Common Objections and Possible Responses

Steps to overcoming an objection

1. Listen to the objection with full attention.
2. Repeat it back to confirm understanding.
3. Validate and empathize. ("I can see how that is a concern.")
4. Respond with a value proposition, what's in it for them, and/or common ground ("Helping students succeed is at the core of our work together.")
5. Seek confirmation (Answer questions and express feelings about trying something new)

"Cooperation doesn't mean agreement, it means working together to advance the greater good."
    -Simon Sinek
"Success in dealing with people depends on a sympathetic grasp of the other person's viewpoint."
    - Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People

Academic Freedom Concerns

Is QM telling me what to teach?

I understand your concern is that a bunch of standards might tell you what to teach. QM is used across every discipline. The standards don't tell you what to teach- that's a decision made by the institution in collaboration with departments, discipline accrediting bodies, and curriculum committees. QM Standards look at how the course is designed and ensure alignment between what the course promises learners will learn and what is provided.
It ensures that your online learners are welcomed, supported, guided, and engaged. QM provides research-based best practices for onlin design that help support online learner achievement. QM is about design and does not prescribe what content you include.

Are you going to tell me how to teach my class?

I would never presume to tell anyone how to teach their classes in which they are the subject matter experts. Quality Matters respects your knowledge as a subject matter expert, in fact, they use a subject matter expert on every team. You know your discipline best. QM standards help you with the course design, not how you teach it. While the two may be intertwined, and your role is critical to both design and teaching, QM only focuses on the design.

If the learning outcomes given in the eBook are there, then I'll just use those. (not wanting to check to see if they are measurable or aligned)

QM will interfere with my academic freedom. I want to just teach the course "my way"

I understand that adhering to a standard set may interfere with something you'd like to do. In online courses, you have a lot of freedom to design your course in a way you see fit. The QM Rubric does not require or prescribe a particular pedagogical philosophy or approach, particular teaching strategies or methods, does not dictate types of instructional material or assessments, and provides a variety of ways that each Specific Review Standard (SRS) can be met.
What is it you would like to do that QM is preventing you from doing?

Evaluation Concerns

Is this a reflection on my teaching ability?

I can see why this may be a concern about how your teaching ability is evaluated. The course design standards from QM focus on the design of your course; not on how you teach it. While it may be difficult to separate the design from how you teach it, course design is much like how the seats are arranged in your classroom. It provides a structure for learners to work within and be successful. Teaching is your active delivery of the course while it is occurring. Your feedback, your learners' work, etc., are not seen during a QM Course Review.

Can this work count toward my yearly review?

Great question! (Check with your academic senate leadership to learn whether the answer is affirmative or not.) Yearly reviews are important and your work to improve your online courses may (or may not) be taken into consideration. Student success is part of our mission as an institution and because of our duty to provide a quality education, the payoffs to investing attention to course design now will pay off later when you have more time and fewer questions in your inbox. Does that sound like a "win"?

Why is the internal review necessary?

I understand you are busy and an internal review may seem like unnecessary administrative work when you have other priorities. We both want the best course you can create to help your learners succeed, right? (get agreement)
An internal review can be beneficial because having others' eyes on something you've written or developed can lead to improvements that will help learners be successful.

Faculty Autonomy Concerns

Do they think they know more about my course than me?

You're asking if QM knows more about your course than you, right?
The QM Rubric is about how your course is designed and is a tool to support you in the digital learning environment. If you think about a physical classroom, we have known what to do when we walk in the room since we were five years old. The desks are for the students and the teacher sits at the front of the

room. Online and in the digital world, those cues aren't there and have to be constructed with how you organize your weekly units or modules. Learners need to know where to go, what to do, how you've organized your digital space, and how and where they can get help, find the library, and other resources you might show them in the physical classroom.

You are the expert when it comes to your course and your online learners. The benefit of the collegial, collaborative QM Course Review is that someone who is not you can use their fresh eyes to see your course from the perspective of the student and give you unique feedback. In a QM Course Review, you're given feedback from three peers, which you can choose to implement, or not.

Why do IDs have to look in my class?

I understand it's a concern to have anyone look at your course. Instructional designers will ask if they can look at your course because they have specialized expertise in designing digital learning environments and in the use of the learning management system (LMS). They might make suggestions that will help your learners have fewer questions about where to find various course components. Instructional designers work with all disciplines and can better understand what your vision is for your course and may provide suggestions. They are there to help you as instructional design is a discipline, too.

Are IDs the course "police"?

I can understand how you may feel you're being "policed" however, instructional designers are here to help you as they have studied the design of instruction and how to develop an effective learning experience for your learners. Instructional designers will ask before looking through your course to respect your privacy and your course. The institution provides instructional designers to support faculty with their work in digital learning environments as they have worked with faculty across disciplines. Instructional designers don't have the power to issue any sort of citation- they would much rather collaborate with you to help you solve instructional design problems using appropriate educational technology tools to fit the needs of your learners.

What happened to "just teaching" my class without all this?

Change is often difficult for all of us. When the pandemic struck, so did panic. Faculty who had already moved their courses online in the past weren't panicking because they had a structure in place and could continue teaching. Accreditation bodies want to ensure the course you're teaching online is still able to meet the learning outcomes set for your course and it's possible to see everything in the learning management system.

What's in it for Me?

Do you know who I am?

Yes! You're Dr. (name) and you teach (discipline) here at our institution. QM can work for anyone who is looking to make a great learning experience for their students. Accreditation looks at the quality of our courses across all disciplines.

Isn't the rubric just a checklist?

I can see how a list of Specific Review Standards can appear at first glance to be a checklist. Each of those sentences for each Standard has a whole set of Annotations behind it that provides information about the Standard, different ways it can be met, and even examples that may meet the Standard. The QM Standards are interrelated and holistic, providing a turn-key approach to quality assurance for your course that will serve you with much more depth than a checklist.

Checklists get a bad rap, even though pilots use them no matter how many flight hours they have, surgeon use them for every surgery to ensure no steps are missed. I feel confident in flying or having a surgery thanks to those checklists, however, I think QM is much more than a checklist.

Why do I, as a faculty member, want to pursue QM?

Quality assurance is the goal and QM is the tool that helps you get there. Most of all, QM is going to save you time. When you design a course with QM Standards in mind, you're making an investment your future self will cash with fewer questions at the start of the term, with more engaged learners throughout the term, and successful learners at the end of the term.

The QM Rubric can be used ad-hoc by faculty to design their courses according to sound, researched instructional design principles and best practices, with special considerations for the online classroom. Whether using the Rubric on your own or as part of an institutional process, the QM Standards support faculty in designing online and hybrid courses that are easy to navigate and focused on student learning via active application of course ideas and topics.

Both published research and anecdotal evidence have shown faculty who have utilized the QM Rubric to improve their courses have a high level of satisfaction and make improvements to their courses that result in increased student and instructor satisfaction, as well as increased learning. It's also important to know that the QM Rubric is not prescriptive in that there is no "one way" to meet a Specific Review Standard. Rather, the Annotation provides ideas and examples for how a Standard might be met.

Initiative Concerns

Isn't this just ANOTHER initiative? -Yeah, but Steve, we've done this before... and then it's another thing... then another thing...

Initiative fatigue is real. We understand that QM seems like another flash-in-the-pan, flavor-of-the-week pedagogical fad, however, QM has been around since 2003 and more than 15,000 courses have been QM-Certiifed in that time period.

I can assure you that the time you spend working toward meeting QM Standards will outlast any new initiative because the concepts you work with in the QM Rubric are grounded in solid instructional design and will stand the test of time.

Use the H.E.A.R. model

From [research about helping others feel heard.](#)

H= Hedge your claims

E= Emphasize agreement

A= Acknowledge the opposing perspective

R= Reframing to the positive.

[Article on Respectful Persuasion](#)

[AAUP FAQ on Academic Freedom](#)