The WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review

Substantive Change Expectations as they relate to the CFRs

Standard 1
Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

- The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good. It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy.

CFR 1.1
Institutional Purposes

1.1 The institution's formally approved statements of purpose are appropriate for an institution of higher education and clearly define its essential values and character and ways in which it contributes to the public good.

Guidelines:
- The institution has a published mission statement that clearly describes its purposes.
- The institution's purposes fall within recognized academic areas and/or disciplines.
- A review under WSCUC begins with and respects the mission of the institution.
- Institutional mission is often reflected in institution-level learning outcomes (ILOs).
- The anticipated substantive change is to be connected with the mission, purpose, and strategic plan of the institution.
- The proposed degree program should be mission consistent.
CFR 1.2
Institutional Purposes
1.2 Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated purposes, and are demonstrably achieved. The institution regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement, including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning outcomes.

- The fundamental purpose of an educational institution is learning
- WSCUC is continuing a shift in focus from inputs to outputs (learning)
- These should be intentional, aligned with mission, and broadly deployed across the institution
- Outcomes must be sufficiently clear to be measurable

CFR 1.6
Integrity and Transparency
1.6 The institution exhibits integrity and transparency in its operations, as demonstrated by the adoption and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, sound business practices, timely and fair responses to complaints and grievances, and regular evaluation of its performance in these areas. The institution's finances are regularly audited by qualified independent auditors.

- The institution has high ethical obligations to multiple constituencies: students, employers, taxpayers, families, and the larger society
- These obligations are defined and codified in clear and available policies
- The institution can document that published policies are followed

CFR 1.7
Integrity and Transparency
1.7 Financial integrity and sustainability are key concerns for a WSCUS review
- Marketing and admission materials for new programs are expected to be clear and transparent.
CFR 1.8
Integrity and Transparency

1.8 The institution is committed to honest and open communication with the Accrediting Commission, to undertaking the accreditation review process with seriousness and candor, to informing the Commission promptly of any matter that could materially affect the accreditation status of the institution, and to abiding by Commission policies and procedures, including all substantive change policies.

- The ALO is expected to remain current on reporting policies, application processes for substantive change, and other formal interactions with WSCUC
- All internal approvals, including Board of Trustees, have been received for substantive change proposals requiring such approval by the institution. For CSU campuses, approval level from the Chancellor’s Office is required.

Standard 2.
Achieving Educational Objectives
Through Core Functions

The institution achieves its purposes and attains its educational objectives at the institutional and program level through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning and success. The institution demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively by evaluating valid and reliable evidence of learning and by supporting the success of every student.

CFR 2.1
Teaching and Learning

2.1 The institution’s educational programs are appropriate in content, standards of performance, rigor, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded, regardless of mode of delivery. They are staffed by sufficient numbers of faculty qualified for the type and level of curriculum offered.

Guidelines:
The content, length, and standards of the institution’s academic programs conform to recognized disciplinary or professional standards and are subject to peer review.

- An institution accredited by WSCUC is expected to operate using accepted conventions, definitions, and practice within the higher education community
- A clarified emphasis: The meaning, quality, and integrity of each degree
- The design and expression of these elements are the responsibility of the institution’s faculty
CFR 2.2
Teaching and Learning
2.2 All degrees—undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits. The institution has both a coherent philosophy, expressive of its mission, which guides the meaning of its degrees and processes that ensure the quality and integrity of its degrees.

- Each degree is more than an aggregation of units; it represents a coherent and intentional learning experience, to include a major, focus or concentrations
- The following sub-sections express how this is applied for both undergraduate (associate and baccalaureate) and graduate education—which WSCUC views as qualitatively different forms of learning in terms of rigor and levels of student performance

CFR 2.2a
Teaching and Learning
2.2a The institution’s programmatic mission is an integrated course of study in which breadth and depth are concentrated within clearly defined learning outcomes. These programs ensure the development of core competencies—written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking—across all programs, in addition to fostering an appreciation for scholarship and/or professional practice, and a commitment to ethical and civic responsibility, core engagement, and the ability to work with others. Bachelor’s programs must be designed for all students to develop the abilities, skills, and knowledge expected of educated persons. Undergraduate programs require significant depth in a major (typically described in terms of a program or major).

- The “general education” component of an undergraduate degree (associate of baccalaureate) is defined in terms of competencies rather than of prescribed units
- Institutions are expected to be able to define and assess the five core competencies:
  - Written communication
  - Oral communication
  - Quantitative reasoning
  - Information literacy
  - Critical thinking
- Competencies should be integrated across the curriculum and assessed near the conclusion (capstones?)

CFR 2.2b
Teaching and Learning
2.2b The institution’s graduate programs establish clearly stated objectives, differentiated from and more advanced than undergraduate programs in terms of admissions, curricula, standards of performance, and student learning outcomes. Graduate programs typically require students’ active engagement with the literature of the field and an active culture that promotes the importance of scholarship and/or professional practice. Ordinarily, a baccalaureate degree is required for admission to a graduate program.

- Graduate degree programs should be clearly differentiated from undergraduate programs; master’s levels, professional and research doctorates should each have distinctive characteristics, consistent with the discipline and/or professional field
- Development and support of an appropriate graduate culture that includes scholarship and/or professional practice for both faculty and students should be featured parts of graduate degree programs
- Full-time faculty must be sufficient to “anchor” the academic processes such as teaching and mentoring students, policy development, program review, and operational oversight (see CFR 3.1 also)
- WSCUC recognizes the value of adjuncts, especially in applied professional areas
### CFR 2.3 Teaching and Learning

2.3 The institution’s student learning outcomes and standards of performance are clearly stated at the course, program, and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and standards are reflected in academic programs, policies, and curricula, and are aligned with assessment, library, and information and technology resources, and the wider learning environment.

**Guidelines:**
- All syllabi include credits awarded, course and applicable learning outcomes
- Program learning outcomes are appropriate to the degree, specific and measurable
- Curriculum maps demonstrate progression of student learning; courses are clearly aligned with PLOs
- Sustained and productive conversations among all relevant units are expected through the annual assessment and program review processes
- Programs with internships, practica, etc. have well developed policies and appropriate oversight.

### CFR 2.4 Teaching and Learning

2.4 The institution’s student learning outcomes and standards of performance are developed by faculty and widely shared among faculty, students, staff, and (where appropriate) external stakeholders. The institution’s faculty/staff collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards.

**Guidelines:**
- Faculty have responsibility for the development and assessment of student learning outcomes and standards of performance
- Well-crafted learning outcomes at each level are the “unit of analysis” for the academic enterprise of the institution
- Skill at expressing high quality student learning outcomes (SLOs) is a hallmark of a mature institution

### CFR 2.6 Teaching and Learning

2.6 The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated learning outcomes and established standards of performance. The institution ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards that faculty use to evaluate student work.

**Guidelines:**
- The institution’s educational effectiveness/assessment plan is clearly articulated and well developed; faculty are fully engaged in assessment at the course and program level
- Assessments aligned with outcomes are key to measuring SLO achievement
- Rubrics define levels of achievement, lead to consistency of scoring among faculty, and inform student learning efforts
CFR 2.7
Teaching and Learning

2.7 All programs offered by the institution are subject to systematic program review. The program review process includes, but is not limited to, analyses of student achievement of the program’s learning outcomes, retention and graduation rates, and, where appropriate, results of licensing examination and placement, and evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations.

- Assessment of student and program learning outcomes are integrated into program review
- Characteristics of expected program reviews:
  - Well-planned in terms of required data, evaluative processes, and outcomes
  - Integrates educational effectiveness results
  - Inclusive (faculty, employers, alumni, student input, etc.)
  - External evaluator(s) now the norm

CFR 2.8
Scholarship and Creative Activity

2.8 The institution clearly defines expectations for research, scholarship, and creative activity for its students and all categories of faculty. The institution actively values and promotes scholarship, creative activity, and curricular and instructional innovation, and their dissemination appropriate to the institution’s purposes and character.

- Faculty workload policies should be clearly stated, especially at the graduate level, and should include considerations of time for scholarship/professional productivity and key roles in mentoring graduate students, especially at the doctoral level
- Different expectations of research and professional faculty at graduate level

CFR 2.12
Student Learning and Success

2.12 The institution ensures that all students understand the requirements of their academic programs and receive timely, useful, and complete information and advising about relevant academic requirements.

- Applies equally to both for-profit and non-profit institutions
- Marketing, admission and all printed material should clearly describe the program, degree requirements, costs and other information needed by prospective and current students to make informed decisions
- Academic advising is readily available to all students, in both face-to-face and online programs
CFR 2.13
Student Learning and Success
2.13 The institution provides academic and other student support services such as tutoring, services for students with disabilities, financial aid counseling, career counseling and placement, residential life, athletics, and other services and programs as appropriate, which meet the needs of the specific types of students that the institution serves and the programs it offers.

- This underscores the institution’s role in supporting the “completion agenda” for students’ success
- Online students have ready access to all academic and other student support services
- Student services are designed to support the specific types of students that the institution serves (WSCUC is seeing more programs that serve Veterans and/or active duty military personnel)

CFR 2.14
Student Learning and Success
2.14 Institutions that serve transfer students provide clear, accurate, and timely information, ensure equitable treatment under academic policies, provide such students access to student services, and ensure that they are not adversely disadvantaged by the transfer process.

- WSCUC does not prescribe numbers of allowable transfer units
- Expected: Well-developed and consistently applied policies that seek to advantage the student whenever appropriate

Standard 3
Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability
The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through investments in human, physical, fiscal, technological, and information resources and through an appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high-quality environment for learning.
CFR 3.1 Faculty and Staff
3.1 The institution employs faculty and staff with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution. The faculty and staff are sufficient in number, professional qualifications, and diversity to achieve the institution’s educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic and curricular programs. Adequate and fairer delivered.

Guidance:
The institution has a faculty staffing plan that ensures that all faculty roles and responsibilities are fulfilling and includes a sufficient number of full-time faculty members with appropriate backgrounds by discipline and degree level.

- Institution should demonstrate adequate staffing for each program, given the broad national shift toward increased reliance on adjunct/part-time and non-tenure track faculty
- Faculty should have appropriate backgrounds by discipline and degree level to teach in and support the program. There is an expectation that the preponderance of faculty have a degree at least one level higher than the degree offered. Doctoral faculty should be doctorally trained, with rare exception
- Academic programs have sufficient student support staffing in such areas as advising, financial aid, admission, library and information technology to fully support a new and growing program

CFR 3.2 Faculty and Staff
3.2 Faculty and staff recruitment, hiring, orientation, workload, incentives, and evaluation practices are aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives. Evaluation is consistent with best practices in performance appraisal, including multi-source feedback and appropriate peer review. Faculty evaluation processes are systematic and are used to improve teaching and learning.

- Policies are in place ensuring both fair and purposeful evaluation and promotion for faculty
- Evaluation protocols and criteria reflect broad higher education practice

CFR 3.3 Faculty and Staff
3.3 The institution maintains appropriate and sufficiently supported faculty and staff development activities designed to improve teaching, learning, and assessment of learning outcomes.

Guidance:
The institution engages full-time, non-tenure track, adjunct, and part-time faculty members in such processes as assessment, program review, and faculty development.

- Expresses the WSCUC view of higher education institutions as “learning organizations”
- Development not limited to the on-site, full-time faculty but to all who are engaged in deploying the learning experience
- Faculty and staff development support should be reflected in the budget and/or narrative
**CFR 3.4 Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources**

3.4 The institution is financially stable and has qualified independent financial audits and resources sufficient to ensure long-term stability. Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources. Resource planning is integrated with all other institutional planning. Resources are aligned with educational purposes and objectives.

Guidance: The institution has functioned without an operational deficit for at least three years. If the institution has an accumulated deficit, it should provide a detailed explanation and a realistic plan for eliminating it.

• The institution demonstrates how it links planning and budgeting with mission, program review, etc.
• Substantive change proposals should reflect detailed and clear program budgets that do not operate at a deficit for an extended period without explanation of how the institution will sustain the program
• All underlying assumptions are to be provided with the program budget
• Adequate planning for and provision of adequate resources for standalone sites, regional centers and/or new programs with physical resource needs should be demonstrated

**CFR 3.5 Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources**

3.5 The institution provides access to information and technology resources sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and functionality, as appropriate, to support its academic offerings and the research and scholarship of its faculty, staff, and students. These information resources, services, and facilities are consistent with the institution's educational objectives, adequate to support demonstrated student learning outcomes.

Guidance: The institution provides training and support for faculty members who use technology in instruction. Institutions offering graduate programs have sufficient fiscal, physical, information, and technology resources and structures to sustain these programs and to create and maintain a graduate-level academic culture.

• The proper deployment of current technology, with training in its uses, is increasingly critical, especially for online programs
• Faculty engagement and development to ensure the alignment of technology with academic practice are critical
• Orientation, training and support for students in all aspects of IT support (LMS, library, etc.) should be demonstrated in the proposal

**CFR 3.6 Organisation Structures and Decision-Making Processes**

3.6 The institution's leadership, at all levels, is characterized by integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibilities, and accountability.

• Proposals should demonstrate appropriate involvement and responsibility of the faculty, academic administration and a board of directors or trustees
• This is an important CFR for structural change proposals for change of mission, ownership, and/or mergers
CFR 3.9
Organization Structures and Decision-Making Processes

• This CFR has implications for structural change proposals for change of mission and/or ownership

3.9 The institution has an independent governing board or similar authority that, consistent with its legal and fiduciary authority, exercises appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing operations, including hiring and evaluating the chief executive officer.

Guideline: The governing body comprises members with the diverse qualifications required to govern an institution of higher learning. It regularly engages in self-review and training to enhance its effectiveness.

CFR 3.7
Organization Structures and Decision-Making Processes

• This CFR has implications for structural change proposals for change of mission, control and/or ownership

3.7 The institution’s organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear and consistent with its purposes, support effective decision-making, and place priority on sustaining institutional capacity and educational effectiveness.

Guideline: The institution establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority.

CFR 3.10
Organization Structures and Decision-Making Processes

• Faculty governance, at minimum, must own the academic processes of the institution

• No single model, such as “Faculty Senate,” is required so long as the functionality can be demonstrated

3.10 The institution’s faculty exercises effective academic leadership and acts consistently to ensure that both academic quality and the institution’s educational purposes and character are sustained.

Guideline: The institution clearly defines the governance roles, rights, and responsibilities of all categories of full- and part-time faculty.
Standard 4
Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The institution engages in sustained, evidence-based, and participatory self-reflection about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. The institution considers the changing environment of higher education in envisioning its future. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities, to plan, and to improve quality and effectiveness.

CFR 4.1
Quality Assurance Processes

1. The institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes in both academic and non‐academic areas, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, assessment of student learning, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. These processes include collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; tracking learning results over time; using comparative data from external sources; and improving structures, services, processes, curricula, pedagogy, and learning results.

• “Quality assurance” (for the benefit of external stakeholders) and “quality improvement” (an internal priority relevant to all units) are intentional, budgeted, and regularly reviewed for effectiveness
• Focus here is on both the processes (how it is done) and the outcomes (results) achieved by doing it

CFR 4.2
Quality Assurance Processes

2. The institution has institutional research capacity consistent with its purposes and characteristics. Data are disseminated internally and externally in a timely manner; and analyzed, interpreted, and incorporated in institutional review, planning, and decision-making. Periodic reviews are conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the institutional research function and the suitability and usefulness of the data generated.

• This CFR expects a dedicated, informed, supported, and evaluated Institutional Research function engaging continuously with all relevant institutional operations
• Institutional research is often integrally involved in determining program need, participating in educational effectiveness and program review data gathering and analysis as well as retention/graduation and outcomes assessment.
CFR 4.3
Institutional Learning and Improvement

4.3 Leadership at all levels, including faculty, staff, and administration, is committed to improvement based on the results of inquiry, evidence, and evaluation. Assessment of teaching, learning, and the campus environment—its support of academic and co-curricular objectives—is undertaken, used for improvement, and incorporated into institutional planning processes.

Guidance:
The institution has clear, well-established policies and practices—for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information—that create a culture of evidence and improvement.

- This addresses the concept of a “culture of evidence”, which should be evident in all substantive change proposals
- Policies and practices in support of assessment of teaching and learning should be evident and document in proposals
- Assessment at the professional and research doctoral levels have particular characteristics and processes related to research and dissertations

CFR 4.5
Institutional Learning and Improvement

4.5 Appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, students, and others designated by the institution, are regularly involved in the assessment and alignment of educational programs.

- Institutional effectiveness is informed by the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, both internal and external

CFR 4.6
Institutional Learning and Improvement

4.6 The institution periodically engages its multiple constituencies, including the governing board, faculty, staff, and others, in institutional reflection and planning processes that are based on the examination of data and evidence. These processes assess the institution’s strategic position, articulate priorities, examine the alignment of its purposes, core functions, and resources, and define the future direction of the institution.

- This CFR has implications for structural changes including change of mission and ownership as well as degrees to be offered at a new level.
Institutional Learning and Improvement

4.7. Within the context of its mission and structural and financial realities, the institution considers changes that are currently salient and are anticipated to take place within the institution and higher education environment as part of its planning, new program development, and resource allocation.

- Institutions are expected to develop or refine a “futuring” function that scans the relevant higher education horizon for factors that will impinge on its operations and sustainability or that inspire the institution to offer new forms of higher education compatible with its mission.
- This CFR has implications for structural changes including change of mission and ownership as well as degrees to be offered in a new field and/or at a new level.