

An Exploration of Ten Quality Assurance Frameworks: A Focus on Technology Enhanced Learning

Developed as an outcome of the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL). IELOL is an annual leadership development program founded by the Online Learning Consortium and Penn State University.



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Quality Framework “Life Lines”

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Quality Framework: *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education*

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Quality Framework: *ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning*

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Quality Matters

Quality Framework: *Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric – Design Standards for Online and Blended Courses*

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Quality Framework: *UPCEA Hallmarks of Excellence in Online Leadership*

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Quality Framework: *Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs*

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Quality Framework: *ENCORE(S)*

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Quality Framework: *Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs*

Foreword

This exploratory analysis of various quality assurance frameworks (e.g., scorecard, rubrics, benchmarks) was undertaken as part of the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) curriculum. A collaborative initiative between the Online Learning Consortium and Penn State University. Beginning in 2009, the IELOL community now consists of over 325 alums who continue to network and use the skills they developed during the program.

IELOL is a four-part leadership development program from July – November annually. It is a cohort-based program requiring a variety of individual, group, and team project work. The program begins with a three-week online Primer experience designed to identify and focus attention on key leadership challenges in online learning. The second component is the Immersion experience held on-site at Penn State University that enables the IELOL participants to develop specific leadership skills, styles, networks, and strategies for leadership by understanding the dynamic forces in the field. A three-week follow-up then takes place online in the form of a Project component that provides senior-level mentoring and consulting for the participants as they apply the newly-acquired skills and information in their local settings. The program culminates with the IELOL Masters Class, a pre-conference workshop at the annual Online Learning Consortium Accelerate conference in Orlando, FL.

The work in this publication was part of the 2016 IELOL leadership development experience. IELOL participants, all contributors to this publication, identified the criteria for inclusion in the Compare and Contrast Matrix during the three-week online Primer in July, 2016. Small groups were then assigned to explore specific quality assurance frameworks during the Immersion experience. Each group reviewed their assigned framework using the same criteria. In addition, each quality framework had a “life line” that the IELOL participants could call upon during the working session. The life lines were individuals who had experience with or were actively involved in developing or maintaining a specific quality framework. This publication was distributed as part of the IELOL Masters Class in November, 2016.

As faculty members for the quality assurance area of the IELOL curriculum, a special thank you to both the contributors and life lines. We recognize that each quality framework has its strengths and particular use cases so that’s why we don’t rate or score the frameworks. Together, we share these insights to inform and educate digital learning professionals everywhere.

Mark Brown, Ph.D.
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Introduction

In a 1992 article by Alison Burrows, Lee Harvey and Diana Green, the authors start by sharing these questions...

- What is quality?
- Is there a single definition which explains its use in all circumstances?
- What do people mean when they use the word 'quality' in relation to higher education?
- How does the concept relate to others in higher education such as 'standards' and 'excellence'?

This article was one of the readings included in the three-week Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) Primer. As noted, questions about quality are not new and they certainly don't pertain to just online, blended, digital or technology enhanced learning environments. However, the focus of the quality frameworks reviewed in this analysis is tilted more toward online, blended, digital or technology enhanced learning environments because of the leadership roles of the IELOL participants.

As part of the leadership development Immersion experience of IELOL, 53 participants reviewed ten currently available quality assurance frameworks (e.g., scorecards, rubrics, benchmarks). IELOL participants, all contributors to this publication, identified the criteria for inclusion in the Compare and Contrast Matrix during the three-week online Primer in July, 2016.

Each of the quality frameworks were reviewed using the same criteria. The Compare and Contrast Matrix included five primary categories for analysis including:

- a. Quality Assurance Framework Background
- b. Using the Quality Framework
- c. Analysis of the Framework
- d. Stakeholder Analysis
- e. Value and Fidelity

Each of the categories focused and shaped the exploration of various frameworks. The Quality Assurance Framework Background is intended to provide specifics about the framework such as the URL, organizational author/maintainer, framework origins as well as information about the scope of the framework with regard to its use case. The second category, Using the Quality Framework, provides an overview of the cost as well as insights about any wrap around services provided to support framework deployment. Within the Analysis of the Framework category, the specifics of the framework are reviewed. This category does a deep dive to explore the major topics or indicators included, scoring processes as well as an exploration of how a user knows they have met the standards. The Stakeholder Analysis category focuses on the primary audience(s) for the quality framework. Within the Value and Fidelity category, the focus is on the types of measures included, fidelity of implementation in addition to potential impacts.

A sixth category entitled Review Team Perspectives provided an opportunity for each reviewing team to include insights about the framework that weren't included in the other five categories. An evaluative question about ease of implementation is included in addition to asking teams to identify other highlights about the framework.

To ensure groups had someone familiar with the framework or an expert they could consult during the work session, a "life line" had been identified in advance for each framework. The life lines were individuals who had experience with or were actively involved in developing or maintaining a specific quality framework. The life lines were available in most cases by phone, via email or through Skype. After the Immersion experience, the results from each group were reviewed by the life line for any errors in fact and additions were made based on their experience with the framework.

It should be noted that many quality frameworks undergo regular review and updating, so information contained in this analysis was accurate at the time of the review in August, 2016. Please consult the specific quality framework's URL for the most up-to-date and accurate information. The frameworks are included in this document alphabetically by the name of the framework.

Quality in online, blended, digital or technology enhanced learning environments is a global conversation. While many of the quality frameworks included in this analysis are primarily US-based, other publications include information about additional international frameworks: <http://www.icde.org/global-overview-of-quality-models>.

Burrows, A., Harvey, L., & Green, D. (1992). Concepts of quality in higher education: A review of the literature. *Quality in Higher Education*.

Retrieved from:

<http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/Harvey%20papers/Burrows%20Harvey%20and%20Green%20Concepts%20of%20Quality%20in%20Higher%20Education%20A%20review%20of%20the%20literature%20.pdf>

Quality Assurance Frameworks

ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning](#)
3. URL for the framework: <http://www.acode.edu.au/>
4. Date the framework was developed: [2007, initiated by Christine Goodacre and Angela Bridgland](#)
 - Has it been updated since? [Yes](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [Last reviewed in 2014, 2nd iteration. This major review was undertaken to ensure the benchmarks are both current and forward looking.](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [Move to clarify focus on technology enhanced learning \(vs online\).](#)
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
 - Was it research-based? [Members from Australia and New Zealand universities created the framework in 2007 before there was a lot of knowledge of other quality frameworks.](#)
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program Institution X
Other, describe: [The ACODE benchmarks have been developed to assist institutions in their practice of delivering quality technology enhanced learning experiences. ACODE sees organizations as an ecology. At the institution level ACODE is interested in creating the right conditions so quality can emerge \(e.g., institution, structure, and staff\). The focus is more about culture change.](#)

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? [It becomes part of the culture, part of what is done at an institution. It is a continual, iterative or part of the long-game.](#)
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: [ACODE provides a handbook focusing on the benchmarks. The](#)

handbook includes a Scoping Statement, a Good Practice Statement, a set of Performance Indicators (PIs) and an area to make initial recommendations that may need improvement. The publication is free and there is a nominal charge for any workshops.

9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? See above.
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? The benchmarks have been developed for use at the enterprise level. A significant time commitment may be necessary. It is expected that benchmarking would take place over a period of years.
11. How many institutions are using the framework? 47 in Australia and New Zealand
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? No, not apparent on the website

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? The benchmarks cover eight topic areas including:

- Institution-wide policy and governance for technology enhanced learning;
- Planning for institution-wide quality improvement of technology enhanced learning;
- Information technology systems, services and support for technology enhanced learning;
- The application of technology enhanced learning services;
- Staff professional development for the effective use of technology enhanced learning;
- Staff support for the use of technology enhanced learning;
- Student training for the effective use of technology enhance learning;
- Student support for the use of technology enhanced learning.

The eight benchmarks can be used as a standalone indicator, or used collectively to provide a whole institutional perspective.

14. How are the topics/indicators categorized? The benchmarks start broad (institutional and support systems) and then drill down into stakeholders (staff, students, implementers, support services).
15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? Because it is institution focused (support for enterprise) it isn't as granular on course indicators of quality.
16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? Yes, institutions may also customize the benchmarks by replacing or adding their own Local Performance Indicators (LPis).
17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? Each Performance Indicator comprises Performance Measures. Each measure is rated on a 5-point scale (where level 5 indicates good practice). There are five statements that represent progress toward good practice (as represented

by the indicator), with some represented as a matrix. Service areas, or units within the institution can complete a self-assessment of current practice using these indicators, noting that it is not necessary to aspire to best practice on all.

18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? The benchmarks are a way to establish a “real” picture of where an institution sits in relation to the benchmarks, and by extension, within the sector.
19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? Yes, there are accessibility standards but not at a detailed level.

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners? Yes
- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom?
 - Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included?
- The focus on students is two part: student training for the effective use of technology enhanced learning and student support for the use of technology enhanced learning.
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? Benchmarking for a variety of stakeholders.

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? While institutions can deploy the benchmarks as standalone indicators or collectively, these benchmarks become even more powerful when they are used in association with other institutions, as part of a collaborative benchmarking exercise. This is where one or more institutions are willing to share their practice and journey in technology enhanced learning with others, based on the outcomes of their own internal benchmarking activity.
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? Process focused, quality of the environment for technology enhanced learning.
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? Focus on supporting a culture of continuous quality improvement in technology enhanced learning.
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? The approach reflects an enterprise perspective, integrating the key issue of pedagogy, with institutional dimensions such as planning, staff and student development as well as infrastructure provision. It's a mindset of continuous improvement and change.
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? Very flexible and can compare to other institutions through a collaborative, comparative

benchmarking exercise.

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique? The benchmarking aspect is unique. The focus on supporting a culture of quality and change setting up conditions for success.
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? Complex due to a focus on cultural change, although each benchmark can be completed separately.
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about?

Courseware in Context Framework (CWIC) Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [Courseware in Context Framework](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Tyton Partners in collaboration with OLC and SRI International](#) – the intent is that the framework will be community owned.
3. URL for the framework: www.coursewareincontext.org
4. Date the framework was developed: [June 2016](#)
 - Has it been updated since? Y/N, describe details: [Newly developed](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [Research will be updated annually](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [Newly developed](#)
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
 - Was it research-based? [Yes](#)
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course [X](#) Program Institution
Other, describe:

[Used by administrators, departments and other institutional leadership to inform potential purchase and implementation of digital courseware. Important note for the CWiC website: “The framework, however, is not a definitive guide to purchasing, implementing or using digital courseware, nor is it a scoring system to rate products or institutions. It is, however, a tool to inform decisions about the selection and implementation of quality courseware for a given](#)

course, while recognizing that quality means different things across courses, institutions and instructors.”

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? The framework is intended to support institutions along a continuum including four different phases: discovery, selection, adoption/implantation, and evaluation of digital courseware.
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? Limited If so, describe: Three different instruments are available to support the needs of different end users. Those instruments include: The CWiC Product Primer, The CWiC Designer, and The CWiC Framework.

The CWiC Product Primer was developed primarily with a focus on faculty members. The CWiC Designer supports instructional designers. Finally, the most comprehensive of the instruments is The CWiC Framework which includes all of the tools and is designed with administrators in mind. A web-based interactive version of each of the instruments is under development.

9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? Free - creative commons licensing
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? Not provided
11. How many institutions are using the framework? Piloted with four institutions who are part of the CWiC advisory board - UCF, UGA, Ivy Tech Community College and Kaplan University.
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? Recent paper published with results from schools on advisory board.

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? The major components of the framework include: digital courseware foundations (showcased in The CWiC Product Primer), efficacy research aligned with the functional product features and implementation guides. Because the campus stakeholders vary, e, three different instruments were developed for higher education faculty, staff and administrators (see #8 above).

The CWiC Product Primer includes three capability areas including functional capabilities (e.g., depth of interaction, measurement and structure, scaffolding, adaptivity, feedback, learner autonomy, collaboration, customization configuration, and usability), procurement capabilities (accessibility,

browser/OS compatibility, interoperability, privacy and security, as well as scalability) as well as delivery platform capabilities (content management, course administration and reporting).

The CWiC Designer adds a database of efficacy research aligned with each of the functional capability areas in addition to what is included in The CWiC Product Primer.

The CWiC Framework includes the product primer foundations in addition to the efficacy research and adds to that both course and institutional implementation guides.

14. How are the topics/indicators categorized? Digital courseware can include:
- All-in-one courseware
 - Courseware via LMS
 - Courseware as a Collection of Tools
15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? Focuses on digital courseware which is unique.
16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? Yes, without major changes this framework can be implemented in various types of learning environments (e.g., blended), not just online.
17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? Yes
18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? Yes, both the product primer and implementation guides have a scoring system.
19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? Yes, the courseware capabilities state it does and the rubric includes a number of accessibility areas.

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners?
- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? Some, indirectly
 - Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? No
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? eLearning senior administrators, IT, instructional designers

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? Ensures you have the tools and features you want for your courses.

23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? [Input: the evaluation spreadsheet.](#) [Output: the results tab of the spreadsheet.](#)
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? [This rubric helps you choose the systems that you want to implement within your infrastructure \(or to build your infrastructure\).](#)
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? [This framework helps translate high-level strategic goals \(such as wanting rich interaction or systems that enable specific capabilities\) into tactical actions \(such as training individuals to use the tools and features that can be used to accomplish the strategic goals\).](#)
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? [This rubric helps the institution identify advanced eLearning tools that fit best with their needs and want to implement institution-wide.](#)

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique? [It is first and foremost a decision-making aid to guide the selection and implementation of digital courseware that support a given pedagogy and/or institutional strategy.](#)
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? [Simple.](#)
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about? [This framework is really used for evaluating tools, not instructional methods that are actually used in class. The best tools don't guarantee quality -- particularly if they are not used, or are used improperly.](#)

ENCORE(S)

Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [ENCORE\(S\)](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Clemson University Online](#)
3. URL for the framework: <http://www.clemson.edu/online/faculty-resources/certification/encores.html>

4. Date the framework was developed: [2014/15](#)
 - Has it been updated since? Y/N, describe details: [Yes, revised via Google Doc regularly. First major overhaul recently.](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [Pretty regularly \(monthly or bi-annually\) most recently March 22, 2016.](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [It has changed quite a bit since 2015, from a checklist to a full rubric.](#)
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
 - Was it research-based? [Yes – based in part on Quality Matters](#)
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course [X](#) Program Institution
 Other, describe:

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? [There are two phases. The first phase is called Compliance, and it ensures that courses meet minimum standards to satisfy federal, ADA, and accreditation guidelines. The second phase ensures that courses adhere to best practices in online education. The first phase is the required design phase. The second is not required.](#)
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: [Yes, online website with info on professional development and reviews. They need to complete the Course Compliance Certification before they teach the course.](#)
9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? [No cost, developed by university.](#)
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? [Concert is a 6 week training course \(3-5 hours per week\). Once completed they can use the framework, submitted to Encore as a review. Tier 1 compliance review is a 1-2 week process. Initial reviewer feedback with ENCORE is 2-3 weeks after course is submitted for review. This process is currently under review.](#)
11. How many institutions are using the framework? [Clemson University Online currently uses the framework. No other institutions have implemented.](#)
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? [They did get feedback to help them make revisions. They made it more user friendly and clearer in the standards they are expecting.](#)

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework?
[ENCORE \(this is technically the compliance phase\)](#)

- a. Course Structure
- b. Syllabus
- c. Accessibility

ENCORE(S)

- d. Experience of Students
- e. Navigationally Sound Design
- f. Collaborative Learning
- g. Ongoing Faculty Presence
- h. Relevant Application
- i. Engaging Content
- j. Superior Qualities

14. How are the topics/indicators categorized?

- a. Course Structure
- b. Syllabus
- c. Accessibility
- d. Experience of Students
- e. Navigationally Sound Design
- f. Collaborative Learning
- g. Ongoing Faculty Presence
- h. Relevant Application
- i. Engaging Content
- j. Superior Qualities

15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? **Yes**

16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? **Yes, not institution specific.**

17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? **Met or Not Met for each item in each category.**

18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? **It is submitted for review and they have to meet 90% met for rubric.**

19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? **There are two phases, and it is in the first phase. This focuses on ADA and federal law.**

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners? [Yes – Experience of Students section](#)
- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? [No](#)
 - Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? [Yes](#)
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? [Yes, run through an advisory board.](#)

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? [It goes through the beginning and the end of the course development process in two phases.](#)
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? [No, just looking at design.](#)
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? [Great impact but creating this learning ecosystem with the two phases of the holistic review process.](#)
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? [Completely supports improvement of course, from beginning to end and through revision.](#)
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? [Maximizes student success.](#)

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique? [Created by Clemson.](#)
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? [Simple, but in two phases.](#)
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about? [Won an Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\) award.](#)

Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions \(C-RAC\)](#)
3. URL for the framework:
https://cihe.neasc.org/downloads/POLICIES/Pp90_Guidelines_for_the_Evaluation_of_Distance_Education_On-line_Learning.pdf
4. Date the framework was developed: 2006
 - Has it been updated since? Y/N, describe details: [Yes. The Guidelines were updated in 2009 and 2013. The Standards for Accreditation, revised in 2011 and 2016, reflect quality standards for programs delivered in all modalities, including F2F and distance education.](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [N/A](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [N/A](#)
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
 - Was it research-based?
[Various factors, including approval by the DOE to award financial aid for programs offered 50% or more online, and a General Accounting Office report, prompted the presidents of 6 regional accrediting bodies to convene and develop guidelines by drawing from interviews of best practices that include 9 hallmarks of quality in distance education programs.](#)
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program Institution
Other, describe:

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? [This framework can be used as a roadmap for institutions and they can develop online programs to map to the guidelines. It is used specifically for program planning, developing policy, developing assessment strategies, budgeting and conducting reviews.](#)
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: [No. Agencies are not prescriptive, so it is left up to the institutions.](#)

Every institution must develop policies and procedures for faculty development, etc. However, they must describe how these wraparounds are effective and equal to F2F. There are not rubrics to assess wrap around services, and it is recommended that the guidelines are used in conjunction with other quality tools such as OLC or QM.

9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? [Not stated](#)
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? [Not stated](#)
11. How many institutions are using the framework? [The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges \(CIHE of NEASC\) accredits 238 institutions, of which about 150 offer some form of online programming. CIHE of NEASC institutions that offer online programming are encouraged to become familiar with and use the Guidelines in tandem with the Standards for Accreditation. The Guidelines are similarly used by all regional accreditation agencies; therefore, all regionally accredited institutions \(about 3,000\) in the United States have access to these Guidelines.](#)
12. Is there any feedback or references from users?

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? [The 9 pillars developed from interviews on best practices.](#)
14. How are the topics/indicators categorized?
15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have?
16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? [It is woven in to a number of accrediting body standards. It can be used in conjunction with other frameworks.](#)
17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? [Each institution choses whether or not to use the guidelines separately from that which is incorporated into the accrediting body standards.](#)
18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? [No](#)
19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? [In this framework there should be no difference between online and face-to-face in terms of accessibility requirements.](#)

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners?

- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom?
- Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included?
The focus is on student learning and assessment outcomes. However, those are defined on an institutional basis.

21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented?

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? Ensure consistent for all institutions. Requires institution to involve faculty to develop curriculum goals. Development program is the same as F2F.

23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? Yes, all of the programs are required to have learning outcomes and assessment methodologies.

24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem?

25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement?

26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? N/A

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique?

28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement?

29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about?

How many institutions are developing programs using external/contracted resources (e.g. Pearson) for their online program? What frameworks are the external resource providers using? The Commissions would have to review proposals and vendor contracts when using a 3rd party provider.

Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs

Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [OLC Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\)](#)
3. URL for the framework: <http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/>
4. Date the framework was developed: [2015](#)
 - Has it been updated since? Y/N, describe details: [No, however it will be updated on a regular basis.](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [It is anticipated that the scorecard will be updated every 3 years.](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable):
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
 - Was it research-based?
[Yes - The Delphi Method, developed by the Rand Corporation in the early 1950s, was used to gain consensus among experts in the administration of online education to identify quality indicators for the scorecard. The Delphi Method is considered a hybrid of both quantitative and qualitative research because both statistical and qualitative data are used. Fifty-four expert panel members participated in the study. Each panel member had five or more years of experience as an administrator in a blended learning program, had either published or presented in the field and were currently working at a community college, public college or university, private college or university, faith-based college or university or for-profit college or university.](#)
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program X Institution X
Other, describe:

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? [This scorecard can be used in all the phases of program planning, design, delivery, implementation and evaluation as well as in preparation for an accreditation visit and for continuous improvement.](#)

8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: Yes, there is a handbook that includes a scoring rubric to provide insights for scoring leading to areas of improvement. Institutions often use their score to develop an action plan and then work on implementation to realize improvement. Institutional members of OLC, have access to a web-based interactive version of the scorecard.

OLC offers a professional development mastery series, through the OLC Institute, aligned with implementing the scorecard. In addition, OLC also offers consulting services to institutions in deploying the scorecard. It is possible for OLC to conduct a 3rd party review, using three trained reviewers, to provide an institution with an unbiased assessment of their blended learning program.

9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? The OLC Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs is free for anyone to download from the OLC website. The hardcopy handbook is available free to OLC institutional members and is available for \$49.99 for non-members. Both virtual and on-site consultation are also available in order to ensure program administrators understand each of the Quality Scorecard indicators as well as the minimum requirements of each indicator. A professional service fee will be assessed for virtual and on-site consultation.
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? Approximately 6 months, but it can vary depending upon the institution.
11. How many institutions are using the framework? Because of the free download of the instrument, it is impossible to know how many individuals or institutions have used or are using the scorecard.
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? Not at this point since it is so new.

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? The scorecard is comprised of 70 indicators. The 70 quality indicators are divided into eight categories. The categories include: Institutional Support (9 indicators), Technology Support (7 indicators), Course Development/Instructional Design (14 indicators), Course Structure (8 indicators), Teaching and Learning, (5 indicators), Faculty support (6 indicators), Student Support (11 indicators) as well as Evaluation and Assessment (10 indicators). The number of indicators in each category varies providing a weighting process for the overall tool.
14. How are the topics/indicators categorized? See above.
15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have?

16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? Yes, the scorecard is flexible and customizable in that institutions can use portions or all components of the scorecard.
17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? Each indicator is scored from 0 – 3 (3 = Exemplary, 2 = Accomplished, 1 = Developing, 0 = Deficient). With the 70 indicators, programs/institutions can score a maximum of 210 points. To determine which blended learning programs are exemplary, a score of 189 – 210 (90% - 100%) is needed. Acceptable programs score between 168 – 188 (80% - 89%). For programs scoring 147 – 167 (70% - 79%) they are considered marginal. Inadequate programs score between 126 – 146 points (60% - 69%) and programs that score lower than 126 points are unacceptable.
18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? The handbook associated with the scorecard includes a scoring rubric which provides insights and guidance for scoring individual indicators from 0 – 3.
19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? Yes

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners? Yes
- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? No
 - Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? Yes, there is a focus on student success.
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? Yes, institutional and IT-related indicators of quality are included illustrating that a blended learning program directly or indirectly involves many individuals at an institution.

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? The rubric included in the handbook provides the structure needed to ensure different institutions are evaluating their program using consistent criteria.
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? Yes, the Evaluation and Assessment category is full of indicators focused on learning outcomes and other output measures. Many of the indicators focus on inputs.
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? While many institutions offer fully online programs, it is recognized that the rise of blended programs on campuses will continue to rise. This scorecard focuses on best practices in a dynamic teaching/learning ecosystem.

25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? [The scorecard, and its associated handbook, showcase best practices in blended learning. By completing the scorecard, institutional personnel understand the strengths of their blended learning program as well as the areas that need improvement. An action plan can be created focusing on the areas for improvement.](#)
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? [The scorecard examines the degree of alignment between the mission, vision and the goals.](#)

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique?
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement?
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about?

Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [OLC Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Online Learning Consortium \(OLC\)](#)
3. URL for the framework: <http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/>
4. Date the framework was developed: [2010](#)
 - Has it been updated since? Y/N, describe details: [Yes in 2013/2014. A few new performance indicators were added and some wording was changed in the second edition.](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [The scorecard is updated every 3 years](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [The scorecard will never change significantly, the revisions will be based on changes in any policies or regulations such as state authorization.](#)

5. What was the process used to develop the framework?

- Was it research-based? Yes

This framework was created as a dissertation by Kaye Shelton and was research based. The Delphi Method, developed by the Rand Corporation in the early 1950s, was used to gain consensus among experts in the administration of online education to identify quality indicators for the scorecard. The Delphi Method is considered a hybrid of both quantitative and qualitative research because both statistical and qualitative data are used.

Forty-four expert panel members participated in the study. Each panel member had five or more years of experience as an administrator in an online program, had either published or presented in the field and were currently working at a community college, public college or university, private college or university, faith-based college or university or for-profit college or university. The Delphi study went six rounds to reach consensus and took 18 weeks.

6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program X Institution X

Other, describe: It is 360 degree evaluation of an online program or institution that includes course-related indicators.

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? It is used in all the phases of program planning, design, delivery, implementation and evaluation as well as in preparation for an accreditation visit and for continuous improvement. It is designed to be iterative.

8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: Yes, there is a handbook that includes a scoring rubric to provide insights for scoring leading to areas of improvement. Institutions often use their score to develop an improvement plan to guide their journey to realize improvement. Institutional members of OLC, have access to a web-based interactive version of the scorecard.

OLC offers professional development workshops, through the OLC Institute, aligned with implementing the scorecard. In addition, OLC also offers consulting services to institutions in deploying the rubric. In addition, OLC can conduct a 3rd party review, using three trained reviewers, to provide an institution with an unbiased assessment of their online program which can lead to an OLC endorsement of the online program.

9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? The Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs is free for anyone to download the scorecard from the OLC website. The hardcopy handbook is available free to OLC institutional members and is available for \$49.99 for non-members. Both virtual and on-site consultation are also available in order to ensure program administrators understand each of the Quality Scorecard indicators as well as the minimum requirements of each indicator. A professional service fee will be assessed for virtual and on-site

consultation (<http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/olc-quality-scorecard-review/>).

10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? Approximately 6 months, but it can vary depending upon the institution.
11. How many institutions are using the framework? Because of the free download of the instrument, it is impossible to know how many individuals or institutions have used or are using the scorecard. A sampling of twenty institutions are listed on the OLC website as currently using the scorecard. In addition, OLC recently announced the names of two Institutions who earned the Exemplary Endorsement for consistently meeting the defined quality metrics for two years in a row. The two institutions are Baker College and University of Wisconsin – La Crosse.
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? Yes, there are 3 universities quoted on the OLC website.

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? The scorecard is comprised of 75 indicators. The 75 quality indicators are divided into nine categories. The categories include: Institutional Support (9 indicators), Technology Support (7 indicators), Course Development/Instructional Design (12 indicators), Course Structure (8 indicators), Teaching and Learning, (5 indicators) Social and Student Engagement (1 indicator), Faculty support (6 indicators), Student Support (16 indicators) as well as Evaluation and Assessment (11 indicators). The number of indicators in each category varies providing a weighting process for the overall tool.
14. How are the topics/indicators categorized? See above.
15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? While not considered a course level quality assessment, adding Universal Design standards in future editions could be considered.
16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? Yes, the scorecard is flexible and customizable in that institutions can use portions or all components of the scorecard.
17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? Each indicator is scored from 0 – 3 (3 = Exemplary, 2 = Accomplished, 1 = Developing, 0 = Deficient). With the 75 indicators, programs/institutions can score a maximum of 225 points. To determine which online programs are exemplary, a score of 202 – 225 points (90% - 100%) is needed. Acceptable programs score between 180 – 201 points (80% - 89%). For programs scoring 157 – 179 points (70% - 79%) they are considered marginal. Inadequate programs score between 134 – 156 points (60% - 69%) and programs that score lower than 134 points are unacceptable.

18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? [The handbook associated with the scorecard includes a scoring rubric which provides insights and guidance for scoring individual indicators from 0 – 3.](#)
19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? [Yes, several indicators focus on various aspects of compliance and accessibility \(e.g., WCAGs\).](#)

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners? [Yes!](#)
- [Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? There is a learning engagement in the classroom environment and social engagement in an online community outside the course.](#)
 - [Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? Yes, they are and there is an entire category on evaluation and assessment.](#)
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? [Yes, Institutional Support is included such as governance, policy, intellectual property and organizational structure are all included. In addition, IT infrastructure is included in the Technology Support category.](#)

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? [There is a lot of transparency because the artifacts are all visible.](#)
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? [Yes, the Evaluation and Assessment category is full of indicators focused on learning outcomes and other output measures.](#)
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? [It's all about the learning process and learning of students. It is a 360 degree ecology of the student learning system from recruitment to degree completion.](#)
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? [The scorecard comes with a handbook that provides a framework for institutional personnel \(e.g., faculty, instructional designers, administrators\) to create an improvement plan that rebuilds weaknesses in areas of improvement.](#)
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? [The scorecard examines the degree of alignment between the mission, vision and the goals.](#)

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique? [Comprehensive 360 approach to a framework.](#)
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? [A simple way to address a complex analysis.](#)
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about? [The developer, Dr. Kaye Shelton is VERY involved, a lot of hands on support for success.](#)

Open SUNY Course Quality Review (OSCQR) Rubric Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [Open SUNY Course Quality Review \(OSCQR\) Rubric](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [Open SUNY's Center for Online Teaching Excellence \(part of the State University of New York\)](#)
3. URL for the framework:
<http://open.suny.edu/oscqr>
<http://commons.suny.edu/cote/course-supports/>
4. Date the framework was developed: [2013](#)
 - Has it been updated since? [Yes](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [Updated yearly](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [The amount of change for each edition varies as it is dependent on needs communicated by users. Changes to the most recent edition will allow for more flexibility for different programs/campuses. The rubric is even more customizable so faculty can change standards they disagree with or those that do not meet their needs.](#)
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
 - Was it research-based? [Yes. They did internal research but also pulled from existing research.](#)
<http://commons.suny.edu/cote/suny-research-abstracts/>
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program Institution
Other, describe:
[The review for Open SUNY + courses is designed to be conducted by a team within any institution. These can include those of the faculty member who teaches the course, an instructional designer,](#)

multimedia/technologist, librarian, faculty colleague or subject matter expert, or student, depending upon the campus preference. Additionally, an individual faculty member, instructional designer, or peer teams can use the OSCQR Rubric to review a course.

Example: Binghamton University

Award faculty 1 credit hour of release time to refresh their courses; faculty self-evaluate; instructional designer reviews the course and an SME (other faculty) provides feedback regarding content; provide access to graphic design work; re-evaluation to measure the difference using dashboard analytics.

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? This rubric is implemented differently by each campus. Some institutions require it and others do not. SUNY encourages institutions to put together a schedule for develop, review, and refresh of each course.
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking audits) to support the framework? If so, describe:
 - [Rubric](#)
 - [Self-Assessment](#)
 - [Dashboard](#)
 - [Community of Practice](#) for people (1) Interested in Online-Enabled Education; (2) Experienced Online Practitioners; (3) Expert Instructional Designers; (4) Online Teaching Exemplars, Coaches, and Mentors; (5) Innovators and Researchers; and (6) Friends of SUNY.
 - [Innovative Instruction Research Council](#)
 - [The Open SUNY Course Quality Review \(OSCQR\) Process](#): online faculty perspective (a review by the course author); the online instructional design perspective (a review by someone with an online instructional design or faculty development background); external reviewer perspective (a review by someone unfamiliar with the course, preferably a librarian, technologist, or other faculty member)
9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? No charge; Open source; set up a network for reciprocal reviews
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? Review less than a day; refresh takes time. Expectation is not that the course will be completely refreshed in one semester, but that issues are identified and a schedule is established for refresh.
11. How many institutions are using the framework? Approximately 40 campuses within SUNY. Rubric is being used by campuses in many different states. Because it is freely distributed, we are not able to provide an exact number.

12. Is there any feedback or references from users? [OLC \(Online Learning Consortium\) Effective Practices in 2015](#); [NUTN \(National University Technology Network\) award for Institutional Achievement in 2015](#).

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework?

- [Course Overview and Information](#)
- [Course Technology and Tools](#)
- [Design and Layout](#)
- [Content and Activities](#)
- [Interaction](#)
- [Assessment and Feedback](#)

14. How are the topics/indicators categorized?

- [Course Profile](#)
- [ID](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Reviewer 1](#)
- [Action Plan](#)

15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? [No](#)

16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? [Yes, it is adaptable, dynamic, flexible and customizable.](#)

17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? [Yes, indicators include: Sufficiently Present, Minor Revision, Moderate Revision, Major Revision and Not Applicable.](#)

18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? [Points/grades are not assigned in the framework. The focus is on continuous improvement, so the rubric indicates where elements can be improved, and how long it might take. There are no passing or failing scores.](#)

19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? [Yes, throughout and one specific criteria for technology accessibility.](#)

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners?

- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? [No](#)
- Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? [Yes](#)

21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? Yes - librarians, technologists, faculty developers are invited as part of the review team.

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? The OSCQR framework is designed to be flexible, so there is likely to be some variation from campus to campus or course to course. The rubric is designed to allow for modification of standards, so it is possible that one campus' version of OSCQR is different from another. This is designed as a feature, but does lead to less uniformity.

23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? Yes, analytics are part of the dashboard.

24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? Creates a process for assessing course quality which will, in turn, improve student outcomes.

25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? Used formatively, the framework can lead to greater consistency and align with best practices. The framework provides for a regular process of reviewing and refreshing courses and promoting quality course design.

26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? The framework is customizable to meet course, department, and institutional needs.

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique? Open-source, flexibility, and analytics platform

28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? Simple and customizable

29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about? They have an Innovative Instruction Research Council that just posts questions to guide the direction of research. They also have an OER Dashboard for data analytics. There is opportunity for other institutions to partner and come in for collaborative efforts in order to better the process, better the rubric, and better the resources that OSCQR.

Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric – Design Standards for Online and Blended Courses

Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric – Design Standards for Online and Blended Courses](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [The Quality Matters project was initiated by the MarylandOnline \(MOL\) consortium, a voluntary, non-profit, association of post-secondary two and four year institutions in the state of Maryland. MOL was established in 1999 to leverage the efforts of individual campuses whose academic leaders were committed to the expansion of online educational opportunities in Maryland through collaborative activities. In July of 2014, Quality Matters became a separate nonprofit organization and a licensee of the Quality Matters material owned by MOL.](#)
3. URL for the framework: <https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric>. The fully annotated Rubric is reserved exclusively for QM member institutions.
4. Date the framework was developed: 2003-2006
 - Has it been updated since? Yes
 - Describe details: [Rubric updates occur approximately every 3 years and are based on a review of the research literature, data analysis, input from the user community and the work of a Rubric Revision Committee composed of experts from the field.](#)
 - What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [Currently at Fifth Edition - new version is scheduled to be released in 2018.](#)
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [The project leaders did not envision the creation of “perfect” courses, or a perfect set of standards. Rather, they foresaw that application of the rubric would improve courses, and that repeated reference to this evolving set of standards would make courses progressively better. The standards were not intended to be prescriptive; rather, they were developed as benchmarks for good practice.](#)

Another founding principle, which continues to drive Quality Matters, is the need for the standards to reflect current academic research on effective learning. The initial standards and subsequent modifications have been based on the insights of teams of experienced online teachers and instructional designers and on the best practices standards promulgated by accrediting bodies and national and international organizations. In addition, the QM standards have been examined for consistency with the conclusions of the educational research literature

regarding factors that improve student retention rates and activities that increase learning and engagement.

5. What was the process used to develop the framework? FIPSE awarded MOL \$509,177 over three years (September 2003 – August 2006) to carry out the project. The agency was interested in this proposal among many that involved quality assurance in online education because the proposed standards would be inter-institutional and inter-segmental and because of the unique peer-to-peer structure of the proposed course review process. The project had the potential to yield a quality assurance tool that was both scalable and replicable, criteria that are fundamental to the FIPSE grant program.

In 2005, MOL received several awards, including the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) award for Outstanding Work (WOW) and the United States Distance Learning Association award for 21st Century Best Practice for the 2 Quality Matters initiative. In the second and third year of the grant, peer reviewer training to develop a cadre of reviewers attracted participants from 158 different institutions spanning 28 states. During this period more than 700 faculty and instructional development staff were trained to conduct peer reviews using the Quality Matters Rubric.

Was it research-based? Yes

6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course X Program Institution
Other, describe:

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)?
The framework can be used at the initial course design stage, as benchmarking process for continuous improvement, and it can also be used to evaluate existing online and blended courses and beyond.
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: QM offers various types of course reviews based on the HE Rubric with review teams comprised of certified Peer Reviewers and Master Reviewers from the QM community. QM member institutions also have access to web-based tools to conduct internal reviews or custom reviews on their own. QM professional development offerings are available.
9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? QM has several subscription types including Basic, Full, Consortia, System, and Service Provider. Subscription fee starts at \$1,650 annually as Basic. If an institution or organization is already a QM member, they can subscribe to additional Rubric services at the following annual rate:
 - HE Publisher Rubric - \$500
 - K-12 Secondary Rubric - \$500

- K-12 Publisher Rubric - \$500
- Continuing & Professional Education Rubric - \$500
- QM for Students - \$300

10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? While official course reviews are conducted within 4-6 weeks with a 20-week window to complete a review including amendments, internal reviews at an institution can take less or more time depending on where the institution is at regarding their course development and review process and preparedness. The time it takes to implement QM as part of the quality assurance process at different institutions also varies.
11. How many institutions are using the framework? More than 1,000 institutions across 47 states in US and 6 other countries are QM member institutions.
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? Guidelines for initial online course development; quality assurance of existing courses; ongoing faculty professional development; institutional reaccreditation; educate faculty about quality in online courses; reduce time and labor in designing courses; provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff; threshold requirement for adjunct faculty; inform teaching practices related to design and structure for BOTH online and F2F courses.

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? The QM Rubric looks at all elements of online course design quality, from welcome through assessment measures. Specifically, they are Course Overview and Introduction, Learning Objectives (Competencies), Assessment and Measurement, Instructional Materials, Course Activities and Learner Interaction, Course Technology, Learner Support, and Accessibility and Usability.
14. How are the topics/indicators categorized? The topics are categorized with course design in mind. There are eight General Standards and 43 specific review standards. These specific standards are assigned 1-3 point values. The fifth edition Higher Education Rubric has a total of 99 points.
15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? It does not assess the quality of course delivery.
16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? Aside from the 21 required 3-point essential standards, an institution, faculty developer, or instructional designer can choose to focus more/less on the rest of the 43 specific standards under the eight categories, especially as part of a professional development effort to promote a culture of continuous improvement.

17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? There are 99 total points possible. A course must have 85% or above of the 99 points and meet all 21 3-point essential standards in order to meet QM standards.
18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? For each specific standard there are detailed annotations with a description of criterion and example to meet the standard.
19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? General Standard 8 focuses exclusively on accessibility and usability. There are two essential standards in General Standard 8, and one essential standard in General Standard 7 that address accessibility.

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners? Yes
 - Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? There is a strong focus on learning inside the online course. General Standard 7 focuses on supporting learners by providing learners with all institutional and course related resources and support.
 - Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? Yes. All of General Standard 2 is about student learning outcomes. All of General Standard 3 is about assessment and measurement.
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? Faculty play a central role in all QM related activities. It is not possible to implement QM at any institution without faculty's participation in every step or administrative approval and support. The QM Coordinator is often an administrator, who works closely with the faculty at the institution, and is the point of contact and liaison between QM and the institution. Instructional design and support staff are often among the first to participate in QM professional development, and they provide training and support to the faculty in implementing QM standards.

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? This framework concentrates on course design quality.
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? This framework only assesses inputs. Since it assesses course design, it looks at how student learning outcomes are WRITTEN, not whether or not they are achieved. QM's alignment principle does ensure that major components of the course align with each other to help students achieve the stated learning outcomes.

24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? It gets everyone on the same page, and gives everyone a common vernacular to talk about course design. It does not cover course delivery or student achievement of learning outcomes, and it does not look at the program as a whole.
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? One of QM's underlying principles is continuous improvement, and QM review process ensures that all courses are reviewed by a review team composed of three Certified Peer Reviewers with the team chair being a Master Reviewer and at least one of them being an external Subject Matter Expert.
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? It helps ensure the quality of online courses. It can also be used as faculty development for instructors new to online learning, and help experienced online instructors to continuously improve their existing courses, both of which usually align with institutional goals.

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique?
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? It seems simple to implement other than securing buy-in across the usual channels and stakeholders.
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn't specifically ask about? It's a good starting point but it shouldn't be the only quality assurance framework or measure. The framework by itself doesn't address course delivery or actual student learning.

One member of the review team had personal experience with the framework and shared this: "I was too close to see what could be improved. It made all of my online courses better. Many elements that might contribute to a student withdrawing can be eliminated. I always find reviews to be a learning experience. This experience was very rewarding for me as both an educator and course developer. It's a great tool for honing your own course".

Quality Online Teaching and Learning (QOLT) Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: QOLT - Quality Online Learning and Teaching
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: California state University

3. URL for the framework: <http://courseredesign.csuprojects.org/wp/qualityassurance/>
4. Date the framework was developed: [Fall 2011 and launched winter of 2012](#)
 - a. Has it been updated since? [Yes, revised with CSU community input during 2012-2013. Instrument stabilized from there until the addition of the Mobile Platform Readiness sections in 2015.](#)
 - b. What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: [Once a year, every summer](#)
 - c. How much has the framework changed (if applicable): [In 2012 and 2013 made changes in wording for clarification and added more for the community of inquiry. In 2015 added the mobile platform readiness. Also have focused on Universal Design for Learning.](#)
5. What was the process used by develop the framework?
Was it research-based? [Yes, based on the following:](#)
 - [Rubric for online instruction at CSU Chico](#)
 - [Quality Matters](#)
 - [Quality Online Course Initiative](#)
 - [National Survey of student Engagement](#)
 - [Community of Inquiry](#)
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program Institution
Other, describe: [Used for online courses and for formal course reviews. Will be adding versions in Fall 2016 for flipped and blended/hybrid courses.](#)

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? [Delivery and design phases. Including a mobile platform readiness.](#)
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: [They provide two levels of training: "Introduction to Teaching Online Using QOLT" and "Reviewing Courses Using the QOLT Instrument." Related materials are downloadable.](#)
9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? [There is a \\$25 registration fee per person for online training. Onsite 1-day training is \\$750 for up to 20 participants BUT is only available to the California State system.](#)
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? [40 hours of training \(2 courses x 20 hours\) online is available. Also there is a one-hour time commitment for a reflective review of the course by an individual faculty member.](#)

11. How many institutions are using the framework? 23 campuses in the CSU system
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? No, but members of the CSU system have access Quality Assurance Resource Repository (QuARRy). QuaRRy is open access and available to anyone looking for online teaching exemplars that are indexed by objective but also searchable by keyword.

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework?

- Course Overview and Introduction (8 objectives)
- Assessment of Student Learning (6 objectives)
- Instructional Materials and Resources Utilized (6 objectives)
- Student Interaction and Community (7 objectives)
- Facilitation and Instruction (8 objectives)
- Technology for Teaching and Learning (5 objectives)
- Learner Support and Resources (4 objectives)
- Accessibility and Universal Design (7 objectives)
- Course Summary and Wrap-up (3 objectives)
- Mobile Platform Readiness – OPTIONAL – (4 objectives)

Of the 58 objectives, we have identified a Core-24 that are essential to address first and foremost.

14. How are the topics/indicators categorized?

- Course Demographics
- Course Design
- Course Delivery

15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? The framework is adaptable with essential objectives. There are nine sections with 54 objectives.

16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? This framework is standard but they are working on different versions to adapt to different course formats (blended/hybrid, flipped), providing some flexibility.

17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? Yes

18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? The rubric assigns points on a scale of 0-3. Points between 2 or 3 meet the standard and 0 or 1 do not meet the standard. Also, 24 core objectives must be met, and 80% of the remaining score fulfilled by the 18 other objectives. A total score of 42 or more objectives met is a passing score.

19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? [The institution has a strong commitment to compliance and accessibility included in the rubric.](#)

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners? [Yes](#)
- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom? [Not broken down that specifically.](#)
 - Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included? [Yes](#)
21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? [Yes](#)

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? [“We’ve developed a network where there is a dean that ensures that the feedback is implemented into the course. We can’t completely control, but we try to manage via certification”.](#)
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? [Yes, assessment of student learning \(output\) inputs-instructional materials and resources used](#)
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? [The purpose is to provide encouragement and support for online and hybrid courses that deliver the best experience for students.](#)
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? [Its comprehensive, includes multiple stakeholders, and includes facilitation and instruction.](#)
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? [Quality teaching/academic excellence is a key component of mission and vision of CSU and that is an integral part of QOLT.](#)

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique?
- [Mobile Platform Readiness, only one very unique, not embedded in technology section, but they stand alone, Universal Instructional Design strong focus there, system commitment.](#)
 - [It includes student section \(not found in other rubrics\).](#)
 - [There is also a student survey based on the Core 24 so that instructors can receive student feedback that is much more specific than standard institution “surveys of teaching](#)

effectiveness.” The student survey also allows them to build a database that shows what students value and/or find effective. Adds value to certification by having backing student data.

- Includes open access repository of exemplars indexed by objectives (quarry.calstate.edu).

28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? It seems complex with lots of stakeholders. It includes a database.

29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn’t specifically ask about? Seems rigorous and includes lots of components of others and research which is great.

Added Note: CSU Quality Assurance program recently received the **Making a Difference for Students Award: Outstanding Impact by an Organization**, awarded by Quality Matters. This recognizes many aspects of CSU’s program, at the center of which is its Quality Online Learning and Teaching instrument and training, as well as its own open access Quality Assurance Resource Repository (<http://quarry.calstate.edu>) that features a large number of exemplars indexed by both QOLT and QM standards.

“**Outstanding Impact by an Organization:** *California State University* is recognized for implementing Quality Assurance for their blended-online courses initiative, cultivating exemplary practices, and cross disseminating exemplars among faculty to improve the quality of their courses. Marked by a cadre of QM certified master/peer reviewers, the initiative has also increased agreement among students that their online instructors are effective in developing and delivering quality online course experiences.”

UPCEA Hallmarks of Excellence in Online Leadership Compare and Contrast Matrix

Quality Assurance Framework Background

1. Quality framework name: [UPCEA Hallmarks of Excellence in Online Leadership](#)
2. Organization that developed, supports, or promotes the framework: [UPCEA \(University Professional and Continuing Education Association\)](#)
3. URL for the framework: <http://www.upcea.edu/hallmarks>
4. Date the framework was developed: [2014](#)
 - Has it been updated since? Y/N, describe details: [No](#)

- What is the frequency at which the framework is reviewed: It is a living document that is going to continue to evolve.
 - How much has the framework changed (if applicable):
5. What was the process used to develop the framework?
- Was it research-based? Developed by a committee. 1 member created the first facet, revised by committee, then used as a model for other facets. Individual members wrote sections based on their experience, perspectives, and vision for the future. It was thoroughly edited to reflect a coherent set of ideals for online leadership.
6. Scope of the framework: Instructor Course Program Institution X
Other, describe: Leaders in online learning

Using the Quality Framework

7. When is it best used (e.g., design phase, delivery/implementation phase)? As an aspiration for online leaders and their institutions. Ongoing as part of a quality improvement process for an institution.
- “Rather than taking a snapshot of current practices, these Hallmarks suggest those truly daunting aspirations necessary to make online education worthy of the highest ideals of higher learning.”
8. Does the organization offer any wrap-around services (e.g., training, handbook, peer review, 3rd party review assessments, professional development, benchmarking, audits) to support the framework? If so, describe: National benchmarking survey planned, professional development offered at the Summit for Online Leadership throughout and during a post-conference workshop.
9. What is the cost for the framework and/or other wrap-around services? Framework is free, membership in UPCEA is up to \$6,400 but is not required, conference (professional development) carries a registration fee.
10. What is the time commitment needed to successfully implement the framework? Ongoing development and aspiration
11. How many institutions are using the framework? Unknown because there is no membership to use it.
12. Is there any feedback or references from users? This document was extensively vetted with UPCEA’s membership and governance.

Analysis of the Framework

13. What are the major topics/indicators of the framework? Facets of leadership and organizational development in online learning.

Advocacy and leadership within the university, Entrepreneurial initiatives, Faculty support, Student support, Digital technology, External advocacy and leadership beyond the university, Professionalism

14. How are the topics/indicators categorized? The topics are not given priority over one another. They are all important for online leadership. There are concrete indicators of efficacy related to each topic as well as KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that one can use to evaluate the efficacy of one's leadership. Each general topic area has both the concrete activities as well as the KPIs.

15. Is this framework missing any topics/categories that other frameworks have? This framework serves a very different purpose than others, so it is not easy to compare the topics to other online learning frameworks.

We would like to see a section on the development of the leader him or herself. Knowledge acquisition, curiosity, and continuous development are important in leadership.

16. Can this framework be applied in different settings without needing to be reworked? In other words, is the framework adaptable, dynamic, flexible, or customizable? This is a good framework for not only online learning leadership but also for people in other tech areas. That being said, one would need to change "faculty" to "employees" and "students" to "customers." These definitions and words are not mutually exclusive and one can think of both groups as being one or the other of the terms.

17. Are points, grades, or some other type of assessment used? Other – Observable measures for many of the facets, KPIs for all

18. How do you know you have met the standard? Is there a rubric for assigning points/grades? KPIs, observable measures for some of them. Rubrics for each facet are in development.

19. Does this framework focus on compliance and accessibility? There are aspects related to advocacy within the institution that would include compliance and accessibility.

Stakeholder Analysis

20. Is there a focus on learners?

- Is there a focus on learning inside and outside of the classroom?
- Are student learning outcomes and assessment measures included?

One of the facets is student support, which means advocating for creating an online learning

experience as good as or better than the face-to-face experience. The facet does not reference measures of learning, learning outcomes, or assessment, since these tend to be more the domain of academic leadership and faculty of specific programs.

21. Are other stakeholders (e.g., faculty, administrators) represented? Yes – the framework is actually designed for administrators, and includes a facet for faculty support

Value and Fidelity

22. How does this framework ensure fidelity of implementation of the course or program? The Hallmarks establish best practices and goals for course/program leadership. Strong leadership will in-turn support fidelity.
23. Does the framework include both output/outcome measures as well as inputs? No – the framework offers recommendations for outcomes and activity, but does not address inputs.
24. What is the value or impact of this framework with regards to a learning ecosystem? The Hallmarks provide “big pillars” and then suggestions for practical implementation.
25. In what ways does this framework assist institutional personnel in achieving course/program improvement? It is not a checklist, rather a series of big picture pillars with a list of suggestions for practice.
26. How does the framework align with institutional mission, vision, and goals for online learning? It helps to (re-)define mission, vision, and goals at an institutional level.

Review Team Perspectives

27. What makes this framework unique? It is a framework for excellence within online leadership, as opposed to course design or institutional structure. Also, the framework is aspirational as opposed to evaluative. UPCEA does not expect that anyone is really prepared to meet all of the hallmarks. The framework should be used as a personal and institutional growth/improvement model.
28. Does this framework seem simple or complex to implement? Fairly simple, because it is designed for self-assessment as opposed to detailed analysis.
29. What would you like to tell us about this framework that we didn’t specifically ask about? Beyond revisions to the existing framework, what does the organization intend for growing/developing in the online-quality space? In this case, UPCEA has started with this initial framework and is currently developing rubrics to measure the facets and a national benchmarking survey for institutional comparison.

Also, is the framework meant to measure a snapshot at once, or ongoing development? How long is a review “good” for? In this case, it is meant to establish a long-view of ongoing development

instead of a snapshot. It is expected to be used frequently to re-assess excellence as opposed to a “certification” with an expiration.

Conclusion

Quality has been a part of the conversation in higher education for years. For online, blended, digital or technology enhanced learning environments, the quest for quality and a need to understand it measures started in the early days. For example, in 1997, the Sloan Consortium (later named the Online Learning Consortium) published their Five Pillars of Quality Online Education. The pillars include Access, Learning Effectiveness, Student Support, Faculty Support and Scale.



(<http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/about/quality-framework-five-pillars/>)

The Pillars serve as the building blocks which provide the support for successful online learning. They have long signaled that quality and excellence matter and a focus on quality is an external quest.

The intent of this publication is to provide professionals in the field with an overview of key quality assurance frameworks (e.g., scorecards, rubrics, benchmarks) in use today by higher education institutions. It is apparent that there are more quality frameworks in the US and worldwide that were not included in this review. If you have a quality framework you would like to have reviewed by the IELOL participants in 2017, please contact Karen Pedersen at karen.pedersen@onlinelearning-c.org.