Northern Kentucky University
Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
Call For Proposals

As part of our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), NKU has the opportunity to develop a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve an area of student learning or student success in a significant way through a university-wide, multi-year initiative. The focus of the QEP is determined by faculty, staff, and students, and the university must provide resources for the development, implementation, assessment, and completion of the plan. The QEP Committee, comprised of 20 members (13 faculty, 3 students, and 4 staff), has designed a multi-step process to identify our next QEP topic and to support the development of the plan itself.

**Topic Selection**

In the first stage, all members of the NKU campus and community were invited to identify both our areas of strength and areas for improvement in our efforts to support learning. Over 850 responses were received. The QEP committee sifted through the data to identify the most common topics. The top seven topics are listed below:

1. Extend **academic support** outside of the classroom
2. Communicate ideas clearly and effectively
3. Instill systematic **critical thinking** skills
4. Foster **online and hybrid learning**
5. Improve classroom **pedagogy**
6. Increase **real-world and workplace experiences**
7. Instill **student success** skills

(See attached table for representative survey responses.)

**Call for Proposals**

All members of the NKU campus community are invited to submit brief, two- to three-page, focused proposals that, if chosen, will serve as the foundation for a fully-developed, 25-30 page plan to be submitted in early September. All members of the NKU campus community are invited to submit proposals. **Guidelines, Criteria for Evaluation**, and **Frequently Asked Questions**, are offered below. All brief proposals meeting established guidelines will receive $100, awarded to the first author listed and then distributed among others as the group sees fit.

**Proposal Development**

In the final stage of the selection process, the QEP committee will read and evaluate all brief proposals using the established criteria as well as institutional data on student success, selecting three or four for further development into full-length plans. Because the development process is significantly more labor intensive and may require some work during the summer, authors who complete viable full-length proposals will receive a cash award between $750 and $1000, again to be distributed as other authors see fit. The full plans will be shared with the campus community for feedback next fall, and the committee will then determine which plan will be NKU’s next QEP.
**Instructions for Proposal**

Please read the Guidelines, Criteria for Evaluation, and Frequently Asked Questions before submitting your proposal. If you have any questions, please contact QEP@nku.edu.

**Guidelines for Proposals**

As you develop your brief proposal, please keep in mind that you are not required to provide a fully detailed plan. The proposal will be reviewed by the QEP Committee with the understanding that further development will be necessary in collaboration with the Chair, Co-chair, and/or members of the committee in order to meet expectations outlined by SACSCOC.

In a two- to three page document, (single-spaced, one-inch margins) please address the following prompts. The QEP committee recognizes that some information might not be available within the timeline for submissions and that some sections may need to be expanded later. That said, please make an attempt to address each prompt or to identify reasons for not doing so.

Please submit proposals to QEP@nku.edu as an attachment no later than **5:00 on Monday, April 24.**

1. **Name(s) and Contact Information**
   List the name(s) and contact information for the person(s) submitting this proposal.

2. **A short but descriptive title**

3. **Rationale for the Topic/Problem Statement/Opportunity for Growth**
   Briefly explain why this topic is particularly important to NKU at this time and how our students and the overall institution would benefit from the proposed plan. You may include any relevant data here, including quantitative, qualitative, or experiential data.

4. **Expected Outcomes/Impact on Student Learning or the Student Learning Environment**
   Briefly explain the expected outcomes of the plan in terms of students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and/or behaviors. What impact would the plan have on student learning?

5. **Strategies/Actions to Be Implemented**
   Briefly describe how you would go about implementing your plan to improve student learning or the student learning environment. What steps or actions would you implement? What initiatives or strategies would be employed?

6. **Student Cohort**
   Briefly identify which students would be affected by your plan. *For example, undergraduate students, graduate students, first-time full-time freshmen, first year students. (The QEP need not affect every student directly, but it does need to offer a significant enhancement to student learning at NKU.)*

7. **Possible Means of Assessment**
   Describe possible measures of success and ways that evidence might be collected and measured.

8. **Resources**
   Identify resources necessary to implement this idea successfully. (A detailed budget is not required, but please indicate needs, including additional staff, software, physical space, etc.)
Criteria for Evaluation
The committee will use the following questions to evaluate proposals:

- How does this QEP focus specifically on student learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning?
- How would this QEP affect student learning?
- What evidence suggests that a focus on this area is needed at NKU?
- How does this QEP topic or area of focus align with the University’s mission and strategic plan?
- What steps and resources needed for short- and long-term success have been identified?
- How will the goals and outcomes be measured or assessed?

Frequently Asked Questions
What is a QEP?
A QEP, or Quality Enhancement Plan, is a plan to improve student knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values, or to improve the student learning environment and student success. For example, the most recent QEP at NKU focused on active learning in the classroom.

Why is NKU developing a new QEP?
A new QEP is required with each reaffirmation of accreditation by SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges). NKU is scheduled for reaffirmation in 2019.

Can I submit more than one brief proposal?
Yes. Anyone may submit more than one proposal individually or as part of a team.

What is my commitment if my proposal is selected for development into a full proposal?
If your brief proposal is selected, the QEP committee will assist you in the development your full proposal. In addition, you are not responsible for coordinating or implementing the final QEP plan. When one is selected by the university community next fall, a new QEP implementation team will be created to support the development of the final plan as well as necessary documentation, literature reviews, assessment plans, budget planning, and publicity. While you may be invited to serve on a committee, you would not be responsible for any large portion of the work yourself. The QEP is a shared university effort with support from the Office of the Vice Provost and the SACSCOC Steering Committee.

What happens to my proposal after I submit it? Who will see it? How will it be shared?
The QEP Committee will read and evaluate proposals as described above. If you are invited to create a full proposal, that work will be made available (along with other final proposals) on the QEP website for public commentary and feedback in order to select the official QEP.

Proposals will be discussed at focus groups and at various University meetings. However, the name(s) of the individual(s) submitting proposals will not be shared or posted during the discussion phase. The focus of these discussions and the public commentary is to determine the best fit for the university.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Representative Survey Responses</th>
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| Extend academic support outside of the classroom. | • Help students be aware of all the resources available to them if they are struggling in a class including the tutoring center, career services, and other programs  
• Tutoring and other services that help students succeed are the most important resources on campus  
• Mentoring programs like ROCKS, and LAMP are great, but do not reach enough of their target population  
• Supplemental Instruction is very helpful so expand it to additional courses |
| Communicate ideas clearly and effectively. | • We need more resources devoted to communication skills, which are important for everyone  
• Develop communication skills that include the effective articulation of ideas to a range of audiences  
• Students would benefit from more individual instruction or mentoring like we do with some in honors projects or supervised research  
• Composition courses do not equip students with basic writing skills. This missing tool creates an obstacle every time students face a written assignment |
| Instill systematic critical thinking skills. | • Don’t tell us to do more critical thinking, show us how  
• Ask meaningful questions, gather and assess relevant information, interpret effectively, and develop reasoned conclusions  
• Teach students to think open-mindedly, recognizing assumptions, and considering implications  
• Critical thinking should be part of every FOK class so students learn to reason and think for themselves |
| Improve online and hybrid learning structures. | • We need enhanced resources and support for hybrid and online classroom formats to offer students an educational experience that is rigorous and stimulating and facilitates degree completion  
• There needs to be an office of online learning which provides logistical support to faculty teaching online courses, including secure assessment options  
• We need to better integrate online students into campus life, even if from a distance; for example, offer online participation in the Celebration of Student Research and Creativity  
• Every instructor should use Blackboard or something else to allow us to access assignments and grades |
| Improve classroom pedagogy. | • I don’t learn much or enjoy classes when instructors talk the whole time, especially when they read directly from notes or PowerPoints  
• A low student-to-teacher ratio is the most important contribution to my success  
• Many professors try to cover too much material too fast, rather than delving deeper into concepts and meanings  
• We need a renewal of our mission as a teaching institution supported by professional development opportunities |
| Increase real-world and workplace experiences. | • We need help with the transition from student to worker, including resume writing, networking, and interviewing  
• Students need the ability to translate classroom knowledge to the real world both as workers and as engaged citizens  
• Prepare students for a workplace that is increasingly diverse in job requirements and work force  
• More than anything I need knowledge about my profession and how to start a career |
| Instill student success skills. | • Students do not have enough time to complete all their work because we do not plan well on a daily, weekly, and semester level  
• Students should take more active responsibility for their learning, including setting goals, developing strategies, and monitoring progress  
• They tell us to have better time management, but do not teach us how  
• Teach us practical skills for our day-to-day lives |