Exploring a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan

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Proposal & Discussion

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University Information and Technology Services
Exploring a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan

Part I

Background
Background

Quality Matters:

- A quality assurance process that utilizes peer review teams (faculty to faculty involving 3 trained and QM-certified reviewers) for reviewing and making recommendations for improving online and blended course designs

- A set of quality standards in the form of a nationally recognized, research-updated, best-practice based rubric instrument that applies across disciplines to inform online course design and guide course reviews
Background

Quality Matters:

• A **not-for-profit subscription service** providing tools, data repository, professional development, training and certification services

• Developed with funding from **FIPSE** by MarylandOnline and designed by faculty for faculty focused on improving student learning

• Adopted by a large and broad user base, QM represents a shared understanding of **quality** in online course design
# QM = Process and Rubric

## Process

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMAL OFFICIAL REVIEWS</th>
<th>Outcome: Earn QM recognition</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Must follow official QM guidelines and procedures and fees ($1,000 per course)</td>
<td>Tool to assess online courses during formal QM review</td>
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## Rubric

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The Peer Review Team

On an official review, the Review Team consist of:

- **3 QM-Certified Peer Reviewers**
  - APPQMR & Peer Reviewer Training plus current online teaching experience
- **Master Reviewer as team chair**
  - Peer Reviewer with additional experience and training
- **One reviewer must be a subject matter expert**
- **One reviewer must be external to the institution sponsoring the course**

- **Faculty course developer:**
  - access to rubric prior to review
  - involved in pre-review discussions
  - consulted during review
The QM Peer Review Process

Institutions → Course → Course Meets Quality Expectations → Peer Course Review → Feedback → Course Revision → Instructional Designers → Faculty Course Developers

National Standards & Research Literature → Rubric → Faculty Reviewers → Training
The QM Rubric

The 2011-2013 Rubric consists of:

- 8 key areas (general standards) of course quality
- 41 specific review standards
- 21 essential standards
- and detailed annotations and examples of good practice for all 41 standards
QM as a National Standard

- 530 + current subscribers
- More than 44 states represented
- QM has trained 14,000+ faculty and instructional design staff
- Largest Community Collaboration on Quality in Online Education
- Award Winning: Sloan-C, USDLA, WCET
- Research-informed updated rubric standards
Research-informed updates

To update the 2011-2013 Rubric, the following peer-reviewed journals were examined to identify themes and incorporate new findings and emerging practices.

- The American Journal of Distance Education
- Distance Education
- Open Learning
- The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning
- Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks
- Quarterly Review of Distance Education
- The Internet and Higher Education
- Educational Technology Research and Development
- MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching
What QM is NOT About…

• Not about an individual instructor (It’s about **the course**)
• Not about faculty evaluation (It’s about **course quality**)
• Not about judgment (It’s about **diagnosis** and **improvement**)
• Not about “win/lose” or “pass/fail” (It’s about **continuous improvement** in a supportive environment)
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Part II

Justification
Why Consider a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan?

A University-Wide QM implementation Plan would provide:

• A **systematic quality-assurance process** with continuous improvement feedback loops

• **Consistency and rigor** in online course design reviews using a nationally recognized rubric instrument

• **Trained peer review teams** (faculty to faculty feedback and recommendations)
Why Consider a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan?

A University-Wide QM implementation Plan would provide:

• **Professional development** and **certification** opportunities for faculty

• **Documentation** of quality assurance processes, measures and indicators for accreditation agencies

• **Institutional recognition** of courses having met quality design standards (CSU-designed quality logo for course/catalogue/web site display)
Why Consider a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan?

Direct benefits to faculty include:

• Improved online course design to better promote effective, efficient and engaging online student learning experiences

• Professional development and online training opportunities

• Faculty recognition through Quality Matters Certification

• Course recognition for having met quality design standards

• Peer Reviewer team service assignments
Why Consider a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan?

This initiative would robustly support and promote CSU’s Strategic Plan **Vision, Mission** and **Goals**:

- **Vision**: to provide world-class education
- **Mission**: to achieve academic excellence through teaching
- **Mission**: to achieve excellence in the student experience
- **Goal One**-Objective 3: to develop and expand opportunities for online degrees and courses,
- **Goal Five**: to provide a best-in-class technology platform and information-based services, and
- **Goal Five**-Objective 5: to inspire faculty/staff to use leading-edge technology
Why Consider a Strategic, University-Wide, Quality Matters Implementation Plan?

• QM Rubric **already being utilized** in CSU’s Online Course Development and Improvement Grant Processes

• QM Rubric **already being utilized** in DLDD-Faculty consultations

• **About 30 faculty already completed** APPQMR workshop

• **Very Positive Feedback** re: FALL 2011 QM APPQMR workshops (novice to experienced online instructors)
Applying the Quality Matters Rubric
Fall 2011 CSU Workshops

October 14: 18 Attendees

October 21: 13 Attendees

Totals:
• 31 Attendees
• 18 Grant Applicants
• 6 Department Liaisons
Applying the Quality Matters Rubric
Fall 2011 CSU Workshops

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attendees came from the following Departments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling, Foundations &amp; Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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Applying the Quality Matters Rubric
Fall 2011 CSU Workshops
Applying the Quality Matters Rubric
Fall 2011 CSU Workshops

Workshop attendees indicated 4.5 or greater rating average to all questions.

Q1: This workshop was effective in introducing me to the QM Rubric.
Q2: I can identify the underlying principles of the QM project.
Q3: I can define alignment and explain why it is critical to course design.
Q4: I understand the rubric scoring system.
Q5: I can apply standards from the 2011-2013 QM Rubric to review online courses.
Q6: I can draft helpful recommendations for course improvement.
Q7: The facilitator was prepared and able to effectively lead the workshop.
Q8: Overall, how satisfied were you with today's workshop?

Likert Scale: 5=Strongly Agree  4=Agree  3=NA  2=Disagree  1=Strongly Disagree
Applying the Quality Matters Rubric
Fall 2011 CSU Workshops
Surveys – Sample Comments

What information, activity, or other aspect(s) of this workshop was most useful to you?

- Having the rubric will better help me design online courses
- Understanding alignment
- New ideas on how to improve my courses
- Reviewing each of the sections against a sample course
- Going through actual online courses as examples
- Warning about the need to align objectives throughout the course
- Application of standards activity
- Everything, really
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Part III

Implementation Considerations
Implementation Considerations

• Faculty Training & Certification
• Course Review Considerations
• Documentation Processes
Faculty Training & Certification

- Training considerations based on 212 faculty having taught a fully or predominantly online course over last 3 yrs.

- QM’s APPQMR workshop needed for not less than 180 faculty (212 less 29 faculty completed such in Fall 2011).

- Peer Reviewer certification training needed for not less than 212 faculty

- Master Reviewer certification training needed for at least 4 designated faculty, 1 per College
Faculty Training & Certification

All online instructors and course developers to complete the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) workshop.

• 1-day face-to-face workshop (up to 30 participants)

• 2-week online option

• APPQMR is the prerequisite workshop for Peer Reviewer and Master Reviewer Certification training

• All to complete Peer Reviewer Certification training
Faculty Training & Certification

**Peer Reviewers**
- Applying the QM Rubric Workshop
- Peer Reviewer Certification (2 wks online)
- Current online instructor

**Master Reviewers**
- Certified QM Peer Reviewer
- Experience on 2+ course reviews
- Master Reviewer Certification (2 wks online)
Course Review Considerations

Per Sri, CSU data over last 3 years indicates:

• 410 unique fully online courses,

• 97 unique course sections, and

• 26 predominantly online (greater than 50%) unique courses

• Based on above, 530+ courses are in need of review
Course Review Considerations

• If 530+ courses need to be Peer Reviewed, consider spreading this over a 5-year period (and recycle).

• This would result in about 107 courses reviewed per year; 36 courses per semester.

• If designated Reviewers would review 2 courses each in a given semester, 5 to 6 total courses over a 5-year period, then 36 Peer Reviewers would be needed per semester.

• Consider 4 Master Reviewers, one per college, for 9 courses per semester per Master Reviewer (90 hrs each)
Course Review Considerations

• Colleges and Departments would work w/QM Inst Rep to create a clear set of deliverables indicating x courses from y departments targeted for review in a given semester.

• Each College would designate who will serve as Master Reviewers for chairing course reviews.

• Colleges and Departments would work w/QM Inst Rep to create a viable schedule re: who is to serve when as Peer Reviewers for conducting course reviews.

• The Peer Reviewer role is a service expectation that will be required of all who teach fully or predominantly online.
Documenting Course Reviews

• Initially, **QM Institutional Rep** serves as **QM Administrator** to oversee tracking and documentation processes. **Long-term, each College** could perhaps designate a **QM Administrator** to handle tracking and documentation processes.

• **QM Administrator** reviews initial request for course review and instructor worksheet, contacts a Master Reviewer, and assembles a Peer Review Team to conduct the Course Review.

• **QM Administrator** tracks review/revision status and ensures that documentation of the quality assurance processes and outcomes are retained and accessible at appropriate levels for accreditation agencies.
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Part IV

Estimated Costs, Target Timelines, and New Online Faculty Training
Estimated 3-Yr Training Cost Total

- APPQMR Workshop (180 faculty, 60 to 70 per year over 3 year period) total = $24,000
- Peer Reviewer (212 faculty) certification = $31,800
- Master Reviewer certification (4 faculty) = $1,000
- Related: 8 Institutional course reviews with external Master Reviewer costs at $350 per review = $2,800
- Total 3-Yr Estimated Training Costs = $59,600
Target Review Timelines

• Summer 2012: 8 courses w/ external Master Reviewers

• Jan 2013 – Dec 2013: 105 – 110 courses

• Jan 2014 – Dec 2014: 105 – 110 courses

• Jan 2015 – Dec 2015: 105 – 110 courses

• Jan 2016 – Dec 2016: 105 – 110 courses

• Jan 2017 – Dec 2017: 105 – 110 courses
New Online Faculty Training

• **At least one** semester, preferably two, **prior to** teaching an online course, it’s recommended that **new online faculty** complete QM’s **APPQMR workshop**.

• Additionally, new online faculty should complete **DLDD’s online needs assessment** which focuses on:
  • online course design
  • site development
  • teaching and facilitation strategies
  • learning management system, and
  • supplementary application competencies.

• DLDD can develop a **customized training plan** to address identified gaps in new faculty member’s skill sets.
Five Phase Systems Approach to High Quality Online Course Design

• Phase I: New Online Faculty, APPQMR workshop, Needs Assessment, DLDD Customized Training Plan

• Phase II: Course Design/Development Period (15-20 weeks) w/DLDD Consultations and Mentor Assignment

• Phase III: Pre-flight Quality Assurance Check w/Mentor

• Phase IV: Course Flight with Student Feedback

• Phase V: Post-flight Peer Review Process
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Part V

Potential Issues and Concerns

Your Questions, Comments, and Recommendations
Potential Issues & Concerns

1. **Equity-related concerns** re: comparable **training** and **compensation** opportunities for **f2f** as well as **online** faculty.

   • The QM Rubric is **applicable to both** “blended” as well as “fully online” course environments.
   • **Training opportunities** to include “predominantly” as well as “fully” online instructors.
   • **No additional compensation** for Peer Reviewer role; it is a **service expectation** required of those who teach online.
Potential Issues & Concerns

2. **Power dynamic issues** related to the Peer Reviewer process if it involves a *junior* colleague having to evaluate a *senior* colleague within the same Department.

- Avert power dynamic issues by *going outside* the Department/College when creating Peer Reviewer Teams for course reviews.
Potential Issues & Concerns

3. Potential Training and Consultation Obstacles for Distant Faculty unable to meet f2f at CSU

- QM workshops are available online
- Online resources for LMS & supplementary apps
- Webinars provided every semester by vendors
- DLDD training and consultation services can be offered from a distance in real time via phone or web conferencing as well as asynchronously via email, etc.
Potential Issues & Concerns

4. A given Department with minimal online instructors-courses will be unfairly burdened with Peer Reviewer Assignments.

• Peer Reviewer Service assignments need to be fairly distributed.

• Based on a 5-year course review plan, **36 Peer Reviewers** would be needed **per semester**. Each of those Reviewers would be tasked with reviewing **not more than 2 courses** in a designated semester and **not more than 6 total courses** over a 5-year period.
Potential Issues & Concerns

5. Locating an appropriate Subject Matter Expert to review a course involving a unique specialty area

• Consider using a Peer Reviewer in a related discipline area

• Consider hiring an External Reviewer to serve as Subject Matter Expert reviewer
6. How are Departments to handle an individual who:

   a) does not complete the requisite QM training, or
   b) is not willing to serve as a Peer Reviewer, or
   c) fails to make recommended course revisions

• Consider **forfeiture of financial incentives beyond the base teaching compensation** for an individual faculty member who does not complete the requisite training, is unwilling to serve as Peer Reviewer, or fails to make recommended course revisions.
Your Questions, Comments, and Recommendations for Improving QM Plan Design and Implementation