

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AT ALEXANDRIA

SUBJECT: DISTANCE EDUCATION

PURPOSE: To provide a framework for the design, development, implementation, instruction, and evaluation of distance learning programs and courses offered for academic credit at LSU Alexandria. These policies and procedures are intended to help individuals involved in distance education to be successful and to ensure quality of instruction.

GENERAL POLICY

I. Definitions

Course Instructor: An individual hired by the university to teach a course for credit. Course content may be prepared by this individual or by a separate faculty developer.

Course Developer: An individual hired by the university to prepare the online content for a course to be taught for credit. The course is a 'work-for-hire' and faculty developer agrees that the course can be taught by other faculty members. Typical contracts will compensate faculty developer for a maintenance period where he/she updates course content as appropriate. Individuals that teach from a 'developed' course will make only minor changes to the course structure once it has been determined to meet Quality Matters standards.

Peer Course Review: A course review occurs when a course is submitted and approved for review by the campus Institutional Representative for Quality Matters. The request may come from the content developer, program coordinator, department chair or Academic Affairs. (See attached 'Course Review Process'). The review team consists of two peer reviewers and a master reviewer. All members of the review team must have appropriate training from Quality Matters.

Peer Reviewer: An individual that has completed both required training courses from Quality Matters : 1) Applying the QM Rubric and 2) the Peer Reviewer course. Peer reviewers will serve on a review team. (Two Peer Reviewers and one Master Reviewer) to review a course for compliance with the Quality Matters Rubric. The process is collegial, collaborative, and constructive with the goal of insuring a high level of quality in all approved courses.

Master Reviewer: An individual that has served as an approved QM Reviewer AND has completed the Master Reviewer course from Quality Matters. The master reviewer coordinates with the individual that developed the content to schedule the review and coordinate an initial

meeting (can be by phone or online) for the review team to ask questions and prepare for the review.

Distance: LSU Alexandria follows the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) definition of Distance Education:

For the purposes of the Commission on College's accreditation review, distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous and may occur in online or blended/hybrid formats. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program. [SACSCOC Policy Statement: *Distance and Correspondence Education*, Edited, January 2012]

A course that **replaces** 50% or more of face to face (F2F) instruction with distance learning will be considered a distance education class.

Formula for determining section number:

$$\frac{(\# \text{contact hours per week}) \times 15 - \# \text{ total hours meeting F2F}}{(\# \text{ contact hours per week}) \times 15} \times 100 = \% \text{ class online}$$

- 100% online = Section ends in 'I' (Courses with only proctored exams – will utilize ProctorU with an on-campus option. Starting Summer 2014, 'T' sections will no longer be utilized per Department Chair meeting December 12, 2013.
- 75%-99% online = Section ends in 'J'
- 50% - 74% online = Section ends in 'K'

Note: Placing significant supplemental materials online does not merit description of 'distance course.'

Quality Assurance

Distance Education courses and programs shall comply with all of the standard practices, procedures, and criteria that have been established for traditional F2F courses including, but not limited to, faculty involvement at the level of course development, selection of qualified individuals to teach the course, pedagogical determinations about appropriate class size, and oversight of all final course offerings by appropriate academic personnel to ensure conformity with established traditions of course quality and relevance to programs. LSU Alexandria will adhere to Quality Matters (QM), a faculty-centered, peer review process to certify the quality of

online courses and online components, in both the design and evaluation stages of course development, and to ensure quality of course offerings. See Quality Matters Implementation Plan (attached).

Course Reviews will begin prior to Fall 2014 and will be conducted on an ongoing basis as part of the continuous improvement process.

University Commitment

All academic departments of the University shall have an opportunity to participate in providing distance education courses and/or programs and shall be encouraged to provide distance education wherever a need is identified. The University shall assure that the institution's administrative policies and procedures allow for an effective and efficient distance education support structure.

Distance Education Programs

Programs offered via distance education shall be consistent with the role and mission of LSU Alexandria and the offering department. There shall be no distinctions between programs or courses offered through distance education and those same programs or courses offered on campus except by coding to track outcomes. Development of new online programs and courses will follow the same development and approval procedures as traditional programs and courses.

Selection of programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate academic department. The academic department shall provide oversight of a program that is offered via distance education to ensure currency of the program, its courses, and its resources. Each program of study shall be coherent and complete and shall result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.

Once implemented, the offering academic departments and the University commit to ongoing support, and to the continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable admitted students to complete the program within the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) definition of standard 'time to graduate' timeframe. (3 years for Associate Degree, 6 years for Bachelor's Degree)

Distance Education Course Review Process

Initial Implementation of the QM Review Process: It is expected that it will take approximately 5 years to fully implement the quality review plan. Courses offered online for the first time by a particular instructor starting Summer 2014 are expected to be developed to the Quality Matters rubric. Standards that apply to all courses on campus (All of Standard 7 and part of Standard 8) will be addressed by content developed and maintained by Information and Educational Technology (IET) Services and will be available via links in Moodle.

Courses that have been offered online by a particular instructor prior to Summer 2014 will have an opportunity for self-review (including a stipend of \$150 for substantial self-review and

additional stipend of \$500 per course after successfully passing a peer review using the Quality Matters rubric standards. Self-Reviews for existing courses are limited to a three-year window. A single course instructor/developer may receive no more than four stipends for course development & no more than four stipends for self-review in a five-year period. Courses offered for the first time after Spring 2014 will have the opportunity for compensation of \$500 stipend but will not be eligible for the \$150 self-review.

Peer reviews require a named review committee consisting of three individuals trained by QM. One must be from off-campus, one must be a subject matter expert, and one must be a master reviewer. One person can fulfill more than one role. (For example, if a Math professor from LA Tech serves as the Master Reviewer, he/she fills all roles and there will be two additional reviewers from on campus.) Regardless of roles, the team will consist of three individual reviewers. Courses offered for the first time Summer 2014 or later will not be eligible for the self-review stipend. Peer Reviewers will be compensated at a rate equal to the Quality Matters Program recommendations (as of Fall 2013 amount is \$150 per reviewer and \$250 for the Chair).

Students in distance education courses shall take examinations under the supervision of the instructor, an approved proctor, or other techniques that assure the integrity of the process. Identification verification will meet or exceed SACSCOC requirements.

It is important that accessibility issues be addressed in distance education courses. The appropriate offices shall be contacted for consultation regarding access and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues. Offices include Student Support Services and IET Services.

Library Resources and Support

A wide range of electronic resources are available for faculty and online students, including electronic access to the Library catalogues, full-text databases, reference resources, and online tutorials related to information literacy skills. Librarians are available by email and telephone. Course instructors/developers are encouraged to incorporate the use of library resources in their distance education courses.

Faculty and Faculty Services

All courses offered via distance education shall have as the instructor a qualified, credentialed faculty member approved and assigned by the appropriate department chair, with the approval of Academic Affairs. Distance Education faculty must have completed an approved Teaching Online training course OR be approved by the department chair and Academic Affairs. Academic freedom policies apply to both distance education and traditional classroom instruction. The assigned faculty member shall have full control of the content and instruction of the course, within the scope of the Master Course Outline. In a case where a course is developed as a 'work-for-hire,' the course developer has full control of the content for modification purposes, within the scope of the Master Course Outline.

The course developer retains the authority and the responsibility to produce any revised/supplemental materials in order to maintain or enhance the accuracy and quality of the distance education course. Distance Education faculty will be held to the same standards and must adhere to all LSU Alexandria policies. The LSU System policy on Intellectual Property applies to all distance education programs and courses. The materials created by faculty developers for distance education courses will be treated in exactly the same fashion as materials created by faculty members for traditional courses. Faculty will ensure that the quality and rigor of online courses and programs are equivalent to the quality and rigor of traditional courses. Student learning in distance education programs shall compare favorably to student learning in campus-based programs. Documentation of outcomes shall be maintained in the appropriate academic office and be available for review.

The University shall provide professional development opportunities for faculty to increase their awareness of distance education methodologies and improve their instructional skills. Faculty shall have appropriate services and resources to assure their effectiveness as distance educators and to ensure an effective and efficient teaching and learning environment. Each course instructor/developer assigned to a distance education course shall have access to consultation, training, implementation, and evaluation support from instructional design and delivery staff to ensure the effective and efficient use of the chosen delivery system. The University shall provide appropriate equipment, software, and communications access to faculty to support interaction with students, cooperating institutions, and other faculty for approved programs and courses.

Faculty shall receive appropriate recognition of teaching and scholarly activities related to distance education programs commensurate with their efforts in traditional activities and programs.

Courses taught via distance education may be included as part of the faculty member's regular assigned load or may be recommended by the appropriate Department Chair and submitted for overload compensation approval. If the course is not part of the regular teaching load, the online course will be considered overload subject to the same parameters as defined in PS 209.

Class size for distance education courses will be determined through a consultative process that includes faculty, department chairs, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and appropriate University administrators.

IET Services will provide support and training to faculty preparing to teach or teaching online courses, including: training in the use of instructional technologies to support teaching and learning, Quality Matters, software, hardware, and Moodle.

Students and Student Services

Distance education students are held to the same admissions standards and enrollment processes as campus-based students.

Distance education students shall have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services and student rights equivalent to that provided to campus-based students and appropriate to support their learning and successful matriculation. Services include the following as necessary and appropriate:

- admissions services,
- course and degree requirements,
- required technological competence and skills,
- technical equipment requirements,
- availability of academic resources,
- availability of student services,
- program/course costs and payment policies and due dates,
- academic calendar and deadlines,
- academic policies and appeals processes, and
- availability of disability accommodations and procedures for accessing these resources.

Students should consult with their program of study advisor for course requirements, advising, and other curriculum and program-related questions. Advisors' contact information can be obtained via the faculty/staff directory and academic program links on the university web site.

Evaluation and Assessment

Distance education course offerings shall be evaluated according to the procedures in effect by Academic Affairs for course evaluations. Additional items to be evaluated shall include the specific questions agreed on by the Online Advisory Committee which are added to the course evaluation forms.

Academic department heads shall review evaluation results to facilitate the continual refinement of distance education course offerings. Consistent with the policies governing on-campus evaluations, documentation of evaluations must be kept on file in the department office, as well as documentation of the proactive use of the results of the evaluations.

Each distance education program shall be assessed in the same manner/frequency as the specific department's assessment of programs offered on campus. The department chair shall review assessment results with assigned faculty, distance education and technical staff, and cooperating service unit heads to facilitate the continual refinement of the distance education program. Documentation of this process and of the proactive use of the results shall be maintained in the appropriate academic office and be available for review.

Self-Review Contract
(Contract only valid through Fall 2016)

LSU Alexandria contracts with _____ to provide a comprehensive self-review for _____ (course). The reviewer will utilize the online Quality Matters Course Review System.

Resources: Reviewer will have access to the Quality Matters online review system.

Process: This is to provide an opportunity for course instructors/developers to review their course and make improvements based on the Quality Matters Rubric

Qualification of Self-Review/Course for Review:

1. The course (specific content and structure) to be reviewed must have been offered in online or hybrid format for LSU Alexandria at least one semester prior to Summer 2014.
2. Course must have had enrollment of at least 8 to qualify for compensated review (cannot be independent study course)

Compensation/Outcomes: Compensation for this review will be commensurate with the amount paid to Peer Reviewers for Quality Matters at the conclusion of the review (as of Fall 2013, \$150 per course). Outcomes will be as follows:

1. Course instructors/developer will indicate for each standard in the rubric whether the standard is met or not met. Standards that are met will indicate where in the course evidence of that standard may be found. Standards that are not met will include the rationale of why it doesn't apply or how it will be resolved.
2. Course instructors/developer will attach the completed review to this request for compensation.
3. Course instructors/developer agrees the course will be offered online or in hybrid format, within the next two years using the modified course design in future offerings.
4. Course instructors/developer agrees to submit course (with faculty developer worksheet from the Quality Matters site) for peer review to complete the Quality Matters review process. (Internal Reviews will be conducted until such time as LSUA has trained reviewers to conduct managed reviews which will result in use of QM logo).
5. This contract does NOT constitute work-for-hire under LSU Intellectual Property Policy.

Course Name: _____

Faculty Member: _____ # completed Prior self-review contracts: _____

Course Last Offered online or hybrid: _____ Anticipated future semesters to be offered: _____

Faculty Developer

Department Chair

Teresa Seymour, Director Distance Learning

Dr. Barbara Hatfield, Vice Chancellor for
Academic and Student Affairs

Course Review Request– Quality Matters

LSU Alexandria contracts with _____ to provide a comprehensive self-review for _____ (course).

Resources: Content developer will complete the Course Worksheet in the QM System

Process: This is to provide an opportunity for course instructors/developers to review their course and make improvements based on the Quality Matters Rubric

Compensation/Outcomes: Compensation for this review will be commensurate with the amount paid to Peer Reviewers for Quality Matters at the conclusion of the review (as of Fall 2013, \$150 per course). Outcomes will be as follows:

1. Course instructors/developer will indicate for each standard in the rubric whether the standard is met or not met. Standards that are met will indicate where in the course evidence of that standard may be found. Standards that are not met will include the rationale of why it doesn't apply or how it will be resolved.
2. Course instructors/developer will attach the completed review to this request for compensation.
3. Course instructors/developer agrees the course will be offered online or in hybrid format, within the next two years using the modified course design in future offerings.
4. Course instructors/developer agrees to submit course (with faculty developer worksheet from the Quality Matters site) for peer review to complete the Quality Matters review process. (Internal Reviews will be conducted until such time as LSUA has trained reviewers to conduct managed reviews which will result in use of QM logo).
5. This contract does NOT constitute work-for-hire under LSU Intellectual Property Policy.

Course Name: _____

Faculty Member: _____ # completed Prior self-review contracts: _____

Course Last Offered online or hybrid: _____

Anticipated future semesters to be offered: _____

This review will be: (choose one)

_____ An internal review – no QM designation (\$450 payments to reviewers plus \$500 to developer after review is successfully complete)

_____ A campus managed review – QM recognition, uses 1 or 2 on campus reviewers (\$450 payments to reviewers plus \$500 to developer after review is successfully complete)

_____ A QM Review – Campus contracts with QM to conduct entire review (\$1000 to QM plus \$500 to developer once review is successfully complete)

Faculty Developer

Department Chair

Teresa Seymour, Director Distance Learning

Dr. Barbara Hatfield, Vice Chancellor for
Academic and Student Affairs

Peer Reviewer Contract

LSU Alexandria contracts with _____ to provide peer reviewer services for _____ (course). The reviewer will utilize the online Quality Matters Course Review System.

Resources: A completed and approved Developer Worksheet will be provided to the reviewer as well as access to the Quality Matters online review system. Reviewer will also be granted access to the course being reviewed and the scheduled time of initial conference with the faculty developer.

Process: This is to be a collaborative and collegial process. The goal is continuous improvement of online and hybrid courses. The reviewer is to look for evidence of meeting the standards and make recommendations for improvement. A review does not supplant academic freedom of the faculty member/developer.

Qualification of Reviewers:

1. In order to be a designated course reviewer, the reviewer must have successfully completed BOTH the “Applying the Quality Matters Rubric” course AND the “Peer Reviewer” course from Quality Matters.
2. Reviewer must have successfully completed the LSUA Teaching Online Course OR be approved by the department chair of the department offering the course as having sufficient experience/training to evaluate online courses.

Compensation/Outcomes: Compensation for this review will be commensurate with the amount paid to Peer Reviewers for Quality Matters at the conclusion of the review (as of Fall 2013, \$150 per course) Outcomes will be as follows:

1. The initial review must be completed within 3 weeks of the start date of the review. Start date is marked by the date of the initial conference with the faculty member/developer. If the review is not complete within three weeks, the review contract will be assigned to another reviewer. Compensation will not be prorated.
2. Reviewer will make substantive comments on each and every standard in the rubric. Recommendations for improvement are required if the standard is not met. If standard is met, evidence or description will be provided. Recommendations for improvement are encouraged, even if standard is met.

Start Date for Review: _____

Peer Reviewer: _____

Master Reviewer Contract

LSU Alexandria contracts with _____ to provide peer reviewer services for _____ (course). The reviewer will utilize the online Quality Matters Course Review System.

Resources: A completed and approved Developer Worksheet will be provided to the reviewer as well as access to the Quality Matters online review system. Reviewer will also be granted access to the course being reviewed and the scheduled time of initial conference with the faculty developer.

Process: This is to be a collaborative and collegial process. The goal is continuous improvement of online and hybrid courses. The reviewer is to look for evidence of meeting the standards and make recommendations for improvement. A review does not supplant academic freedom of the developer.

Qualification of Reviewers:

1. In order to be a designated master reviewer, the reviewer must have successfully completed 1) the “Applying the Quality Matters Rubric” course, 2) the “Peer Reviewer” course from Quality Matters, and 3) the Master Reviewer Course from Quality Matters.
2. Reviewer must have successfully completed the LSUA Teaching Online Course OR be approved by the department chair of the department offering the course as having sufficient experience/training to evaluate online courses.

Compensation/Outcomes: Compensation for this review will be commensurate with the amount paid to Master Reviewers for Quality Matters at the conclusion of the review (as of Fall 2013, \$250 per course if the Master Reviewer serves as Chair of the review committee). Outcomes will be as follows:

1. The initial review must be completed within 3 weeks of the start date of the review. Start date is marked by the date of the initial conference with the faculty developer. If the review is not complete within three weeks, the review contract will be assigned to another reviewer. Compensation will not be prorated.
2. Each reviewer will make substantive comments on each and every standard in the rubric. Recommendations for improvement are required if the standard is not met. If standard is met, evidence or description will be provided.
3. Master Reviewer will have two weeks after review is complete to take all comments and compile a single report with recommendations for faculty developer.
4. If the course does not meet QM Standards after review, Master Reviewer will re-evaluate any standard that the developer makes changes in. Changes must be made and re-evaluated within two weeks after final revisions are made.

Start Date for Review: _____

Master Reviewer

Teresa Seymour, Director Distance Learning

Dr. Barbara Hatfield, Vice Chancellor for
Academic and Student Affairs

Course Review Process Quality Matters Review

1. Online or Hybrid course is offered at least two semesters
2. Request is made to have course reviewed (since funds are committed, this has to be approved through Academic Affairs)
3. Content developer (usually the faculty member) completes the Course Worksheet through the QM system
4. Team is appointed/contracted to serve for this review (training required)
5. Master Reviewer (team chair) distributes Course Worksheet to team and coordinates meeting (phone or in person) with developer for initial meeting. This is the start of the review
6. Team members review course independently in the QM system using the current QM Rubric. Team can communicate with developer and each other throughout the review to ask questions or possibly resolve 'simple' issues as they go. Consensus is not required on any standard.
7. Master Reviewer uses online system to compile results, comments, recommendations and outcome to provide to the developer.
 - a. If course meets QM standards (all essential standards are met and score of at least 81 of 95 total possible points) developer is notified, payment is requested and processed.
 - b. If course does not yet meet QM standards, faculty developer is provided feedback and specific recommendations that will result in meeting the standards. Master Reviewer will review changes made and once they meet standards will notify developer and payment will be processed.
8. Initial review is completed within three weeks. Time for revisions (if needed) depends on scope of revisions needed. Revisions must be made within six weeks to have Master Reviewer re-evaluate for compensation to be processed for developer.



HE Implementation Plan Worksheet

Now that your institution has made a commitment to implement the Quality Matters Rubric across your online/blended curriculum, proper planning will be the key to success. *The Institution Representative Training will guide you through the completion of this worksheet; however, it may be completed outside of the IR Training.*

This plan is developed jointly between Heather Williams and Teresa Seymour – both Institution Representatives for LSU Alexandria.

Part 1: Governance - Who will lead your QM project?

Institution Name: Louisiana State University at Alexandria
Initiation Date: Spring 2014
Plan Manager: Teresa Seymour
Title of Plan Manager: Director, Distance Learning
Contact Information: 8100 Hwy 71 South, Alexandria, LA 71302
Ph: 318-473-6566 Fax: 318-473-6575
Email: tseymour@lsua.edu

Part 2: Goals – What you wish to achieve through the integration of the QM Program.

LSU Alexandria seeks to provide high quality online programs and courses. Following the research based, peer review process of QM will provide guidance and collegial, collaborative feedback to faculty teaching hybrid and online courses to ensure the highest possible quality of online courses while ensuring students have access to information and materials needed for academic success. It will also foster consistency in our course structures.

Part 3: Engagement – How will you gain staff commitment?

Our plan will be called “The Power of ‘A’ – Alignment, Activity, Assessment”. (LSU Alexandria is often referred to in the LSU System as ‘A’). Stipends will be provided to faculty members that engage in the process. Initially, this will include a small stipend for substantial ‘self-review’ using the QM Course Review system. A more substantial review will be provided to faculty who pass an internal review of peers. As we have approved peer reviewers on campus, we will move to Managed Reviews. It is expected that as the rubric becomes part of the course development culture, the self-review stipends will no longer be necessary and course reviews and course maintenance will continue. Stipends will be provided to faculty members who have courses that pass a peer review.

How will you (or have you) introduce QM to your faculty?

- We are currently in the building stages of our QM application. We are piloting course reviews with an online learning committee. We also have members participating in coursework that will allow them to become peer reviewers.

Will you do so as part of an event or meeting and, if so, how will you encourage attendance?

- Once ready to launch, we will present QM during our mandatory spring faculty meeting to discuss the benefits of the QM rubric and its application.

Will you ask someone from QM to present (via a webinar or onsite)?

- We anticipate having the Director of Distance Learning trained to conduct the Applying the Rubric course.

What key points about QM do you think would be most motivating in encouraging your faculty to embrace QM?

- High-quality, structured content. It allows educators academic freedom while providing a structured framework to assist with content delivery.

Part 4: Rubric Use – Identify the ways in which you will utilize the QM Higher Education

Rubric

- Course Evaluation
- Course Development
- Course Maintenance
- Other: Explain.

Part 5: Professional Development – What PD opportunities and incentives will you provide?

Members of the Online Advisory Committee (faculty and staff) are completing the appropriate QM training to become Peer Reviewers. A former faculty member who now works at another institution is eligible for Master Reviewer Training. The director of Distance Learning will become eligible to conduct F2F training for Applying the Rubric.

Use the following table to help you with your planning. Add additional rows if needed.

QM Training	Dates	Target Audience	Follow Up
Applying the Rubric	On-going	Up to 50 faculty members	
Peer Review	On-going	Up to 25 faculty members	
Master Reviewer	On-going	Up to 5 faculty members	

Part 6: Course Reviews – Will they be mandatory, optional, official or informal? What will be your criteria for selecting courses for review (most in need or most likely to succeed; Oldest; Newest; By Department)?

To date, we have decided to offer optional, internal reviews for our faculty, especially those that are offering online courses. Course reviews will be by request with four maximum stipend supplements per instructor/developer in a five year period. We anticipate moving to official reviews as we have enough trained participants to conduct the reviews. The goal is to have at least 50% of all online degree program courses be recognized as meeting QM Review standards. New courses (courses each instructor offers online for the first time Spring 2014 or later) will be developed to the rubric – their reviews will take place after being offered at least twice.

APPROVED: _____
G. Daniel Howard
G. Daniel Howard
Chancellor

_____ 03/12/14
Date