



Rx For Success: A Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve the clinical reasoning skills of student pharmacists

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Clinical reasoning skills are required by pharmacists to assess and evaluate patient information to make appropriate therapeutic decisions and to develop, implement, monitor, and adjust patient-centered care plans to ensure desirable patient outcomes. The focus of the Appalachian College of Pharmacy's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to improve the clinical reasoning skills of our student pharmacists. Our QEP entitled "Rx for Success" outlines a strategy to strengthen students' foundational knowledge through curricular reinforcement and develop students' clinical reasoning skills through curricular revisions and course activities. This QEP topic supports the College's Mission to educate and professionally develop pharmacists that can address the health-related needs of rural and underserved communities, including Appalachia.

The QEP topic of clinical reasoning skills emerged from a broad-based institutional process that solicited input from all members of the Appalachian College of Pharmacy (ACP) community (*i.e.*, students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, preceptors, Board of Trustees), and is supported by available institutional evidence from direct and indirect measures. The goals and outcomes of the QEP center on the development of clinical reasoning skills, and will be comprehensively assessed through a combination of direct and indirect measurements.

Primary Goal and Outcomes of the QEP:

1. Improve students' clinical reasoning skills.

- 1.1. Students will acquire requisite basic science knowledge as a foundation for clinical reasoning.
- 1.2. Students will apply clinical reasoning skills in the didactic curriculum.
- 1.3. Students will apply clinical reasoning skills in the experiential setting.

Supportive Goals and Outcomes for achieving the Primary QEP Goal:

2. Revise the curriculum to foster the development of clinical reasoning skills.

- 2.1. Optimize course sequencing, content, and delivery to maximize student acquisition and reinforcement of foundational knowledge.
- 2.2. Increase opportunities for students to reinforce and apply their foundational knowledge through the development of Clinical Skills Laboratory courses that require students to solve complex integrated problems involving clinical reasoning skills.
- 2.3. Incorporate clinical reasoning skills and application-based activities throughout the curriculum.

3. Enhance pedagogical practices that focus on clinical reasoning and application-based curricular activities.

- 3.1. Increase faculty participation in national and regional QEP-related workshops/trainings.
- 3.2. Develop in-house workshops/trainings related to the QEP.

Plan implementation will largely focus on curricular revisions and faculty development. Curricular revisions will include modifications to existing courses, as well as the creation of new Clinical Skills courses that will provide both reinforcement and application-based opportunities. Faculty development will center around improving faculty consistency in measuring and reporting student-learning outcomes, and on strengthening pedagogical practices related to clinical skills development. Successful implementation of the QEP will benefit all stakeholders – students, faculty, preceptors, and other members of the ACP community, and will ensure that our graduates are prepared to excel in the pharmacy profession in their respective communities.