

3.A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

WSC is part of the North Dakota University System (NDUS); as such, many courses fall under the [General Education Requirements Transfer Agreement \(GERTA\)](#), which is an agreement amongst all institutions in the university system to accept transfer credits from other North Dakota institutions. Annually, academic discipline groups meet for each area of study to add, delete, or amend classes that are part of the [GERTA matrix](#). WSC's general education classes align with GERTA standards. For classes in career and technical education (CTE), WSC's course offerings align with the same GERTA requirements or with industry standards based on CTE advisory board meetings. Such board meetings occur twice a year and influence the instruction and workforce preparation of WSC students. Moreover, the North Dakota Department of Career Technical Education (NDCTE) accredits all CTE programs and coursework across all K-12 and NDUS institutions. Among the latter's criteria is a requirement to have courses audited by the NDCTE in each program every five years. Additionally, programs like nursing and massage therapy are accredited separately through national professional accrediting entities. In all these scenarios, WSC's curriculum and instruction have been recognized for quality and relevance.

3.A.2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.

As a two-year community college, WSC does not offer graduate, post-baccalaureate, or post-graduate awards. Instead, most classes offered fall under transfer pathways or lead to job placement in local industry. Each class at WSC ties to one or several of the four institutional learning outcomes: [communication, reasoning, wellness, or diversity](#).

Moving forward, WSC plans to more carefully differentiate the institutional learning outcomes from program learning outcomes. For many years, the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science program learning outcomes adopted the institutional learning outcomes. After professional development with a [Worldwide Instructional Design System \(WIDS\)](#) (WIDS) consultant, faculty began revising program learning outcomes; going into the 2024-2025 school year, this consultant will work with WSC faculty to [further develop learning outcomes and building a plan to start assessing those program learning outcomes appropriately](#). The [Fall 2024 in-service schedule](#) includes professional development time with the consultant to address Course Outcome Guides, Program Outcome Guides, and curriculum maps to articulate and differentiate learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels.

3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery. Credit-bearing classes at WSC have Course Outcome Guides (COGs) to note the courses' learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and institutional learning outcomes; each COG also lists the concepts and issues taught in the course, the process skills being

demonstrated in the course, and the assessment tasks of the course. Faculty utilize COGs to provide a framework for all credit-bearing courses at the college while maintaining academic freedom for individual instructors. The Distance Learning committee also started planning evaluation materials for online courses that use Quality Matters standards as criteria; this would further ensure that WSC's quality and learning goals are consistent across various course sections and locations of instruction.

Institutionally, the ePortfolio process also provides consistency across teaching modalities and localities. WSC Procedure 483 notes that all course sections, no matter the teaching modality, are required to include an ePortfolio assignment to ensure that data is being collected for institutional learning outcome assessment. This includes online asynchronous courses and dual-credit courses at several regional high schools.

Faculty evaluations also provide consistency across all modes of delivery and all locations. [WSC Policy 604.4](#) and [WSC Procedure 604.4](#) govern faculty evaluations; full-time faculty are evaluated annually by administration, and part-time adjunct faculty are evaluated semesterly by the department chair of the respective department. Dual-credit faculty are observed annually by the department chair or a representative of the respective discipline on campus. Observing faculty either annually or semesterly ensures that all faculty are providing learning materials and assessment tasks that match the rigor required of a two-year associate degree. The end of a faculty evaluation process entails discussion with an administrator (or a full-time faculty member who observes dual-credit faculty) to point out strengths and areas for growth, including revision to course materials or professional development to enhance instruction. Moving forward, WSC plans to review and revise faculty observation forms to create a more relevant evaluation of teaching; this will be especially important to align dual-credit courses with WSC's course offerings.

One area of growth is aligning the learning materials and assignments of dual-credit faculty to those of WSC. This will ensure that dual-credit students are getting a similar classroom experience to regularly enrolled college students. Moving forward, WSC will explore professional development opportunities specifically for dual-credit faculty, such as synchronous webinar-style events to explain important information, WSC's expectations for dual-credit faculty, and student learning.

As a second area of growth, WSC will explore the use of master course shells within the Blackboard learning management system. If one full-time faculty member held the responsibility of creating and maintaining a master course shell for a given course, then adjunct, dual-credit, and even other full-time faculty could use that same master course shell for their own sections, thereby guaranteeing consistency across all teaching modalities and locations. A master course shell is not intended to curtail the academic freedom of individual faculty, but ensure an alignment of instruction across modalities, localities, and instructors. The proposed starting premise intended for this initiative is that every course and every section taught, irrespective of who is teaching and how they are teaching, is a "WSC course, taught to WSC students, and taught by a WSC faculty." Coupled with the adherence to the newly established faculty minimum qualifications

rubric, such an approach creates the necessary adherence to the same standards, rigor, and expectations.

Sources

- WSC website, “General Education Requirements Transfer Agreement (GERTA)”
- GERTA-Guide-2024.pdf
- WSC website, “Institutional Effectiveness”
- Worldwide Instructional Design System website
- WSC SLO and curriculum plan.pdf
- Pre-Service Itinerary – Fall 2024 ACADEMIC AFFAIRS_Version Updated 06.06.2024.docx
- WSC website, “Policies”
- WSC website, “Procedures”