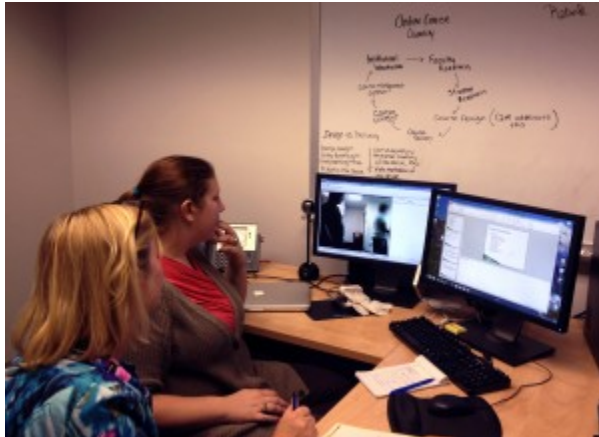


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Business professor first at USFSP with Quality Matters certification for online course

Posted [September 21, 2012](#) at 10:46 am by [Tom Scherberger](#)



Instructional Designer Elizabeth Hanna with Instructional Technologist Nicole Emert. On the whiteboard are Quality Matters standards and how they relate to course content.

Associate Professor of Finance Todd Shank, Ph.D., is the first USF St. Petersburg faculty member to obtain the Quality Matters Program certification for an online course.

Dr. Shank's International Finance course meets the highest standards under the national Quality Matters review process. USFSP joined Quality Matters in 2010 to assist faculty with developing high-quality online courses.

The QM seal is now displayed on Dr. Shank's online course, and also will be listed on QM's website.

The QM review process is designed and implemented by faculty who teach online courses throughout the U.S. It ensures quality and alignment with accreditation standards and best practices in online learning.

"It was a very rigorous review," Carol Hixson, Dean of the Poynter Library, which houses USFSP's Distance Learning Program in the Instructional Media Services Department. She called the QM Program the "gold standard" for online courses.

USFSP faculty can apply to the Distance Learning Program to fund salaries, equipment and training. Faculty members seeking funding through the program in the future will be required to attend Quality Matters training offered through the Library's Instructional Media Services, follow the Quality Matters rubric, and submit their courses for QM review, Hixson said.

"We are trying to provide faculty the tools they need to create high quality online courses so students get a more consistent experience," Hixson said. Faculty members may still create online courses without additional funding or QM review.

"The QM review process helps make a course better, period," said Dr. Shank. "Whether it's an online course or one that is taught face-to-face, the peer review process makes for a better experience for students."