Status Tracking and Reporting the Quality Matters Process at the University of North Georgia

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Abstract

The University of North Georgia utilizes the internal Quality Matters (QM) process to review all their online courses. As our online course offerings have increased, the need to devise a system to track the QM process, ensure timely reviews, and begin recertification of previously reviewed courses was necessary. As a result, several reports have been devised to capture this process: 1) a master list of all online course offerings, 2) bi-weekly status reports, and 3) QM reviewer status reports. The process that is used and the resulting reports will be shared in this report.

Introduction

Gainesville State College and North Georgia College and State University were consolidated January, 2013, and became the University of North Georgia (UNG). Each institution offered online courses before the consolidation, but only NGCSU was using Quality Matters (QM) as a means to review online courses. After consolidation this became the method for review of all online courses at UNG. The management of the quality assurance program is overseen by the Distance Education & Technology Integration (DETI) Division and, in particular, the presenters of this paper.

Online course offerings at UNG have increased considerably since consolidation with a 19% increase from 2013 to 2014, and a 12% increase from 2014 to 2015. As of spring 2016 there are 577 online course offerings with a status record in the Master List (ML) that is maintained. This report identifies the status of the course as 1) the QM course review process is completed, 2) it is currently in the QM process, or 3) for various reasons the course did not require a review. What follows is an outline of the QM process at UNG and descriptions of the main reports that are produced.

The Internal QM Online Course Review Process at UNG

Initial Stage (the Master List and Status Reports)

- Each semester when UNG's course schedule becomes available, the ML is updated with the Course Reference Number (CRN) for the current semester.
  - If the course already exists with the same instructor, only the CRN is added to the semester column. If there are additional sections of the same course/instructor, those CRNs are added as well.
  - If the course already exists, but with a new instructor a new row of course information is created.
  - If the course does not already exists, a new row of course information is created.
- The ML is continuously updated with course schedule changes (with new faculty and new sections being added) prior to the start of the semester until the conclusion of add/drop (approx. 2 weeks into the semester.)
- Status reports are produced. (Descriptions provided below)
  - Bi-weekly report: open QM courses, courses with no review status, and courses needing recertification.
  - Additional reports: (e.g., reviewer, contract, chair) as needed
- QM Coordinator (QMC) team meets to discuss the status and develops status plan of action

Initiate QM Process

- If it is a new course (never offered online), it is eligible for the Incentive Program
  - QMC contacts the course representative (CR) with relevant information
  - Sends contract, QM rubric to assist in development, helpful links, and sets up time to discuss needs.
  - QMC stays in contact with CR to aid in course development and when complete assists the CR in a QM self-review.
  - QMC creates a folder for filing with notes on course development and QM review
  - Course added to QM for review
- QM sends initial email to CR
  - QMC contacts CR
  - Emphasize worksheet completion within 14 days
  - Contract denoted in ML
  - Worksheet start date denoted in ML
  - QMC receives completed contract
  - DETI Director signs (QMC adds date to contract information)
  - Confirms if new or redesign amount to be paid (different amounts)
  - QMC emails CR, contract has been received
  - If course has been certified: no incentive is offered. (QMC confirms if course has been previously certified).
- CR can use existing certified course
- CR can design a new course and QM process initiated
- If the course has been significantly redesigned since completing a QM review (same steps as above)
  - A redesigned course is a course that underwent significant change. Textbook changes and the use of the DETI Online Course Template (OCT) does not fulfil the requirements of a redesign.
  - Denotes as redesign contract in ML
- If the course is ready for a QM recertification (3 years from last certification)
  - Recertification may also include textbook changes and use of the OCT where applicable.
  - Listed on separate tab in ML

- Follows same process as above without contract

QM Peer Reviewer Process

- QMC reviews and accepts CR's QM worksheet (dates/duration noted in ML)
- assigns reviewers in QM (names and start dates noted in ML)
- assigns chair in QM (name noted in ML)
- adds reviewers to D2L (learning management system) section being reviewed
- QMC emails reviewers info on section to be reviewed
  - Includes links and instructions
  - Emphasize review completion within 30 days
- QMC gets an automatic email, from QM, when review is completed
  - QM Reviewer #1 (dates/duration noted in ML)
  - QM Reviewer #2 (dates/duration noted in ML)
  - Chair reviews: breaks ties, adds comments and resources (start, completion dates/duration noted in ML)
    - Communicates with reviewers when necessary

Concluding the QM process

1. If meets standards

- QM sends automated email to CR
  - Review is complete and met standards
  - QMC sends a simultaneous email.
    - Outcome response form to be completed.
    - Emphasize completion within 14 days
    - (dates/duration noted in ML)

2. If does not meet standards

- QM sends automated email to CR
  - Review is complete, but did not meet standards.
  - QMC sends a simultaneous email.
    - Outcome response form to be completed
    - Amendment form to be completed.
    - Emphasize completion within 14 days
    - (dates/duration noted in ML)
- Once amendment form completed (dates/duration noted in ML)
  - Chair of 3 person review team reviews updated section
    - Chair Confirms
      - Review complete (dates/duration noted in ML)
    - Chair Denies
      - QMC emails CR to makes updates
      - Emphasize completion within 14 days
      - Upon QM course review completion
- QMC adds certified course to DETI internal website (date noted in ML)
- QMC removes reviewers from D2L section being reviewed
- QMC sends thank you emails to reviewers
- DETI initiates payment process.
  - When contract is paid, the date is noted in the "contract" column of the ML

The Master List

The master list is an excel file, which tracks the status of all the online course reviews.

CRN SP '16	COURSE	NUMBER	NAME	INSTRUCTOR	QMINSTRUTORNAME	QMCERTDATE	CONTRACT	STATUS COMMENTS
	EDGE	6002	Curr/Prog Dev for the Gifted	XXX				Using XXX certified course
1987	EDGE	6003	Methods/Assess Teaching Gifted	XXX	XXX	2014		Course Review Complete
	EDGE	6003	Methods/Assess Teaching Gifted	XXX	XXX	2014		Course Review Complete
	EDGE	6003	Methods/Assess Teaching Gifted	XXX				No longer at UNG: IK (7/20/15)
	EDGE	6003	Methods/Assess Teaching Gifted	XXX	XXX		Yes-RD	Course Rep Editing amendment Form
6414	EDUC	7793	Special Topics in Education	XXX	XXX		Yes	Will be taught Sp' 2016 and rev Sum 2016
	ENGL	1101	English Composition I	XXX	XXX	2015		Course Review Complete

Continuation . . .

WKSHT START	WKSHT COMP	WKSHT TIME	R1	R1 START	R1 COMP	R1 TIME	WKSHT_REV TIME	R2	R2 START	R2 COMP	R2 TIME	R COMP	C
	Tracking began in 2015		XXX	9/11/2013	9/19/2013	7	Tracking began in 2015	XXX	9/11/2013	9/19/2013	7	9/19/2013	XXX
			XXX	9/8/2014	9/8/2014	1		XXX	9/8/2014	9/22/2014	11	9/22/2014	XXX
12/11/2015	12/21/2015	7	XXX	1/10/2016	2/4/2016	19	15	XXX	1/10/2016	2/12/2016	25	2/12/2016	XXX
5/26/2015	5/30/2015	4	XXX	6/1/2015	6/12/2015	10	1	XXX	6/1/2015	6/12/2015	10	6/12/2015	XXX

The information contained in the ML columns have this information (duration is measured in workdays):

- Semester CRN
- Course Abbreviation, Number, Name, Instructor
- QM Instructor Name (often same as instructor)
- QM Certification Date, Contract Date, Status Comments

- Worksheet Start, Completed, Time to Complete (duration)
- Reviewer's Name, Review Start, Completed, Time to Complete (duration)
- Chair's Name, Review Start, Completed, Time to Complete (duration) [not visible in illustration]
- CR's Amendment Start, Completed, Time to Complete (duration) [not visible in illustration]
- Course Review Completed, Time to Complete (duration) [not visible in illustration]

The Bi-Weekly Report

The ML is condensed into a bi-weekly Excel report that the QMC's use to determine the follow-up actions that need to be implemented to identify courses needing to be put into QM, following up with CR's, Reviewer's, Chairs, as needed depending on the current course status (see the "comments" column). The report consists of these tabs:

1. *Overview*: Summary of the information contained in the report
2. *Open*: Listing of all courses currently in QM in chronological order of oldest to newest
3. *No Reviews*: Courses for which their status classification is yet to be determined. Most are the new online courses currently being taught for the first time. Reviews are initiated once a course has been taught for a semester.
4. *Recertification*: This lists the courses that are up for recertification, 3 years after haven been certified

The Reviewer's Report

Also condensed from the ML, this report identifies the active, QM certified, internal peer-reviewers, the number of reviews they have conducted in a fiscal year (FY) and their average time to complete a review. At UNG we have a memo of understanding with our reviewers for which a stipend is earned for completing a minimum of six reviews in the FY. The reviews are evenly assigned to meet this objective.

Conclusion

It is stated in the UNG faculty handbook that "all courses offered fully online will be Quality Matters (QM) certified." In support of this policy the above mentioned process and reporting system have been developed so that this goal is met. But, it goes beyond this, as we know designing (and, delivering) quality online courses is paramount in providing a quality education to our student body.