

Expanding Student Horizons through Real World Connections
Quality Enhancement Plan for Francis Marion University

The QEP derives from the FMU Mission Statement and the Strategic Plan. “The primary purpose” of FMU is “to make available excellent undergraduate education in the liberal arts and selected professional programs.” In fulfilling that purpose, the University provides “traditional and when appropriate, non-traditional instruction.” The QEP reaches into all academic areas of the University and promotes appropriate nontraditional instruction. The QEP complements the commitments made in the FMU Strategic Plan to “increase opportunities for all students and faculty to become aware of multicultural and global issues and to have international study/employment opportunities” and to “increase opportunities for student involvement within the business, governmental, and public organizations within the local community.”

The QEP focuses on broadening student cultural and intellectual horizons through engagement in nontraditional learning which is defined as learning in settings outside the traditional classroom, laboratory, or library. Examples include clinical experiences, cooperative education, internships, pre-professional activities, service learning, and travel study. For the purposes of the QEP, student learning means enhancing students’ awareness of their own values and the values of others and increasing students’ knowledge. Learning in contexts outside traditional settings pushes students beyond their social comfort zones and thereby broadens their cultural horizons. Learning in such environments enhances cognitive thinking and problem solving abilities by involving students in practical application of knowledge they acquired through learning in traditional settings. The QEP uses qualitative and quantitative measures to determine if nontraditional learning contributes to the broadening of student cultural and intellectual horizons.

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