Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Definition

Below are SACS’ definitions and explanations related to the QEP:

What is the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)?
The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is the component of the reaffirmation process that reflects and affirms the commitment of the Commission on Colleges to enhancing the quality of higher education in the region and to focusing attention on student learning. By definition, the QEP describes a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning. The QEP should be embedded within the institution’s ongoing integrated institution-wide planning and evaluation process and may very well evolve from this existing process or from other processes related to the institution’s internal reaffirmation review. (Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation, 2011, p. 38-39)

What goes into deciding on, implementing, and assessing a QEP?

SACS (2010) further notes:
The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) (1) includes a process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment; (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution; (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation and completion of the QEP; (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement” (Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, p. 7).

Why is a QEP important?
In Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation, SACS (2011) explains the benefit of the QEP accreditation requirement to institutions and the students they serve: “Developing a QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning” (p. 39).

Sources