborative Industry Projects, Interdisciplinary Projects.²

Proposal involving interdisciplinary projects or linked courses may be submitted by co-PIs from different departments or colleges. Although most proposals will be for undergraduate courses, proposals may be submitted for enhancement of graduate courses that are cross-listed for undergraduate enrollment. Faculty who are interested in other types of curriculum development or use of instructional technology that is not related to delivery of inquiry-based learning should seek funding from other sources such as the Faculty Development Initiative Program (FDIP) or the Student Success Grant Program.³

C. Partnerships with QEP Resource Collaborators & Community Partners

Principal Investigators (PIs) are encouraged to partner with various university learning resources to strengthen development and implementation of their proposed enhancement or approach. Examples of the types of resources and expertise that are available on posted on the Discovery website – Faculty & Staff gateway: www.uh.edu/discovery. These include partnering with: subject librarians for information literacy training, writing center specialist for writing skills training, instructional designers for technology integration, and assessment specialists for determining applicable student learning outcomes. Other resources may include those available through departments, colleges, centers, and institutes. PI/Co-PIs should involve resource partners in the early stages of the planning process to ensure effective collaborations with workable timelines. Due to limitations on staff time and resources, some prospective partners may not be able to provide the level of support desired in all cases.

Partnerships with the Houston area community and beyond are also encouraged such as: non-profit, small business, community, corporate, etc. Projects involving corporate partners should leverage sponsorships and in-kind support for the project. Domestic and international collaborations will also be considered.

¹ Examples of the types of activities or courses are further elaborated in Sections 3.4.1-3.4.3 of the QEP Report.

² http://www.uh.edu/discovery/QEP_Report.html. Table 9 of the QEP Report summarizes the pedagogical approaches that may be applicable for research –intensive courses.

D. Levels of Funding

Funding will be available at three levels:

- **Individual Faculty** (up to \$5K) - support for faculty to enhance existing courses or develop new courses at the core, intermediate or advanced research-intensive levels. Multi-semester courses are encouraged as they allow students to fully develop their projects.
- **Faculty Team** (up to \$10K) - support for teams of faculty who collaboratively develop a plan to adopt a research-based pedagogy in several or all sections of a particular course. Faculty may also propose development of interdisciplinary projects that span several linked courses from different departments.
- **College/Department** (up to \$20K) - support for departmental or college initiatives that include research-based enhancements in multiple courses from freshman/sophomore through junior/senior levels. This vertical integration could involve introducing a training module or research-based learning model in several courses. College-wide curricular enhancements could also involve horizontal integration across the disciplines of training modules or research-based learning model (e.g., college-wide implementation of information literacy training or a capstone course or research-intensive course in several majors).

E. Budget

Budget requests are subject to adjustment by the reviewers. Funding requests should be made based on the following categories:

- **PI/Co-PI Salary Support** – partial summer salary support for PIs to significantly enhance existing courses or develop new courses. Course release time will be supported but approvals must be obtained by the appropriate department chair and/or academic program director of the unit so that alternative teaching assignments can be arranged.
- **Graduate Assistants** – graduate assistants who assist in development and pilot implementation of the course and mentor undergraduates. Cross-disciplinary graduate assistants may be proposed where appropriate (e.g., a psychology graduate student may serve as an assistant and mentor to students in a computer science course).
- **Undergraduate Assistants** - undergraduate assistants who assist with pilot implementation of the course and serve as peer instructors.
- **Partnership Support** – partnership services provided to support curriculum development and/or pilot implementation.
- **Technical Resources** – computer hardware, software, or other types of equipment to support pilot implementation³
- **Course Materials** – reusable course materials (i.e., collections, holdings, manuals, models)
- **Other Costs** – costs that do not fit into any of the above categories (i.e., guest speaker travel and honoraria, travel to visit external partners, travel to present at national conferences, etc.). Guest speaker support is limited to one per proposal and may not exceed \$2,000 for travel-related expenses and honoraria. Travel support for the PI and/or Co-PIs to present their QEP project at national conferences may not exceed \$750 per person.

QEP Curriculum Development Grant funds may not be requested for student travel. Students may submit applications for the Undergraduate Research Travel Fellowship Program to support their travel to regional and national conferences: <http://www.uh.edu/discovery/UGResearchTravelFellowship.html>

³ PIs should not submit triplicate proposals for the QEP Curriculum Development Grant Program, the Faculty Development Initiative Program (FDIP), and the Student Success Grant Program. These three programs are distinct and support different goals. Information about the other grant programs supported by Academic Affairs can be found at: <http://eto.uh.edu/Home/grants.cfm>

F. Eligibility of Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI

Individual Faculty and Team Faculty proposals may be submitted by tenured and tenure-track faculty, clinical faculty, instructional faculty, and research faculty. PIs of individual or team proposals must be the course instructor(s) of record for the proposed course(s). A faculty member may serve as PI of no more than one proposal. Faculty or college/departmental administrators may submit proposals that include multiple courses. There are no limits on the number of departmental and college level proposals. Proposals from interdisciplinary team members across departments and colleges are encouraged. Co-PIs may be from any of the faculty categories specified above.

G. Previously QEP-Funded PIs and Co-PIs

This solicitation is primarily intended to support new initiatives. PIs and Co-PIs who were previously funded in previous years may submit new proposals in this round; however, such proposals should be sufficiently distinct from the prior effort. Proposals for the continuation of the same, previously-funded, project will be considered but will require one-to-one matching funds and inclusion of letter(s) of commitment of matching funds. In addition, the impact of prior QEP funding of the project must be clearly demonstrated via a project report. Faculty seeking long-term support of their previously QEP-funded courses should seek other local or external sources of funding.

H. Proposal Evaluation

The broad-based Discovery Curriculum Task Force will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- A. Degree to which the enhancement has the potential to significantly improve student research skills training and practice. (35%)
- B. To what extent specific QEP Student Learning Outcomes will be addressed. (25%)
- C. To what extent the proposed enhancement is innovative and/or interdisciplinary. (10%)
- D. The potential for the proposed enhancement to serve as a model for others to implement. (10%)
- E. Plan for departmental, college, or external support for sustained funding of successful pilot projects. (20%)

Additional consideration for competitive proposals may include criteria such as proposal type (individual, team, college/dept), course type (core, major, WID, research-intensive), college and department representation among awardees, new or existing courses, number of students to be impacted, collaborations and partnerships. Feedback summaries will be provided to PIs of funded and unfunded proposals.

I. Relationship to Institutional Effectiveness Planning

Beginning in Fall 2008, undergraduate programs were encouraged to incorporate a student learning goal in IE plans that is research-specific for the discipline. Faculty developing QEP proposals should review their academic units' IE plan to ensure that the proposed enhancement is aligned with any research-related student learning outcomes. During the QEP proposal development phase, faculty should contact their college's assessment specialist for assistance.

J. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

For funded QEP proposals, PIs and Co-PIs will collaborate with the QEP Assessment Task Force and appropriate assessment specialist to refine instruments for measuring student competencies in the specified QEP Student Learning Outcome(s). In Spring 2009, a set of six disciplinary rubrics were developed for scoring student work in QEP courses. PIs will be responsible for selecting the appropriate rubric for their course(s), applying the rubric to students' final work product, and reporting rubric scores from their funded courses. PIs will also be responsible for submitting representative samples of students' final work products. In addition, PIs will assist in development and administration of a pre- and post- course assessment instrument to students in QEP Courses to gather data related to the effectiveness of QEP course enhancements. QEP rubrics can be downloaded from:

<http://uh.edu/discovery/QEPGrantGuidelines.html>

K. Reporting & Sharing of Best Practices

Upon notification of award, additional guidelines for funded PIs will be distributed. Some of the reporting requirements are briefly described below.

Prior to course implementation:

- 1) QEP Project Summary that is adopted for student and lay audiences
- 2) List of class numbers and semesters of implementation for QEP funded courses
- 3) Completion of QEP Course Evidence Inventory for each course

Within 30 days of the last implementation semester of the project:

- 1) a detailed QEP Project Report of your pilot project and findings; including course syllabus/materials/tools and assignment descriptions that can be shared with others via the Discovery website
- 2) a detailed budget summary from your Department or College Business Administrator providing a description of how the funds from your grant was spent

A format for the QEP Project Report will be provided. The QEP Project Summary and Report for all funded projects will be posted on the Discovery website.

In addition, PIs and Co-PIs with successfully piloted QEP-funded projects will be encouraged to share their experiences with fellow colleagues during the annual Teaching Best Practices Showcase and/or other campus teaching and learning conferences.

L. Proposal Submission and Notification of Award

All proposals must be submitted using the attached proposal template and include the following:

Cover Page and Signatures. Specify details for the PI, Co-PIs, and collaborators if applicable. The Department Chair and Dean of the PI's College must approve the proposal. The PI will serve as the main point of contact for the project.

Proposal Narrative. Complete all applicable sections.

Budget Request. Specify funding requests in each applicable category and provide justification.

For continuation proposals, the following additional documents must also be included:

FY10 Project Report and Summary. Submit copy of Project Report detailing impact of FY09 project.

Matching Funds. Include letter of commitment for one-to-one matching funds. Letter should specify dollar amount, source of funds, and how funds will be used.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **Monday, March 7, 2011**. Signed Proposals must be submitted electronically via attachment as a PDF scan to discovery@uh.edu. Hardcopy submissions will not be accepted. Notification of award will be made on or before April 25, 2011. Funds will be disbursed by May 16, 2011, provided that a local QEP cost center account is available for funds transfer.