



# *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 alike can utilize the rubric to help design new online or hybrid courses, or to identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement and revision in existing online or hybrid courses.

Quality Matters is also a course review process, and institutions can decide to have courses formally reviewed through QM, departments or programs can conduct informal reviews according to their needs, and individual faculty can use the self-review tool to explore whether their existing online course meets many of the QM standards. 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. The QM Rubric also does not prescribe any particular content that must be in a course, thereby allowing faculty full academic freedom. 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 learner achievement.

## ***Want to learn more?***

Kent State University offers a 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, as well as some Kent State Online resources for designing and developing high-quality online and hybrid 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 or College 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 offers QM's full-day *Improving Your Online Course* workshop as well, and this session is reserved exclusively for faculty who are already teaching an online or hybrid course and would like to focus their revision efforts.

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