FLORIDA ONLINE COURSE DESIGN QUALITY STANDARDS AND PROCESS

As the demand for online courses in higher education continues to increase, so has the concern for the quality of online education and its impact on student success. While there are many components of online education that can impact student success, the most standardized and least subjective component has to do with the online course design and structure. Just as brick-and-mortar construction standards were used to build traditional face-to-face classrooms, online courses are now being similarly built using rigorous, research-based standards for quality course design and format. The result is increased quality and accessibility of online education and reduced barriers to student success.

Quality Online Course Design
A primary focus of the *2025 Strategic Plan for Online Education* is quality in all aspects of online education, including quality of the design of online courses. The Florida Online Course Design Quality review process is used in conjunction with the Quality Matter Standards to assign quality designations to online courses. A State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS) Quality Workgroup developed this unique Florida process to be flexible enough to work across all SUS and FCS institutions. Institutions that prefer to use their own standards and rubrics provide evidence that they are comparable to those published by Quality Matters..

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Online Course Design Quality Process
The standards-based, course review process is a significant commitment of institutional time and resources. When reviewing an online course for quality design, trained reviewers must determine that the course meets all Quality Matters essential standards, and provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.

Quality Matters Standards

1. **Course Overview and Introduction:** The overall design of the course is made clear to the learner at the beginning of the course.
2. **Learning Objectives:** Learning objectives or competencies describe what learners will be able to do upon completion of the course.
3. **Assessment and Measurement:** Assessments are integral to the learning process and are designed to evaluate learner progress in achieving the stated learning objectives or mastering the competencies.
4. **Instructional Materials**: Instructional materials enable learners to achieve stated learning objectives or competencies.
5. **Learning Activities and Learner Interaction:** Learning activities facilitate and support learner interaction and engagement.
6. **Course Technology:** Course technologies support learners' achievement of course objectives or competencies.
7. **Learner Support:** The course facilitates learner access to institutional support services essential to learner success.
8. **Accessibility and Usability:** The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility and usability for all learners.