

# Breaking Down Barriers for Students with Quality Courses



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## Introduction

Research demonstrates that the design of the online course may be a factor in motivating students to complete a course (Pittenger and Doering 2010). The following study, of completion rates for one science lab course by an instructor, will show an increase in student completion rates following a Quality Matters (QM) course review.

## Methods

Student completion\* rates were calculated for two semesters prior to QM review, as well as three semesters following the review.

\*Completion: % of students who registered, relative to those that completed with a grade of D or higher.

## Results

1. Student concerns seemed to decrease
2. Grading is more efficient
3. The course fills quickly
4. Student completion rates improved (fig. 1)

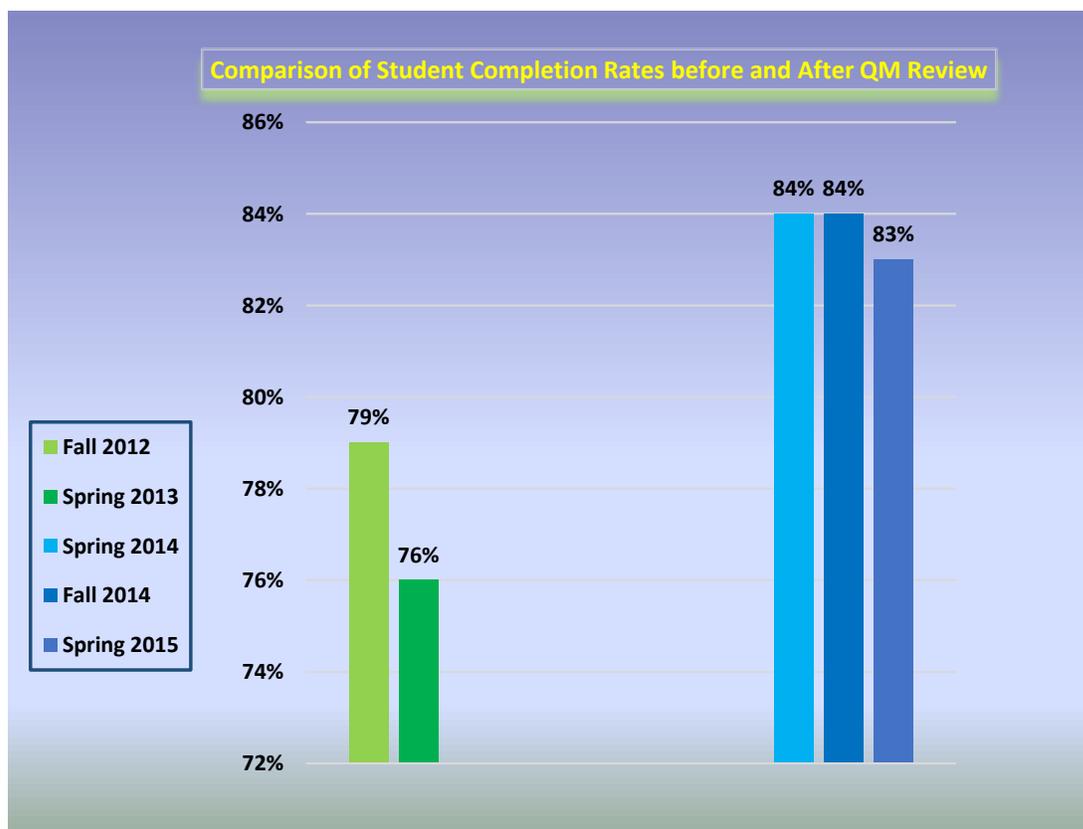


Figure 1. Rates of completion are compared before QM (average of 77.5%), to a completion rate after the QM process averaging 83.6%. This data shows an increase in student retention and completion for this course over three years.

## Conclusions

The results from this single online course over a period of 5 semesters demonstrate improved retention at a specific point in time, which coincides with the timing of a Quality Matters (QM) certification for this course. This demonstrates that QM certification may be beneficial in retaining students in online courses.

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