



Christopher Newport University

Quality Enhancement Plan: Research LENS: Enhancing Undergraduate Research Literacy

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Christopher Newport University's Quality Enhancement Plan aims to improve students' basic literacy skills and translate these into research literacy skills. Our guiding goal is to enhance basic research literacy to help students translate literacy skills into discipline-specific research. We define **Undergraduate Research Literacy** as "a skill-set that emerges as students learn to recognize, locate, evaluate, and synthesize information necessary to conduct a discipline-specific academic inquiry and produce work notable for its originality, rigor, and creativity."

Christopher Newport University is excited to announce our new **Research LENS** initiative to enhance undergraduate research literacy. The development of Research LENS involved a campus-wide effort over the course of three years, examining internal assessment data and gathering input from students, faculty, and staff. Grounded in best practices for both information literacy and undergraduate research, our Research LENS program was crafted to build on CNU's unique strengths in liberal arts undergraduate education. Research LENS identifies four key areas critical to the development of research literacy:

- **LEARN:** During the "Learn" phase of our program, students obtain a basic mastery of information literacy that will serve as a foundation for their discipline specific endeavors.
- **EXPLORE:** During the "Explore" phase, students will transition into beginning stages of research literacy by forming strong connections with faculty.
- **NAVIGATE:** During the "Navigate" phase, students will embark on discipline specific undergraduate research projects.
- **SHARE:** During the "Share" phase, students will disseminate the findings of their individual projects to broader university, discipline-specific and public audiences.

CNU will use multiple measures to assess our two student learning outcomes associated with Research LENS:

- **SLO #1** – students will be critical consumers of information/research as defined by demonstrating the ability to (a) access, evaluate, and synthesize information (i.e., information literacy); (b) differentiate, comprehend, and use primary and secondary information/research; (c) demonstrate conventions of academic writing including assessment and use of sources, and aims and practice of argument (i.e., written communication literacy); and (d) determine the reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, point of view or bias of information/sources/research/creative work.
- **SLO #2** – students will have the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct research/create new knowledge as defined by demonstrating (a) the ability to conduct discipline-specific research; and (b) the ability to disseminate information/results appropriate to discipline-specific practices.

Implementing a research initiative focused on literacy rather than just research alone allows us to connect Research LENS to the fundamental foundations of a liberal arts education—the cornerstone of Christopher Newport's educational experience.