

AQIP Criterion One: Helping Students Learn

Context for Analysis

1C1 Student Learning Objectives

Western's context for analyzing Helping Students Learn (Criterion 1) is based on the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) mission as stated in Wisconsin State Statute 38.001 (1) and (2a). One of the principal purposes of the Wisconsin Technical College System is to provide education through associate degree programs and other programs below the baccalaureate level. Western has identified six core abilities or general student learning outcomes (Figure 1-1) that are common across all associate degree programs, technical diploma programs, and certificate offerings. These core abilities represent the overall employability skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for successful performance in the work place and in life.

Figure 1-1 Core Abilities

Learning Outcome	Patterns of Knowledge/Skills
Communication	Demonstrate effective reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills
Mathematics	Demonstrate mathematical skills
Science	Apply scientific concepts
Problem Solving	Identify and solve problems, applying knowledge in a critical, creative, and ethical manner
Self-Awareness, Teamwork, Diversity	Recognize the value of self and others in order to be a productive member of a diverse global society
Technology	Evaluate and use information technology effectively

In addition to the core abilities, each program consults with employer advisory committees and state-wide curriculums where appropriate to identify occupational-specific learning outcomes.

1C2 Learning Aligned with Mission, Vision and Philosophy

Western assures that its student learning expectations, practices, and development objectives align with its mission, vision, and philosophy by validating the outcomes with program advisory committee members on a regular basis. In addition, many of the program outcomes are based upon industry standards or accreditation standards and reflect entry-level competence in specific skills and knowledge related to the discipline. A recent state-wide effort to develop common curricular standards for programs has resulted in a state-wide curriculum for the nursing, paralegal and supervisory management programs. The WTCS presidents have recently placed priority on the development of state-wide curriculum for all programs.

1C3 Key Instructional Programs

Wisconsin State Statute 38.001 defines the mission and purpose of the Wisconsin Technical College System, the governing body of the 16 technical college districts within the state. The mission of establishing less-than baccalaureate level post-secondary educational opportunities is a shared responsibility between the Wisconsin Technical College System Board and the College. Thus, the educational design process is multi-faceted and well-defined by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board. This framework, illustrated in Figure 1-2, identifies the education design aid codes and programs. The Wisconsin Technical College System also mandates the functions within the programs (types of courses) and range of credits.

Figure 1-2 Wisconsin Technical College System/Western Technical College Educational Framework

Education and Design Aid code	Program	Types of Courses	Minimum Credits	Maximum Credits
10 (100 level)	Associate Degree	Technical Studies	36	49
		General Studies	21	30
		Electives	0	6
30-32 (300 level)	One Year Technical Diploma (26 – 54 credits)	Technical Studies	70%	100%
		Occupation Supportive/ General Education	0%	30%
	Two Year Technical Diploma (55-70 credits)	Technical Studies	70%	100%
		Occupation Supportive/ General Education	0%	30%
42, 47 (400 level)	General Adult Occupational Adult	All Non-Credit "Aidable"	Requires only course approval at WTCS	
50 (500 level)	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship programs of three (3) or more years of on-the-job training shall have a minimum of 400 hours of paid related instruction.	No minimum	No maximum
60 (600 level)	Adult Avocational	Non "Aidable"	Flexibility to offer any course that falls within mission defined by State Statute	
73-78 (700 level)	Adult Basic Education	Beginning, Intermediate, ESL, HIP, VIP, High School Diploma, GED, HSED, Developmental, and Remedial Education	All codes are non post-secondary courses (WTCS Reporting Process)	
38.14	Customized Training/ Technical Assistance	Training or assistance designed for a particular business/organization to meet specific employment requirements or other needs	N/A	N/A
	Certificates	Short-term training to provide basic skills and/or certification requirements	N/A	N/A

Figure 1-3 identifies the number of program offerings within the five instructional divisions at the College. These offerings include 43 associate of applied science degree programs, 23 technical diploma programs, and 6 certificates. The College also offers 40 internal certificates, apprenticeship training, non-credit courses, and customized training and technical assistance for business and industry. Adult Basic Education includes developmental education, remedial education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL), and High School Credential—regular high school diploma, High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED), and General Educational Development Certificate (GED).

Figure 1-3 Number of Program Offerings by Division

Division	Associate Degree	Technical Diploma	Certificate
Business	11	3	
Family and Consumer Science	5	2	
General Education	2		
Industrial Technologies	13	10	1
Health and Public Safety	12	8	5
Extended Education and Training	Non Associate Degree, Technical Diploma or certificate offerings		
Instructional Support Services	Non Associate Degree, Technical Diploma or certificate offerings		

Western operates on a semester basis (16-week, 55-minute class period structure) including 4- and 8-week summer sessions and an 11-week summer term. Programs and classes are offered at various times (day, evening, and weekends) by the six instructional divisions. Classes are commonly scheduled in “blocks” to accommodate students. Both credit and non-credit offerings are available at the main campus and extended campus locations.

Courses are delivered in a variety of formats and vary by program offerings. The delivery methods include traditional face-to-face, traditional with web-based enhancement, web-based (online), accelerated, block and blend (combination of accelerated and online), interactive television, independent study, and cooperative education. Prior to implementing or integrating an alternative delivery method, Western studies the targeted student segment to make sure the method fits student needs. For example, the Supervisory Management program is offered in an accelerated format with classes structured in 6-7 week blocks offered in the evenings. This delivery method works well for the targeted student market which is defined as a non-traditional market that has work experience, a need to balance full-time work schedule, family and education.

Western has responded to changing stakeholder needs by integrating technology and innovative teaching methods into instructional programs. New technology is incorporated into programs and courses based upon emerging technologies, student need, feedback from advisory committees, employer focus groups, market research, and industry standards. Figure 1-4 illustrates a variety of resources and components that support the integration of technology into instruction. Figure 1-5 depicts the increase in the number of courses offered online.

Western’s Learning Innovation Center and Instructional Technology Team consists of faculty, administration, learning and development consultants, and IT professionals, who stay abreast of emerging technologies and provide recommendations for technology upgrades and applications in the classroom. Technology upgrades are funded through Western’s annual instructional planning and budgeting process, through grants, and through in-kind donations. For example, the Respiratory Therapist program received a \$20,000 grant that included a \$15,000 donation of The Vest (a high-frequency Chest Wall Oscillator) and \$5,000 to attend a training workshop and obtain a pre-written curriculum.

Figure 1-4 Technology Resources and Components

Component	Service/Benefit	Impact
Instructional Technology Team	Promotes integration of technology into instruction; addresses issues related to instructional technology	Enhances instructional delivery to students in non-traditional formats (ITV, online, web-assisted, open lab, etc.)
Instructional Technology Dialogue Sessions; Online Faculty Mentoring Program	Fosters and supports development of faculty instructional websites	Enhances online instruction and delivery to students
BlackBoard	Online course management system	Provides an all-in-one system for online instruction (posting course materials, chat rooms, discussion boards, testing, posting grades, etc.)
Respondus—computer- based testing tool	Supports faculty evaluation/ assessment of students (can write, administer, and report on assessments electronically and administer and reports on summative course evaluations)	Provides a secure testing/assessment environment for students enrolled in online, ITV, and traditional
eTech (the WTCS virtual college)	Educational portal promotes online course/program availability, linked to each WTCS district website	Provides working adults more flexibility in pursuing an education from home
Learning Innovation Center website	Supports integration of technology into instruction by providing resources for web-based pedagogy and online instruction	Enhances online instruction and delivery to students
General Studies Online Writing Center	Supports student learning by providing online writing resources and access to online tutoring	Enhances student writing skills

