

4.A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

Every academic program goes through a three-year review cycle according to the [2024-2025 Academic Program Review Summary Report](#). The second page of this document notes that the Academic Affairs Office will maintain a schedule to conduct four full program reviews per year. For faculty and staff completing a full program review summary report, a timeline of document creation and submission is found on page 2 of the summary report. This review process ensures compliance with [WSC Procedure 403.1.2: Current Academic Program Review](#).

In the first year, the program being reviewed will create a full Academic Program Review Summary Report as an in-depth self-study. This report is intended to assist programs in identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement and/or collaboration. The seven sections of this self-study address the program's goals and how they align with the overarching goals of the college and how industry trends might impact the program and its graduates; sections also require data about program enrollment, faculty and staff, program resources and space, and program assessment data. The final section of the report notes the major findings of the self-study and which recommendations would help to achieve the desired outcomes for the program. Program coordinators work with the Institutional Research Office to gather internal data to use in their self-studies.

For programs in their second or third year of the three-year program review process, they will create a program update report. The program update report is a self-study document to note and discuss changes made to the program and to highlight strengths of the program along with areas of improvement.

As of Fall 2023, members of Accreditation Criterion Teams 3 and 4 evaluate program review summary reports or program update reports per the timeline on page 2 of the summary report document. October 15 and November 1 are the submission due dates for program update reports and program review summary reports, respectively; after submission, accreditation team members evaluate the reports throughout November and December and return these documents to program coordinators by January 15. Program coordinators, the accreditation team leads, namely the Vice President for Academic

Affairs and the faculty lead on Criterion Teams 3 and 4 review and discuss the evaluated self-study documents until the end of February. By March 15, final reports are due to the Academic Affairs Office; findings are incorporated into the next year's academic plans where feasible.

Faculty utilize this three-year cycle of program review to strengthen programs, but as an area of growth, budget prioritization must reinforce the program review process. [A town hall meeting on April 5, 2024 included a long-range planning schedule that highlighted budget prioritization based on student learning outcome assessment.](#) In the Spring 2024 semester, the college purchased membership to Worldwide Instructional Design System (WIDS) to aid in student learning outcome assessment. Moreover, WSC is in the process of connecting Blackboard's Analytics for Learn module to the backend of the Blackboard Learn learning management system (LMS) to automate and streamline the data collection and collation for faculty. Assessment data will be a strong focus of the program review process, especially in Section VI of the Academic Program Review Summary Report. Data collected from the program learning outcome assessment will be included in the summary report to inform budget prioritization at the institutional level. Training camps and one-on-one consults will be scheduled for all faculty irrespective of whether they teach using the LMS.

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

The Registrar's Office at WSC evaluates all requests for credit for prior learning. Credit for prior learning is governed by [WSC Procedure 467: Credit for Prior Learning](#), which details which students are eligible for credit for prior learning and what stipulations come with those credits. This procedure also notes the different challenge exams available for students to earn credits, such as College Level Examination Program (CLEP), DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement (AP) for high school students, or National Teacher Examination (NTE).

Academic credits awarded to students at WSC are evaluated by multiple campus entities. At its inception, every new course must pass through its respective academic department. If approved by that department, the new course will be evaluated by the Curriculum Committee; [policies and procedures governing the committee](#) recommend three separate readings of course additions, changes, or deletions to ensure that courses are evaluated thoroughly. As these policies and procedures have not been revised since

2018, [the Curriculum Committee has already started discussions about how to revise some of its procedures.](#)

One area of growth that WSC is exploring is master course shells, especially for courses with multiple sections and that are commonly taught by adjuncts and in dual enrollment. Such an approach would create consistent learning and rigor, while preserving a distinct level of academic freedom for the instructor to personalize their teachings. The master course shell created and maintained by one full-time faculty member would also ensure rigor and consistency across all sections of the course. For example, three full-time faculty teach ENGL 110 (College Composition I), but several adjunct and dual-credit faculty also teach sections of this course. If a master course shell were created, all students would get a similar experience in the course no matter which instructor or teaching modality. In turn, the transcribed grade would reflect the common standards of rigor of WSC. Additionally, common course shells allow for a more unbiased learning outcome assessment across all modalities, locations, and instructors.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Policies regarding transfer credits can be found in the [WSC Course Catalog](#). Specifically, page 18 defines the term “transfer student” and what documents are necessary to be admitted as such; if accepted, the transfer student must provide official transcripts from any other colleges attended to evaluate the quality of credits transferring into WSC. Within the North Dakota University System, [Common Course Numbering](#) further ensures a smooth alignment of curricula and competencies across the eleven institutions across the state.

For international students, a third-party evaluator (e.g. World Education Services or Spartan) is required to evaluate transfer credits. Page 21 of the catalog specifies that any credits transferring to WSC must come from regionally accredited colleges and universities, though credit for prior learning may be applicable for credits transferring from non-degree granting institutions. Any transfer credits, including those from NDUS sister institutions, entering WSC are evaluated by the Registrar’s Office in conjunction with the applicable academic department.

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

The academic quality of a WSC student's education is managed by Academic Affairs and the college's faculty. Qualifications for faculty are documented in the [minimum qualifications rubric](#) found on the WSC website, and these qualifications also apply to adjunct and dual credit faculty employed by the college; this document complies with the [WSC Instructional Division Policy and Procedure Manual](#) and [SBHE Policy 420: Accreditation](#). Expectations of college employees are explained in the [Code of Conduct](#), which all faculty must sign in acknowledgement; faculty expectations are further outlined in the [WSC Constitution](#), [WSC Procedure 626: New Instructional Staff Member Mentoring](#), [WSC Procedure 627: Adjunct and Dual Credit Faculty Mentoring](#), [WSC Procedure 630: Workload and Compensation](#), and the WSC Instructional Division Policy and Procedure Manual.

Individual faculty have authority over their courses' textbooks and learning resources as it complies with [SBHE Policy 401.1: Academic Freedom](#). In preparation for every semester, textbook requisitions are requested from and submitted by faculty to the WSC bookstore manager for fulfillment to comply with federal regulations regarding textbook information being freely available for students. The [SBHE is drafting a new policy](#) regarding course marking those courses which utilize low-cost or no-cost learning materials, and more WSC faculty are adopting open education resources each year. [In academic year 2023, 33 WSC courses were marked used low-cost or no-cost learning materials; this number more than doubled in the following academic year.](#)

Authority over course prerequisites, rigor, and student learning outcomes belong to individual academic departments and the Curriculum Committee. Proposed new courses must include a departmentally approved Course Outcome Guide, and proposed new programs must include a departmentally approved Program Outcome Guide. When proposing a new course or when changing a course, faculty within one of the four academic departments at WSC review the student learning outcomes for the course and

discuss how the course's learning outcomes apply to the program learning outcomes. Once approved departmentally, new courses or course changes are submitted to the Curriculum Committee for review; the committee may approve or deny new courses and course changes; if the committee denies a new course or change, they will provide recommendations about course prerequisites, rigor, and student learning outcomes. Changes to academic programs follow a similar process as outlined in the [WSC Curriculum Committee Policies and Procedures](#).

In Spring 2024, a [common grading scale](#) was approved for use across WSC's courses. This grading scale evaluates student work on a scale of A-B-C-D-F and provides percentages and brief descriptions of each grade. The common grading scale was proposed by Instructional Cabinet to ensure the consistency of the academic rigor across WSC courses, whether these are course offerings on the WSC campus or dual-credit offerings at area high schools. Subsequently, departments met and discussed differing options and chose the scale presented above.

One area of growth that WSC is exploring is master course shells in Blackboard. If several faculty members are teaching the same course, a master course shell, created and maintained by one full-time faculty member, would also ensure rigor and consistency across all sections of the course. For example, three full-time faculty teach ENGL 110: College Composition I, but several adjunct and dual-credit faculty also teach sections of this course. If a master course shell were created, all students would get a similar experience in the course no matter which instructor or teaching modality.

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

WSC maintains specialized accreditation for certain programs. The Nursing program holds accreditation from the [Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation](#), and TrainND Northwest maintains accreditation with the [International Association for Continuing Education and Training](#). The planned new healthcare related programs will also seek programmatic accreditation. The proposed programs being worked on at the time of the writing of this document are:

- Medical Assisting: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) based on the standards of Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB)
- Health Information Technology: Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM)

- EMS and Paramedic: Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) based on the standards of Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP)
- Human Services: Council for Standards in Human Service Education (CSHSE)
- Addiction Studies: National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC)

Discussions have begun at WSC to seek accreditation through the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). Accreditation through NACEP would ensure that dual-credit courses contain the same content and rigor that WSC expects out of its normal classes.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

WSC evaluates the success of its graduates primarily through the ePortfolio process. This process provides data to show how well students have met the institutional learning outcomes. Each student creates an ePortfolio and adds coursework to it to demonstrate how they have met the learning outcomes for each course; once students have graduated, faculty evaluate the contents of the ePortfolio and score the student's work against the institutional learning outcomes. This data is used to improve the college.

For students in career and technical education (CTE), WSC measures the success of its graduates in several ways. Each CTE program at WSC meets with an advisory board comprised of local and regional experts; advisory boards bring information to faculty about what strengths and weaknesses are seen in recent graduates, and they provide insight into industry trends and their impacts on WSC's curriculum. Nursing students must pass the NCLEX-RN exam; while the program expects 80% of students to pass the exam on their first attempt, nearly 90% or more test-takers passed since 2019, with the most recent cohort achieving a 100% pass rate. In North Dakota, Massage Therapy students must also pass the MBLEx licensing exam at the end of their program to practice in the state; 100% of students passed the exam since 2021. Any information collected is also included in the program review process.

Sources

- Academic Program Review Template 24-25Final.docx
- WSC website, “Procedures”
- Townhall 040524.ppt
- WSC website, “Curriculum Policies & Procedures”
- Curriculum Committee Minutes February 2024.pdf
- WSC website, “Catalog 2023-24.pdf”
- North Dakota University System website, “Common Course Numbering (CCN)”
- WSC website, “Minimum Qualifications”
- Instructional Division Policy and Procedure Manual -12.3.19.pdf
- SBHE Policy 420: Accreditation
- 2011_Code of Conduct(0).pdf
- WSC website, “Constitution”
- SBHE Policy 401.1: Academic Freedom
- Developing-OER-System-Level-Policy-through-a-Community-Approach.pdf
- North Dakota University System website, Goal 4: Unified System, Objective 4.3B: Increase number of low cost/no cost textbooks
- Common Grading Scale.xlsx
- BOC Initial Accreditation – Granted Letter-Williston State College-AD.pdf
- WSC website, “IACET Accredited Provider”
- Appendix E – WSC Nursing Program Evaluation Plan AY19-AY22 March 11, 2022.pdf
- Minot Daily News website, “DCB, Williston nursing students achieve full pass rate”
- Massage Therapy Exam Results folder