

**QEP Executive Summary: Experiential Learning Initiatives**  
**Randolph-Macon College**

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Randolph-Macon College's QEP implements a program of reflective analysis for students involved in each of three experiential learning areas: study abroad, undergraduate research, and internships. For students studying abroad, a "journal initiative" provides students both resources and guidance: *Students in semester (or year-long) study abroad will be required to maintain travel journals throughout their experience. Students may alternatively choose to write a paper or create an oral presentation. Students in J-term study abroad will be asked to maintain travel journals. Instructors of these courses will consider course assignments that involve the use of the journals. The Office of International Education (OIE) will give all study abroad students materials to help them with travel journal composition (handouts, guidelines, etc.), and will share these with study abroad instructors for information purposes, should they employ such rubrics as part of the course.* The materials will provide guidance on how travel journals can enhance the study abroad experience and will promote journal entries that include a reflection of the study abroad experiences' influence on values and impact, such as appreciating other cultures, different viewpoints, and diversity.

Associated student learning outcomes include expectations that students: 1. will demonstrate a heightened awareness of cultural differences; 2. will demonstrate an understanding of cross-cultural communication; 3. will demonstrate an increased interest in fostering open mindedness, tolerance and understanding of cultural diversity; and 4. will demonstrate ability to undertake a comparative analysis of the social, political and economic characteristics of the United States with those of the host country. Four tools will assess the program's effect. The first measures collectively the "intercultural competence"; the College will administer the Intercultural Development Inventory, an exam that provides direct measure of such impact. We expect significant gains by individual subjects (pre- and post- testing) in intercultural proficiency as measured by the IDI. Second, R-MC will annually administer a survey on student experiences in and perceptions of experiential learning. Third, NSSE results on questions related to the student learning outcomes listed here will be assessed. Fourth, the reflective pieces will be assessed. Each year, the OIE will submit an assessment plan for study abroad to the provost and the Committee on Assessment.

The QEP also requires a reflective component in the college undergraduate research program SURF: *All SURF students will produce a reflective component at the completion of their experience and separate from the corresponding research paper. They may choose one of two paths: a daily diary describing and reflecting on research activities throughout the project's development or a summary paper describing the experience, focusing on the process used to solve the research problem or to answer the research question, the discipline's methodology used in the project, the way a concrete investigative problem was identified, and the student's feelings as the project concluded in the public presentation.* Corresponding student learning outcomes are that SURF students will: 1. demonstrate an understanding of the activity's contribution to a research-driven intellectual climate; 2. demonstrate competency in the disciplinary methodology relevant to the research project; 3. demonstrate their ability to express research ideas and results with clarity in written and oral formats appropriate for the relevant discipline; and 4. demonstrate the project's value to their enhanced intellectual cognitive development. Assessment is in four forms. First, a final written report appropriate to the discipline is already standard for SURF projects. Second, SURF students will complete a survey containing a number of open-ended questions leading to reflection on the outcomes and processes of the project. Third, a sampling of student reflective components will be assessed, paying particular attention to the description of adoption of the discipline's methodology in the research work. Fourth, NSSE results on questions related to the student learning outcomes will be analyzed.

Finally the QEP requires an internship reflective component: *The Internship Program will require and enforce the obligation that students with academic internships keep a log or journal of work experiences and will work with departmental faculty to encourage the inclusion of a reflective component relative to the experience in their written report.* Corresponding student learning outcomes are: 1. Students will understand how organizations set, reach, and measure goals; 2. Students will demonstrate improvement in work environment skills (e.g. professional etiquette, appropriate attire, office protocols, time management skills); 3. Students will understand the importance of and demonstrate improvement in oral and written communication; and 4. Students will reflect well on ties between their internship experience and other areas of their academic training. To assess these, first, a survey will measure the interns' perceptions of learning outcomes both before and after the internship experience. Second, a sample of written student intern reports will be reviewed and assessed by the Director of the Program as either positive or negative reflections on each learning outcome. Third, students' site supervisors will complete an evaluation. Fourth, NSSE results on questions related to the learning outcomes will be analyzed. Assessment results will be used to strengthen each of the corresponding experiential programs; for example, if the internship reflective components work well, then the College will consider the possibility that non-credit internships may also require a reflective component.