

eLearning Quality Assurance (A)

Quality Matters Overview

Quality Matters[™] (QM) as an overarching quality assurance framework for e-Learning. QM has been adopted by other [post-secondary institutions](#) across North America, and it provides tools such as the self-assessment tool that you can use to ensure the high quality of the online components of your course. Of course, many of the elements of the QM framework can also be applied to the measurement of quality for traditional face-to-face (web-enhanced) courses. QM is a companion to Fanshawe's set of core teaching competencies that guide the opportunities to support faculty member, and which reflect quality standards that adhere to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) standards for measuring effective teaching.



There are three primary components in the Quality Matters Program:

- **The Rubric:** Based on research-supported and published best practises, the QM Rubric is a set of standards by which to evaluate the design of online and blended courses. The rubric is the principle component used at Fanshawe to guide Instructional design.
- **The Peer Review Process:** Quality Matters promotes a peer review process and provides a database of trained QM Peer Reviewers eligible for assignment to a peer review team.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** PD supports the other QM program components and is an important part of a quality assurance effort. QM provides on-site, online and Elluminate-based opportunities to a broad audience

KEY DEFINITION

What Is QM In Practice?

In practice, QM is a set of quality standards for online and blended course design, a faculty-centered peer review process for online and blended courses, a tool used by instructional design staff in their work with faculty, and a professional development opportunity for both faculty and staff.

The Rubric

The QM Rubric is a set of 8 General Standards and 43 Specific Standards used to evaluate the design of online and blended courses. The key standards are:

1. Course Overview and Introduction
2. Learning Objectives
3. Assessment and Measurement
4. Instructional Materials
5. Course Activities and Learner Interaction
6. Course Technology
7. Learner Support
8. Accessibility and Usability

Unique to the Rubric is the concept of alignment. This occurs when critical course components (Standards 2 to 6) work together to ensure students achieve desired learning outcomes.

How Can I Apply the Rubric to my Course(s)?

The QM rubric is, at first glance, a rather rigorous set of criteria. You may find it daunting to attempt to achieve ALL the criteria at once. It's best to approach the rubric as an aspirational set of goal; you may want to focus on Standards 2 to 6 first and then the rest gradually over several iterations of your course.

To support Fanshawe's e-Learning policy, a set of essential FanshaweOnline (FOL) elements have also been identified as the minimum standard for all courses (Policy 2-B-24). These elements have been integrated into the "Course Quality Assurance (CQA) Checklist", along with the Quality Matters rubric.

FOL Elements Required for All Course Modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. College policy, Health and Safety, and student support information (SLLS templates) are “published” in content. B. Current Course Information Sheet (C.I.S.) is complete, signed and posted. C. Supplementary syllabus/guide or similar required course document(s) (where applicable) are posted. D. Instructor’s full name and college contact information is available and course communication expectations/details are outlined. E. Complete assignment instructions, due dates, and submission guidelines are provided for each assessment outlined in the CIS. F. Complete gradebook customized for the course is available at the start of the semester with the correct grade items, categories, and weights; gradebook and CIS/Syllabus are consistent. G. Course uses an appropriate organizational structure to deliver content (i.e. modules, weeks, units, or themes). H. Course/supplemental resources exist in the content section of FOL to support class content. I. All links are active and current, text formatting is consistent, and course material is free of grammatical and mechanical errors. J. Course components comply with Fanshawe copyright (Policy I-1-01) and Accessibility guidelines (Policy 1-5-51).
Course Overview and Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components. 1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course. 1.3 Etiquette expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated. 1.4 Course and/or institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a web link is provided. 1.5 Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided. 1.6 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated. 1.7 Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated. 1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online (or instructor Bio for Web-enhanced). 1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.
Course Learning Outcomes & Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 The course learning outcomes describe skills that are measurable. 2.2 The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level outcomes 2.3 All learning outcomes and module objectives are stated clearly and written from the learner’s perspective. 2.4 The relationship between learning outcomes and course activities/assessments is clearly stated. 2.5 The learning outcomes are suited to the level of the course.
Assessment and Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 The assessments measure the stated learning outcomes. 3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly. 3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners’ work and are tied to the course grading policy. 3.4 The assessment methods selected are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed. 3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.
Instructional Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning outcomes 4.2 Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained. 4.3 All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited. 4.4 The instructional materials are current (where appropriate). 4.5 A variety of instructional materials is used in the course. 4.6 The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.
Learner Activities & Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning outcomes 5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning. 5.3 The instructor’s plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated. 5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.
Course Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning outcomes and module objectives. 6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning. 6.3 Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable. 6.4 The course technologies are current. 6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course.
Learner Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it. 7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution’s accessibility policies and services. 7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution’s academic support services and resources can help help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them. 7.4 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution’s student services and resources can help learners succeed and how learners can obtain them.
Accessibility and Usability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.1 Course navigation/components facilitates ease of use. 8.2 Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course. 8.3 The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners. 8.4 The course design facilitates readability. 8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.