Welcome to the Quality Matters Overview.

Let’s begin with a little background about Quality Matters.

Quality Matters began as a FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education) Grant that was awarded to MarylandOnline in 2003. The grant lasted three years, at which point the good work continued with QM beginning as a bootstrapped non-profit part of MarylandOnline. In 2014, QM separated from MarylandOnline to form their own 501 (c)(3) non-profit.
The QM underlying principles are collaborative, meaning we work with others to achieve our mission, collegial, as educational professionals, we are working together to help our learners utilizing a continuous improvement model centered around student learning and research.

There are many factors that affect the quality of an online learner’s experience:

- Beginning with the dark blue-gray slice of the pie, Course Design is all of the forethought and planning that goes into an online course before it is offered.
- The dark gold slice represents Course Delivery, which is the implementation of the design, the actual teaching of the course.
- The light gold slice is about Course Content, which is all of the decisions the institution makes about which textbooks or Open Educational Resources (OER) to use in the course. The dark blue slice represents Institutional Infrastructure. Meaning, is the institution prepared to accept online learners? Do learners know they are signing up for an online or blended course?
- The dark gray slice of the pie represents the Learning Management System. Does it provide the ability to foster an active learning environment?
• The light gray slice of the pie represents Faculty Readiness. Are faculty prepared to teach online? Do they know how their role is impacted in an online environment?

• Finally, the light blue slice of the pie represents Learner Readiness. Are learners ready to learn online? Have they been oriented to online learning at the institution?

Out of all of these factors, QM addresses a few — mainly course design through the use of the QM Rubric. QM Program Reviews address faculty readiness, learner support, teaching support, and course design.

QM has become an international standard for online learning. With over 1,000 member institutions in the U.S. across 48 states and in eight other countries, QM continues to impact the online learning experience through both faculty development and course reviews, providing faculty a respected pathway to become QM-Certified Peer Reviewers.
Quality Matters works with other major non-profit organizations across the U.S. and around the world to promote quality and quality assurance efforts.

To begin any journey, you must know where you’re headed. A destination must be decided. What will your quality assurance goals consist of? How will you know when you’ve reached them?

Quality Matters recognizes that stakeholders who care about online quality span a wide range. From accreditors and legislators to learners and employers, all have a vested interest in ensuring quality online learning is taking place across the educational spectrum.
Organizations and institutions have many reasons for assuring quality. Take a moment and think about what your goals are for quality assurance. Would you like to offer better online courses, provide professional development opportunities to faculty and staff, or, would you like to demonstrate a quality assurance process to an external evaluator? Is your campus all about continuous improvement or do you want to do some benchmarking to see how well your courses are doing against an international standards set? Is your goal to change the institution to one that puts quality at the forefront of everything you do?

QM has been around for over 10 years and along the way we have seen that institutions often follow a process of change that begins on the bottom step, an Ad-Hoc approach. At this first step in the journey, the QM Rubric may be used episodically to share with faculty developing courses or used for self-review. Professional development may be offered, but it’s completely voluntary. The next step is Quality Assurance — putting a supported process in place for internal reviews and professional development.

The Continuous Improvement step includes implementing an official review process and taking the data from the outcomes of the reviews to make changes across courses. The Benchmarking step includes showcasing that courses have been QM-Certified and program reviews are...
taking place for the available areas of concentration.
The Institutional Change step is the most difficult to achieve and extends quality assurance to all educators through research and applications, presentations and publications, and community recognition. Regardless of where you aspire to be, all of these efforts are important in moving the quality of online learning forward.

QM is adaptable to the needs of your organization. Tying quality assurance and QM to your strategic goals, course reviews for quality benchmarking, and providing ongoing faculty professional development opportunities are a few of the ways that institutions leverage QM for quality assurance. Regardless of your organizational culture, governance structure, size, or resources, you can implement QM at your organization. A key outcome for nearly all QM members is course improvement.
QM has a Rubric for your organization. From K-12 Secondary through Continuing Education, QM’s Rubrics assure quality from high school through the rest of one’s educational journey throughout life.

QM defines “quality” as better than “good enough,” “more than average,” and at about an 85% level or above. If you think of a typical 100 point grading scale, an 85% is about a ‘B+’ – above average plus! Quality is supported by research-based best practices in the discipline. For QM, 100% perfection is not the goal. Progress, not perfection is our goal. We know nothing is perfect, so we have a realistic application of quality to online learning. For Quality Matters the goal is quality assurance in an open and supportive environment with a continuous improvement approach.
QM’s credibility stems from the hundreds of instances of use by faculty and institutions across the country and around the world. It is adaptable to your needs whether they be improved courses or institutional change. QM is flexible – it doesn’t come in a box that you open and implement, but is flexible to your organization’s size, resources, and structure. QM is a turn-key approach that includes all of the elements necessary for a quality assurance program – the QM Rubric is the instrument used in course design reviews and QM professional development teaches how to use the Rubric and conduct course reviews.

Quality Matters Rubrics address online and blended course design components and are the assessment instruments used in QM Course Reviews. Rubric Workbooks are available for member purchase for Higher Education, Continuing and Professional Education (for non-college-credit-bearing courses), K-12 Secondary, and K-12 Publisher Rubrics.
QM’s course design Specific Review Standards are written in such a way that they can be met in many different ways. Best practices are provided with multiple ways to meet the Standard. QM Rubrics are updated regularly with the input of the community and research is provided to enable the most current findings to be implemented through the Standards. A rich set of Annotations includes many examples of how the Standard can be met, and some have examples of when the Standard would not be met. Instructions to Reviewers and additional information about the Standard are included in the Annotations to support the intent of the Rubric, which is to review the design of blended and online courses.

Eight General Standards are common to all of the QM Rubrics. While the Specific Review Standards and Annotations found within each General Standard area vary by number and by program need, all QM Rubrics are organized around the General Standards.

- Course Overview and Introduction: Addresses many of the things that are covered during the first day of class in an on-site course. Minimum requirements, how to find one’s way around the course, introductions and provided policies are all addressed in this General Standard.
- Learning Objectives (Competencies): Determines if the course and module-level learning objectives are measurable, written
from the learner’s perspective and suited to the level of the course.

• Assessment and Measurement: Looks for the assessments to actually measure the stated learning objectives, examines the grading policy, and the descriptive criteria necessary so learners understand how they will be graded.

• Instructional Materials: Specific Review Standards in this General Standard address whether the provided instructional materials will enable the learners to meet the learning objectives and other related information about instructional materials, such as using a variety of instructional materials in an online course.

• Learning Activities and Learner Interaction: Determines if the learning activities provide the learner with the opportunity to meet the learning objectives, if the assignments support active learning, and the instructor’s plan for interacting with the learners.

• Course Technology: Addresses how the course technologies support the learning objectives, and promote active learning and learner engagement.

• Learner Support: Looks for four different types of support linked from the course – technical support, accessibility support, academic support, and learner support, such as financial aid and advising.

• Accessibility and Usability: Determines if the course navigation and course features enable a usable learning
experience and provides alternative formats of materials to meet the needs of diverse learners.

With the eight General Standards are the Specific Review Standards which are inter-related and look at the course in a holistic way. Each Rubric has different numbers of Specific Review Standards due to the nature of the types of course designs that are addressed by each program. All QM Rubrics support competency-based education (CBE). All QM Rubrics are technology and learning management system (LMS) agnostic. Meaning, the Standards are applicable to all kinds of courses regardless of LMS or technologies used.
Common to all QM Rubrics is the concept of “alignment”. That is, critical course elements work together to ensure that learners achieve the desired outcomes. The image on this slide uses a building metaphor to illustrate how the learning objectives (addressed in Specific Review Standards 2.1 and 2.2) lay the foundation of the course (or building), while the instructional materials (SRS 4.1), learning activities (5.1), and course tools (6.1) provide the supports for the learners to complete the assessments (or capstone/roof) successfully. Without any one of these components, our building structure is compromised.

QM provides two different types of quality assurance reviews – course reviews and program reviews. Each help organizations demonstrate their commitment to quality in online learning.
QM members can benefit from two types of course reviews, internal and official. Internal reviews are where many QM members start. On this slide, the “QM Essentials” banner may be displayed using your organization’s logo if internal review parameters are followed when conducting internal reviews. At right is the QM Certification Mark, which can be displayed for courses that have met QM Standards in an official QM Course Review. The program and year the course was certified is included in the Certification Mark. Let’s take a closer look at each type of review.

Internal reviews using the QM Rubric can be accomplished through a variety of ways. Internal course reviews do not have to follow QM established processes and protocols, which make them useful for organizations getting started or those organizations that have additional standards to include in reviews. Some organizations opt to use a selected set of QM Specific Review Standards, like the essential Standards, or a focused set of Standards like the six alignment Standards. Internal Reviews do not attain QM certification. See the QM website for more information on using the QM Essentials seal with your internal course reviews.

QM members (all faculty and staff at QM subscribing organizations) have access to the Self Review tool found in QM’s Course Management System (CRMS). Faculty can create as many Self Reviews as they like, and no one
will see what they wrote in their recommendations to themselves unless the faculty member emails the final report to them. The QM Course Review Management System (CRMS) enables members to set up Internal Reviews that do not lead to QM certification. These reviews may use a different set of reviewers or a different make-up of review teams. The My Custom Reviews (MyCR) tool enables members to copy the QM Rubric and deduct Specific Review Standards they will not be reviewing or add additional institutional standards. MyCR is also used by some member organizations for other types of reviews that use the power of the CRMS functionality.

Anyone who participates in Internal Reviews should at minimum take the QM “Applying the QM Rubric” workshop and it is recommended that those involved also complete the “Peer Reviewer Course” as well.

Official QM Course Reviews lead to QM-Certified courses. QM offers two ways to accomplish official course reviews. In either case, all QM processes, procedures and protocols are followed for consistency in review outcomes.

QM-Managed Course Reviews are where the organization provides QM with the course and QM selects the Peer Review team, manages the review process, and compensates the review team.
Depending on the membership type, members can manage their own Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews. In a Subscriber-Managed Course Review, the institution selects and compensates the review team, and manages the process. QM Coordinators must complete QM Coordinator Training to manage official QM Course Reviews. QM charges a registration fee of $100 for Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews, once the course meets Standards. This fee is waived if the course review is managed by a QM-Certified Course Review Manager.

In either case, the same QM-Certified course is recognized by QM with the QM Certification Mark, which is good for three to five years depending on the Rubric and any changes made to the course after certification.

Course Certification is available for all five programs across QM. The Certification Mark can be used in specific ways and includes metadata that explains what it means.
QM offers Preparatory Course Reviews for organizations that are interested in Official Course Reviews, but would like additional input on the course before submitting it for review. This review type is only available as a QM-Managed review and provides organizations with feedback from a QM-Certified Master Reviewer who is an external subject matter expert in the discipline area.

The QM Peer Review Process is a continuous improvement process, as illustrated by the image on this slide. Courses are generally reviewed after they have been offered a couple of times, allowing time for the course developers to improve the course first based on their experience of offering it. The course review process results in courses that either meet QM Standards or do not yet meet QM Standards. A course revision step is included because QM believes that all courses will eventually meet Standards. The course continues to be offered and may be re-reviewed later as the QM-Certification mark is good for five years.

**COURSE:** Beginning at the top of the cycle, institutions have developed a course that is online or blended. Faculty and instructional support staff spend a great deal of time creating the course and ultimately it is offered to students.

The institution may decide to submit its course to QM for an official review or, if the institution is a QM member...
with the appropriate subscription, it may conduct the official course review in-house. Both an official QM-Managed Course Review and a Subscriber-Managed Course Review lead to QM certification. The institution may also decide to use the Rubric internally and complete a review using its own process. Internal Reviews do not earn QM certification.

**PEER COURSE REVIEW:** The course is then reviewed by a team of three QM-Certified Peer Reviewers using the QM Rubric. Peer Reviewers must have online teaching experience in a college credit-bearing course and complete the Peer Reviewer Course to be eligible to serve on an official QM Course Review. The peer review team consists of at least one member from an institution other than the course’s home institution, one member from a discipline that matches that of the course (the subject matter expert), and is led by a team chair who is a QM-Certified Master Reviewer. This combination of Reviewers ensures a diverse set of perspectives.

**FEEDBACK:** Following the course review, the review team’s feedback is provided to the Course Representative in the form of a Final Report. The Final Report consists of two components: Scoring — indicates which QM Specific Review Standards were and were not met by the course. Feedback — a rich set of recommendations from the Reviewers indicating the strengths of the course, areas for improvement, and specific recommendations and suggestions for improving the course. Reviewers write
recommendations for any Specific Review Standards that were not yet met. However, they may also write recommendations for improvement even when they mark a Specific Review Standard as “Met” because there can still be room for improvement.

**COURSE REVISION:** Upon conclusion of the initial review, the course may or may not have met QM Standards. If the course did not yet meet Standards, 14 weeks are provided for course revisions and improvement based on the recommendations from the review team. The team chair re-reviews the course after revisions are completed. Once the course has met QM Standards, a certification mark will be provided and the course listed on the QM registry.

**COURSE IS QM-CERTIFIED:** QM expects that all courses will eventually achieve QM certification. The QM review process is not meant to be a test in which a course passes or fails. The overall goal is to provide a process for the continuous improvement of course quality, rather than the simple assignment of a grade or quality level to the course.
QM-Certified course reviewers and the Course Representative make up the course review team. Reviewers have access to the course site and review it compared to the QM Rubric Standards. All Reviewers have completed QM professional development pathways to attain their roles. Depending on the QM program, there are either two or three Reviewers assigned to the team. Every team includes at least one subject matter expert (SME) and an external reviewer. Teams are chaired by those who hold the Master Reviewer role. The Team Chair is responsible for the integrity of the review and is an experienced Reviewer.

Since QM reviews are meant to be transparent, the Course Representative is a part of the process and should be provided with the Rubric prior to the course review. The CR is involved in a pre-review conference call and is available for the team to consult throughout the review, in case of questions or clarifications.
Reviews take about 20 weeks to complete, with some taking longer and some reaching completion after the active review period concludes. Once the review is complete, Course Representatives have 14 weeks to complete any changes or amendments to the course for resubmission. The changes are reviewed by the Team Chair who determines whether the Standards that were previously not met have been met.

Course reviews provide a number of benefits. Continuous improvement of the course design is a major benefit that results in helping learners succeed. Internal and external recognition with a QM Certification Mark or QM Essentials banner is an indicator of the commitment to quality by the institution and the Course Representative. Faculty in QM’s exit surveys state this is a positive experience for them that has ultimately made their courses better and easier to teach. Benchmarking how well your institution’s courses do against QM Standards can be an important step toward continuous institutional improvement.
Quality Matters offers Program Certifications in four areas: Online Program Design, Online Teaching Support, Online Learner Support, and Online Learner Success. Each certification is also preceded by a review of the institution’s evidence of rigor in these four different areas. QM defines programs as being a single program in a single college all the way through all programs at an institution. The size of the program determines the cost of the review.

Program Certification benefits include having an external evaluation of the organization’s courses, outcomes, and supports. Program Certification can be a healthy way to prepare for reaffirmation of accreditation and demonstrates the institution’s commitment to quality. Above all, the greatest benefit is — through examination of the submission of evidence — the identification of improvements that can be made to online programs to help learners.
When an institution earns all four of the QM Program Certifications within a three year period, they are recognized as an Exemplary Program.

Organizations that need additional help in preparing for Program Review may choose the Program Candidacy Pathway. This structure engages the whole organization with an intentional approach to quality assurance of the program.

Professional Development is an integral part of implementing quality assurance efforts.
Regardless of your goals, professional development is key to help build your campus capacity and gets your faculty and staff speaking the same language about online courses. Professional development includes a pathway to develop QM Reviewers and helps staff and faculty understand how to conduct Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews. Professional development helps create a culture of continuous improvement.

QM offers workshops for continuous improvement - the Applying the QM Rubric workshop is QM’s flagship workshop that is the prerequisite for any QM certification courses to hold QM roles.

- The Applying the QM Rubric (APP) workshop can be licensed as part of your QM membership.
- Improving Your Online Course is a workshop for those who have an online course developed already. A license is available to offer this workshop at your organization for higher education members. This workshop provides a walk-through of the essential Standards of the QM Rubric and participants come away with a Course Improvement Plan based on their own findings.
- Designing Your Online Course is a workshop for those who haven’t yet developed an online course but wish to. Participants come away with a plan for their first module and an overall plan for the
Some QM members require this workshop before faculty can meet with instructional designers or other instructional support staff as a way to drive efficiency in course development.

- **Designing Your Blended Course** is a workshop for those who wish to create an online course. Participants come away with a plan for their blended course. QM also offers workshops that are focused around the different General Standards of the QM Rubric. All workshops can be provided to your organization either online or on site.

Certification courses lead to QM roles and are crucial to implementing QM at scale.

- **The Peer Reviewer Course** (for higher education) or Reviewer Course prepares those who have completed the Applying the QM Rubric workshop to become QM-Certified Peer Reviewers or QM-Certified Reviewers.
- **Master Reviewer Certification** is available to those who have review experience as QM-Certified Peer Reviewers. Master Reviewers lead review teams and ensure the integrity of the review.
- **Course Review Manager Certification** is for QM Coordinators who plan to do more than three QM-Certified Course Reviews for recognition. This certification course teaches about using the Course Review Management System (CRMS) and provides additional guidance by
experienced QMCs who have managed many QM-Certified Course Reviews. The course leads to the QM-Certified Course Review Manager role. Course reviews managed by a CRM do not have to pay the $100 registration fee for Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews.

Members with qualifying subscriptions can deliver the APP workshop either online or face-to-face. Prerequisites of the Applying the QM Rubric workshop and the Peer Reviewer Course are required for completion before taking either the Applying the QM Rubric Online or Face-to-Face Facilitator Certification courses.

All QM certification courses are offered online only.

QM provides professional development online, face-to-face, and through web conferencing. Any QM offering can be scheduled for dates and times that work for your organization’s faculty and staff. Contact QM’s Professional Development Registrar to schedule.
Above all, QM is a community – a community that cares about quality in online learning and the learner experience.

The graphic on this slide is a representation of the QM Community. At the center is the small QM staff. The first band represents QM community advisory bodies such as the QM Academic Advisory Council. The second band represents QM special interest groups like the QM Instructional Designers Association and iQM. The third band represents the QM-Certified educators – those who have earned the Peer Reviewer, Reviewer, Master Reviewer, Course Review Manager, or Facilitator role. The fourth band represents all of the QM institutions who are members. And finally, the outside represents Students because a positive learner experience is the ultimate goal we are all trying to achieve.
QM provides two special interest groups to our members. The QM Instructional Designers Association is a volunteer-managed group dedicated to connecting and supporting instructional designers and advancing the field of instructional design. Instructional designers use Quality Matters in their work and this association provides them with free professional development opportunities such as monthly Twitter chats (#QMIDAchat) and regular Instructional Designers’ Learning Exchange web conferencing events where IDs can share their techniques, strategies, and helpful ideas with one another.

iQM is the International QM special interest group. It is for those who read, write, and speak languages other than English. The members participate in QM Course Reviews as needed and help promote QM in other countries.

QM Success Stories are free to QM members and are offered monthly. Each month, a QM member shares their story or presentation about how they are implementing QM. Each monthly webinar is archived and past presentations can be accessed in the MyQM Reference Library. Descriptions are available on the QM website.
QM Colleagues is a program QM offers to help organizations connect with other organizations of their same size and type. QM Colleagues have implemented QM and are ready to talk to others about how they did what they did with helpful advice along the way. Please contact QM if you have interest in being connected to a QM Colleague.

QM has a grounding in research that supports all of the QM Rubrics.

QM has a core of Research Colleagues who are a community of volunteer researchers. They contribute to the QM Research Library, a free resource for everyone, not just QM members. Research Colleagues also assist QM with the research agenda and help determine which research projects are completed.
Slide 47

**Research Library**
- Free
- Updated regularly
- Search friendly
- Online learning research
- Over 1000 curated articles

The QM Research Library is a free resource for everyone that is updated regularly. Its Search functionality enables search by keyword or by QM Standard. All articles are cited in online learning research and the Research Library includes over 1000 articles that have been curated by the QM Research Colleagues.

Slide 48

**Research Projects**
- Support QM initiatives
- Explore trends (CHLOE)
- Extend research with important findings

QM Research Projects support QM initiatives, explore trends in quality assurance in online learning, such as through the CHLOE (Changing Landscape in Online Education) Reports. These projects also extend research projects that have preliminary and important findings related to QM, quality assurance, and online learning.

Slide 49

**Teaching Online**

QM has extended into the online teaching component of online learning. Meaning, how the course design is implemented.
The QM Teaching Online Certificate was introduced as a way for online teaching faculty to demonstrate their knowledge competencies in seven areas related to online teaching. The Teaching Online Certificate is earned upon completion of the seven associated competencies through active engagement in seven workshops, each focused on a different aspect of online teaching. Each workshop is either one or two weeks in length and can be taken in any order. A textbook is required for four of the workshops. Upon completion of each workshop, a piece of evidence is generated by the earner that is tied to a digital credential that the earner can share on social media like LinkedIn. Once all seven credentials have been earned, the Teaching Online Certificate is awarded.

While the Teaching Online Certificate demonstrates knowledge competence, QM recognizes that teaching standards are important for institutions to evaluate online teaching performance. QM is currently working to develop teaching standards that organizations can use that are connected to the delivery of online learning, which is the execution of the course design addressed in the QM Rubric. QM plans to include community input with strong research support.
Slide 52

Quality Matters provides several subscription options for your organization to become a member.

Slide 53

QM institution-level memberships include all faculty and staff at the institution. This means that everyone has access to the fully-annotated QM Rubric. Supplemental memberships can be purchased for other QM programs and licenses.

Slide 54

Higher Education offers a Basic membership that is a good place for most institutions to start. Access to the current Higher Education Rubric, the CRMS, Self Review tool, and reports are available. Members enjoy special member rates on all professional development, course and program reviews and conference registrations.

The Higher Education Full membership includes all of the benefits of the Basic membership plus it also includes a license to facilitate the Applying the QM Rubric workshop, and the ability
to conduct Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews for QM-certification. Both of these activities, when brought in-house, can save significantly on the cost of QM implementation. Full memberships include a small program option for institutions with one or two online programs that is at a discounted rate. Full members also have the option to purchase a license to provide the Improving Your Online Course workshop.

The Higher Education Consortium membership is a group of organizations that join QM at the same time with a Full membership for each organization. Consortia receive a 25% discount for joining together. All organizations are on the same membership cycle.

System members include a lead organization with affiliate organizations. Organizations in a System membership are able to collaborate with others in their system to provide QM workshops and course reviews. Systems have enhanced reporting tools available to them that include the activity for each organization within it.
K-12 Basic memberships are for a single organization and include access to both the K-12 Secondary Rubric and the K-12 Publisher Rubric. They receive member rates on all QM professional development, course reviews, and events.

K-12 Consortium memberships are for two or more organizations and include all Basic benefits plus access to the Course Review Management System, My Custom Reviews (MyCR), and the ability to collaborate on quality assurance efforts within the consortium.

QM members can choose from a variety of options to supplement their memberships. Access to any other QM Rubric is one option. For K-12 members, they may wish to provide QM workshops to their teachers and staff, so a training license for the Applying the QM K-12 Rubric workshop is available. If K-12 members wish to manage their own QM-Certified Subscriber-Managed Course Reviews, a supplemental membership is available. Use of the CRMS is another option available for K-12 members.

Higher Education members on a Full or System membership can add an Improving Your Online Course workshop license to their membership to offer that workshop to their organization or System.

QM for Students enables Higher Education members to teach about
Quality Matters to their students. Some faculty have found the experience of using the QM Rubric so valuable, they want to share it with their learners.

The QM Coordinator is the liaison between QM and the organization. The person in this role is the key to the success of the QM implementation and should complete the QM Coordinator Training, which is included as part of the membership. Also included is the free online community of QM Coordinators which is a part of the QM Coordinator Training. QM hosts quarterly meetings for all QM Coordinators to attend. QM recommends that the QM Coordinator also take the Applying the QM Rubric workshop at minimum and ideally take the Peer Reviewer Course as well. The person chosen to lead the QM implementation at your organization should be empowered to make it happen.