What is Quality Matters?

Quality Matters (QM) is an international, non-profit organization centered on improving the design of online and hybrid courses. Begun as a FIPSE grant over a decade ago, QM is now a self-supporting organization that is faculty-focused, and dedicated to the idea of continuous improvement and quality assurance in online learning.

QM is both a rubric and a process. As a rubric, there are 43 specific, annotated standards organized under eight general standards, such as: Learning Objectives, Assessment and Measurement, Instructional Materials, and Course Activities/Learner Interaction. Faculty developers and instructional designers can utilize the rubric to help design high-quality online courses, or to look at existing courses to highlight possible opportunities for improvement and revision.

Quality Matters is also a course review process, and institutions can decide to have courses formally reviewed through QM, or departments and/or individual faculty can do informal reviews according to their needs. QM, as both a rubric and a process, is focused on the design of an online course, and does not look at the delivery/teaching of the course. It is a tool to evaluate course design and components, not the individual instructor. A major tenet underlying Quality Matters is the idea of alignment, where critical course components – such as learning objectives, assessments, and materials – must reinforce one another to support student achievement and learning.

Want to learn more?
Kent State University offers a one or two hour in-person presentation that provides an overview of Quality Matters. This presentation will introduce participants to the QM Rubric and also to basic instructional design methods for online courses.

Additionally, Kent State sponsors QM’s full-day flagship workshop, Applying the Quality Matters Rubric, at least once per semester, and a session can be held by request for any Kent Campus if there are at least ten guaranteed participants. This workshop is open to all faculty and staff, regardless of experience with designing or teaching online courses.

For current online instructors, Kent State holds QM’s full-day Improving Your Online Course workshop at least once per semester, and this session is reserved exclusively for faculty who are already teaching an online course and would like to revise it for improvement.

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