

Comparison of OLC and QM characteristics based on key course design standards.

Course Design Standards	Online Learning Consortium	Quality Matters
Course Learning Objectives and Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stresses the importance of learning objectives • Focuses on broader alignment with program and institutional goals • Encourages flexibility in how objectives are formulated and assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes clear, measurable learning objectives • Requires strong alignment between objectives, assessments, and materials • Provides specific criteria for writing and evaluating learning objectives
Instructional Practices and Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses both course design and delivery • Promotes active learning and student engagement strategies • Encourages innovative pedagogical approaches and use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on course design rather than delivery • Encourages use of varied instructional materials and activities • Emphasizes accessibility and usability of course components
Assessment and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses assessment design and implementation • Encourages diverse assessment methods • Emphasizes the importance of timely and constructive feedback • Encourages regular and substantive interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires clear grading policies and assessment criteria • Emphasizes alignment of assessments with learning objectives • Focuses on the design of assessment tools
Student Support and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a broader view, including institutional support services • Addresses strategies for promoting student engagement and interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on providing clear instructions and resources within the course • Emphasizes course-level support mechanisms
Faculty Support and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses faculty support more comprehensively • Includes standards for ongoing faculty development in online teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily focuses on training faculty in course design • Offers professional development through the review process

<p>Digital Accessibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses accessibility throughout its quality framework rather than as a standalone standard • Considers accessibility at both course and institutional levels • Includes considerations for diverse learner needs beyond technical accessibility • Incorporates principles of UDL throughout its standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicates a specific standard (Standard 8) to accessibility and usability • Provides detailed, specific criteria for making course materials accessible • Includes guidelines for alt text, captions, transcripts, and color contrast • Incorporates principles of UDL throughout its standards
<p>Technology Integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides broader guidelines for technology integration • Encourages innovative use of emerging technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the effective use of technology to support learning objectives • Emphasizes accessibility and user-friendliness of technology
<p>Continuous Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages continuous improvement at course, program, and institutional levels • Provides frameworks for ongoing evaluation and enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes ongoing course refinement through the review process • Focuses on improving individual courses
<p>Cultural Responsiveness and Diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes more explicit standards related to cultural diversity and inclusivity • Encourages culturally responsive teaching practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses accessibility and universal design • Limited explicit focus on cultural responsiveness