

# **Principles of Healthcare Quality**

*Spring 2026 (March 23 through May 10)*

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Course Coordinator:** David Nau, PhD

## **Course Description:**

This course will provide an overview of healthcare quality and performance measurement. It will also provide a review of quality improvement strategies used in various healthcare settings.

## **Course-Specific Outcomes:**

By course completion, the student will be able to:

1. Discuss the nation's top healthcare priorities as outlined in the National Quality Strategy, and be able to explain how the National Quality Strategy aligns with the Triple Aim of Health Care.
2. Discuss other major quality initiatives in our healthcare system in the United States that have been the result of Federal legislation.
3. Describe how quality is measured in our healthcare system today: at the provider level, at the health plan level, and at the health system level. Understand the healthcare goals of the Secretary of Health and Human Services as it relates to moving the healthcare system from a fee-for-service model to a value-based healthcare system.
4. Discuss the role of quality indicators, quality performance measures, patient experience survey instruments and how they are used separately and together to assess and/or reward quality.
5. Track and describe past and current healthcare legislative, regulatory, and policy changes and proposals influencing quality over time, along with future expectations/speculation;
6. Identify key stakeholders and stakeholder organizations engaged in healthcare quality, understanding their roles and opportunities to engage those stakeholders;
7. Provide examples of the various uses of quality measures by various stakeholders from public and private sectors;
8. Identify the methods for developing and implementing quality measures as well as related resources and challenges;
9. Recognize and describe the extent of various factors that cause medication errors and adverse events; and
10. Discuss the problems and issues in measuring and reporting safety, as well as understanding the ethical, legal, and regulatory implications to patient safety.

### **Textbook:**

Warholak, Terri L. and Nau, David P., *Quality and Safety in Pharmacy Practice*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education / Medical, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0071603850 [**available at no charge electronically through Access Pharmacy via the library**].

### **Course Activities and Delivery Method(s):**

There will be a combination of live/video lectures as well as prerecorded videos to supplement the weekly readings on various topics. To assess the student's understanding of the course topics, the course will include:

**Reading Synopses:** Where noted on the course calendar, students should submit a 1/2-page synopsis of each assigned reading for that week. The synopses should identify the key points of the assigned reading for that week along with a discussion of the application of that reading to their professional practice. Put all synopses into 1 document and submit via email to Dr. Nau.

**Discussion Board Participation Points:** Students are expected to participate in online discussions. Points will be awarded to a student when the student meaningfully contributes to the class discussion. Students may earn up to 20 points during the semester (maximum of 3 points per class discussion).

**Midterm Exam:** The mid-term exam will cover topics covered in the first half of the course. Students who miss the mid-term exam due to death in their family or serious documented illness will be allowed to take a make-up midterm exam. Any unexcused absences for the mid-term will be assigned a zero grade.

**Quality Improvement Paper:** Each student will write a paper on a quality topic. The instructor must approve the paper topic at least 2 weeks before the due date. Papers should be at least 5 pages of text (plus an additional page for references) with line spacing of 1.5 and font size no bigger than 12 point.

### **Assessments and Grading:**

Reading Synopses (16 x 2.5 points)	40%
Discussion Board Participation (5 x 4 points)	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Quality Improvement Paper	20%

### **Grading:**

Students will be assigned a grade at the completion of the course, based on the following percentages of possible points:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	below 60%

### **Course Communication**

#### **Instructor communications:**

All students must have access to their university email address. Any changes to the syllabus or class schedule will be communicated through email (per the University Faculty Handbook). Students are responsible for obtaining course updates sent via email. Please check your email regularly for any important updates, changes, or cool news about pharmacy and the world of health care.

#### **Etiquette and Professionalism:**

As an enrolled student in a graduate professional program, you are held to the same professional standards as a healthcare professional. Please be courteous and respectful of your classmates and instructors when communicating in person and by email. Professionalism in your interactions includes correct and appropriate spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

#### **Academic Dishonesty Statement:**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Cases of academic dishonesty will be treated in accordance with UW Regulation 2-114. The penalties for academic dishonesty can include, at the Course Coordinator's discretion, an "F" on an exam, an "F" on the class component exercise, and/or an "F" in the entire course. Academic dishonesty means anything that represents someone else's ideas as your own without attribution. It is intellectual theft – stealing - and includes (but is not limited to) unapproved assistance on examinations, plagiarism (use of any amount of another person's writings, blog posts, publications, and other materials without attributing that material to that person with citations), or fabrication of referenced information. Facilitation of another person's academic dishonesty is also considered academic dishonesty and will be treated identically

#### **Disability Support Statement:**

The University of Wyoming is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you have a disability, including but not limited to physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities, and would like to request accommodations in this course due to your disability, , please register with and provide documentation of your disability as soon as possible to Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 128 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu). It is in the student's best interest to request accommodations within the first

week of classes, understanding that accommodations are not retroactive. Visit the DSS website for more information at: [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)

### **Classroom Statement on Diversity:**

The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, culture, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning.

### **Duty to Report:**

UW faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, the faculty member **MUST** report information you share about the incident to the university's Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may find info about UW policy and resources at <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit>

You do not have to go through the experience alone. Assistance and resources are available, and you are not required to make a formal complaint or participate in an investigation to access them.

### **Substantive Changes to Syllabus:**

All deadlines, requirements and course structure is subject to change if deemed necessary by the instructor. Students will be notified verbally in class, on our WyoCourses page announcement, and/or via email of these changes.

### **Student Resources:**

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES: [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu), 766-3073, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)

COUNSELING CENTER: [uccstaff@uwyo.edu](mailto:uccstaff@uwyo.edu), 766-2187, 766-8989 (After hours), 341 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/ucc](http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc)

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS: 766-4286, 312 Old Main, [www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs)

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE: [dos@uwyo.edu](mailto:dos@uwyo.edu), 766-3296, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/dos](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos)

UW POLICE DEPARTMENT: [uwpd@uwyo.edu](mailto:uwpd@uwyo.edu), 766-5179, 1426 E Flint St, [www.uwyo.edu/uwpd](http://www.uwyo.edu/uwpd)

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT WEBSITE: [www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct)

**Course Calendar** (week starts on Monday)

WEEK*		TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS*
1	03/23	Overview of Quality Problems	<p><b>Watch “Overview of Class” video that is posted in Canvas</b></p> <p>Read : IOM Executive Summary: <i>Crossing the Quality Chasm</i> &amp; Textbook Chapter 2 &amp; Article on Aviation &amp; Healthcare</p> <p>Submit : Synopsis of each article/chapter by 03/29 (total of 3 synopses)</p> <p>Discussion board prompt will be posted by 03/25. Post a response to the discussion board by 03/27.</p>
2	03/30	Quality Improvement Concepts	<p>Read: Textbook Chapter 5, and Slides on QI Models, and Article on Six Sigma... Why, What, How</p> <p>Submit synopsis of each chapter/web-reading by 04/05 (total of 3 synopses)</p> <p>Discussion board question will be posted by 04/01. Post a response to the discussion board by 04/03</p>
3	04/06	QI Tools and Statistical Techniques	<p>Read: Textbook Chapters 8, &amp; Six Sigma... Problem Solving &amp; Lecture on SPC</p> <p>Submit: Synopsis of each chapter/web-reading by 04/12 (total of 3 synopses)</p> <p>Discussion board question will be posted by 04/08. Post a response to the discussion board by 04/10</p>

4	04/13	Organizations That Develop and/or Endorse Quality Measures	<p>Read: Textbook Chapter 4</p> <p>PQA: <a href="https://www.pqaalliance.org/pqa-measures">https://www.pqaalliance.org/pqa-measures</a>  NCQA: <a href="https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/">https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/</a>  NQF: <a href="http://www.qualityforum.org">www.qualityforum.org</a>  TJC: <a href="http://www.jointcommission.org">www.jointcommission.org</a></p> <p>Submit: Synopsis of Chapter 4 by <b>04/16</b>  <b>Exam will be posted by 04/16. Submit exam by 04/19</b></p> <p>No discussion board this week</p>
5	04/20	Macro-level strategies for QI (public reporting & payment reform)	<p>1. Medicare Plan Compare: <a href="https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/">https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pretend you are a Medicare patient searching for a Medicare Health/Drug Plan in your zip code. Review the costs and star ratings of those plans. Is there a clear-cut best choice?</li> </ul> <p>2. Medicare Care Compare: <a href="https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/">https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do a search for hospitals, nursing homes and physicians in your zip code, and compare the quality of the providers who are listed.</li> </ul> <p>3. Physician Quality Payment Program: <a href="https://qpp.cms.gov/mips/overview">https://qpp.cms.gov/mips/overview</a></p> <p>4. Private sector Value-Based Care: <a href="http://valuebasedcare.humana.com/">http://valuebasedcare.humana.com/</a></p> <p>Submit: Synopsis of your key learnings from each of the four websites (4 synopses) by <b>04/26</b></p> <p>Discussion Board topic posted by 04/22; respond by 04/24</p>
6	04/27	Micro-level strategies for QI (teams and tactics)	<p>Read Textbook Chapter 17</p> <p>AHRQ site on QI Team STEPPS: <a href="https://www.ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/communication/overview/index.html">https://www.ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/communication/overview/index.html</a></p> <p>Helping Pharmacies engage in QI and payment innovation: <a href="https://www.pharmacyquality.com/">https://www.pharmacyquality.com/</a></p> <p>Submit synopsis of each chapter/website by 05/03 (total of 2 synopses – nothing on pharmacies)</p> <p>Discussion board question will be posted by 04/29. Post a response to the discussion board by 05/01</p>

7	05/04	Paper on Quality Improvement	Submit Paper no later than <b>11pm MT on May 10, 2026</b>
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