

SE Plan for Continuous Improvement and Course Review of Online Courses

Semester 1

The faculty member gains online certification through successful completion of Quality Matters (QM) Applying the QM Rubric Workshop (APPQMR). This workshop should be completed either prior to teaching the course or during the first semester.

*The instructor should take advantage of the template provided in the Start Here section of each BlackBoard (Bb) course shell by filling in all red text and following the instructions found there. He or she should also review the information found in the Instructor Guide tab at the bottom of the course menu. Each department has a member of the Distance Education Council (DEC) who can mentor online faculty as needed.

Year 2

- A.** The faculty member continues professional development and begins the course review process by successfully completing the QM Improving Your Online Course Workshop (IYOC). This occurs within the second year of online teaching.
- B.** The faculty member shares the self-review and course improvement plan, started in the IYOC, with their DEC representative. This occurs after completion of the self-review in Part A.

Year 3

The department DEC representative will review the course and provide personal feedback. The DEC member can assist the online faculty member in making modifications as needed.

Years 4 +

- A.** Online instructors are encouraged to repeat the self-review process on additional courses, or the same course if significant revisions have been made. The self-review should be discussed with the department DEC representative again.
- B.** Online instructors are encouraged to participate in at least 1 form of training relating to online course development each year. Examples of such training include but are not limited to the following:
 - CIDT Public Workshops
 - CIDT Personalized Training
 - Webinars
 - Conferences (for example, Quality Summit in OKC)
 - Lynda.com

Notes:

This plan is designed primarily for instructors teaching online courses for the first time. However, the need for continuous improvement and the mentorship provided by the department's DEC representative is for all online instructors. The starting point, pacing, and further application of this process for experienced online instructors will be determined by the department chair and the department's DEC representative.

A faculty member can request alternate certification for Semester 1 by submitting documentation of previous online training/certification to the department DEC representative. Faculty members who obtained SE online certification prior to QM, can be considered certified. It is strongly recommended that every faculty member who teaches online or blended courses participate in the APPQMR. After initial certification, the faculty member begins the course review process by participating in the IYOC.

Philosophy of this model:

Grounded in QM guiding principles, this model attempts to ensure quality online courses by offering professional development and support to online instructors. It evaluates the design of online and blended courses with a systematic scoring system (QM rubric). This process is meant to be collegial, continuous, and centered in national standards of best practice, research, and instructional design principles.

Rationale:

Initially, Southeastern had an approval process in which a course was approved to be delivered online after the submission and approval of the course syllabus by the DEC (APPM 6.7.3). The online faculty were trained through an in-house Bb course designed and facilitated by the DEC Chair (APPM 6.7.2). Currently, the syllabus approval process is not being implemented and online faculty are requested to go through APPQMR before teaching an online course. This proposal is an attempt to outline the guidelines needed for obtaining online teaching certification and a structured course review process. It is a product based on The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation requirements and the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Initiative requirements.

HLC's "Reviewing Distance Delivery during Comprehensive Evaluations and Comprehensive Quality Reviews" describes the requirements for online quality to be evaluated by reviewers for accreditation visits. Criterion #5 requires a "process for selecting, training and orienting faculty for distance delivery." Criterion #7 requires a "process to evaluate and improve quality in distance-delivered offerings." These are both addressed by this proposal.

SARA is a nationwide collaborative of states designed to make distance education courses more accessible to students across state lines and make it easier for states to regulate and for institutions to participate in interstate distance education. SARA is an agreement among member states, districts, and

territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. Southeastern was approved to participate in SARA as of March 2016 and will be reviewed annually. SARA requirements addressed by this proposal are below:

3. How is online learning incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight?

- How does the institution ensure the rigor of the offerings and the quality of instruction;
- does approval of online courses and programs follow standard processes.....;
- how are online learning courses evaluated on a periodic basis?

6. Are the faculty responsible for delivering the online learning curricula and evaluating the students' success in achieving the online learning goals appropriately qualified and effectively supported?

- How are online learning faculties carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated;
- Is the institution's training program for online faculty periodic? Does it incorporate tested good practices in online learning pedagogy, and ensure competency with the range of software products used by the institution?

References:

Reviewing Distance Delivery during Comprehensive Evaluations and Comprehensive Quality Reviews (DistDeliveryReview_2015_PRC.pdf). Retrieved from <https://www.hlcommission.org/Peer-Review/peer-review-team-resources.html>.

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. Retrieved from: www.okhighered.org/admin-fac/sara/app-approval-form.pdf. Application and Approval Form for Institutional Participation in SARA. Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (2011). Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC)