

Review of Online, Hybrid, and TN eCampus Courses at Walters State

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Walters State Community College (WSCC) was one of the early entrants into online education in the state of Tennessee. The present document continues the innovations WSCC faculty members are known for in the use of technology for teaching and learning, including online education.

Background

In the fall of 1998, Andrea Sanders, former English department faculty, offered the first online course at the institution, English 1010. At that time, because of the newness of this mode of delivery and no learning management system (LMS), the first online courses required students to come for a beginning-of-the-course orientation, a middle-of-the course check-in, and an end-of-course wrap-up. These face-to-face requirements were soon dropped as faculty and students became more comfortable with the technologies and processes of online education. In the early 2000's, TBR created the TN eCampus (formerly ROCC) program and purchased an LMS, which WSCC faculty soon adopted for their online courses and for other purposes.

In 2005, Distance Education began a process of reviewing the technical and content aspects of online courses. Based on some early Quality Matters (QM) training, faculty

developed documents for a technical review completed by faculty knowledgeable in the LMS and for a content review completed by a faculty member familiar with both online and the discipline/area of the course.

The Niswonger Project (2011-2014) was an i3 grant received by the college to develop online courses in specific disciplines for dual enrollment students. This project delivered 32 courses entirely online with dual enrollment students as the specified target audience. The Niswonger Project allowed the college to further invest in Quality Matters professional development for interested faculty and served as a model process for creating, reviewing, improving and ensuring robust online courses.

Online and Hybrid Courses

Online courses at WSCC are those that require no face-to-face meetings to carry out instruction and are indicated by “WEB” in Self Service Banner (SSB); hybrid courses include much instruction online but require one or more face-to-face meetings between faculty and students and are indicated by “HYB” in SSB.

Online and hybrid courses at WSCC will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Every five years in rotation with a division
- When major revisions in curriculum take place, as deemed necessary by deans or department chairs
- When textbooks change (but not necessarily editions of textbooks)
- During pilots for online course changes
- As deemed necessary by academic administrators

Faculty creating and teaching online and hybrid courses benefit from continued and specialized professional development, including the following Quality Matters courses:

- the faculty member is a developer— either lead developer or otherwise— of an online or hybrid course: APPQMR (Applying the Quality Matters Rubric) and DYOC (Developing Your Online Course)
- the faculty member is a reviewer of an online or hybrid course: APPQMR and PRC (Peer Review Course)
- the faculty member may be both a developer and reviewer of an online and/or hybrid course: APPQMR, DYOC, and PRC
- the faculty member teaches a course developed by another faculty member: TOL (Teaching Online)
- the faculty member is appointed by a dean to review for content only (no QM courses required)

The following rotation recognizes that when divisions concentrate on online and hybrid courses in their departments and divisions, faculty in that department and/or division attention on this particular mode of delivery and any issues that may be unique to online and/or hybrid learning in the discipline. Noting that the next SACSCOC report is due in 2027, WSCC divisions will review online and hybrid courses in the following rotation:

- Fall 2025-Summer 2026: Health Professional and Natural Science
- Fall 2026-Summer 2027: Humanities
- Fall 2027-Summer 2028: Behavioral and Social Science
- Fall 2028-Summer 2029: Business and Technical Education
- Fall 2029-Summer 2030: Math and Public Safety

At any time, academic deans may request that particular online and hybrid courses in their division undergo review in addition to the above rotation.

Academic Year Rotation

In the spring preceding the division review cycle, the Instructional Department for Educator Advancement and Success (IDEAS) will create a list of online and hybrid courses and faculty teaching those courses (fall, spring, and summer) for the indicated divisions to represent different departments. This list will be sent to the dean of the division by April 15. Then, the QM Coordinator and Instructional Design Executive Director will meet with the division dean to finalize the list of courses to be reviewed. The final choices are determined by the division dean and/or department chairs working in conjunction with the division dean. Substitutions may be made by the division dean or the department chairs during the division review cycle based on course enrollment and/or faculty needs.

Online and Hybrid Course Copies

The division dean will choose a faculty member to represent the selected course for review. The dean in conjunction with the faculty member will determine the course, section, and semester of the course to copy. Most reviews are copies of current sections. We recommend the course developer/instructor of the section should have previously completed the APPQMR (Applying the QM Rubric) course which details the standards being reviewed and expectations. Faculty are also encouraged to attend the 3-day IDEAS summer training where they can work on preparing their courses. The eLearn course materials including detailed annotations, faculty examples, and resources for each standard can be accessed at any time during and after the training. In addition, the QM Coordinator will send a copy of the current faculty peer review rubric with detailed annotations and notes, so faculty will know how they will be assessed before the review. This document is emailed in the spring after the division list is submitted by the dean and again prior to the faculty's scheduled semester review. The

QM Coordinator will notify faculty when the course should be ready to copy; this is usually during the third week of the new college semester. This gives both the faculty whose courses are being reviewed and the faculty peer reviewers time to settle into the new semester. The course developer will submit a Course Info document (see Addendum 1) that indicates the course, section, semester, year, CRN, read date, any third party material access info, other details about the course, and percentages for student-instructor, student-student, and student-material engagement. This document along with a PDF copy of the syllabus are returned to the QM Coordinator who provides these docs to the faculty peer reviewers prior to their independent reviews of the course.

TN eCampus Courses

In addition to online courses housed within the college, WS-owned TN eCampus courses will also be included in the QM review process. These courses are developed by faculty from the department and/or division, use the same (or similar) syllabi to the course on campus, and are overseen by the dean and department chair.

TN eCampus Master Courses are maintained by our college faculty. TN eCampus copies these courses and creates sections. The review will focus on a copy of a master course. The QM Coordinator will work with TN eCampus staff to obtain access to a Master Course for reviewers.

Reviewers

Three qualified faculty peer reviewers representing different divisions and/or departments will be selected to review each course. Reviewers are faculty members who have successfully completed training for APPQMR (Applying the QM Rubric) and PRC (Peer Review Course). Where possible, a content area expert from the same department as the course being reviewed will be part of the review team. The QM Coordinator will oversee this process and rotate reviewers to offer diversity and expertise.

Review and Improvement Process

Three reviewers are independently assigned to review each course such that

- The QM Coordinator will contact each reviewer separately, so they can work independently.
- The QM Coordinator will send each reviewer both the current QM Standards rubric review document, the Course Info document, and a PDF of the syllabus.
- Reviewers will provide comments, explanations, discussion points, and any applicable recommendations for improvement for each standard.
- Reviewers will have 3-4 weeks to complete each review during fall, spring, or summer semester.

- Reviewers will not be asked to review more than one course at a time.
- Reviewers will send their completed course review document to the QM Coordinator on or before the due date. The QM Coordinator will compile the three independent reviews into one document for each course.
- After the results are compiled, a Course Reviewers' meeting will be scheduled by the QM Coordinator. This meeting will be led by the QM Coordinator with assistance of the Executive Director of IDEAS. This is the first time the three faculty peer reviews are contacted as a team.
- When the Course Reviewers' meeting schedule is finalized, the QM Coordinator will send the combined course review document with each "not met" item highlighted. Faculty will review the combined course review document prior to the meeting.
- In the Course Reviewers' meeting, each "not met" standard will be discussed. Faculty peer reviewers may adjust their initial independent assessments during the discussion, comparison of the three different perspectives, and by re-examining the course copy, the Course Info document, and/or the syllabus. They will approve the final combined document and score.
- The QM Coordinator will contact the course developer/instructor to arrange a meeting with the QM Coordinator and IDEAS Executive Director to discuss and review the final combined review document with faculty peer reviewer names removed.
- After the meeting, the course developer/instructor will be emailed the combined final review document and a Course Improvement Action Plan (see Addendum 2). This plan briefly discusses how the faculty plans to make improvements on the unmet standards and which semester they plan to complete.
- The Course Improvement Action Plans for all courses are sent to the division dean after the division review cycle is complete. Deans do not see the original reviews, but faculty are welcome to share and also include in their promotion or tenure materials.
- If a course developer does not pass the review with the minimum of 85/101, they can request a re-review and rescore when their improvements have been made in a new semester and section. The QM Coordinator will work with one of the original reviewers to re-review an improved new section for just the unmet standards.

Reviewers' Meeting

As noted in the steps above, prior to scheduling a meeting with reviewers, the QM Coordinator will compile the three independent reviews into one document and prepare a review results document for a meeting with the course reviewers and IDEAS Executive Director. The reviewers will be emailed the combined review to preview prior

to the team meeting.

In that meeting, the following points will be addressed:

- Confidentiality of the review and professionalism needed in the review process.
- Appreciation of the reviewers for their work
- Discussion of each standard marked “not met” by all three reviewers
- Consultation of the course copy, Course Info document, and/or syllabus
- Discuss any other concerns or clarification that may be needed for the developer/instructor
- Discuss positive things the reviewers would like the developer to know

From the Course Review Meeting and oral input from the reviewers, the QM Coordinator will finalize the combined review document with the faculty peer review team’s final approval during the meeting.

IDEAS retains copies of the completed independent and combined review documents. Reviewers will be compensated after the Course Reviewers’ meeting. The QM Coordinator will notify the designated IDEAS staff that the reviews have been completed and for faculty to be compensated.

Developer/Instructor Meeting

When the review results document has been finalized, the QM Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the developer/instructor and the IDEAS Executive Director to share and discuss the review documents.

In that meeting, the following points will be addressed:

- Confidentiality of the review and professionalism of the review process
- Process of the QM review, especially each reviewer working independently
- Provide review results document and Course Improvement Action Plan to developer/instructor
- Discuss all “not met” QM standards where the majority of the faculty peer reviewers agree
- Discuss any other standards, as desired by the developer/instructor
- Discuss any other concerns of the developer/instructor
- Distribute the final combined review document (with faculty peer reviewer names omitted) and Course Improvement Action plan to the developer/instructor
- Discuss any assistance in making changes to the course that the developer/instructor feels they need.

Course Improvement Action Plan

At the end of the Course Developer/Instructor meeting, the Course Improvement Action Plan will be discussed with the developer/instructor along with possible improvement actions. Within three weeks of the meeting, the form is due to the QM Coordinator.

