

One perspective on Quality Matters course certifications

We embraced Quality Matters (QM) as a framework for continuous improvement of online and blended courses just over four years ago. To get a faculty perspective I reached out to Gary Copus, professor emeritus, and asked him to share any highlights, benefits or challenges experienced as part of certifying three UAF Justice courses: Introduction to Justice (JUST 110), Research Methods (JUST 222), and Ethics and Justice (JUST 300). This tip provides his answers and a few paths you might take to make use of Quality Matters.

PLUG IN

- EXPLORE CURATED RESEARCH
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- COURSE CERTIFICATION

HISTORY

UAF has 28 QM-certified courses so far. These courses come from a variety of subjects including accounting, atmospheric sciences, business administration, biology, communications, justice, math, music and psychology. See the [full list of UAF's QM-certified courses](#).

INSIGHTS

QM stresses that students should clearly know what is expected of them. Professor Copus writes: “QM requires you to integrate class objectives, tasks to get to those objectives, and evaluation of students’ progress toward learning those objectives. Each section of the class flows from general to specific. Without this focus, some objectives were not realized simply because I had not organized the rest of the section toward that end. Most importantly, I was now concentrating on addressing each objective and how to get there and evaluation of student success.”

BENEFITS

There are many QM workshops to take including Designing Your Online Course, Addressing Accessibility and Usability, and Connecting Learning Objectives and Assessments. QM-certified facilitators within the UA system offer some of these workshops online and face-to-face, while the majority are available through Quality Matters. Each of the workshops

has a different focus. You don’t have to start with certifying a course. Copus says, “In a nutshell, meeting the requirements of QM forces an instructor to focus on what are the goals and objectives of a class, how to accomplish those goals, and how to evaluate whether the student mastered them. QM integrates course content.” If you’re curious about [QM professional development](#), fill out [this short form](#).

CHALLENGES

Some items could easily be considered a challenge and a benefit. QM requires instructors to think about how they will evaluate assignments. Copus writes, “Just asking a student ‘What do you think about the Criminal Justice Process?’ isn’t enough. QM requires actions to be clearly stated, which can be challenging. These statements provide the instructor with a basis to evaluate.” For example, Copus rewrote the assignment to say “Give a road map of the steps of the Criminal Justice Process and identify what you consider to be key concerns at each point.” According to Copus, the benefit is “the instructor and the student know what is expected and elements (key points and concerns) can be evaluated.”

Copus has taught Introduction to Justice, Research Methods, and Ethics and Justice for many years. He feels “attaining QM certification for each of the three has been a tremendous asset to myself and my students.”

OPPORTUNITIES

UAF eCampus is assisting several faculty to prepare for Quality Matters course certifications. You can get started by doing a self-check on your online or blended course, participate in a workshop or attend training. Complete [this short form](#) to get started.

Watch or listen to QM Success Stories for inspiration. 1. Log into your free account, 2. go to the [free webinars page](#) and 3. click on the “[Reference Library](#)” link.

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