

## Center for eLearning - Resources for Faculty

Tallahassee Community College has adopted the Quality Matters (QM) approach to assuring quality of eLearning courses. Effective with the Fall 2008 semester, all faculty teaching online classes will have completed the QM sequence of courses leading to peer reviewer status and should be knowledgeable about course design and development according to QM principles.

To accompany that knowledge, the following list of Best Practices is provided to establish minimum expectations for eLearning courses at TCC:

- **All eLearning courses must start in Blackboard** and include a navigation scheme that makes it easy and intuitive for students to find necessary information. Included within Blackboard should be elements created according to the Quality Matters Rubric standards. Faculty who wish to use their own web pages or companion websites can simply link out of Blackboard to those sites.
- **The Blackboard course shell for all eLearning courses is created according to a template recommended by the Online Quality Assurance Task Force.** Customizations of the shell are possible via downloads, but buttons for Student Resources, Course Tools, and TCC info are not to be removed. They contain important information, including Blackboard Accessibility standards and Help Desk information. An added benefit of these buttons is that faculty do not have to remember to add this information to their course shell every semester!
- **Blackboard courses must be made available no later than the first day of classes.** However, eLearning students often want to learn about the course and secure course materials prior to the first day. It is considered a Best Practice to have the course available 3-5 days prior to the start date.
- **Faculty must communicate to students what response times they can expect to emails or phone messages.** Response times of between 24 and 72 hours are generally accepted as the Best Practice standard; the business and industry standard is normally 24 hours during weekdays and 48 hours on weekends. Because "life happens," confusion and frustration on the part of students can be alleviated by placing an announcement in Blackboard or with a group email should response times have to be extended.
- **eLearning courses must be current and in good operating condition.** Course content must be updated in a timely fashion and periodically reviewed to verify that all links work properly.
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This list is not meant to be exhaustive. A Google search of "Best Practices in eLearning" provides a wealth of information useful to accompany QM design standards. YouTube videos provide many examples of what can be considered "Worst Practices." A good example of this can be found by searching for the video entitled "Online Student Experience."