

Integrating the Research Participant Databases

Quality Enhancement Plan

Prepared by:

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Section 1: Vision

Share your vision of how your proposed topic has the potential to transform an issue related to student learning at the institutional level. Consider your audience of the Mason community members – why should we embrace this topic and how will it enhance student learning at Mason?

George Mason University is a school that is always growing and adapting to the needs of today's society. One of the ways that it can be on the cutting edge of research is to integrate all of the Mason undergraduate research participant databases to one single database. This will include all departments and majors for an enhanced student learning experience as well as giving researchers access to more diverse research participant groups.

Currently there are multiple research databases for the different departments this causes fragments in our research. These different databases such as Sona-Systems in the psychology department and Experimetrix in the business department prevent students from gaining potential exposure to different schools and concepts. On top of that each department is on their own leases costing the university more money. Integrating all of the various databases into one system will streamline our research participation as various departments will have access to a greater research pool.

Taking this step will further legitimize our standing as a research intensive school and improve our overall image. Research that is needed today is not always locked into one specific discipline or another and thus opening up the participants to more research will make Mason a strong research community. This would also increase the number of qualified applicants for our university due to the fact that we would be better recognized as a research university.

Take for example the field of industrial psychology which overlaps psychology and business. This kind of research has real applications to the business department, but they are facing issues of data that is too skewed to woman participants. The predominately male business school needs more research to offer to their students for credit. This integration would be the best fix for these types of situations.

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Departments have a different composition of participants, thus combining the research pool as a whole will benefit the research produced here by providing a better pool of students and will give participants more exposure to more schools of thought.

Section 2: Congruence with Mission and Goals

Demonstrate how your proposed topic is consistent with Mason's mission and 2014 Strategic Plan.

Integrating our research participation databases will be consistent with the Mason mission statement and achieve three of the goals in the 2014 Strategic Plan.

Bringing the systems together will give researchers more experience with a diverse subject pool. A sense of nepotism could develop as the departments use their own students to test their research. People in their department would be more likely to be familiar with a related topic and not experience varying research cultures. A diverse subject pool would make all of George Mason research stronger and innovative as more ideas collaborate, that we would secure ourselves as leaders in the 21st century in our research. Making us leaders in innovative research will add to our reputation as up and coming campus that is working to improve its image from a commuter school, to the place to be.

This implementation would help with the goals of the 2014 strategic plan. George Mason University is always working on improving its image as a nationally ranked research university, and providing more human subjects from a single database would be a good step in this direction. Our research subjects would be more varied and thus our results would be more valid to apply to conclusions that our research reaches.

Demands are changing at a rapid rate for what is expected to graduate. Research that George Mason produces must be in line with this demand. Making our research pool better will meet these changing demands as our research could be applied to more groups and appeal to more people outside of one school of thought. No longer can one make it out of a college or university without an understanding of multiple general education requirements. Thus participants need to be varied to make our research stronger.

Bringing our pool together will get multiple departments in George Mason together. Departments will communicate with each other with the establishment of policies and systems, but as these growing pains ease out it will grow our community as a whole. This can be a step in the right direction for interdepartmental communication and can be a leading step to grow other initiatives.

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Section 3: Student Learning Outcomes

Identify at least four measurable student learning outcomes that your proposed topic expects to address. Specifically, if your plan were to be adopted, what would students know and be able to do as a result?

1. Students will have a greater research participation experience as they will have access to various departments
2. Researchers will have a better pool to improve their research results
3. Multi department communication to improve student exposure to different schools of thought
4. Students will be able to identify and assess the validity of key dimensions of different research projects in their own field.
5. Students will have a greater opportunity to complete and publish research.
6. Acquisition of qualified faculty would increase due to a stronger research program.

If this plan is adopted students would know that as a researcher they would have access to a greater participant pool. No longer will researchers be discouraged from exploring their interests by a poor pool of participants and now undergraduate participants will have access to a fuller experience. Students would have to know that this plan will have growing pains as multiple departments would have to collaborate together on this issue, but the benefits will outweigh the costs in a short amount of time.

Section 4: Possible Avenues for Implementation

Describe how your proposed QEP topic relates to an issue where there is momentum building on campus or an issue that would be significantly strengthened through added attention and resources. Include your ideas about possible strategies for implementing this topic so that we could obtain meaningful results. Where possible, highlight opportunities to build on current institutional initiatives and resources.

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Putting this plan into effect will be beneficial in the push to better the research that is produced at George Mason. Our results would be more valid and the university as a whole will have access to a more diverse set of participants to have to do their research. This energy and momentum will help the university grow and improve the quality of their research experience.

Our implementation is as follows:

1. Have each department select a representative to discuss each department's policies and have them work together to create a general policy. For example, various departments range on the number of credit hours allotted for an experiment and if financial compensation is allowed for experiments.
2. Have that committee determine which participant database system is the best and collaborate on using only one system on one lease and collaborate on having one person running the entire participant system.
3. That committee should also come to a general acceptance of the process to approve experiments and determine whether it would be appropriate for the research database and whether they do not violate any of the participant's rights.
4. Have the committee decide the best way to increase participation for classes that currently do not offer incentives for participating in research.