



Fall 2022

ONLINE/HYBRID CREDIT COURSES: STANDARDS FOR DESIGN AND DELIVERY, MEASUREMENT, AND FACULTY TRAINING

ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

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1. Introduction

PGCC's online and hybrid credit courses are designed around 3 pillars of quality: Design, Organization, and Engagement. These standards address both design (development) and delivery (teaching) and are modeled after standards developed by organizations which specialize in online pedagogy in higher education such as Quality Matters (QM) and Online Learning Consortium (OLC).

Research has shown that the presence of the components listed in the standards below increases student success. Conversely, the absence of these components forms barriers to student success (See list of sources below).

2. Standards

These standards articulate the minimum expectations for all online (DL and DR) and hybrid (HY) courses at PGCC. For more information see appendix A.

2.1. Standards for Course Design

Standard 1: The course design is intentional and preplanned.

Standard 2: The course content is rich, appropriate, and current.

Standard 3: The course is accessible.

Standard 4: A clear, logical structure is used to organize the course materials.

Standard 5: The course includes a variety of instructional materials, methods, and assessments.

Standard 6: The course provides students with guidance in the learning process.

Standard 7: The course includes various opportunities for interaction.

2.2 Standards for Course Delivery

Standard 8: The course includes regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor.

Standard 9: Student learning is guided.

Standard 10: Communication is professional, student-centered, and inclusive.

3. Course Quality Measurement

3.1 Initial Course Approval

Before a newly designed online or hybrid course is offered for the first time, eLearning will complete a review process using the current edition of the Quality Matters – Higher Education Rubric (QM-HE – See appendix B). Though course developers are encouraged to meet as many QM standards as possible, all 3-point standards must be met before the course is approved and can be offered for the first time.

Role of the Collegial Exemplar Site

This course will then serve as a collegial exemplar course for other faculty. Other faculty who teach online or hybrid sections of this course will be provided with a copy of the exemplar course. They will update the site for the upcoming semester and may make modifications to the site up to the percentage as defined by QM. This will ensure consistency and quality across course sections.

3.2 Course Re-approval

3.2.1. Collegial Exemplar Course Sites

All collegial exemplar course sites will be reevaluated and need to be reapproved once every 5 years. This evaluation will be done by eLearning, using the current edition of the Quality Matters – Higher Education Rubric (QM-HE). All 3-point standards must be met. If these standards are not met, the course will not be offered in an online or hybrid modality until the necessary revisions have been made.

Exception: if the course is QM-certified, it does not need to be evaluated for the duration of the QM certification (5-years from the date of certification).

3.2.2. Course Sections Using the Collegial Exemplar

Course sections that use the collegial exemplar content as their basis will be evaluated by the faculty member teaching the course, using the Online/Hybrid Course Checklist (see Appendix C)

throughout the semester. This checklist may also be used by coordinators and chairs. Additional course vetting and quality assurance is up to the discretion of the department chair.

3.2.3. Course Sections Not Using the Collegial Exemplar

Faculty who do not wish to use the collegial exemplar will have to provide their academic coordinator and department chair with a written explanation within one week of being assigned to teach the online/hybrid section as to why they do not wish to use it. Course sites that do not use the collegial exemplar course will have to be evaluated and approved each time the course is offered. At least one week before the course starts, the department chair or academic coordinator will evaluate the course site, using the 3-point standards of the QM rubric. This documentation will be submitted electronically to the division dean and eLearning. If the course is not approved, the department chair may require the faculty member to:

1. Modify the course to meet the QM standards prior to the day the course becomes available to students or
2. Use the collegial exemplar for the upcoming semester.

Exception: if the course is QM-certified, it does not need to be evaluated for the duration of the QM certification (5-years from the date of certification)

4. Faculty Qualifications and Trainings

4.1. Online Course Delivery

4.1.1. Online Express (OEPREP) Training

Faculty who successfully completed Online Express (OEPrep) training prior to Fall 2022 may continue to teach online and hybrid courses.

4.1.2. Initial Online Instructor Training

Faculty who want to become online instructors have to complete the following trainings:

- 1) **Online pedagogy and instructional strategies training:** Faculty have to successfully complete [Quality Matter's Teaching Online - An Introduction to Online Delivery \(TOL\)](#). This is a

(approximately) two-week online course offered every two to three weeks by Quality Matters. Time commitment: approximately 20-24 hours total.

- 2) **PGCC specific online teaching requirements training:** Faculty have to attend a *PGCC Online/Hybrid Teaching Orientation*. During this synchronous session, PGCC online standards are introduced as well as any specific teaching expectations for online/hybrid courses. Attendance and successful completion (70% or higher) on a quiz are required. Time commitment: approximately 3 hours.
- 3) **LMS Specific Training:** Faculty have to demonstrate Canvas competency either through:
 - a. The completion of the self-paced course *Higher Education: First Day Ready* in Canvas. Time commitment: approximately 3-4 hours or
 - b. Successful completion of an online Canvas skills assessment.

This Initial Online Instructor Training is also highly recommended for faculty in the following roles:

1. Academic coordinators
2. Course coordinators of courses that exist in online or hybrid format
3. Department chairs

4.1.3. Ongoing Professional Development

All faculty teaching one or more online/hybrid courses sections during an academic year have to attend 1 webinar focused on online pedagogy per academic year. Attendance may be used towards the professional development requirement as stated in the faculty contract. Faculty who do not complete the ongoing professional development requirement may not teach online/hybrid courses until the PD requirement is fulfilled.

4.1.4. External Qualifications

Faculty who completed Quality Matters training related to online pedagogy and instructional strategies through another organization will be exempted from Training #1 listed on 4.1.2, provided that:

- a) The training was completed in the last 5 years or
- b) The training was completed more than 5 years ago, but the faculty member can provide evidence of online teaching in the last 3 years.

They will still have to complete the other 2 trainings.

Faculty who wish to be exempted from the trainings listed above in 4.1.2 because they have completed similar training externally will have to provide clear and substantial evidence that the training addresses online pedagogy and instructional strategies of course delivery. This evidence will be reviewed by eLearning and acceptance is up to the discretion of the Director of eLearning.

4.2. Online Course Design Training

4.2.1 Online Express (OEPrep) Training

Faculty who successfully completed Online Express (OEPrep) training prior to Fall 2022 and have successfully developed an online or hybrid course at PGCC within the last 5 years may continue to design online and hybrid courses.

4.2.2 APPQMR, DYIC or IOYC Training

Ideally, faculty who have successfully completed online course delivery training should teach for at least 2 semesters before starting course design training. Faculty who want to design online or hybrid courses have to complete either:

- a. **Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR):** This synchronous training focuses on underlying principles behind the QM Rubric and the critical elements of the QM quality assurance process. Time commitment: approximately 8 hours.
- b. **Designing Your Online Course (DYOC):** This 2-week online course includes an overview of the QM Rubric and provides a framework for participants to design an online course plan. Time commitment: approximately 16-20 hours.
- c. **Improving Your Online Course (IYOC):** This 2-week online course explores the QM Rubric and provides a framework to improve the quality of online courses. This requires participants to bring a copy of their existing online course to the training. Time commitment: approximately 16-20 hours.

Faculty who wish to be exempted from the trainings listed above in 4.2.2 because they have completed similar training externally will have to provide clear and substantial evidence that the training addresses online pedagogy and instructional strategies of course design. This evidence will be reviewed by eLearning and acceptance is up to the discretion of the Director of eLearning.

5. Recommendations for the Future

In addition to these standards and expectations for courses and instructors, the College should develop a set of expectations for online/hybrid students related to minimum (technology) skills and behaviors. The college should also consider developing a plan for any new course development with departments to ensure budget and other resources are available. The current budget only covers the budget for reviewing and ensuring the quality of the approximately 150 courses that are part of the fully online degrees approved by MHEC at the time of the strategic charter from FY 23 through FY 25:

- Accounting Professional AAS
- Accounting Certificate
- Business Management AAS
- Criminal Justice AAS
- General Studies A. A. with a Concentration in Criminal Justice
- General Studies A. A. with a Concentration in Economics
- General Studies A. A. with a Concentration in Psychology
- Marketing Management Certificate
- Paralegal/Legal Studies AAS
- Paralegal/Legal Studies Certificate

6. Sources:

<https://www.esc.edu/dlis/design-your-course/regular-and-substantive-interaction/>

<https://diversity.ucf.edu/document/tips-for-creating-inclusive-college-classrooms/>

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/curator-or-dumper/>

Ralston-Berg, P., & Braatz, H. (2021). Online course design structure and interface.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ace.20411>

Martin, F., Bolliger, D. U., & Flowers, C. (2021). Design matters: Development and validation of the online course design elements (OCDE) instrument. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 22(2), 46-71.

Cheng, S. L., & Xie, K. (2021). Why college students procrastinate in online courses: A self-regulated learning perspective. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 50, 100807. doi: 10.1016/j.iheduc.2021.100807

[Inclusive Teaching and Course Design | EDUCAUSE](#)

<https://www.qualitymatters.org/research/curated-research-resources>

APPENDIX A: Course Evidence of Standards

Courses should include evidence of each of the standards. The components and characteristics listed below are examples of how a standard can be evidenced in the course. This list is not exhaustive.

Standard 1: The course design is intentional and preplanned.

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- All course content is created and developed and in place in the course site prior to the first day of class. Instructors may tweak content during the course to better meet students' needs, but the course should be fully developed prior to the start of the course.
- The learning materials and assessments are housed in the Learning Management System (LMS) or appropriately linked either through a hyperlink or LTI connection (e.g., Canvas assignments are used instead of students emailing their work to their instructor)
- The course includes only information specific to the current/upcoming semester (e.g., the due date for the current semester and not old due dates or generic statements like "this assignment is due on Sunday" or "this week", there is no information applicable only to, for example, Spring 2019, ...).

Standard 2: The course content is rich, appropriate, and current.

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- The course materials will allow students to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- The course materials are appropriate for the level of the course (e.g., equivalent hour, 1000- or 2000-level college course).
- The course materials align with the information in the syllabus and the gradebook.
- The course materials are balanced: there is enough for students to master the outcomes, but the amount is not overwhelming.
- The course content is presented in manageable chunks and evenly distributed over the duration of the course.
- The course materials include multiple perspectives on the topics, when applicable.
- Used sources are less than 10 years old.

- The course reflects inclusive course design.

Standard 3: The course is accessible.

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- The course content aligns with current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Content can be viewed on different types of devices, including mobile.
- Bandwidth requirements do not exceed those recommended by eLearning for online students.

Standard 4: A clear, logical structure is used to organize the course materials.

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- The PGCC Canvas course template for credit courses is used
- There is an organizational structure in the course, e.g., units, modules, ...
- Sections and materials in the sections have a heading or title that is clear to students (e.g., introduction, reading on X, practice activity on Y, assignment Z.)
- The unit or module components are logical, consistent, and predictable (e.g., each module starts with an overview of the content and the outcomes).
- The course is instructor paced and the units or modules include a reasonable amount of work to complete in the time given.
- Features and tools that are not used are disabled or removed when appropriate.

Standard 5: The course includes a variety of instructional materials, methods, and assessments.

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- The learning materials are more than assigned textbook readings and assessments.
- The materials provide students with multiple ways to understand the content.
- Learning includes hands-on opportunities.
- The course includes regular activities and assessments that require instructor and students to engage with each other.

- Learning is scaffolded.
- The materials and assessments align with the course outcomes.
- The instructional technologies used in the course add value by promoting active learning and engagement with the course materials. These technologies are accessible and protect student's privacy.

Standard 6: The course provides students with guidance in the learning process

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- Skills, tools, and knowledge that students need to be successful in the course are clearly communicated.
- It is clear to students what the purpose of the materials is (“what to expect or gain?”) and what students need to do with the materials (“how-to?”). Examples are: read X carefully and use it in assignment Y; skim pages A to B, but focus on pages C to D; watch the video on X to learn more about Y from the previous module, ...
- There are self-check opportunities to help students regulate their learning
- There is a grading policy present which explains how a student's overall grade is calculated.
- Open-ended assignments have a grading tool (rubric, checklist, etc.) that is shared with the students when the assignment becomes available.
- Turnaround time for receiving feedback and grades on assignments is communicated at the start of the course.

Standard 7: The course includes various opportunities for interaction

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- The course includes multiple opportunities for students to interact with the materials. Learning is hands-on and goes beyond reading texts and watching videos. There are multiple opportunities for students to check their knowledge and skills (i.e., there are practice activities that do not count towards the course grade (or for very little points as an incentive for completion as opposed to a measurement of learning)).

- The course includes multiple opportunities for students to interact with each other. There are opportunities for students to collaborate, share thoughts, respond to others' ideas, ...
- The course includes multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement of learning. Each of those assessments include specific directions and criteria for how the students will be evaluated.
- The course design is set up for student engagement, creating a social learning environment with opportunities through multiple communication channels and ways of building rapport with students (e.g., faculty contact information, discussions, ...)

Standard 8: The instructor is present in the course

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- There are regular announcements about the course (e.g., reminders, addressing common misconceptions, changes and updates). Information about college-related activities beyond the course may also be included (e.g., transfer day, SGA events, etc.)
- Office hours are provided in the same modality as the course and follow college requirements for duration as stated in the faculty contract.
- Faculty will respond to student queries as stated in the faculty contract.

Standard 9: Student learning is guided

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- Students receive detailed feedback on their work, e.g., auto-graded selection items, scoring tools for open-ended assignments, ...
- Instructor feedback is timely, i.e., it is available prior to when the next similar assignment is due
- Students may have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work if appropriate for the assignment.

Standard 10: Communication is professional, student-centered, and inclusive

Evidence in the course includes, but is not limited to:

- Content is free of writing errors.

- The instructor reaches out to students who are struggling.
- The instructor clearly communicates their role in assisting students in being successful
- The instructor communicates high expectations
- The instructor uses inclusive language
- The instructor encourages different points of view, when applicable
- Feedback is about the learning, never the person
- Student grades are confidential

Appendix B: Quality Matters Rubric

[The Quality Matters™ Higher Education Rubric Sixth Edition](#) – 3-point standards are highlighted in yellow

Appendix C: Online/Hybrid Course Checklist

Modified from: [Stevenson University Online Faculty Checklist](#)

Directions:

Use this checklist as a guide to complete all key administrative tasks throughout the course and to prepare your Canvas course each semester.

Reference the [First Day Handouts](#) on the MyPGCC Portal Page and the [Academic Calendar](#) on the PGCC website for important course dates.

Before the Start of the Course

- Review and update the syllabus and schedule for your course section, using the current syllabus template.
- Check the [PGCC bookstore](#) website to ensure you have the text for the class (book or OER). Contact your program coordinator or instructional designer if you need the text.
- Check the course materials in Canvas: is the information still relevant and current? Do the web links work?
- Review the Canvas Grade book to ensure it reflects course grading policies and criteria in the syllabus.
- Update Faculty Information. Make sure you include office location, phone number, information about office hours. (optional: a brief bio and a picture).
- Post a welcome announcement in your Canvas course and share the same information by email.
- Publish your Canvas course at least 4 days before the start of the course class as listed in Owl Link.

During the Course

- By the 5% and the 10% mark of the course (i.e., end of week 1 and week 2 for a full semester course; prorated for accelerated courses) contact the students who have not yet completed any work in the course by email and phone.

- By the 20% mark of the course (i.e., end of week 3 for a full semester course; prorated for accelerated courses), submit an NA grade for those students who did not submit any course work or did not email the instructor about course content.
- Contact students who are struggling to offer assistance. If the student does not respond to your efforts, submit an early alert using this link to [Navigate](#) for those students who are not spending sufficient time in the course (poor attendance) and who are scoring low on their assessments (poor performance).
- Be present in the course at least 3 times a week for a full semester course (or pro-rated for accelerated courses) by
 - engaging with students (e.g., grade, post announcement, provide wrap-ups, etc.),
 - responding to issues (give reminders, provide clarification on muddy points, etc.), and
 - adjusting learning materials (e.g., add extra reading based on students' needs, make a short video to address a common misconception, ...)
- Provide grades and detailed feedback on student assignments in a timely manner, i.e., prior to when the next similar assignment is due.
- Respond to student queries within the timeframe as stated in the faculty contract.
- Post an announcement to remind students to complete the end-of-course evaluation.

After the Course

- Final course grades need to be submitted in Owl Link within 2 days of the final exam ending.
- Your course will automatically be made unavailable to students 2 weeks after the end of the course as listed in Owl Link. Please do not make the course unavailable to students.