

Quality Enhancement Review (QER): Purpose and Overview

Purpose of the QER Process:

The Quality Enhancement Review process serves as a tool for ensuring that the university fulfills and maintains its mission. Generally, the process enables the university to provide quality assurance, maintain academic standards, ensure continuous improvement of academic programs, and improve the university's reputation. Specifically, the process serves to implement recommendations of the state's and university's strategic plans to permit continuous improvement and to advance FSU into the top tier of public research universities.

The Quality Enhancement Review's major purposes are (a) to examine the institutional effectiveness of a unit, its national position with respect to comparable units, what it needs to improve or sustain performance; and (b) to serve as a basis for administrative decisions on the investment of new and existing resources. A unit is evaluated on the basis of its mission and that mission's relation to the university mission, student-learning and program outcomes specified by the unit, and the assessment and continuous evaluation of program and learning outcomes. The Quality Enhancement Review also permits a "streamlined" continuous evaluation system by combining:

- ✓ the statutorily required Florida Board of Governors' seven-year program reviews
- ✓ the Graduate Policy Committee's (GPC) reviews of graduate programs
- ✓ the Undergraduate Policy Committee's (UPC) reviews of undergraduate programs
- ✓ independent external evaluation

The entire review process is monitored by the Provost's Office through the academic dean of the relevant college. The Provost's Office may revise the policies and procedures, as appropriate, after timely consultation with interested parties.

Components of the QER Process:

The Quality Enhancement process is founded on an extensive self-examination. Members of each academic unit and its programs under review prepare a self-study binder that articulates the unit's goals, objectives, and intended student-learning and program outcomes in relation to its mission.

The self-study addresses a number of questions integrating the concerns of the Florida Board of Governors, the Undergraduate Policy Committee, the Graduate Policy Committee, and the Provost. The measures used in Quality Enhancement Reviews of graduate and undergraduate degree programs include indicators of:

- ✓ Curriculum
- ✓ Student Experience
- ✓ Faculty
- ✓ Resources

The review also asks for an evaluation of the quality of degree programs based on qualitative measures of the reputation of the faculty, significance of research and scholarly activities to the profession, and the currency of the curriculum, all ascertained by external review. In addition, the QER evaluates the program's student achievement by reviewing its follow-up on graduates, for example its success in placing graduates in graduate schools or employment in relevant fields, as well as employer satisfaction, student satisfaction with FSU, academic experience at FSU, the extent to which program and student-learning outcomes have been evaluated and achieved, and the levels of continuous improvement.

An independent external reviewer, contracted with the university, provides an outside perspective on the unit or program. The external reviewer reads the self-study binder, conducts onsite interviews, and prepares and submits a report indicating the findings of the site visit. The external reviewer synthesizes findings into a final report that also makes recommendations for improvement. The report forms the basis for later stages of the QER process.

The self-study material prepared by the unit/program is reviewed, along with the report of the external reviewer, by the academic dean, the Undergraduate Policy Committee, the Graduate Policy Committee, and other faculty and administrators. Academic deans review and act on findings of the QER, including the report and recommendations of the GPC and UPC, and submit an action plan to the Provost's Office. Representatives of the Provost's Office review the dean's report. The Provost assesses the dean's action plan and makes budgetary, planning, and performance assessments against the dean's action plan. The Provost's Office reviews and submits the final reports to the Florida Board of Governors in accordance with state guidelines.