



Third Party Engagement – Instruction & Curriculum

Purpose

Colleges are responsible for managing how courses and curricula are implemented at their colleges in alignment with Wisconsin Technical College System Board (WTCS) policies and procedures and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and Department of Education (DOE) requirements. Guidance in the Educational Services Manual (ESM) establishes processes and procedures for WTCS program, course and curriculum approval, including requirements surrounding the use of third-party instructors and/or third-party curricula. The purpose of this guidance is to provide clarity on requirements for third-party implementation of courses reported in Client Reporting for purposes of state aid eligibility. Common examples of third-party related courses may include, but are not limited to, apprenticeship courses, high school dual enrollment courses and WTCS courses delivered through the Department of Corrections. All courses submitted to WTCS Client Reporting must comply with this guidance and all other WTCS course policies in order to be eligible for state aid.

Background

To be a WTCS approved course, a college course must meet the WTCS definition of a course and the college must provide assurance of required oversight of both the course content and the course instruction. The requirement for colleges to maintain oversight of instruction and curriculum is necessary to ensure program integrity and consistency across the System. It also directly relates to Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation standards. HLC requires institutions to ensure all instructors meet minimum academic, occupational, or equivalent experience requirements, and this obligation extends to any entities to which instruction is assigned. The ability to transcript courses and grant credit is fundamental to the college's role as an accredited institution.

Required oversight of the course content includes ensuring all course standards are met and all required documentation is maintained for the relevant aid code as described in Educational Services Manual (ESM) Chapter 7 Course Standards. For aid code 50 courses, this includes 1) a detailed course description, 2) a course syllabus, 3) a course outcome summary, and 4) a description of established methods for assessing student learning.

Required oversight of course instruction includes ensuring that all instructors (regardless of whether the instructor is a college employee or a third party employee) meet FQAS faculty hiring requirements as established in TCS 3.07.

When third parties are used for either curriculum development or instructional delivery, some additional criteria become applicable. This is described in Guidance for Third-party Curriculum or Instructors on page 76 of the [WTCS Educational Services Manual \(ESM\)](#):

Third-party Course Instruction: Courses taught by a third-party instructor can only be submitted in Client Reporting if the course content was developed by a WTCS college and the course is approved in the Course Approval Data System. Courses developed by a third-party vendor are not reportable in Client Reporting [unless the course is instructed by a college employee]. Third-party instructors must meet the minimum academic, occupational and teaching requirements for WTCS colleges as outlined by the Faculty Quality Assurance System and local college requirements.

If a course is developed by a third-party it only qualifies for WTCS approval if taught by a WTCS qualified college employee. The course must also still meet all WTCS requirements of a course. Apprenticeship courses are often an example of this situation.

If a course is taught by a third-party instructor that is not a college employee, it only qualifies for WTCS approval if the course content is *developed* by the college, the college maintains oversight of the curriculum *and* the third-party instructor also meets WTCS faculty hiring requirements. The course must also still meet all WTCS requirements of a course as outlined in ESM Chapter 7. WTCS collaborates with a variety of stakeholders on the development and revision of curriculum. Two examples of this situation are dual-enrollment courses delivered by high school teachers and post-secondary courses delivered by Department of Corrections instructors in the prisons.

Credit for Prior Learning Solutions for Apprenticeship

Under current WTCS credit for prior learning (CPL) policies, WTCS allows colleges to grant 39 credits towards the 60 credit Technical Studies - Journey Worker AAS degree to those apprentices that have completed a Registered Apprenticeship *and* completed their related instruction at a WTCS college.

In accordance with WTCS Board Policy 323 (Credit for Prior Learning), which states that "maximum recognition should be provided for education, training or work experiences pertinent to the student's new educational programming," we will now expand this opportunity to those apprenticeship completers that have completed related instruction provided by a Department of Workforce Development – Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards (DWD-BAS) approved provider of related instruction. This expansion will streamline and standardize access for apprenticeship completers, maximizing opportunity and recognizing the rigorous and comprehensive training they have received in their trades. This expansion will also standardize college access and opportunity to offer academic credit for all apprenticeship trades offered throughout the state.

In order to grant 39 credits towards the Technical Studies - Journey Worker AAS degree to individuals that completed a registered apprenticeship, the WTCS granting college must obtain documentation to affirm the following:

1. Applicant's apprenticeship completion.

2. The program is at least three years in length.
3. The number of hours of related instruction for the apprentice's trade exceeds the minimum of 400 hours.
4. The apprenticeship related instruction was provided by a WTCS college *OR* by a provider that has been approved by DWD-BAS as a provider of related instruction and maintained their approval throughout the duration of the apprentice's time spent in related instruction.

Implementation

Colleges must review courses and ensure compliance by July 1, 2027. Expanded CPL provisions for apprenticeship will be effective upon publication in the WTCS Educational Services Manual.

