

REQUEST FOR QEP ACTION PROJECT PROPOSALS

Old Dominion University Quality Enhancement Plan *Improving Disciplinary Writing*

DEADLINE

Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on February 1, 2013 and each February thereafter.

OVERVIEW

Old Dominion University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is intended to improve upper-division undergraduate students' disciplinary writing – that is, writing that demonstrates a reasoning process supported by research and reflection on a problem, topic or issue. Writing is a critical skill that goes beyond demonstrating proficiency with the mechanics and structure of writing per se. Writing is a means to communicate what has been learned.

All Action Project Proposals must focus on improving upper-division undergraduate students' disciplinary writing. As a result of Action Project initiatives, students will be able to produce written documents that demonstrate these six Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) as measured by the QEP Writing Rubric (found at www.odu.edu/qep). That is, students will be able to:

- Clearly state a focused problem, question, or topic appropriate for the purpose of the task
- Identify relevant knowledge and credible sources
- Synthesize information and multiple viewpoints related to the problem, question, or topic
- Apply appropriate research methods or theoretical framework to the problem, question, or topic
- Formulate conclusions that are logically tied to inquiry findings and consider applications, limitations, and implications, and
- Reflect on or evaluate what was learned

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Funding is available for program activities related to the QEP's goal of engaging upper-division undergraduate students in disciplinary writing that demonstrates a reasoning process supported by research and reflection on the problem, topic or issue being studied. For example, programs might submit Action Projects to seek funds that could:

- Allow a few faculty members to attend a conference related to writing in their discipline, share what was learned with the other faculty in the program, and then plan a strategy to implement the best practices for disciplinary writing throughout their courses
- Invite a nationally known expert in their discipline to offer a workshop for faculty on writing, and then implement the best practices for teaching and assessing writing in their discipline throughout their upper-division courses
- Provide resources for a faculty member to improve the writing in a particular course as a pilot test with the commitment of the program faculty to implement what was learned in other courses in the program
- Develop a capstone course for their major that uses writing extensively

In all cases, the goal remains: to improve upper-division undergraduate disciplinary writing. Academic programs impart knowledge through courses and so the focus is ultimately on the teaching and assessing of writing within courses. Academic program faculty know what the issues are within their own programs in terms of what is lacking, and they have the best

sense of what is needed to improve upper-division undergraduate disciplinary writing within their specific program as a whole. The Action Project process provides the flexibility for them to design a strategy and request the funds needed to implement a plan to improve disciplinary writing in their programs.

Academic programs are encouraged to refer to the High Impact Practices (HIPs) identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) that have been demonstrated to enhance student engagement in learning (www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm). AAC&U identified ten HIPs but those most pertinent to the QEP and work with upper-division students are:

- Writing Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

All proposals must result in student writing from one or more upper-division undergraduate courses that will be uploaded into an electronic repository within one semester of proposal completion for assessment by the QEP Office using the QEP Writing Rubric.

AWARDS

Grants will range from \$2,000 to \$20,000. Programs are expected to apply for different amounts depending on the scope of the project in which they plan to engage.

Project length will generally be from three months to one year; multi-year projects will not be eligible initially, but may be reconsidered as the QEP progresses.

ELIGIBILITY

Full-time faculty members who teach upper-level (300 and 400-level) undergraduate courses, as individuals or teams, are eligible to apply as Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-Investigators (Co-Is). All academic programs are eligible to apply and multidisciplinary proposals are welcome.

Faculty submitting Action Projects for their programs may have, but are not required to have participated in the QEP Faculty Workshops.

OUTCOME

The lessons learned by Action Project grant recipients will be shared as an important step in fostering a campus-wide dialog on upper-division undergraduate disciplinary writing. The final reports will be published on the QEP website as a resource for the campus community.

All proposals must result in student writing from one or more upper-division undergraduate courses that will be uploaded into an electronic repository within one semester of proposal completion for assessment by the QEP Office using the QEP Writing Rubric. (This is best accomplished by including this in the course requirements.)

Principal Investigators (PIs) will submit a final report that provides sufficient documentation of all activities to allow readers to replicate the activities in their home departments. Appendices are encouraged to provide example activities, papers, surveys, and the like that may have been used to implement and/or evaluate the plan deployed.

SUPPORT

Applicants must schedule an appointment with the Director of Writing and Faculty Development to discuss the Action Project **BEFORE** an application can be submitted.

PREPARATION

As you prepare for the proposal consider the questions listed below:

- What are the strategies you will be adopting to improve upper-division undergraduate students' disciplinary?
- How will these strategies improve the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) across courses in the department or program?
- How do you plan to evaluate the impact of the strategies in your department?
- Are there other faculty in your department, college, or other colleges who may benefit from collaboration on this project, or upon whom this project will have an impact?
- Will the project's impact be sustainable?
- What is your timeline from award through evaluation plan? Is it reasonable to accomplish your goals?

Proposals are limited to 7 pages. In addition to describing the proposed activities, the proposal should address, with as much detail as possible, the following key issues in one page or less:

- A statement about the need to improve upper-division undergraduate students' disciplinary writing – that is, writing that demonstrates a reasoning process supported by research and reflection on a problem, topic or issue – in your academic program.
- A statement of the overall vision that underlies the management and implementation plan.
- The specific strategies to be used during the grant period to develop or discover strategies to improve upper-division undergraduate students' disciplinary writing and the rationales for these efforts.
- An assessment plan that outlines the methods that will help determine how benchmarks are met, for example how strategies were effectively implemented (process), the impact they made on student learning (i.e., initial assessments of how writing influenced learning; outcomes), and how specific strategies may be altered in the future to enhance effectiveness. This plan should incorporate the QEP Writing Rubric (found at www.odu.edu/gep).
- A clear statement of which of the proposed activities, if successful, would be expected to be institutionalized by the end of the grant period and which of the proposed activities, if successful, would require further sources of support in order to be continued.
- All proposals must result in student writing from one or more upper-division undergraduate courses that will be uploaded into an electronic repository within one semester of proposal completion for assessment by the QEP Office using the QEP Writing Rubric. All proposals must include an explanation of how this will be done; that is, in which courses this will occur. This assessment is independent of a student's course grade.

- Faculty involved in the Action Projects should be willing to participate in confidential surveys for assessment purposes.
- A budget outlining how funds will be used throughout the duration of the grant period. Requested items must be necessary to address the goal. Allowable budget items include, for example, release time, graduate student support, travel cost for faculty to attend conferences or bring experts to ODU, and supplies. In addition to funds requested, indicate any matching funds the applicant's department or program is willing to contribute. Matching funds are not required for submitting a proposal; however, the sustainability of the activities is important (i.e. once QEP funding ends, is there the possibility for the department to have built effective activities into its standard procedures?). Matching funds, of any amount, help demonstrate a commitment to sustainability.
- A timeline for implementation and assessment.
- A letter of support from the Department Head, Associate Chair, Chair or College Dean from the lead faculty member's (PI) department. (Support letter will be excluded from page count.)

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

After meeting with the Director of Writing and Faculty Development, applications must be submitted as one Microsoft Word or PDF document via e-mail to QEP@odu.edu with the subject "QEP Action Project Proposal."

SCHEDULE FOR PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN SPRING 2013

November 30, 2012	Request for Proposals Begins
February 1, 2013	Proposal Due Date
March 1, 2013	Announce Awards
July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014	Develop and/or Implement Project
August 1, 2014	Submit Final Report
September – December 2014	Share Results

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Proposals will be reviewed by the QEP Advisory Board. Any member of the Advisory Board that is named in an Action Project proposal will not be included in deliberations for the grant cycle. Action Project award decisions will be based on the quality and impact that the proposal will make towards the overall goal of improving upper-division undergraduate students' disciplinary writing.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- ✓ **All sections of the proposal are completed.**

Approach – 30%

- Approach is well-defined
- Approach is appropriate
- Approach is innovative
- Approach is practical
- Approach is feasible

Project Impact – 30%

- Project is reproducible
- Project affects a significant number of students (based on average annual enrollment)

Assessment Plan – 30%

- Assessment plan is well-defined
- Assessment plan is relevant to the learning outcomes
- Assessment plan is feasible

Budget Plan – 10%

- Budget plan is well-defined
- Budget plan is feasible

CONTACTS

Please visit www.odu.edu/QEP for more information on ODU's QEP. General inquiries regarding this program should be sent to Remica Bingham-Risher, Director of Writing and Faculty Development, at qep@odu.edu.