QM@YC

YC ESSENTIALS HANDBOOK

How to complete a self-review and mentor your colleagues!

Abstract

This handbook provides a basic guideline on how to participate in YC's Essential Design and Teaching self-review process, conduct a mentor/faculty meeting examining Essential Design and Teaching self-reviews, and how to submit the documentation of your time and efforts.

My thanks to you all for participating in this very important program intended to ensure our online and blended students' success.

Professor Lindsay Henning

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Basic roles in YC's Essential Self-Review process:

As a **Course Representative,** it is faculty's opportunity to have a colleague observe their online or hybrid course, assure them that the design and teaching plan is working as planned, and help faculty notice areas that might need a bit of help so their students can more easily accomplish what is intended for them.

As a **Course Mentor,** it is a mentor's job to be a listening ear for their colleague as well an extra set of eyes on a course with which the mentor might or might not be familiar. As learned through experience as a QM-trained mentor, it is *not* a mentor's job to judge, to assess, to grade: It *is* their job to be a resource, a sounding-board for their faculty partner, the Course Representative.

As a **Team**, it is everyone's collective purpose to work together while focusing on what the students will experience in the course being reviewed. The ultimate goal is offering a good course that maintains academic rigor, meets all course and module learning outcomes, all while the design supports the students' ability to fully participate along with all that implies.

As **Director of QM@YC**, it is my job to smooth the way for all of you throughout this process. I collect data from Banner to help determine which courses are due for review, collect and organize all self-review submissions, match faculty with mentor for the self-review meeting and discussion, support each team in whatever they might need, lead trainings and meetings regarding YC's Essential processes, recruit and train mentors, collect and document completed self-reviews, and share the resulting data with our Deans.

On a personal note, please allow me to assure you I walk the walk, not just talk the talk: I have personal and recent experience as a QM-Certified Peer Reviewer, I am a mentor for the YC Essential Design and Teaching self-review process, and a faculty member who has successfully applied for and earned QM certification for my own online course designs. I am also a QM-certified facilitator in the "Improve Your Online Course" workshop — the workshop that directly mirrors our YC Essential Design process.

I well know conducting a self-review and then discussing the results with a colleague can be a bit challenging. It is always difficult to take a hard look at what we are doing with someone else peering over our shoulders as we do so, isn't it?

Quality Matters focuses on continuous improvement — something we all do as faculty each and every semester as we prepare for the next semester...

Please feel free to contact me whenever a question or concern arises!

My thanks,

Lindsay

QM@YC FAQs

How can I become a mentor?

When YC's Essential Standards self-review program first began, there were a few ways you could qualify to mentor your colleagues. Basic experience in Quality Matters and how to read and apply the Essential Standards YC has adopted was desired for mentors:

- Continuing-contract faculty at the time of the review
- Has taught an online course over the past 18 months at the time of the review
- Authored a QM-certified course ~or~
- Completed the *Apply the QM Rubric* workshop

As our program grows, so too, does our mentor program! There was a recent expansion to the mentor program which can offer a stipend to mentors for completed and mentored self-reviews to those who have advanced training in Quality Matters. The qualifications needed to be considered for a stipend are:

- Continuing-contract faculty at the time of the review
- Has taught an online course over the past 18 months at the time of the review
- Successfully complete the Improve Your Online Course workshop ~or~
- Be a QM-certified Peer Reviewer with current standing at time of the review

How do I become a Course Representative?

At Yavapai College, we are very lucky that we have TeLS (Teaching and e-Learning Support) to help faculty by sharing course design tools and build skills using those tools.

Unlike other colleges who have Instructional Designers (ID) whose sole responsibility is to create the course design and work with faculty to import their content into the ID-developed course shell, TeLS does not create or design courses: YC's faculty is ultimately responsible for course design. If you teach a course at Yavapai College, you are your course's representative.

How is my team determined?

One member of your team is easy to determine! It is you, *you* are your Course's Representative. After your self-review report is forwarded to the folks at QM@YC, a mentor will be found for you. QM@YC will usually attempt to match you with a mentor who is not in your discipline.

The goal in matching you with a mentor is not to have someone comment on your content but instead help you look at your course design. It is much easier to keep that distance (not commenting on your content) when your mentor doesn't teach the course you are reviewing or teach in the discipline to which you belong.

How will I learn who is on my team?

The members of your team consist of you as Course Representative and your assigned Mentor. When you as Course Representative have completed and submitted your course's self-review, the folks at QM@YC will send an email to you and your mentor. This email serves as your introduction to each other as team members and will contain a brief list of the next steps to follow depending upon your role in the team.

When is my course self-review considered complete?

The basic steps to a course's self-review are:
- Notification of the need to conduct a self-review
- Download and use YC's Essential Design and Teaching forms
  - The self-review forms can be found at www.yc.edu/QM
- Complete your self-review following the instructions on the self-review forms
- Submit your self-review to your dean, department chair, or designated 'other'
- All self-reviews are then forwarded to the folks at QM@YC
- The folks at QM@YC match you with a mentor
- You and your mentor meet to talk about your course and self-review
- You resubmit your self-review to QM@YC including any notes regarding what you plan to update, tweak, improve, or polish.

Once you resubmit your self-review (with notes, etc) to QM@YC, your course's review process will be indicated as complete.

Which courses need to be self-reviewed?

YC's Essential Standards Design and Teaching self-reviews are evaluative tools developed, adopted, and used by faculty teaching online and blended courses. All online and blended courses are included in this process. The list of courses needing self-reviews is compiled using Banner as the data source. Any course classified in Banner as "Online" or "Classroom and Web (hybrid)" will be included in the compiled list.

How often do I need to conduct a self-review for my course?

We are on a two-year cycle for conducting a self-review on an online or blended course you teach. If you complete a self-review on a single course in May 2019, that course with you still teaching it online/blended will not be due for self-review until Spring 2021. Including a review of the QM Essential Standards can easily become part of your normal "getting-your-course-ready" activities as you prep for the next time you offer your course.

How do I know if my course needs to be self-reviewed?

A report is downloaded from Banner each semester after the schedule is finalized. It is this report that is used to identify the courses to be self-reviewed in the coming semester. The

report is distributed to each School's Dean as well as the Department Chairs. They will let you know if your course is on the list. Please feel free to check with the folks at QM@YC (that's me!) if you are not sure.

What is the time frame required to complete a self-review?

The time frame to complete your self-review is decided collectively by you, your mentor, and your Department Chair or Dean.

I teach using a common (Master) course shell. Do I have to do a self-review of my course?

If you are using a common course shell, the first question to answer is if the course has been QM-certified. If the course has been QM-certified and if the structure of the course remains the same as when it was certified, your section of the course should be exempt. Your Department Chair or Dean should have this information. If you need to check, please feel free to contact the folks at QM@YC (yes, me again!)

I teach three different courses online but use the same design for each. Do I need to complete self-reviews for all three courses?

QM@YC looks at the pairing of faculty and course. Each unique course/faculty pair is required to complete a self-review. If you teach three different courses but use the same structure or course design in each, you will need to conduct self-reviews of all three.

Underlying principles of Quality Matters:

The Quality Matters Rubrics and processes are:

Continuous

- The Quality Matters process is designed to ensure all reviewed courses will eventually meet expectations.
- The process is integral to a continuous quality improvement process.

Centered

- On research - the development of the rubric is based in national standards of best practice, the research literature, and instructional design principles.
- On student learning - the rubric and process are designed to promote student learning.
  - On quality - the review sets a quality goal at the 85% level or better (courses do not have to be perfect but better than good enough).

Collegial

- A Quality Matters review is part of a faculty-driven, peer review process.
- The review process is intended to be diagnostic and collegial, not evaluative and judgmental.

Collaborative

- The review is based on collaboratively identified evidence found in the course rather than the personal preference of an individual reviewer.
- The review is flexible and not prescriptive (many ways to meet each standard).
- The review team consists of experienced online instructors as reviewers in communication with the course developer.

As you work with your team either as mentor or the Course Representative, please keep these concepts in mind.
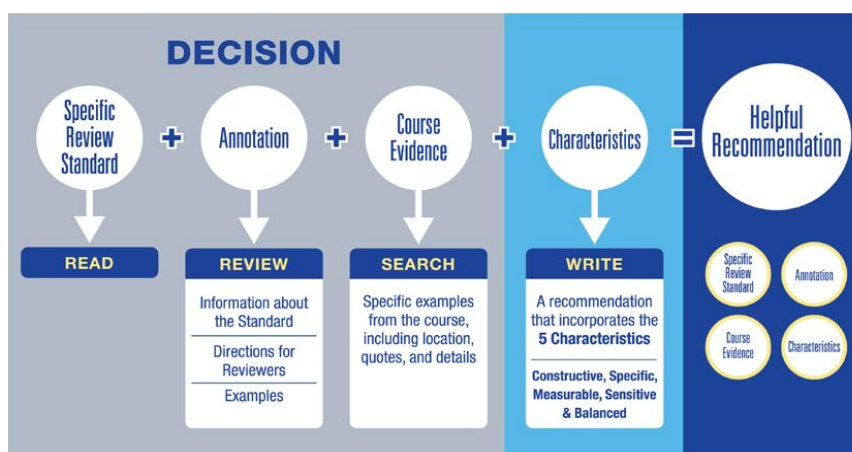
Always remember, we are faculty supporting faculty.

Constructing a helpful recommendation:

When working with a faculty member, the following reference is most helpful to assist the team's focus on the course design (not content) in a collegial manner.

Helpful Recommendations Reference

A helpful recommendation consists of four components and five characteristics. Helpful recommendations help the Course Representative make changes to the course that will help learners. Below are additional descriptions of each component and characteristic:

Component/ Characteristic	Description
Specific Review Standard	Reviewers read the Specific Review Standard to determine what sort of evidence to look for in the course. Helpful recommendations are written for the right Specific Review Standard.
Annotation	Annotations guide reviewers about what the evidence might look like in a course. A helpful recommendation is supported by the Annotation.
Course Evidence	A helpful recommendation includes evidence found or not found in the course to support the decision and the suggestion for improvement. Evidence is used to make a decision and supports the request for change that will lead to improvements to the course.
Constructive	A helpful recommendation identifies areas for improvement and offers solutions that will improve the course.
Specific	A helpful recommendation is explicit about what could be improved, where it could be improved, and how it could be improved.
Measurable	A helpful recommendation describes an observable change to the course.
Sensitive	A helpful recommendation uses sensitive language that speaks to the Course Representative as a colleague, without being so sensitive that the need for change is obscured.
Balanced	A helpful recommendation points out areas for improvement and meaningful strengths when it is appropriate to do so.

Determine your next steps by *your* role:

If you are the Course Representative:

- Conduct your self-review(s) using the Essential Design and Teaching forms found on QM@YC's website, www.yc.edu/QM Once on this page, look for the following text:

  QM@YC's Essential Design and Teaching forms (download and edit in MS Word):
    - QM@YC Essential Design Standards
    - QM@YC Essential Teaching Standards

  (Click on the forms' links and download the Word documents to your own computer. There are a few instructions at the top of the Design form to help you get started)

  - *Your Dean or Department Chair (or designated 'other') will let you know which blended or online courses are up for review. If you feel your course should not be included, please contact me and your Dean or Department Chair to have its inclusion reassessed.*

  - *Please, please, please use the latest QM rubric and the descriptions of each Standard, their annotations, and their examples during your self-review. It is through referring to the annotations that you can learn just what the Standard means through a deeper explanation and also see some examples of how a Standard might be met.*

  - *Please use the self-review tool in the QM website if you don't have QM's most recent Rubric.*

  - *Please use the "Comments" column in the YC Essential Design and Teaching Standards forms to document specific evidence of the inclusion (or lack ☺) of compliance to that Standard.*

    - *Your evidence should include specific descriptions of where and how each Standard was satisfied and also provides a place to note where you might want to make changes.*

    - *Remember, self-reviews are <u>not graded</u> — this process is intended to provide a structured tool to help you see what is working and what you might want to change.*

    - *Self-reviews are conducted not only for your information and to provide documentation of your valid self-review but to also help streamline the meeting with your mentor by pre-identifying just how and where each Standard was satisfied.*

- Email completed self-reviews as attachments to your Dean or Department Chair (or designated 'other')

- - *Your Dean or Department Chair (or designated 'other') will keep a copy and forward a copy to QM@YC (That's Stacey and me!) via email.*

  - *Following the receipt of the self-review form, a mentor will be paired with you by Lindsay via email.*

- Add your mentor to your course with a "student" role

  - *Choosing the "student" role is intentional as we are evaluating our courses based on what our students see,-not on what we hope they are seeing.*

- Share your completed Essential Design and Teaching forms with your mentor

  - *If you use a soft-copy, you can not only easily share your form, you can also easily update the form with any comments or changes.*

- Make an appointment with your mentor to discuss your results

  - *This appointment could be in person or via Zoom. The only requirement is that during this meeting you should both be able to see the course at the same time.*

- While meeting with your mentor, develop your update plan (if any) and determine when to implement identified changes. Document those plans on your forms.

- Send updated forms to Lindsay as documentation the Essential self-review process for this class with a note saying the self-review meeting and related activities are concluded.

  - *This does not necessarily include any updates you determine you might want to make — changes to a course takes time. It is the decisions and implementation planning that should be noted on your resubmission.*

If you are the Course Mentor:

- Check to see you can enter faculty's course and your role is "student"

- Become familiar with faculty's completed Essentials Design and Teaching forms

  - *Please contact the Course Rep for a copy of each*

- Accept and/or arrange an appointment with faculty to discuss his/her results

- Refer to and apply QM's Principles and Helpful Recommendations guidelines: depend upon them during your meeting.

As a member of the Team:

- Review the completed Essentials Design and Teaching forms with the Course Representative

    - *Discuss and determine which changes could be made*

    - *Document those changes on your Essentials forms in the Comments area*

- Submit final versions of both forms to QM@YC (That's Stacey and me!)

    - *Please rename files to now include the word "Final" in both file names.*

Once your self-review is completed, your course should not need another self-review unless you have completed major design changes that impact the Essential Design Standards or two years has passed since the course's last self-review.

Thanks again for your participation and a job well done!

Lindsay