

QM Framework for Quality in Course Sharing

Definitions, Principles, Guidelines, and Standards



qualitymatters.org

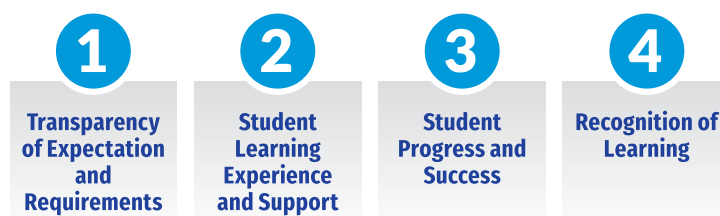
DEFINITION OF QUALITY IN COURSE SHARING

A quality online course sharing experience is one in which the student can further their academic progress by seamlessly enrolling in a well-designed and supported online course, offered outside their home institution, with transparent expectations and requirements, taught by a qualified and well-prepared instructor, recognized and appropriately transcribed by the home institution without the need for credit transfer.

PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY IN COURSE SHARING GUIDELINES FOR HI / STANDARDS FOR TI

To ensure students have a quality learning experience through course sharing arrangements to achieve their learning goals, four encompassing **Principles** are identified (transparency of expectations and requirements, student learning experience and support, student progress and success, and recognition of learning.). Since the course sharing experience results from the collaboration of two institutions (HIs and TIs), this collaboration determines how the above principles are supported and can be expressed through specific guidelines for the Home Institutions and standards for the Teaching Institutions. The Home Institution is ultimately responsible for quality because that is where the students are enrolled. The detailed guidelines shown below are intended to help Home Institutions: 1) identify and document their adherence to quality

Principles of Quality in Course Sharing



guidelines; and 2) efficiently meet the subset of guidelines that can be addressed by the selection of courses that are well-designed, well-supported, and taught by qualified and well-prepared instructors (which forms the basis of the standards for Teaching Institutions).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Home Institutions (HIs): Home Institutions are where students are matriculated and enrolled to study for degrees or certificates. Home Institutions maintain quality control and oversight of academic curriculum, and they enroll students in courses at partner institutions (Teaching Institutions - TIs) in order to fill the gap and/or help students further their academic progress to achieve their learning goals. Home institutions retain enrollments and recognize/transcribe students' credits from TIs without the need for credit transfer.

Teaching Institutions (TIs): Teaching Institutions make open seats in online courses available to students from partner institutions (Home Institutions - HIs) according to executed course-sharing agreements. Teaching Institutions ensure their online courses are well-designed and supported, and their online instructors are credentialed and well-prepared to teach online with external students (from HIs) enrolled. In collaboration with HIs, TIs are responsible for providing a quality learning experience to students, with all the support services needed, to help them succeed.

Furthering academic progress: Students take classes through course sharing agreements to acquire credit hours, continue their academic progress toward degree/certificate completion and graduation, or otherwise help reach their educational goals. The emphasis is on the opportunity to bridge a gap along their current pathway to help them remain on track with their goals.

Seamless enrollment: Starting from advising and ending on students enrolled in shared courses, the process is easy, smooth, and user-friendly for students, and for institution staff acting on behalf of students, with expectations, requirements and support resources clearly stated and communicated.

Well-designed and supported online course: Online courses are designed to meet QM Standards or other quality course-design guidelines with outcomes, assessments and learning activities well aligned, and interactions, expectations and resources clearly stated; online courses are accessible, easy to navigate and have built-in wrap-around services such as orientation, technical support, tutoring, proctoring, and accessibility services available to all students.

Transparent expectations and requirements: Students are informed of expectations and requirements of TIs and HIs, and how to meet them, prior to enrolling in or taking shared courses, including, but not limited to, required orientation and/or participation agreement, institution/course policies, course schedule and delivery format, technical and/or proctoring requirements, associated costs such as textbooks or required lab kits, grade grievance process, support contacts for content-related and technical issues.

Qualified and well-prepared instructor: Online instructors at TIs meet accreditation board requirements to teach online courses in the credentialed disciplines, have completed required training in

online teaching such as QM's Teaching Online Certificate (TOC), have prior experience in online teaching, and are effective in engaging all students, including those participating via course sharing, in a learning environment that is affirming, inclusive, and conducive to active learning. Instructors are aware that their classes may have students from other institutions via course sharing engagements, and are ready to support them in the same way as they do home students.

Recognized and appropriately transcribed credit: Recognition of learning and transcribed credits for courses taken from TIs are addressed in course sharing agreements between HIs and TIs and the credits are recognized by the HI on the student's transcripts.

1 Transparency of Expectation and Requirements

Overview Statement: Information is shared between engaged institutions, with students, and with external stakeholders as necessary, to ensure student expectations are met and learning goals are achieved. Transparency is necessary to i) develop and/or support a course sharing arrangement, ii) inform students in the selection of courses, and iii) provide students with information they need for the successful completion of the course.

Guidelines for Home Institution (HI):

- *Course-share solution or agreement clearly identifies* what information will be shared, and **how** relevant information will be shared, between the institutions in advance of student enrollment in TI course, including but not limited to:
 - » Course learning outcomes or objectives.
 - » Competencies in CBE courses.
 - » Faculty credentials.
 - » Institutional contacts.
 - » Grading schemes/structures.
 - » Student grades.
 - » Student drops and withdrawals on a timely basis.
 - » Student conduct, complaints, etc.
 - » Student accommodation needs.
 - » Institutional policies at TI that students need to comply with.
 - » Academic and student support services provided by TI and how they can be accessed.
- Provide students with information to guide and assist their course selection and enrollment.
 - » Articulate and communicate to students and external stakeholders how selected TI courses map to or align with HI courses and otherwise fulfill program requirements.
 - » Communicate competencies, in CBE courses, students are expected to master as well as any and all unique instruction methods to help ensure that the CBE courses are acceptable, meet accreditation requirements and further students' academic progress.
 - » Communicate to students requirements, expectations, and timing for them to complete the course in order to achieve learning goals, including what successful completion of the selected course means with emphasis on areas that differ from HI policies and practices.

- » Provide course syllabi or otherwise explain to students institution/course policies, course schedule and delivery format, technical and/or proctoring requirements, and associated costs such as textbooks or required lab kits, etc.
- Provide students with information they need for the successful completion of the course to achieve their learning goals.

This is achieved in part by selecting TI courses that meet the following Standards:

- » Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.
- » Students are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.
- » Instructor's self-introduction is welcoming and available.
- » Communication guidelines for the course are clearly stated.
- » Policies and expectations with which students are expected to comply while enrolled in the course are clearly communicated.
- » Course prerequisites and technology requirements are provided to students.
- » Course learning objectives are measurable and clearly stated.
- » How learning activities and learning materials relate to the achievement of learning outcomes is explained.
- » How student work is graded, including grading policies, is clearly stated at the beginning of the course.
- » Expectations for student interaction are clearly stated.
- » Instructions about how to get technical support, accessibility support, and academic support are provided.

2 Student Learning Experience and Support

Overview Statement: Processes are in place and executed to ensure students are supported from course selection/enrollment to successful completion of course, resulting in a quality learning experience to achieve learning goals and further academic progress.

Guidelines for Home Institution (HI):

- Establish and implement a “seamless” process to enroll students in TI courses that is simple and user-friendly for any actions required of students.
- Orient students to the course sharing engagement and to online learning, including but not limited to:
 - » HI requirements as well as institutional policy differences, if any, between HI and TI for enrolled students.
 - » How students can access technology, academic, and accessibility support services.
 - Identify the support services at the TI that the student will and won’t have access to and provide guidance to the student about how they can access these supports.
 - Students with known accommodation needs should have those needs conveyed to appropriate units at the TI, such as the Office of Accessibility and, at a minimum, to the course instructor.
 - » Explanation or interpretation of different terminologies used at TI.
 - » Contacts at HI and TI for student questions and concerns. (*Best practices may include offering students orientation sessions with staff from both HI and TI.*)
 - » Information that can help students engage and succeed in online learning.
- Establish and execute processes to support students, in coordination with academic support services offered at HI, by providing intervention and resolving issues they encounter while taking courses at TI.
 - » Provide students with information on how, and to whom, to identify possible issues that might arise while taking courses at TIs and advocate for their resolution.
 - » Include a process to proactively alert the TI about student needs for accommodation.
- Ensure courses are well-designed and meet quality online course design standards to support students and provide a quality learning experience.

This is achieved in part by selecting TI courses that meet the following Standards:

 - » Learning activities in the course provide opportunities for interactions that support active learning.
 - » Tools used in the course support stated learning objectives and promote student engagement.
 - » Instructors’ plan for regular interaction with students is clearly stated.
 - » Course navigation facilitates ease of use.
 - » Course design facilitates readability.
 - » Text in the course is accessible.
 - » Visual content is accessible.
 - » Audio content is accessible.
 - » Multimedia in the course is easy to use.
 - » Instructors are prepared to teach online with appropriate training.
 - » Instructors are aware that external students are enrolled in their courses, and they are prepared to teach and support them in resolving issues that might impact student performance and success.

3 Student Progress and Success

Overview Statement: Students are provided with learning opportunities and support that help them succeed and advance their academic progress.

Guidelines for Home Institution (HI):

- Advise students on courses that meet their learning goals and/or fulfill their program/degree requirements.
- Identify and select courses that are well aligned to specific learning goals to further students’ academic progress.
- Ensure the selected course is designed and structured to facilitate students’ achievement of desired learning goals.

This is achieved in part by selecting TI courses that met the following Standards:

 - » Course materials and activities are aligned to support student achievement of the stated learning outcomes.
 - » Course assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives.
 - » Course includes multiple types of assessments that are sequenced and suited to the level of the course.
 - » Course provides students with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.

4 Recognition of Learning

Overview Statement: *Processes are in place and executed to ensure student learning is recognized and transcribed at HI without required student action.*

Guidelines for Home Institution (HI):

- Course-share solution or agreement clearly addresses TI's role in meeting compliance requirements for accreditation and state reciprocity agreements, as relevant.
- Have a documented process for the selection of courses that will meet requirements for timely transcription.
 - a. *Pre-determine and address any differences in grading criteria that might affect the credit award.*
 - a. *Identify if CBE courses are acceptable for credit recognition at the HI and any requirements for instruction in those courses.*
- Pre-determine courses that meet HI specific program and licensing requirements.
- Establish and implement a process to automatically and consistently award credit for successful completion of TI courses without any required student action.
- Establish and implement a process to transcript credits for successfully completed TI courses in fulfillment of pre-identified requirements and learning goals without any required student action.