

# The Common Course at Montgomery College

## Background

Montgomery College continues to experience high demand in gateway courses and General Education courses. Consistent with enrollment data from previous years, a significant proportion of student enrollment is concentrated in a relatively small number of courses. Ensuring access to these highly-enrolled courses is critical to improving student retention, completion, and overall success.

The College has expanded its online education infrastructure through MC Online, leveraging scalable, high-quality online course design to increase access while maintaining academic rigor. A key strategy is the development and delivery of common courses, which are high-quality online course shells that can be deployed across multiple sections and multiple instructors.

The common course model does the following:

- Expands student access to courses that are in high demand;
- Supports consistent online course quality that is aligned with Quality Matters standards and Montgomery College expectations;
- Reduces duplication of course development efforts;
- Enables more efficient training of qualified instructors; and
- Improves student success through the incorporation of relevant online pedagogy and digital tools.

## Faculty Training

MC Online collaborates with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to develop and deliver training for all Montgomery College faculty. Per the [E-Learning Side Letter](#), faculty are required to successfully complete the appropriate training to teach online. Faculty who develop the common course must complete the Online Teaching training, while faculty who teach the common course need to complete the Digital Fundamentals for Teaching and Learning (DFTL). These training courses ensure that faculty can:

- Teach effectively in Blackboard Ultra;
- Apply relevant online pedagogy and digital tools; and
- Align their teaching with that of Quality Matters standards and Montgomery College expectations.

The common course coordinator is the faculty member who shepherds the course through the Quality Matters certification process, with support from MC Online and CTL staff. This coordinator maintains the course during the semesters in which they have been assigned to this role.

## Additional Guidelines

For information on the development of common courses, training, compensation and support, and coordination, please refer to the [E-Learning Side Letter](#).