

5th Edition Quality Matters (QM) Rubric (2014)

General Standard 1	The overall design of the course is made clear to the learner at the beginning of the course.	
Standard	Points	Annotations
1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.	3	Instructions provide a general course overview, present the schedule of activities, guide the learner to explore the course site, and indicate what to do first, in addition to listing detailed navigational instructions for the whole course.
1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	3	The instructor’s statement gives the learner an idea of how the learning process is structured-including schedule, communication modes, and types of activities and how learner’s performance will be evaluated. Usually, this is included in the syllabus but can also be included in the introductory or welcome message.
1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.	2	Expectations for learners conduct online and in the classroom are clearly stated. For example, rules of conduct for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion board • Email • Speaking style • Spelling/grammar
1.4 Course and/or institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided.	2	Policies may be promulgated by the instructor or by the institution. Policies may include learner conduct, academic integrity, late submission of assignments, the grade of incomplete, confidentiality in the classroom, learner grievances, etc. Confirm that the policies are adequately explained and up-to-date.
1.5 Minimum Technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided.	2	Learners are provided with detailed, clearly worded information regarding the technologies they will need throughout the course. (Hardware, software, subscriptions and plug-ins).
1.6 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.	1	Information about prerequisite knowledge and/or competencies is found within the course, in documents linked to the course, or in supporting material provided to the learner by another means.
1.7 Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.	1	General as well as course-specific technical skills learners must have to succeed in the course are specified.
1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.	1	The initial introduction creates a sense of connect between the instructor and the learners. It presents the instructor as professional as well as approachable, and includes the essential, such as the instructor’s name, title, field of expertise, email address, phone number, and times when the instructor is typically online or may be reached by phone. It may also include comments on

		teaching philosophy, summary of past experience with teaching, hobbies, family, and a photograph.
1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.	1	Learner introductions at the beginning of the class help to create a welcoming learning environment and a sense of community. Learners are asked to introduce themselves and given guidance on where and how they should do so. Exceptions to this rule (e.g. the class is too large, the learners are already familiar with each other) should be provided in the Instructor Worksheet.
General Standard 2	Learning Objectives or competencies describe what learners will be able to do upon completion of the course.	
2.1 The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.	3	Measurable course learning objectives precisely and clearly describe what learners will learn and be able to do if they successfully complete the course. Objectives should describe learner performance in specific, observable terms. Course learning objectives must align with critical course components such as assessments, resources and materials, learning activities and technology used.
2.2. The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.	3	Learning objectives at the module/unit level align with and are more specific than course objectives or competencies. The module/unit learning objectives describe learner mastery in specific, observable terms and in smaller, discrete pieces. The module unit objectives or competencies may either implicitly or explicitly be aligned with the course-level objectives or competencies.
<p>Alignment: <i>The concept of alignment is intended to convey the idea that critical course components work together to ensure that learners achieve the desired learning outcomes. Measurable module/unit learning objectives from the basis of alignment in a course because they are consistent with the course-level objectives (2.1). Objectives explain how learners will be assessed (3.1). Instructional materials (4.1), activities (5.1), and technologies used in the course (6.1) contribute to the accomplishment of the learning objectives.</i></p>		
2.3 All learning objectives are stated clearly and written from the learner’s perspective.	3	The learning objectives are stated clearly in the online classroom for all course delivery formats. The learning objectives are written in a way that allows learners to easily grasp their meaning and the learning outcomes expected of learners. The use of educational jargon, confusing terms, unnecessarily complex language and puzzling syntax is avoided.
2.4 The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and course activities is clearly stated.	3	Learning objectives are integrated throughout the course and are not just listed in the syllabus. Confirm a relationship exists between the stated learning objectives or competencies and the activities learners are asked to complete.
2.5 The learning objectives are suited to the level of the course.	3	Content mastery should be appropriate for the type and level of the course. Lower-division courses should address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core

		learning skills. Upper-division and graduate courses may focus on objectives more related to the specific discipline.
General Standard 3	Assessments are integral to the learning process and are designed to evaluate learner progress in achieving the stated learning objectives or mastering the competencies.	
3.1 The assessments measure the stated learning objectives	3	Course assessments should align with the course and module objectives of the course by measuring the accomplishment of those objectives
3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.	3	A clear, written statement fully explains how the course grades are computed. The points, percentages, and weights for each component of the course grade are clearly stated. The relationship(s) between points, percentages, weights, and letter grades are explained. The instructor's policy on late submissions is clearly stated.
3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work and are tied to the course grading policy.	3	Learners are provided with a clear and meaningful description of criteria that will be used to evaluate their work and participation in the course. The description and/or statement of criteria provide learners with clear guidance on the instructor's expectations and on the required components of work and participation. The criteria give learners the information they need to understand how a grade on an assignment or activity will be calculated.
3.4 The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed.	2	Multiple assessment strategies are used in both the online and face-to-face settings, and they are appropriate to the content being measured and the format in which they are used.
3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.	2	Learners learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and timely feedback. This feedback may come from the instructor directly, from assignments and assessments that have feedback built into them, or even from other learners. Look for examples of self-check quizzes and activities, as well as other practice opportunities that provide timely feedback.
General Standard 4	Instructional materials enable learners to achieve stated learning objectives or competencies.	
4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives.	3	Instructional materials used in the course align with the course and module learning objectives of the course by contributing to the achievement of those objectives and by integrating effectively with the tools and media selected for delivery.
4.2 Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.	3	Learners can easily determine the purpose of all content, materials, resources, technologies, and instructional methods used in the course, and how each will help them achieve the stated learning objectives. Links to external websites indicate the purpose of the links and/or is

		completely self-evident. The function of animated games or exercises is clearly explained or is clearly self-evident.
4.3 All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited.	2	Sources for materials used in the course are clearly identified. Text, images, graphic materials, tables, video, audios websites, and other forms of multimedia are appropriate referenced according to the institution's copyright and intellectual property policies.
4.4 The instructional materials are current.	2	The instructional materials represent current thinking in the discipline. Older works considered to be seminal are cited with publication dates.
4.5 A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.	1	The course materials are robust and create a rich learning environment for learners. The course presents meaningful instructional materials form a variety of sources, including the textbook(s), PowerPoint presentations, websites, lecture notes, periodicals, outlines, and multimedia.
4.6 The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.	1	Clear explanations are provided to learners regarding which materials and resources are required and which are optional. Particular attention is given to those resources learners need to acquire through purchase, download, CD-ROM or web access outside of the course. Instructors should clearly indicate materials learners are expected to acquire and use to complete course activities and assignments.
General Standard 5	Course activities facilitate and support learner interaction and engagement.	
5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives.	3	Learning activities align with the course and module objectives of the course by engaging learners in activities that directly contribute to the achievement of those objectives and integrating smoothly with the tools and media that enable these activities.
5.2 Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.	3	Activities encourage learners' engagement during learning through different types of interaction as appropriate to the course. Interactions are designed as activities to support the course objectives and may vary with the discipline, purpose, and level of the course. Types of interaction include learner-instructor, learner-content, and learner-learner. Active learning involves learners engaging by "doing" something, such as discovering, processing or applying concepts and information.
5.3 The instructor's plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated.	3	Frequent feedback from the instructor increases learners' sense of engagement in a course. Learners are better able to manage their course activities when they know upfront when to expect feedback from the instructor. The course provides clear information about when learners will receive instructor responses to emails and discussion postings, feedback on assignments, and grades.

5.4 The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	2	Look for a clear statement of the instructor’s expectations for learner participation in required course interactions (frequency, length, timeliness, etc.). The statement helps learners plan and manage their class participation and provides a basis for the instructor to evaluate learner participation. The more specifically the expectations are explained the easier it is for the learner to meet the expectations. Clearly explaining the role of the instructor and expectations for interactions with the instructor and with other learners is especially helpful to learners from cultures in which deference to the instructor is customary and who may need encourage to “speak up.”
General Standard 6	Course technologies support learners’ achievement of course objectives and competencies.	
6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives and competencies.	3	The tools and media selected for the course align with the course and module objectives of the course by effectively supporting the assessment instruments and learning activities in the course.
6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	3	Tools and media used in the course help learners actively engaged in the learning process, rather than passively absorbing information. Selected tools and media should encourage the learner to reflectively grasp and respond to the deeper learning process.
6.3 Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable	2	All required technologies are easily obtainable, through download, purchase at the bookstore, or another means. (Hardware, software, subscriptions and plug-ins)
6.4 The course technologies are current.	1	Innovative technologies continuously appear on the market, and course technology should be up-to-date and chosen to best meet the needs of the course. The course design takes advantage of the features of the learning management system – that are available to the instructor/learner.
6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course	1	Tools used in the course include links to the privacy policies provided by the creator of the tool.
General Standard 7	The course facilitates learner access to institutional support services essential to learner success.	
7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.	3	Technical support differs from institution to institution and includes such information as how to log in; how to use the tools and features of the learning management system, and how to get help desk support.
7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution’s accessibility policies and services.	3	Accessibility policies or accommodation statements state that services and accommodations are available for learners with disabilities and inform the learner how such services may be accessed.
7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the	2	Academic support and resources for learners may include an online orientation; access to library resources; a readiness assessment or survey; testing services;

institution's academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can access them.		tutoring; non-native language services; writing and/or math centers; tutorial or other forms of guidance on conducting research, writing papers, citing sources, using an online writing lab, and using institution-specific technology; supplemental instruction program; and teaching assistants.
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.	1	Learner support services may include advising, registration, financial aid, learner or campus life, counseling, career services, online workshops, and learner organizations.
General Standard 8	The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility and usability for all learners.	
8.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use	3	Navigation refers to the process of planning, controlling, and recording the movement of a learner from one place to another in the online course. Navigation throughout the course is consistent, logical, and efficient.
8.2 Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course.	3	Learners with disabilities have access to information on the accessibility of the learning management system and all additional required technologies. The course includes links to the accessibility statements for all required technologies. If an accessibility statement does not exist for a particular technology, a statement is included that explains that the accessibility statement does not exist.
8.3 The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	2	Alternative means of access to course information are provided for the vision or hearing impaired learner such as equivalent textual representations of images, audio, animations, and video in the course website or learners may be directed to where they may access the alternative representations. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An audio lecture has text transcript available. • A video clip, image or animation is captioned and/or available with a text transcript.
8.4 The course design facilitates readability	2	The course uses appropriate design elements, including colors, fonts, spacing, graphics, formatting, and color coding to facilitate readability and minimize distractions for the learner. Colors are used judiciously and do not present a barrier to learners accessing the content. Fonts and spacing do not crowd words or present a barrier to the content. Graphics and animations are used to enhance instructional materials and illustrate ideas without causing distraction from the materials.
8.5 Course multimedia facilitates ease of use.	2	Course elements maximize usability by ensuring multimedia used as a vehicle for content or feedback (e.g., images, audio, animation, video, and interactive

		components) are easy to sue, intelligible, and inter-operational across devices. Course multimedia is easy to view, operate, and interpret.
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- For more information on the Quality Matters rubric, please visit the <http://qualitymatters.org> website.
- For more information about how to meet the QM standards, please contact the Quality Assurance Team for FIU Online – fiuqm@fiu.edu.