

Quality Matters[®]

www.qualitymatters.org

Summary by Dr. Al Valbuena

What is QM: Quality Matters (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components. Sponsored by MarylandOnline, Inc, Quality Matters has generated widespread interest and received national recognition for its [peer-based approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement](#) in online education.

Institutional Policies and QM: To implement QM, a formalization of goals/objectives is needed based on a Policy that fosters the monitoring process of a Continuous Quality Improvement program for Teaching and Learning. QM becomes an integral part of the faculty development strategies, by which faculty would be encouraged to use the QM rubric to develop/improve their courses, and form an informal team to evaluate the course. Even in absence of a Quality Management Policy, we encourage institutions to formally subscribe to QM. To subscribe, click on [QM-Site](#)

The Origin of QM: In Fall of 2003, MarylandOnline, Inc. began a three-year FIPSE grant to develop a replicable pathway for inter-institutional quality assurance and course improvements in online learning. It created and implemented a process to certify the quality of online courses and online components. As a result, the QM project has impacted the quality of teaching and learning at a state and national level. Upon expiration of the grant in 2006, Quality Matters continued as a self-supporting organization, through subscriptions and other fee-for-service offerings, and has grown to more than 120 current subscribers across 30+ states.

How to apply QM: QM rubric is used as a scoring instrument for evaluating whether a course is ready to go online. This should be a “recommended” practice until a “T&L Continuous Quality Improvement Policy” is formally adopted. Once the policy is in place, the QM rubric would be applied following the model established by the QM organization where a team of reviewers (consisting of a content expert, colleague from another department and an instructional designer) will evaluate the course and provide feedback to the instructor.

Goals that QM pursues: Quality Matters processes benefit both individual faculty and their institutions through:

- **Retention:** Improved student learning outcomes
- **Continuous quality assurance process:** Adoption of a systematic and comprehensive continuous quality assurance process that includes faculty training, course development, and course revisions that are aligned with accreditation standards
- **Innovation:** Incorporation of new technologies and research findings
- **Peer-based Benchmarking:** Opportunity to engage in benchmarking activities with peer institutions
- **faculty professional development:** establish faculty development as a permanent, systematic activity
- **More Innovation:** Increased flexibility, creativity, and divergent thinking
- **Efficiency:** Increased efficiency in using institutional resources

Faculty Development and QM: QM does offer training at a reduced cost to subscribers. QM offers a variety of courses that are designed to help and support faculty in the development of effective online courses.

- Applying the QM Rubric
- Peer Reviewer Certification
- Master Reviewer
- Train the Trainer
- Institution Representative Training (QM Subscribers Only)
- Improving Your Online Course Using the QM Rubric
- Building Your Online Course Using the QM Rubric
- Quality Matters Standard 1: Design That Welcomes Your Students
- Quality Matters Standard 2: Measurable Learning Objectives at the Course and Module Levels
- Quality Matters Standard 6: Choosing and Using Media Effectively
- Quality Matters Standard 8: Addressing Accessibility