**What is Quality Matters**

**Quality Matters** provides inter-institutional quality assurance in online learning.

This is achieved through a not-for-profit subscription service providing tools and training for quality assurance of online courses. The underlying principles of QM are a primary reason for this wide-spread adoption. Quality Matters provides a **faculty-driven, peer review process that is**...

- **Collaborative**: QM was designed by and for faculty to share expertise and experience relative to the design of a course.
- **Collegial**: The course review process is a collegial discussion between faculty peers committed to
- **Continuous** quality improvement. It is not an evaluation.
- **Centered** in national standards of best practice, the research literature and instructional design principles designed to promote **student learning**.

Quality Matters provides a set of standards (a rubric) for the design of online and blended courses that can serve as

- A peer review process (faculty to faculty) for reviewing and improving online and hybrid courses
- A faculty support tool used by instructional development staff
- A professional development opportunity

It’s important to distinguish what QM is **NOT** about......

- It’s not about the instructor, it’s about the **design** of the course
- It’s not about faculty evaluation, it’s about the **quality** of the course
- And it’s not a win/lost or pass/fail test...... the rubric in the review process functions as a diagnostic tool to facilitate the **continuous improvement of online courses**
The rubric represents the core of QM. The rubric is organized into 8 main sections (these are the General Review Standards). There are a total of 41 specific standards within these 8 general categories. This also includes 21 essential standards. The rubric is research-based. (QM standards come from a detailed review of existing research literature, updated every few years, from existing best practice sets, and from our community of practitioners’, that provide feedback on every new rubric version.) QM focuses on the standards needed in course design and to promote student learning. (Please see a copy of the rubric and a copy of the annotated rubric.)

QM tries to take a holistic view of the course and that’s why it’s so important that within the 8 standards, the Learning Objectives ALIGN with the Assessments, Resources and Materials, Interaction, and Technology.

Uses of the QM Rubric include:

- Course development checklists for faculty
- Faculty development
- Faculty engagement with national standards supported by research
- Course reviews both internal and for certification
- Quality process indicators for accreditation self-studies

Types of QM Reviews

1. Unofficial Reviews
   
   Internal/Informal subscriber reviews not required to follow QM process

2. Official Reviews – follows QM policies/protocols

   QM-Managed review - QM manages and pays review team

   Subscriber-Managed review - Subscriber manages and pays review team

Rubric Scoring

- Points are awarded for each of the 41 specific standards based on the team majority decision

- Specific standards have a point value of 1, 2, or 3; the total points possible in a review is 95
• If 2-3 Reviewers believe that a standard is:
  • met, then the full pre-assigned points are awarded
  • not met, then zero points are awarded

A course must receive at least 81 points (85%) and meet all essential standards to be recognized by QM.