

## **SUBJECT: Quality Course Review**

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**Tactic:** Quality 1.1.3 - Ensure implementation of Quality Scorecard, Quality Matters Course Rubric, and/or course certification processes for all universities offering online education.

### **Background:**

The original intent of the course review process was to encourage a culture of quality course design from the beginning across the system. While a desirable outcome of this process would be a high percentage of courses within the SUS that are quality and high quality courses, the impetus behind the development of the process is really about supporting quality course development and the creation of well-structured online courses.

Because this proposal is for a voluntary process, it will most likely take time to see the numbers of courses being submitted for quality design review increase from current numbers across the system. The current performance indicator in the 2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education calls for 90% of SUS courses in the FLVC catalog to be rated at the high quality level.

### **Recommendations:**

(1) In an effort to identify both quality and high-quality online courses across the State University System of Florida, it is recommended that a course review process be established with two levels of recognition: quality and high-quality. The course review process will make use of the Quality Matters standards, higher education rubric, and process as the basis of the overall review. The QM standards and rubric focuses on the design of the online course and not the content or the delivery. Both review processes will use the MyQM portal of Quality Matters and the MyCR tool (the course review tool) and will be at the course section level (i.e., not a master course but for each section or instructor). Submission of courses for review will be voluntary.

### **Quality and High Quality Courses:**

To receive a **Quality Course** designation, a course must successfully complete a QM *Internal Course Review* process, and satisfy all of the *Essential* standards (currently, there are 21) as identified in *The Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, Fifth Edition, 2014*. This will be referred to as the **Florida QM Fundamentals Course Review** and is a baseline review conducted by the instructor and one additional reviewer, who has been trained as a QM reviewer. Courses that are successful in meeting all of the *essential* standards have measurable objectives aligned with assessments and are presented in an organized and consistent format. The courses that satisfy all of the *essential* standards

will be considered Quality Courses and will be designated as such in the FLVC catalog.

To receive a **High Quality Course** designation, a course must successfully pass an *Official QM Course Review* using the Quality Matters standards, as identified in *The Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, Fifth Edition, 2014*, in either a QM-managed or Subscriber-Managed official course review, as described by Quality Matters. This review process will use the Quality Matters standards, rubric, and scoring criteria (e.g., all essential, 3 point standards must be met **and** an overall point value of at least 84 out of 99 points).

(2) It is recommended that, because some institutions may have a quality course review process that they developed and would like to use, a formal process be developed by which institutions may elect to provide evidence that their internal quality review system is based on a documentable set of standards, is of comparable rigor, and adheres to a similar review process as those outlined above. In so doing, an institution's specific quality review standards and process could be approved to also meet the quality and/or high quality designation.

(3) It is recommended that, as part of the Quality course review process, one or more course design templates be developed and shared system-wide for faculty to use, at their discretion, in the design of their online courses. The course design templates will be developed based on the QM Standards and when used will satisfy a significant number of the standards. In addition, use of course design templates provide key aspects of effective practices such as consistent navigation, organization, and student usability. The course design templates will be developed by a cross-institutional team and shared throughout the system. Additional benefits of using course design templates include saving development time on behalf of the faculty, and allowing for easy reuse of key elements of design and development.

(4) It is recommended that a statewide, shared service agreement be negotiated and obtained for a system subscription to Quality Matters. It is also recommended that the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) be the system centralized agency to manage the QM subscription.

### **Costs:**

Costs of implementing the course review process outlined above would include the QM subscription fees for a "system" membership, possibly some "review" fees for course reviewers if an institution chooses to offer such stipends for course reviewers, and finally a cost affiliated with submitting a course to QM for a QM lead official review if a faculty chooses that review process rather than a system-led process.

*System membership* in QM, as per the QM standard pricing (i.e., not a negotiated

reduced cost) currently costs \$5,775 for the lead entity (e.g., FLVC) and \$1,155 per “affiliate” (e.g., each institution) entity. For the Florida SUS that total annual costs would be approximately \$19,635 (assuming FLVC is designated at the lead entity and the 12 SUS institutions are “affiliate” members. Although we would pursue a new negotiated system subscription at a reduced cost, through the FLVC we did have a prior “discount” for any institution to join individually and that reduction was a 25% reduction.

*Review fees* may be provided to those individuals who agree to serve on a course review team. Currently, if you serve as a reviewer for the official QM review process, you are given an *honorarium* of \$100. At this time, those institutions that conduct internal reviews compensate faculty reviewers in a variety of ways. It may also be the case that reviews are done as a professional courtesy without a need for review fees. If a review fee is offered, the institution where the course resides would be responsible for this fee.

*QM Lead Official Review Fee* would be paid by the institution if a faculty or institution chooses to use the national QM review process rather than the Florida SUS review process. Currently, this review fee is \$1,000 per course. It should be noted that if a QM lead review is used, QM coordinates all aspects of the review including selecting the review team and paying each reviewer the review fees.

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**Supporting Documentation Included:**

\*The hyperlinks below connect to each document.

1. [The Principles of QM](#)
2. [QM Standards, Fifth Edition](#)
3. [QM Course Review Process](#)

**Facilitators/Presenters:**

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