

## Education Technology Committee

Monday, January 27, 2014, 1:00 pm  
Location: CHEM/PHYS Conference Room

In attendance: Beth Childress, Ela Kaye Eley, Chad Guilliams, Doug Herrington (invited), Thomas Murphy, Stephen Primatic (sent comments via email), Michael Tiemeyer, Pam Culberson (ex-officio)  
Absent: Clifford Padgett

### Agenda Items

1. Request from Dr. Doug Herrington, Director, Office of Online and Blended Learning, to review and offer comments, suggestions, and/or recommendations about the Armstrong Online and Blended Course Development and Quality Review Process.

### Committee Comments Summarized

The ETC is in favor of the new Online and Blended Course Development and Quality Review Process and believes that it is reasonable to start reviews of new online courses using this process in February 2014.

It is expected that all new online and hybrid courses planning being offered starting in Fall 2014 will follow the process outlined in the Online and Hybrid Course Quality Review Process before being offered. The ETC is in favor of this.

The ETC has the following concerns about the process:

- Document needs to be clearer on what faculty status/credentials are required to teach an online course and what additional status/credentials are required to design a new online course. A list of the different online course workshops that have been offered and what status they confer would also be useful.
- The document should outline how review teams will be selected. It is desirable for the department and/or college that will offer the course to have some say in the review team composition.
- Since some QM rubric questions address course content and assessment method appropriateness, the review team should consist of should minimum of one and preferably two subject matter experts. If no Armstrong faculty members with appropriate subject expertise are available, a minimum of one external reviewer with subject matter expertise should be part of the review team.
- The OLBL office will need to coordinate with ITS on mechanisms for ensuring that faculty developing new online courses have access to D2L space and that faculty reviewers will be given instructor access to courses they are reviewing during the review period.
- Deadlines for summer course offerings should probably be before deadlines for fall course offerings and the same as the spring deadlines. Summer course schedules are typically created at the same time as the spring schedule.
- A formal mechanism for providing exceptions to the policy for current and new faculty members teaching and/or developing online courses should be developed. Exceptions should only be granted in rare cases and only if the faculty member can show evidence of competence in teaching/designing online courses.

Final Version of Online and Hybrid Course Quality Review Process will be included with minutes after the OLBL office makes alterations based on ETC comments and suggestions.

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM

Respectfully submitted  
Thomas Murphy

## **Online and Hybrid Course Quality Review Process**

### **OVERVIEW**

In order for a new online course, partially online course, or hybrid course to be offered, said course must be fully developed and pass a Quality Matters™ (QM) review before it can be listed in the course schedule for registration.

This review process is designed to Quality Matters™ specifications so that Armstrong's online courses and programs may be "Quality" certified by Quality Matters™, a nationally recognized distinction. Additionally, this process is designed to meet SACS, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) standards, and Federal standards and laws that we are required to be in compliance with in order to offer our online programs to students outside of the state and for accreditation. Finally, this process helps to achieve Armstrong's Strategic Goal 1 (Armstrong will impart the skills and habits of mind to motivated students that help them realize their potential as productive citizens of the world) and Armstrong's Strategic Goal 2 (Armstrong will build upon and strengthen its foundational commitment to teaching, ensuring that transformative student learning occurs inside and outside the classroom).

The Online and Hybrid Course Quality Review Process (QRP) is an internally managed institutional review conducted by a team of certified peer reviewers utilizing the Quality Matters Course Review Management System (CRMS). In order for a course to be reviewed, it must first be approved through the applicable curriculum approval processes in place at Armstrong and it must be completely developed and uploaded into Desire2Learn (D2L) or an alternative delivery system. Faculty course developers must have Course Developer Status or eLearning Faculty Status. More details about faculty development requirements (FD) are included later in this document.

A review team consists of a review chair and two additional peer reviewers. At least one member of the review team will be from the discipline in which the course will be offered, which may mean employing a QM-certified peer reviewer from outside of Armstrong if one is not available within Armstrong. All reviewers are faculty members with experience designing and delivering fully online or partially online courses. Reviewers must have Peer Reviewer Status or eLearning Faculty Status. It is the goal of the Office of Online and Blended Learning that the review process maintains Armstrong's standards of high quality course design and delivery while serving as a constructive and positive experience. The underlying principles on which the Quality Matters (QM) process is based are centered on peer review, iterative and continuous improvement, research, and a collegial, diagnostic, and collaborative process.

This document covers (a) the required qualifications and faculty development necessary to serve as a course reviewer, to serve as an online instructor, and to develop an online course; (b) the Quality Review Process; (c) the Online and Hybrid Course Development Process; (d) exceptions for exigent circumstances; (e) a timeline for implementing this policy; (f) estimates of faculty

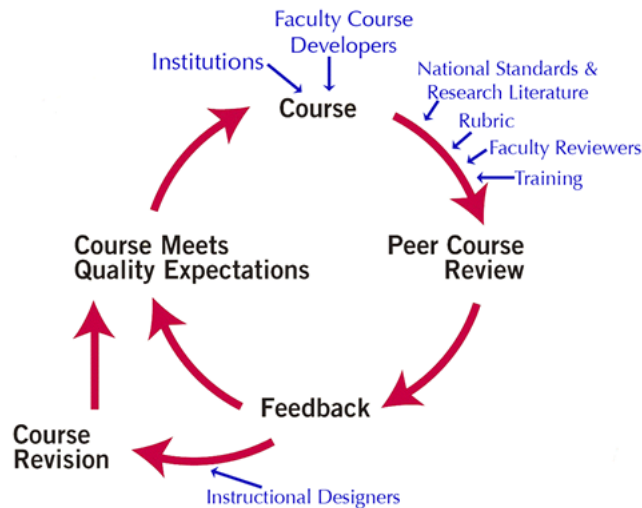
time to develop courses; (g) and a list of definitions. Process flow charts and an explanation of the Office of Online and Blended Learning faculty development program are included as appendices.

### Faculty Development Qualifications

The Office of Online and Blended Learning has a sequential menu of FD offerings leading to four statuses. Starting with Online Teaching Status, then Peer Reviewer Status, and followed by Course Developer Status, the FD program culminates in the overarching eLearning Faculty Status. The status titles are meant to be intuitive in that they each name the function they are designed to permit the faculty member to perform. See the Faculty Development appendix for more details.

### Quality Review Process

The QM peer review process is summarized in the graphic below and explained in detail in the steps below.



#### STEP 1

Once the faculty member has developed the course, he or she completes the Faculty Developer Worksheet and submits the course for review to the QM online portal (QM Course Review Management System). An account will be created for the faculty member in the QM online portal either when he/she begins working with an Office of Online and Blended Learning (OBL) instructional designer or upon request.

- A member of the Office of Online and Blended Learning will review the worksheet for completion. If the worksheet is complete, the review process will begin. If the worksheet is not complete, it will be returned to the faculty member for modification.
- The Office of Online and Blended Learning will assemble and assign a review team (for more about the review team, see below). Each review team member will receive a \$100 stipend for conducting the review; the review team chair will receive a \$150 stipend.
- The Office of Online and Blended Learning will request reviewer access to the course for the members of the Review Team and applicable members of the Office of Online and Blended Learning from Information Technology Services.

- The review team will be asked to complete the review in 2-3 weeks. Failure to complete the review within the time allotted may result in a reduction in compensation or being replaced by another reviewer. A thorough, unbiased, and speedy review is imperative.
- The Review Chair may contact the faculty member or the Office of Online and Blended Learning if she/he has any questions.
- The Review Chair will email the faculty member via the QM Course Review Management System (CRMS) when the review has been completed.

## **STEP 2**

### **Closing the Review**

- Courses that meet all 21 Essential Standards and earn at least 81/95 points on the QM Rubric are unconditionally approved.
- The Quality Matters QRMS will send the faculty member an email to login and access the review report.
- The faculty member will complete the Faculty Response Form indicating acceptance of the review results. The review will not be complete and closed until this form is submitted.
- Once complete, the Office of Online and Blended Learning will provide the faculty member and department head with a letter certifying the course.
- If the course did not meet all 21 Essential Standards and earn at least 81/95 points on the QM Rubric, a Faculty Amendment Form is required (Step 3).

## **STEP 3**

### **Course Revisions and Resubmission**

- Courses that do not meet all 21 Essential Standards and earn at least 81/95 points on the QM Rubric may be revised and resubmitted within the same review cycle.
- The Course Review Report will provide specific information on the revisions requested. The faculty member may contact the Review Chair for additional information or may consult with the Office of Online and Blended Learning.
- After revisions are made, the faculty member submits the Faculty Amendment Form using the Quality Matters CRMS to delineate the revisions made to the course.
- The Review Chair will evaluate the faculty response(s)/revisions(s) and adjust the QM Rubric score as appropriate.
- Resubmission must occur no later than 4 weeks prior to the beginning of the semester in which the course will be offered.
- Courses not resubmitted for review within 3 calendar months from the delivery of the original review report will be subject to a full peer review upon re-submission.
- Online or blended courses will not be opened for registration without successfully completing the QM internal peer review process.

### **QM Peer Review Team**

**Team composition.** The three-member peer review team will consist of a team leader and two members. At least one, and possibly two, member(s) of the team must be from the discipline of the course being reviewed. Qualified Armstrong faculty members who volunteer to serve as course reviewers will make up the bulk of each team. Additionally, in order for a review

to be considered official by Quality Matters™, at least one member of each team must be a QM-certified reviewer from another institution (i.e., an external reviewer).

**Internal member selection.** All qualified faculty members shall constitute the pool from which volunteers will be solicited for course reviews. When selecting volunteers, an effort will be made to distribute review team participation as widely as possible across colleges and departments. If a department, program, or faculty course developer would prefer that any particular faculty member be excluded from a course review team, they may request that exclusion directly to the Director of Online and Blended Learning. However, much like the selection of reviewers for a scholarly journal manuscript submission review, the Office of Online and Blended Learning selects the membership of the review team.

**External member selection.** Quality Matters has a pool of trained and experienced course peer reviewers for each discipline. When using an external reviewer, we place a request with QM and they assign the next qualified and available reviewer in their queue to do the review.

**Internal member compensation.** Armstrong faculty serving as review team members will be compensated for their time in the amount of \$100 per review. Armstrong faculty members serving as review team leaders will be compensated for their time in the amount of \$150 per review.

## **Online & Hybrid Course Development Process**

### **Online Course Quality and Certification**

All online and blended classes must be vetted through an internal peer review process as part of the Armstrong Online Course Quality Initiative.

1. Courses must meet specific quality standards as assessed by the Quality Matters Rubric. The peer course review process focuses on course structure and organizational quality. Departments remain responsible for insuring course content quality and rigor, and for assessing instructional effectiveness.
2. Prior to teaching online or hybrid courses, faculty must achieve Online Teaching Status by completing Armstrong FD focusing on the teaching of an online/hybrid class.
3. Prior to developing an online or hybrid course, faculty must achieve Course Developer Status by completing Armstrong FD focusing on the development of online/hybrid courses.
4. Faculty must obtain departmental approval before developing such courses.

### **Submission Deadlines**

Courses that are already approved through the Armstrong curriculum approval process are accepted for development and QM peer review on a rolling basis. Upon receipt of a completed Faculty Developer Worksheet reviewers will be assigned to the course. Each course must be certified for online delivery before it can be opened for registration. The deadlines below are for faculty developers that partner with instructional designers and submit their courses for informal pre-review and feedback prior to formal submission. The deadlines do not allow adequate time for a course that is not fully developed. If a course does not successfully complete the review process prior to the start of registration, the course will be placed on a registration hold pending updates, re-submission and approval.

- **Fall** – for a course to be offered in the fall it must be finished and pass QM peer review by the last workday of the preceding February. Therefore, it should be submitted for QM peer review by the first week of the preceding January to allow for a review process to be complete, and any minor corrections to be made prior to being submitted for registration.
- **Spring or Summer** – for a course to be offered in a spring or summer term it must be finished and pass QM peer review by the last workday of the preceding September. Therefore, it should be submitted for QM peer review by the first week of the preceding August to allow for a review process to be complete, and any minor corrections to be made prior to being submitted for registration.

### **STEP 1**

Complete the Online and Blended Learning Course Request Form at the following link (requires an Armstrong email address):

<http://bit.ly/OBL-RequestForm>

The Office of Online and Blended Learning will enter your course into the QM Course Review Management System (CRMS). Once entered, the Faculty Developer Worksheet will be sent via email from the CRMS.

### **STEP 2**

Build your course in Desire2Learn or an alternative delivery system.

Use the QM Rubric Workbook (available via the QM CRMS) and the Faculty Developer Worksheet as a guide while building the course. Because of copyright restrictions, one must obtain a copy of the QM Rubric Standards from <https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric>

### **STEP 3**

Complete a self-assessment of your course using the QM Rubric prior to submitting your course for review. You may also contact the Office of Online and Blended Learning for an instructional design review of your course prior to submission. A course must meet all 21 Essential Standards and earn at least 81/95 points on the QM Rubric to be unconditionally approved.

### **STEP 4**

Visit the QM website to complete the Faculty Developer Worksheet. This worksheet will be made available to you via email from QM shortly after completing the course request form.

Once the worksheet has been saved and submitted, the course will be in the queue for review. You may track the status of your review through the QM CRMS.

### **Exceptions for Exigent Circumstances**

The Director of Online and Blended Learning can make exceptions to the above procedures and timelines at the request of a department head or college dean. Such a request must be made as soon as the need is known in a written letter explaining the unforeseen circumstances and the need for the exception. The letter may be transmitted via email or through campus mail. A copy of the letter must also be sent to the Provost. The Director of Online and Blended Learning will respond to the letter within one workweek.

Exceptions are to be requested rarely and only due to extraordinary circumstances. Examples of such circumstances may include such eventualities as the need to hire an adjunct instructor to teach a class at the last minute due to an unforeseeable circumstance or the hiring of a new faculty member who must take the place of another instructor at the last minute due to an unforeseeable circumstance.

### **Implementation**

Rolling implementation of this procedure will start in March of 2014. By the end of spring 2014 all new courses will be reviewed using this procedure. Legacy courses that have not been reviewed using this procedure will be reviewed starting in the fall of 2014 based on age; older courses will be reviewed before newer courses.

### **Faculty Course Development Time**

The amount of time it takes an instructor to develop a course is the primary factor influencing the length of time it takes to offer a course online. We find that, as a rule of thumb, developing a course for online delivery that the instructor has previously taught face-to-face takes about 100 hours of work for the instructor. An instructor assigned the task of developing a class for online delivery that they have previously taught is, perhaps, the most common scenario. Of course, some instructors may spend more or less time in the development process. At the other end of the time commitment continuum would be an instructor assigned to develop a course for online delivery that has never been taught by anyone previously, face-to-face or otherwise. In this scenario the instructor is likely to spend about 250 hours of work. These time estimates assume the instructor developing the course is working with an instructional designer. Without instructional design help, the amount of time an instructor will spend on course development is likely to increase by 25 to 50 percent in order to successfully negotiate the peer review process.

### **Definitions**

#### **Badge/Logo, Quality Matters**

Quality Matters™ has awarded Armstrong their Program badge, below, in recognition of our peer-reviewed plan to implement the QM peer review program for our online and partially online courses.



Additionally, for courses reviewed using the QM process, and where the review team has at least one reviewer external to Armstrong, that course will be able to display the QM badge/logo.





**Hybrid Course**

A hybrid course is one that meets online up to 50% of the time. Hybrid courses that will meet online 25% or more of the time must undergo a Course Quality Compliance Check by an instructional designer. Alternatively, if the course developer wishes, a hybrid course may be submitted for a full peer review to obtain the Quality Matters™ seal/badge of quality.

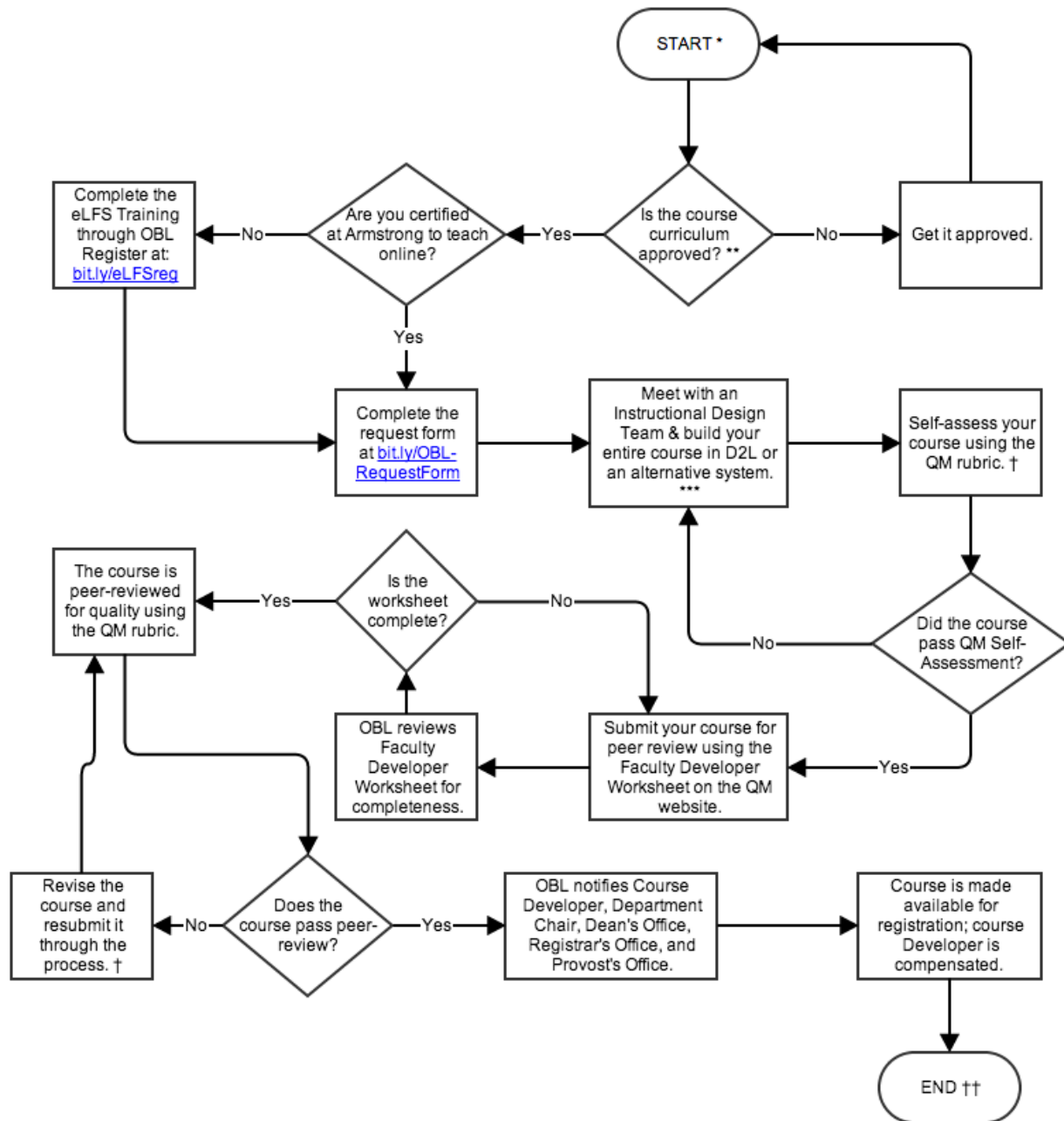
**Online Course**

An online course is one that meets online 96% or more of the time.

**Partially Online Course**

A partially online course is one that meets online 51% to 95% of the time.

## Armstrong Online and Blended Course Quality Review Process



\* This process applies to gaining Online Course Quality approval which is required of all fully online, partially online, and hybrid courses prior to their being made available for student registration. Therefore, this process must be completed early enough to notify the registrar's office prior to registration that such a course has been approved.

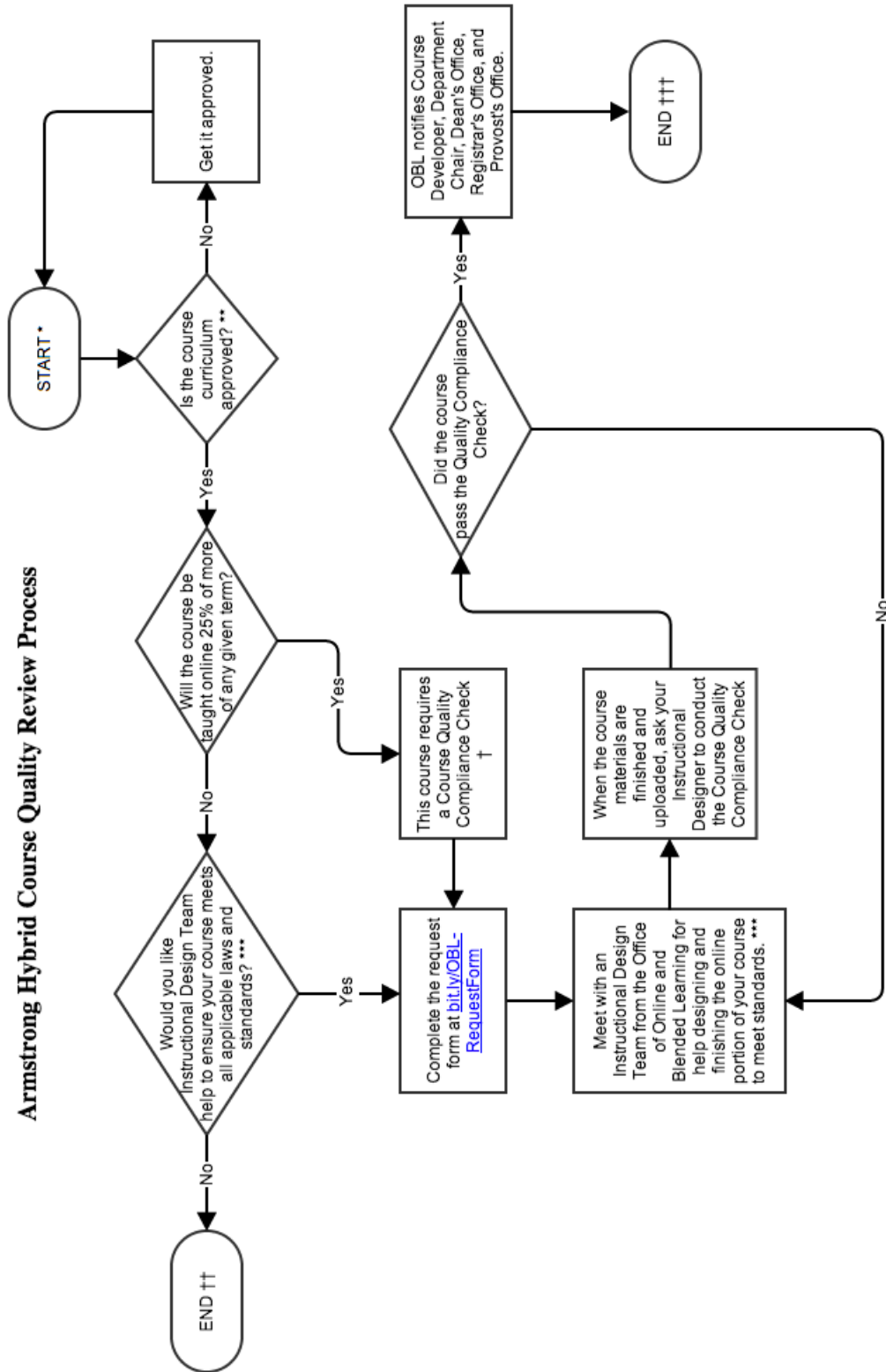
\*\* Before this process may begin, a course must have been previously approved at the department, college, and university levels.

\*\*\* The Course Developer must have an initial meeting with an instructional designer, and may choose to avail her or himself of the services of an instructional design team offered through the Office of Online and Blended Learning. If the Course Developer so chooses, she or he may build the online course without instructional design team assistance.

† At this point in the process, or at any time hereafter, the Course Developer may ask for assistance from an instructional designer from the Office of Online and Blended Learning to aide in the approval process.

†† All courses must be re-approved through this process every three years.

## Armstrong Hybrid Course Quality Review Process



\* This process applies to gaining Online Course Quality approval for hybrid courses, which are those courses that are less than 50 percent online.

\*\* Before this process may begin, a course must have been previously approved at the department, college, and university levels.

\*\*\* An instructional designer or an Instructional Design Team can help the Course Developer to develop those portions of a course that will be online so they meet all applicable laws and standards.

† A Course Quality Compliance Check will ensure that those portions of a course offered online will meet all applicable laws and standards.

†† No Quality Compliance Check is required, but if the course will be offered more than 25 percent online in the future, it must go through the applicable quality assurance process at that time.

††† All courses must be re-approved through this process every three years.

## Office of Online & Blended Learning Faculty Development Program

eLearning Faculty Status (eLFS)	
Course Developer Status (CDS)	15 hours*
Peer Reviewer Status (PRS)	15 hours*
Online Teaching Status (OTS)	20 hours*

\*Approximate number of hours to completion

### eLearning Faculty Status

eLearning Faculty Status (eLFS) is the highest level of online teaching professional development for faculty. It has previously been awarded to Armstrong faculty through the Teaching Fellowship program and, in the future, will be awarded to faculty who complete the following three certificates:

1. Online Teaching Status (qualification to teach online courses)
2. Peer Reviewer Status (qualification to review online courses)
3. Online Developer Status (qualification to develop online courses)

Each certificate is built on the previous certification and further develops professional abilities and supplemental learning potential. There is no charge for any of the training courses or workshops required for eLearning Faculty Status. Also, all materials will be made available to faculty and updated on an ongoing basis for just-in-time reference availability. The following sections explain the certificate goals and requirements in greater detail.

### Online Teaching Status

This foundational certificate is required of Armstrong faculty by the Faculty Senate in response to SACS-SOC requirements. The Provost has required that all current Armstrong faculty teaching online have Online Teaching Status by April 1st, 2014. Online Teaching Status has been recorded for faculty who have previously completed:

- Online Teaching Boot Camp
- Teaching Fellowship Program
- eLFS course.

Beginning in 2014, Online Teaching Status will be awarded to faculty who complete the three-week Online Teaching Course and one or more one-week elective workshops. Time required for this certification is approximately 20 hours. After earning Online Teaching Status, faculty will be able to:

- Personalize a previously designed online course to make it fit with their teaching style and experience along with student needs and outside events.
- Analyze course objectives, content, and learning activity alignment to ensure that modifications to the course do not compromise instructional integrity.
- Modify or create content and learning activities that are fully 508 compliant and that conform to the principles of Universal Design for Learning.
- Use online technology to promote and preserve academic integrity, enhance student retention, improve learning outcomes, and efficiently manage the most time-intensive online teaching activities.

### Online Peer Reviewer Status

Faculty earning Online Peer Reviewer Status will be qualified to participate on the Armstrong Online Course Review process, earning payments for the review of Armstrong's online courses using the Quality Matters rubric. Faculty reviewing courses will also gain greater familiarity with the teaching practices of peers inside and outside of their own subject area (itself a professional development opportunity.)

Online Peer Reviewer Status is automatic for all faculty who have completed the Armstrong Teaching Fellowship Program. It can also be earned by any faculty with Online Teaching status by taking the QM Rubric Workshop (approximately 15 hours). After earning Online Peer Reviewer Status, faculty will be able to:

- Apply the QM Rubric to review online courses.
- Draft helpful recommendations for course improvement citing annotations from the QM Rubric applied to the evidence in the course.

### Online Course Developer Status

Faculty earning Online Course Developer Status will be qualified to develop fully and partially online courses for programs and departments at Armstrong. Online Course Developer Status is automatic for all faculty who have completed the Armstrong Teaching Fellowship Program. It can also be earned by any faculty with Online Teaching Status and Online Peer Reviewer Status by taking the Online Course Development Course.

After earning Online Developer Status, faculty will be able to:

- Satisfy the requirements mandated by the US Department of Education, program integrity rules, and Southern Association of Colleges & Schools (SACSSOC) accreditation guidelines, and USG policies and guidelines to the degree and fashion that balances compliance, time expenditure, and the quality of instruction for all course students.
- Evaluate and select appropriate instructional strategies and assessments to meet the needs of diverse learners, course and program outcomes, and Institutional quality mandates.
- Submit a completed course for peer review using the Quality Matters Course Review System.

## Elective Workshops

### Synchronous Instruction

A five-hour workshop teaching the techniques of classroom management, assessment, and technological mastery of Blackboard Collaborate.

### Using Media

A five-hour workshop delving into the pedagogical application and practical procedures for using a variety of media formats to enhance online instruction.

### Web-based Tools

A five-hour workshop teaching how to research, evaluate, and apply Web-based applications to enhance student engagement while meeting instructional outcomes at little or no cost to students.