

Quality Matters: <https://www.qualitymatters.org/>

The following content has been adapted from the Quality Matters website.

Overview

Quality Matters (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components.

QM has received national recognition for its peer-based approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement in online education.

Originating from a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant project, QM is now a self-supporting organization offering institutional subscriptions and a range of fee-based services including QM-managed course reviews and an array of professional development opportunities.

Core Values

The Quality Matters Rubric and processes are:

Continuous: The Quality Matters process is designed to ensure all reviewed courses will eventually meet expectations. The process is integral to a continuous quality improvement process.

Centered: On research - the development of the rubric is based in national standards of best practice, the research literature, and instructional design principles. On student learning - the rubric and process are designed to promote student learning. On quality - the review sets a quality goal at the 85% level or better (courses do not have to be perfect but better than good enough).

Collegial: A Quality Matters review is part of a faculty-driven, peer review process. The review process is intended to be diagnostic and collegial, not evaluative and judgmental.

Collaborative: The review is based on collaboratively identified evidence found in the course rather than the personal preference of an individual reviewer. The review is flexible and not prescriptive (many ways to meet each standard). The review team consists of experienced online instructors as reviewers in communication with the course developer.

The Rubric

The Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, Fifth Edition, 2014 is a set of 8 General Standards and 43 Specific Review Standards used to evaluate the design of online and blended courses. The Rubric is complete with Annotations that explain the application of the Standards and the relationship among them. A scoring system and set of online tools facilitate the review by a team of Peer Reviewers.

Unique to the Rubric is the concept of alignment. This occurs when critical course components - Learning Objectives (2), Assessment and Measurement (3), Instructional Materials (4), Course Activities and Learner Interaction (5), and Course Technology (6) - work together to ensure students achieve desired learning outcomes. Specific Standards included in Alignment are indicated in the Rubric Annotations.

The eight General Standards:

1. Course Overview and Introduction
2. Learning Objectives (Competencies)
3. Assessment and Measurement
4. Instructional Materials
5. Course Activities and Learner Interaction
6. Course Technology
7. Learner Support
8. Accessibility and Usability

What is Alignment?

Critical course components - Learning Objectives (2), Assessment and Measurement (3), Resources and Materials (4), Learner Engagement (5), and Course Technology (6) - work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. When aligned, each of these course components is directly tied to and supports the learning objectives. Specific Review Standards included in alignment are indicated in the Rubric Annotations.

When Do I Use the Rubric?

The Rubric is intended for use with courses that are delivered fully online or a significant online component (hybrid and blended courses).

How Do I Obtain Access to the Rubric?

The Rubric is available with both the Full and Basic Subscription Options.