



REPORT TO THE NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness

August 14, 2026

An Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness and
Mission Fulfillment Relative to NWCCU Standard One

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Institutional Overview



Central Washington University (CWU) is a public, regional comprehensive university located in Ellensburg, Washington, approximately 100 miles east of Seattle. Established in 1891 as the Washington State Normal School, CWU has evolved into a comprehensive institution offering a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs that support workforce development, social mobility, and community engagement throughout Washington State.

CWU's mission and strategic direction reflect its longstanding commitment to access, student success, and public service. The University's Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2023 following the adoption of the University's vision and mission in 2022. In 2025, the Board approved updated vision and mission statements while reaffirming the Strategic Plan, which continues to guide institutional priorities, annual assessment, and accountability reporting. The plan is organized around a unifying value of student success and three core values of engagement, belonging, and stewardship, and is regularly assessed to monitor progress and inform continuous improvement. The University expects to review the Strategic Plan during the next planning cycle to ensure continued alignment with its updated vision and mission.

In Academic Year 2025, CWU served approximately 8,300 degree-seeking students, including undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate students. The University offers more than 130 undergraduate majors and over 30 graduate programs organized within four academic colleges and the William O. Douglas Honors College. In addition to its Ellensburg campus, CWU operates university centers in Lynnwood, Des Moines, Pierce County, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Yakima, Wenatchee, and Moses Lake, extending access to place-bound, transfer, military-affiliated, and adult learners throughout the state.

During Academic Year 2025, the University employed 587 faculty members, including 234 tenured, 54 tenure-track, and 299 non-tenure-track faculty. CWU's faculty are central to the University's mission, combining disciplinary expertise with a deep commitment to teaching, mentoring, scholarship, and student success. The University also employed 2,413 non-instructional staff, including 405 exempt employees, 560 classified employees, 1,370 student employees, and 78 graduate assistants. Together, faculty and staff create a collaborative learning environment that supports student success.

CWU's undergraduate student population reflects its regional access mission. Nearly half are first-generation college students, more than one-third receive Pell Grants or Washington College Grants, approximately one-quarter identify as Hispanic/Latinx, and more than 40 percent identify as students of color. The University has also experienced substantial growth in dual enrollment programs, serving more than 16,000 high school students annually through College in the High School and Running Start.

Like many regional public universities, CWU has navigated enrollment challenges associated with demographic shifts and the COVID-19 pandemic. While degree-seeking enrollment declined between 2019 and 2023, recent trends indicate stabilization in first-time-in-college enrollment and continued growth in dual enrollment pipelines. The University views these pathways as important components of its long-term strategy for access, enrollment, and student success.

Improving student persistence, retention, and completion remains a central institutional priority. Recent cohorts have demonstrated improvements in first-year retention following pandemic-era declines, supported by targeted investments in advising, onboarding, and student support services. These institutional investments are complemented by faculty who engage students through high-quality instruction, mentoring, timely feedback, and early intervention, reinforcing CWU's commitment to student success. Transfer student outcomes remain a particular strength, with three-year graduation rates for students entering under Direct Transfer Agreements [exceeding 70 percent](#) in recent cohorts. CWU also emphasizes high-impact educational practices, with a substantial majority of graduating seniors participating in experiences such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, or culminating projects prior to graduation.

A comprehensive assessment and accountability framework supports CWU's commitment to institutional effectiveness. Annual Strategic Plan Accountability Reports track key performance indicators related to enrollment, student success, equity, workforce outcomes, and employee diversity. Together with peer comparisons, assessment results, and ongoing planning processes, these measures support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement. Through this integrated approach, CWU seeks to

strengthen educational quality, advance access and opportunity, and fulfill its public mission within Washington State's evolving higher education landscape.

Institutional Update

Since the 2022 Mid-Cycle Evaluation, Central Washington University (CWU) has continued to advance its mission of access, opportunity, and student success through strategic planning, organizational transformation, academic innovation, and enhanced assessment and accountability processes. During this period, the University has strengthened its institutional effectiveness framework, expanded student success initiatives, modernized key academic and administrative processes, and positioned itself to respond effectively to evolving student, workforce, and community needs.

Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

In 2023, the Board of Trustees adopted the University's Strategic Plan following the adoption of a new vision and mission in 2022. In 2025, the Board approved updated vision and mission statements while reaffirming the Strategic Plan, which continues to guide institutional priorities. The plan is organized around a unifying value of student success and three core values: engagement, belonging, and stewardship, and includes measurable objectives supported by annual accountability reporting. The University has implemented a comprehensive assessment and accountability framework that tracks key performance indicators related to enrollment, student success, equity, workforce outcomes, and employee diversity. These measures, together with peer comparisons and institutional assessment activities, provide the foundation for evidence-informed planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

Leadership and Organizational Development

Since the 2022 Mid-Cycle Evaluation, CWU has experienced several leadership transitions across Academic Affairs, Student Engagement and Success, Enrollment Management, Graduate Studies, and the academic colleges. While these appointments represent significant leadership change, most were the result of intentional organizational realignment designed to support implementation of the University's Strategic Plan and strengthen institutional capacity in key strategic areas. Seven of the appointments were internal promotions or reassignments that positioned experienced leaders in roles with broader institutional responsibility and impact. The leadership changes include:

- Patrick Pease – Provost
- Kurt Kirstein – Associate VP for Academic Affairs (internal appointment)
- Elvin Delgado – Interim Associate VP for Faculty Success (internal appointment)
- Virginia (Ginny) Thomlinson – Vice Provost of Transformation and Associate VP of Information Services and Chief Information Officer (internal appointment)
- Chris Redfearn – Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities

- Julie Baldwin – Dean of the College of the Sciences
- Patti Miles – Dean of the College of Business
- Tishra Beeson – Interim Dean of Undergraduate Studies (internal appointment)
- Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia – Dean of Graduate Education, Research, and Strategic Initiatives (internal appointment)
- Verónica Gómez-Vilchis – VP for Student Engagement and Success (internal appointment)
- Hung Dang – Associate VP for Enrollment Management
- Ruben Cardenas – Interim Associate VP for Student Engagement and Success (internal appointment)

Initiative-driven Leadership Organization

As part of these leadership transitions and the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan, CWU restructured its Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to provide focused leadership for three institution-wide initiatives: Adaptive University, Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM), and Shared Equity and Belonging Leadership. Each initiative is led by a pair of co-chairs drawn from across the institution and is intended to advance key strategic priorities through cross-divisional collaboration, broad stakeholder engagement, and continuous institutional improvement.

Adaptive University

In 2024, CWU launched the [Adaptive University initiative](#) to strengthen the institution's capacity for continuous improvement and organizational learning. The initiative established a structured process through which faculty, staff, administrators, and students collaboratively identify emerging challenges and opportunities, evaluate potential responses, and develop recommendations for institutional action. Through the work of the Adaptive University Council (AUC) and a series of Catalyst Teams, the University has undertaken institution-wide reviews of academic advising, the first-year experience, general education, three-year degree pathways, and College in the High School capacity building. The initiative has become an important mechanism for translating strategic priorities into actionable improvements while reinforcing shared governance, thereby broadening institutional engagement and evidence-informed decision-making.

Strategic Enrollment Management

CWU's Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) initiative emerged from an institutional assessment conducted in partnership with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and is designed to align enrollment planning with the University's mission, strategic priorities, and long-term sustainability goals. During

the 2025–2026 academic year, a cross-divisional implementation team was established to advance a comprehensive SEM Plan organized around five goals: enrollment growth, student retention, credential completion, supportive learning environments, and experiential learning opportunities.

The SEM Plan establishes measurable targets, including growth in total enrollment, improvements in first-time-in-college and transfer student retention rates, increases in credential attainment, and expanded participation in experiential learning. Enrollment targets and strategies are informed by historical trends, demographic changes, workforce needs, and emerging educational markets. Implementation of SEM strategies is currently underway, with regular reporting provided to the university community regarding progress toward established goals.

Shared Equity and Belonging Leadership

During the 2025–2026 academic year, CWU launched the Shared Equity and Belonging Leadership initiative to strengthen institutional capacity for advancing equity, belonging, and inclusive excellence. Grounded in the University's vision of becoming a model learning community of access and opportunity, the initiative recognizes equity and belonging as a shared institutional responsibility that extends across academic, administrative, and student-facing functions.

The Shared Equity and Belonging Leadership Committee adopted the American Council on Education's Shared Equity Leadership Framework to guide its work and engaged participants in a year-long process of learning, dialogue, and relationship building. Committee members examined issues related to institutional culture, systems, leadership practices, and student and employee experiences. The initiative is now moving from internal learning to broader campus engagement through institutional programming, leadership development opportunities, and collaboration with national experts. This work is intended to strengthen CWU's ability to create an environment in which students, faculty, and staff experience a strong sense of belonging and are positioned to thrive.

Collectively, these leadership initiatives provide a framework through which CWU monitors emerging challenges and opportunities, advances strategic priorities, and strengthens institutional effectiveness through collaborative leadership and cross-divisional engagement.

Student Success and Academic Innovation

Student success remains a central institutional priority. Since the Mid-Cycle Evaluation, CWU has expanded efforts to improve student persistence, retention, and completion through enhancements to advising, onboarding, and coordinated student support services.

The University completed a comprehensive review of academic advising that resulted in a redesigned advising model, including the establishment of a centralized first-year advising structure and plans for enhanced university-wide coordination of advising services.

CWU has also undertaken a comprehensive revision of its General Education program. The redesign simplifies the curriculum, establishes a set of institution-wide learning outcomes, strengthens assessment processes, and provides a more coherent framework for student learning across disciplines. These changes support both student success and the University's ongoing efforts to assess educational effectiveness.

Enrollment, Access, and Educational Pathways

CWU continues to fulfill its regional access and opportunity mission through a combination of traditional undergraduate education, graduate programs, transfer pathways, and dual enrollment opportunities. While degree-seeking enrollment experienced declines similar to those observed across many regional public universities following the COVID-19 pandemic, recent enrollment trends indicate stabilization in first-time-in-college enrollment and continued growth in dual enrollment programs.

College in the High School and Running Start participation have expanded substantially during the current accreditation cycle, creating new pathways into higher education for students throughout Washington State. The University has also continued to strengthen partnerships with community colleges and regional stakeholders through its statewide network of university centers located in Lynnwood, Des Moines, Pierce County, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Yakima, Wenatchee, and Moses Lake.

Response to Outstanding Recommendations

During the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) issued three recommendations to Central Washington University (CWU) related to academic advising, strategic planning, and assessment. At the time of the Commission's subsequent reviews, the University had demonstrated progress in all three areas, though not yet at a level sufficient for removal of the recommendations. Since that period, CWU has made substantial, sustained, and demonstrable improvements. Collectively, these improvements reflect a maturing institutional culture of planning, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous improvement that is well aligned with NWCCU Standards.

Advising (Standard 2.G.6)

The 2018 evaluation recommended that CWU evaluate the structure and effectiveness of academic advising to better support student development and success. In response, CWU undertook a significant redesign of its advising model. Academic advisors were moved into the colleges and aligned with specific disciplines, allowing them to develop deeper curricular expertise and provide more integrated, program-specific guidance beginning at orientation and continuing through graduation. This shift strengthened the connection between advising, academic programs, and faculty, and improved students' ability to receive timely, relevant advising support.

To further assess and strengthen advising, CWU invited the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to conduct a comprehensive review of the advising function in 2024. Following the consultant's report, the University established a cross-functional Catalyst Team through the Adaptive University Council (AUC) to examine advising structures, identify gaps, and develop actionable recommendations. In parallel, CWU expanded the use of early-alert systems to identify students who may need additional support and implemented coordinated outreach processes through the division of Undergraduate Studies. Together, these actions demonstrated a systemic approach to advising that places emphasis on effectiveness, continuous evaluation, and student success.

Update on Implementation Actions (2026):

The Advising Catalyst Team completed its work in 2025 and submitted a final report with recommendations to the Provost. The Provost accepted nearly all the team's recommendations and approved a new integrated advising structure that includes the creation of a University Advising Office and a centralized first-year and exploratory advising model. The Provost also approved the creation of an Executive Director of Advising

position, reporting to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, to provide clear operational leadership, accountability, and university-wide coordination of advising functions. That position has recently been filled.

Following acceptance of the recommendations, the University established an Advising Implementation Team charged with carrying out the approved advising redesign. The implementation team is currently active and overseeing the phased rollout of the new advising structure. A significant focus of this work is the creation of a dedicated First-Year and Exploratory Advising Team to support students during their transition to the university. Beginning in Summer 2026, new first-year and transfer students who meet designated criteria will be assigned to a first-year advisor rather than directly to a program-based advisor. These students will remain with the First-Year Advising Team through their first three quarters of enrollment to ensure they are able to achieve certain [goals](#) before they are transitioned to advisors embedded within their academic programs. The model is designed to provide developmental advising tailored to the unique needs of new students, including support for academic adjustment, engagement with university resources, and long-term educational planning. By distinguishing transition-focused advising from program-specific advising, the University seeks to provide more intentional support during students' initial enrollment while allowing program advisors to focus more deeply on discipline-specific guidance. The First-Year and Exploratory Advising Team is active and will start serving students during Summer 2026 orientations and the Fall 2026 term.

The [full advising implementation report](#) is provided as supporting evidence and reflects the current approved model and phased implementation plan.

Strategic Planning (Standard 1.B.3)

The 2018 evaluation recommended that CWU integrate divisional plans into a comprehensive institutional strategic plan tied to assessment data. Since that time, CWU has undertaken a fundamental rethinking of institutional planning. Under the leadership of President Jim Wohlpart, a broad and representative group of [faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees](#) participated in the development of a new institutional [Strategic Plan](#), which was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2023. In 2025, the Board approved updated vision and mission statements that continue to guide implementation of the plan.

The current Strategic Plan is a clearly articulated, mission-driven framework organized around the university's unifying value of student success and three core values of Engagement, Belonging, and Stewardship. The plan is operationalized through defined initiatives, assigned responsibilities, and measurable indicators. CWU has completed two full cycles of strategic plan accountability assessment, with annual reports published in

[2024](#) and [2025](#) that document progress toward plan initiatives. Strategic priorities are further reinforced through institutional structures, including an expanded executive leadership team aligned with key components of the plan, and through processes such as the Adaptive University initiative, which requires proposed operational improvements to be explicitly linked to strategic plan goals. These practices demonstrate that CWU's planning process is inclusive, resourced, and directly connected to institutional effectiveness.

Assessment (Standard 1.C.7)

The 2018 evaluation recommended that CWU strengthen the collection and use of assessment data to document student achievement of learning outcomes and to inform improvement. CWU is now in its fourth year of a systematic, institution-wide process for assessing both Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and General Education outcomes. All academic programs are expected to participate in regular SLO assessment using a common framework and reporting timeline, with results reviewed by associate deans serving as the University Assessment Team. Feedback is provided to programs annually, creating a structured mechanism for closing the loop and supporting program-level improvement.

CWU has completed a full multi-year assessment cycle of its General Education program, assessing all ten General Education component areas over a three-year period. The General Education assessment process is described more fully in Standard 1.C. The findings from the initial assessment cycle led to improvements in General Education requirements, assessment processes, and the overall structure of the program. Building on those results, the University began a new assessment cycle in 2025–26 by assessing three General Education component areas.

General Education assessment findings have also informed broader institutional improvement efforts, including the creation of a General Education Catalyst Team through the Adaptive University initiative. The team is evaluating opportunities to simplify and reorganize the General Education program to reduce complexity, improve transfer pathways, and create a more coherent, student-centered, and assessable curriculum. These efforts will continue in the coming academic year.

Standard 1.A Institutional Mission

1.A.1 The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

Central Washington University's mission statement defines the institution's broad educational purposes and affirms its commitment to student learning and achievement. Initially approved by the Board of Trustees in 2023 and refined in 2025 through a robust, transparent, and inclusive shared governance process, the mission reflects extensive engagement with faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, and community partners and aligns with CWU's role as a public regional comprehensive university.

Mission: *To build a community of access and opportunity, Central Washington University fosters high-impact practices, sustainability, and authentic community partnerships grounded in meaningful relationships.*

The mission emphasizes access and opportunity as central to CWU's educational purpose. As a regional public institution, CWU is committed to serving students from diverse backgrounds, including first-generation, rural, transfer, military-affiliated, and place-bound learners. This focus reflects the University's responsibility to expand educational pathways, promote student success, and support social and economic mobility throughout Washington State.

CWU's commitment to student learning and achievement is embedded throughout the mission. The emphasis on high-impact practices reflects the University's belief that students learn most effectively through active engagement in their education. Undergraduate research, internships, learning communities, service learning, capstone experiences, and community-engaged learning opportunities are integrated across academic and co-curricular programs to deepen learning, strengthen student engagement, and prepare graduates for professional, civic, and lifelong success.

The mission is reinforced through the University's strategic framework, which identifies Student Success as CWU's unifying value and is supported by the three core values of Engagement, Belonging, and Stewardship. Together, these values guide institutional priorities, resource allocation, academic planning, and assessment activities. The mission and values also serve as the foundation for the University's Strategic Plan and accountability processes, ensuring that institutional decisions remain aligned with CWU's educational purposes and commitment to student achievement.

Through its mission, values, and strategic priorities, CWU clearly defines its educational purpose and demonstrates a sustained commitment to student learning, development, achievement, and success.

Standard 1.B Institutional Effectiveness

Central Washington University (CWU) maintains an integrated system for evaluating and improving institutional effectiveness. Assessment provides the evidence used to evaluate student learning, student achievement, and the effectiveness of student support services. That evidence informs planning, guides institutional decision-making, and helps determine where resources are invested. The University also monitors its progress through strategic performance indicators, peer comparisons, and ongoing review of internal and external conditions. Together, these processes support continuous improvement and help ensure that institutional decisions remain aligned with CWU's mission and values.

1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process of assessing institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

CWU maintains a continuous process for assessing institutional effectiveness across student learning, student achievement, and student support services. Assessment is a routine part of the University's work and provides the evidence used to evaluate educational quality, improve programs and services, and support student success. Rather than serving as a compliance activity, assessment is an ongoing process of gathering evidence, evaluating results, implementing improvements, and reassessing their effectiveness.

Assessment occurs at multiple levels of the institution. Faculty evaluate student learning through annual assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and comprehensive Academic Program Review, while administrative and student support units assess the effectiveness of programs and services using measures appropriate to their work. Together, these processes provide a broad view of institutional performance and create a culture of continuous improvement.

Assessment of Student Learning

Student learning assessment is faculty-led and centered on clearly defined Student Learning Outcomes. Every academic program identifies measurable learning outcomes that are published in the [University Catalog](#) and approved through established faculty curriculum processes. Programs assess at least one outcome annually using a common reporting template that documents assessment methods, summarizes findings, and identifies actions for improvement.

Annual assessment reports are meant to demonstrate how faculty use evidence to strengthen teaching and learning. Programs analyze student performance, identify areas for improvement, and document changes to curriculum, assignments, instructional methods, or assessment practices. Results are reviewed centrally and shared across programs to identify common themes, strengthen assessment practice, and encourage the exchange of effective strategies.

General Education Assessment and Improvement

General Education assessment provides a university-wide perspective on student learning. Since 2023, faculty have participated in an annual assessment cycle using common rubrics to evaluate student achievement of General Education outcomes and strengthen the reliability and consistency of assessment practices. Over four consecutive assessment cycles, faculty gathered evidence about student performance and the alignment between General Education outcomes and course-level learning. These findings provided a richer understanding of how effectively the curriculum was supporting student learning and identified opportunities to strengthen the General Education program.

The assessment findings informed the work of a year-long Adaptive University Catalyst Team charged with reimagining CWU's General Education. Drawing on multiple years of assessment results, faculty and staff recommendations, and extensive review through shared governance, the team developed a proposed framework that simplifies the curriculum, strengthens alignment between courses and learning outcomes, and establishes seven university-wide General Education outcomes. The recommendations are currently under review by the Provost and the Faculty Senate. If approved through the University's governance and academic review processes, the seven General Education outcomes will also serve as CWU's Institutional Learning Outcomes. Implementation is expected to begin during the next academic year through a faculty-led implementation team working in collaboration with the Faculty Senate to revise the General Education curriculum, assessment processes, and program requirements.

Academic Program Review

Annual assessment is complemented by comprehensive Academic Program Review conducted on a regular cycle. Program review brings together multiple sources of evidence, including student learning assessment, enrollment trends, student achievement data, and information about curriculum quality and program effectiveness. Departments use these findings to guide long-term planning, strengthen academic programs, and identify priorities for future improvement.

Assessment of Student Support Services

CWU also assesses the effectiveness of student support and co-curricular services. Units establish performance measures aligned with their mission and evaluate services using participation data, student feedback, operational measures, and other relevant evidence. Assessment findings are used to improve services, strengthen student engagement, and support persistence and student success.

Assessment across academic and administrative units follows the same continuous improvement cycle: evidence is collected, results are evaluated, improvements are implemented, and progress is assessed over time. These assessment processes are described in CWU's 2025 PRFR in Standard 2.G.1.

Summary

Assessment findings are used at the level most appropriate to the decisions they inform. Annual Student Learning Outcomes assessment is primarily used by faculty, program coordinators, department chairs, and associate deans to strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and program quality. Aggregate findings also support college-level planning and, where applicable, specialized accreditation. General Education assessment provides institution-wide evidence that has informed significant improvements to the General Education program, including proposed revisions to its structure, learning outcomes, and assessment framework. Academic Program Review provides a broader institutional perspective by integrating student learning, student achievement, enrollment, and program vitality data to inform long-range planning, resource allocation, and annual faculty hiring priorities. Assessment of student support and administrative services similarly informs improvements to programs, service delivery, and operational effectiveness, ensuring that student support resources evolve in response to evidence of student needs and institutional priorities. Together, these complementary assessment processes ensure that evidence informs decisions at every level of the institution—from improvements in courses and academic programs to institutional planning, resource allocation, and advancement of the University's strategic priorities.

Exhibits:

[Annual SLO Assessment Process](#)
[Academic Program Review Process](#)
[General Education Assessment Plan](#)
[CWU's 2025 PRFR](#)

1.B.2 The institution sets and publishes, in alignment with its mission and core themes, expected outcomes and indicators of achievement for student learning and student achievement. The institution uses these measures to guide decision-making and improve institutional effectiveness.

CWU establishes and publishes expected outcomes and indicators of institutional achievement through its Strategic Plan, Annual Accountability Report, institutional dashboards, and published student learning outcomes. Together, these resources define institutional priorities, communicate expectations for student success, and provide a transparent framework for evaluating progress toward the University's mission.

Published learning outcomes establish the educational expectations for students at both the program and institutional levels. Academic programs publish Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in the University Catalog, while the General Education curriculum defines the learning outcomes expected of all undergraduate students. These published outcomes provide the foundation for the assessment processes described in Standard 1.B.1.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan serves as the University's primary framework for defining institutional success. Organized around CWU's vision, mission, a unifying value of student success and three core values of Engagement, Belonging, and Stewardship, the plan establishes strategic goals, measurable initiatives, and quantitative performance indicators that guide institutional priorities and evaluation. These indicators address enrollment, student retention, graduation, student success, participation in high-impact educational practices, employee diversity, and other measures that reflect the University's mission and long-term aspirations.

Annual Accountability Report

Each year, CWU publishes an Annual Accountability Report that evaluates institutional performance relative to the Strategic Plan. The report presents longitudinal trend data for the University's key performance indicators, allowing the institution to evaluate progress over time rather than relying on single-year results. Current reports include five or more years of data for enrollment, retention, graduation, course success (DFWI rates), high-impact practices, employee diversity, and accelerated credit participation. Student achievement measures are routinely disaggregated by populations such as Pell Grant recipients, Washington College Grant recipients, first-generation students, students of

Institutional Performance Framework

Central Washington University



Central Washington University · Institutional Effectiveness

color, and Hispanic/Latinx students, providing a clear understanding of equity gaps and student success across the institution.

The Annual Accountability Report also demonstrates how institutional performance is changing over time. For example, the 2025 report documents improvements in first-year retention, increasing participation in accelerated credit programs among entering students, continued growth in dual enrollment, and multi-year trends in graduation, course

success, and student demographics. By presenting historical trend data alongside current performance, the report supports evidence-informed planning, institutional transparency, and continuous improvement.

Institutional Dashboards

Institutional dashboards complement the Annual Accountability Report by providing regularly updated operational data that support ongoing monitoring throughout the year. Public and internal dashboards present longitudinal trends for key institutional measures, including enrollment, retention, graduation, degrees awarded, DFWI rates, and other indicators of student success. For example, enrollment dashboards include historical data beginning in 2016, while retention dashboards provide fall-to-winter, fall-to-spring, and fall-to-fall retention trends beginning in 2018. These dashboards allow university leadership, faculty, staff, and governance groups to monitor institutional performance, identify emerging trends, and evaluate progress between annual accountability reporting cycles.

Peer Benchmarking

CWU supplements internal performance measures through comparisons with a defined group of regional and national peer institutions. Peer analyses provide context for interpreting institutional performance, inform strategic goal setting, and identify promising practices that may strengthen student success and institutional effectiveness. Rather than serving as fixed performance targets, peer comparisons help the University understand its progress within an appropriate institutional context.

Together, the Strategic Plan, Annual Accountability Report, institutional dashboards, and peer benchmarking create an integrated framework for defining, communicating, and evaluating institutional achievement. The Strategic Plan establishes the University's priorities and expected outcomes, the Annual Accountability Report evaluates progress toward those expectations using longitudinal evidence, and institutional dashboards provide ongoing monitoring of key performance indicators throughout the year. This integrated approach promotes transparency, supports evidence-informed decision-making, and enables CWU to continuously evaluate progress toward its mission and strategic priorities.

Exhibits:

[CWU Strategic Plan](#)

[Strategic Plan Accountability Report 2024](#)

[Strategic Plan Accountability Report 2025](#)

[Institutional Dashboards](#)

[Peer Benchmarks](#)

1.B.3 *The institution provides evidence that its planning, budgeting, and resource allocation processes are aligned with and support its mission and core theme objectives.*

Planning and resource allocation at CWU are guided by evidence and aligned with the University's mission, Strategic Plan, and institutional priorities. Assessment findings, institutional performance data, and financial information are used together to identify priorities, evaluate alternatives, and direct resources toward initiatives that strengthen student learning, student success, and institutional effectiveness. Rather than functioning as separate administrative activities, planning, budgeting, and resource allocation form a continuous decision-making process that supports the University's mission and long-term sustainability.

Planning Informed by Evidence

Institutional planning begins with the priorities established in the Strategic Plan and is informed by evidence gathered through assessment, Academic Program Review, institutional performance indicators, enrollment analyses, and other planning activities. Divisions and academic units use these sources of evidence to evaluate progress, identify emerging needs, and establish priorities for future investment.

Planning is intentionally collaborative. Faculty, staff, students, administrators, shared governance bodies, and the Board of Trustees all contribute to institutional planning through established governance processes, committee work, and campus-wide consultation. This broad participation helps ensure that institutional priorities reflect both the University's mission and the needs of the campus community.

Values-Based Budgeting

CWU's Values-Based Budgeting (VBB) model provides the framework for aligning institutional resources with strategic priorities. Developed to replace the University's previous Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) model, VBB emphasizes stewardship, transparency, and investment in activities that advance the University's mission and values. This model funds instruction first and prioritizes other initiatives for growth and improvement.

Budget planning incorporates enrollment projections, financial forecasts, institutional priorities, and relevant assessment findings to support informed decision-making. Budget assumptions and resource needs are developed and reviewed through established administrative budget processes involving university leadership, the President's Budget Advisory Committee, and the Budget Development Team. Budget priorities, financial conditions, and planning assumptions are then communicated through shared governance

groups, including the Faculty Senate, Academic Department Chairs Organization (ADCO), and the University's labor organizations, to promote transparency and support institutional planning. This process ensures that financial decisions are informed by institutional evidence while providing opportunities for the university community to understand the financial context and prepare for implementation of institutional priorities.

Featured Example: Advising Redesign

The redesign of academic advising illustrates how CWU uses evidence, planning, and resource allocation to improve the student experience. An external review conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) identified opportunities to strengthen advising, improve coordination across academic units, and better support student success. The findings provided an independent assessment of the University's advising model and established a foundation for institutional planning.

The Academic Advising Catalyst Team reviewed the consultant's findings, conducted further research, and developed six recommendations to improve the University's advising system. Before the recommendations were finalized, they were shared with faculty, staff, and administrators during an Academic Affairs forum to encourage campus discussion and gather feedback. Following this collaborative review, the Provost accepted five of the six recommendations and modified the sixth, establishing the direction for implementation.

A cross-functional Advising Implementation Team was formed in early 2026 to guide implementation across the University. The team includes representatives from Academic Affairs, Student Engagement and Success, the academic colleges, and advising units, reflecting CWU's collaborative approach to institutional change. Current implementation efforts include establishing a University Advising Office for First-Year and Exploratory Advising, modifying the direct-to-major admissions process, developing shared advising outcomes and assessment metrics, creating consistent advisor onboarding and professional development, and implementing advisor caseload recommendations informed by national best practices. The Academic Advising Council also continues to strengthen university-wide advising expectations, policies, and practices.

Implementation is occurring in phases to support a successful transition. The redesigned advising model will support Summer 2026 orientation programs and students entering CWU in Fall 2026. The Implementation Team continues to provide regular campus updates while monitoring progress and refining implementation activities as the work advances. Future phases include continued development of shared advising outcomes, common assessment measures, and coordinated professional development to support consistent advising practices across the institution.

The advising redesign demonstrates how CWU's planning, budgeting, and resource allocation processes move evidence into action. An external review identified opportunities for improvement, faculty and staff developed recommendations through a structured planning process, leadership established institutional priorities, and resources, including a new Director of Advising, were allocated to support implementation. Progress continues to be monitored through a structured implementation plan, illustrating the University's commitment to using evidence to guide institutional decision-making and improve student success.

Evaluating Institutional Investments

Planning and budgeting do not end when resources are allocated. The University evaluates the effectiveness of institutional investments through ongoing assessment, institutional performance indicators, enrollment trends, budget reviews, and regular reports to university leadership and the Board of Trustees. These evaluations inform future planning decisions and help ensure that institutional resources continue to support student success, educational quality, and responsible stewardship.

Through this integrated process, CWU demonstrates that planning, budgeting, and resource allocation are interconnected components of the University's institutional effectiveness system, ensuring that evidence informs decisions, resources support institutional priorities, and investments contribute to continuous improvement.

Exhibits:

[Values-Based Budgeting Framework](#)
[President's Budget Advisory Committee](#)
[AASCU Academic Advising Review](#)
[Advising CAT Team Recommendations](#)
[Advising Implementation Plan](#)

1.B.4 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution considers these findings in developing and revising its mission, planning, and resource allocation.

CWU continuously monitors both its internal performance and the external environment to identify emerging opportunities, respond to changing conditions, and strengthen institutional effectiveness. Assessment results, institutional research, demographic trends, workforce needs, and stakeholder feedback all contribute to the University's understanding of its operating environment. This information is reviewed through

established governance and planning processes and is used to refine institutional priorities, improve programs and services, and guide future decision-making.

Adaptive University: Responding to Internal Opportunities

Adaptive University serves as CWU's primary framework for organizational learning and institutional innovation. Established to strengthen the University's ability to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges, the initiative brings together faculty, staff, administrators, and students to examine issues of institutional importance and develop recommendations for improvement.

Through the Adaptive University Council and a series of cross-functional Catalyst Teams, the University evaluates institutional evidence, studies current practices, engages stakeholders, and develops recommendations for institutional improvement. Topics examined during the current accreditation cycle have included academic advising, General Education, the first-year student experience, College in the High School, and three-year degree pathways. Each project follows a common process of research, campus engagement, recommendation development, executive review, and implementation planning.

Adaptive University demonstrates how CWU transforms institutional evidence into organizational action. Rather than responding to individual challenges in isolation, the University uses a structured and collaborative process to evaluate complex issues, develop solutions, and implement improvements that support student success and institutional effectiveness.

Seamless Transfer: Responding to External Needs

CWU also works closely with external partners to ensure that its programs and services remain responsive to the educational needs of students and communities throughout Washington. One example is the Seamless Transfer Pathway Program developed collaboratively with Yakima Valley College (YVC).

The partnership grew from ongoing conversations between the two institutions about barriers that transfer students often encounter when moving from a community college to a four-year university. Working together, CWU and YVC identified opportunities to simplify administrative processes and create a more seamless transition for students pursuing bachelor's degrees.

The resulting agreement includes automated transcript sharing, application fee waivers, guaranteed admission to most CWU majors, coordinated advising, and jointly developed four-year degree plans that provide students with a clear pathway from admission through

graduation. The initiative will also strengthen collaboration between faculty and advisors at both institutions, helping ensure that transfer students receive consistent guidance throughout their educational journey.

This partnership illustrates how CWU uses information gathered through external relationships to improve institutional processes, expand educational opportunity, and strengthen student success. Rather than responding only to internal priorities, the University actively collaborates with educational partners to develop solutions that address regional needs and improve outcomes for students.

Continuous Environmental Scanning

In addition to these focused initiatives, CWU routinely monitors demographic trends, workforce needs, employer feedback, enrollment patterns, peer institution performance, and recommendations from advisory boards, professional organizations, and community partners. These activities provide valuable context for institutional planning and help the University anticipate emerging challenges and opportunities. Information gathered through these sources is regularly incorporated into planning, enrollment management, academic program development, and student success initiatives.

Through continuous monitoring of its internal performance and external environment, CWU maintains an institutional effectiveness system that is responsive, collaborative, and forward-looking. Adaptive University demonstrates how the University identifies internal opportunities for improvement and uses collaborative planning to strengthen institutional effectiveness. The Seamless Transfer partnership illustrates how external relationships with community colleges and other stakeholders inform innovation, improve transfer pathways, and expand educational opportunities for students. CWU also benchmarks key institutional performance indicators, including retention and graduation rates, against a defined group of peer institutions. These comparisons provide important context for evaluating institutional performance, identifying opportunities for improvement, and informing planning and goal setting.

Exhibits:

[Adaptive University Website](#)

[Seamless Transfer Initiative](#)

[YVC Seamless Transfer Website](#)

[Example Advisory Board \(IT Management\)](#)

[Business and Community Services](#)

[Peer Comparisons](#)

Standard 1.C Student Learning

1.C.1 *The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminating in the achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials and include designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.*

Central Washington University offers 135 bachelor's degree majors, 32 master's degree programs, and a variety of undergraduate and graduate certificates that prepare students for careers, advanced study, and lifelong learning. Academic programs are intentionally designed to provide students with progressively advanced knowledge and skills through a scaffolded curriculum. Lower-division coursework (100- and 200-level) establishes foundational knowledge and skills, while upper-division coursework (300- and 400-level) emphasizes disciplinary depth, integration, critical thinking, and application. Graduate programs build on undergraduate preparation through advanced study, independent inquiry, and professional practice, culminating in a faculty-approved capstone experience. Depending on the discipline, culminating experiences may include a thesis, applied capstone project, comprehensive examination, or other scholarly or professional work demonstrating achievement of program learning outcomes.

These academic offerings are intentionally designed, faculty-led, and regularly evaluated to ensure academic rigor, disciplinary relevance, and alignment with the University's mission. New academic programs are developed through a structured proposal process that requires clearly articulated program learning outcomes, coherent curriculum design, evidence of student and workforce demand, and analysis of disciplinary and professional context. Program proposals demonstrate how the curriculum supports achievement of program learning outcomes through progressively advanced levels of knowledge and skill. Before entering the formal approval process, proposals are evaluated for mission alignment, academic level, institutional need, and consistency with disciplinary expectations.

Curriculum proposals are reviewed through a comprehensive faculty governance process using the University's curriculum management system, Curriculog. Proposals receive layered review by department faculty, department chairs, deans, Academic Affairs leadership, and faculty governance committees. Reviewers evaluate curriculum coherence, prerequisite structure, outcome clarity, academic rigor, and alignment with disciplinary standards. Graduate programs undergo additional review through graduate governance processes to ensure expectations appropriate to advanced study. Final

approval of new academic programs proceeds through faculty governance, university leadership, and the Board of Trustees prior to implementation.

Many academic programs also receive external review through specialized accreditation agencies, professional organizations, licensing requirements, and industry advisory boards. These external perspectives complement the University's faculty governance processes by helping ensure that curricula remain current with disciplinary knowledge, professional expectations, and workforce needs.

Academic quality is maintained after implementation through ongoing faculty oversight, annual assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, and periodic Academic Program Review. Faculty use assessment findings to review and revise curricula, maintain disciplinary currency, strengthen academic rigor, and respond to changes in scholarship, professional practice, student learning, and workforce needs. Academic Program Review integrates student learning assessment with enrollment trends, student achievement data, and other indicators of program effectiveness to support long-term planning and continuous improvement. Together with the annual program-level assessment process described in Standard 1.C.5, these review activities ensure that CWU's academic programs remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive to the evolving needs of students, employers, and the communities the University serves.

Exhibits:

[New Program Proposal Template](#)

[Curriculog Workflow](#)

[Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee Website](#)

[Academic Program Review Policy](#)

[Sample Academic Program Review Report](#)

1.C.2 The institution awards credit, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based upon student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.

Programs are structured to provide both the breadth and depth of learning appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. Undergraduate students complete a combination of General Education requirements and disciplinary coursework that develops foundational knowledge while progressively building specialized expertise within the major. Graduate programs extend this progression through advanced disciplinary study, independent inquiry, and professional application appropriate to post-baccalaureate education.

Curricula are intentionally sequenced to support progressive student learning.

Prerequisites, course sequencing, and degree requirements are established through

faculty curriculum processes to ensure that students acquire foundational knowledge before engaging in increasingly complex concepts, advanced methodologies, and discipline-specific applications. Learning outcomes are integrated throughout the curriculum so that students build upon prior learning as they advance toward completion of their programs.

Students demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes through discipline-appropriate methods that may include examinations, research projects, laboratory experiences, performances, clinical experiences, internships, field experiences, portfolios, comprehensive examinations, capstone projects, theses, or other culminating experiences. These experiences require students to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies developed throughout their academic programs, providing evidence that awarded credit and academic credentials represent meaningful achievement of collegiate-level learning.

Exhibits:

[Sample Undergraduate Program of Study](#)

[Sample Graduate Program of Study \(MS IT Management\)](#)

[Sample Syllabus \(BS IT Management\)](#)

[Sample Syllabus \(College of Business\)](#)

[Capstone/Internship Handbook](#)

1.C.3 The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.

Central Washington University (CWU) clearly communicates the learning expectations associated with its academic programs by publishing program-level learning outcomes for all degrees and certificates in the official University Catalog and providing course-level learning outcomes to enrolled students on syllabi. These published outcomes promote transparency, help students understand the knowledge and skills they are expected to develop, and establish a common framework for teaching, learning, and assessment.

Program learning outcomes for undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates are published in the official University Catalog, which serves as the University's authoritative source for academic program requirements and expectations. Some academic programs also publish learning outcomes and four-year plans on their program websites. As part of an ongoing initiative to improve student access to academic information, the University is expanding the availability of program-level learning outcomes and degree pathways across program websites to provide students with multiple ways to access program information.

Course-level learning outcomes are required elements of all course syllabi and are provided to enrolled students at the beginning of each course. These outcomes communicate the knowledge, skills, and competencies students are expected to achieve in the course and guide instructional activities and evaluation of student learning. Together, program-level and course-level learning outcomes help students understand how individual courses contribute to the achievement of broader program goals and successful completion of their academic credentials.

Exhibits:

[University Catalog](#)

[Sample Program Website with Outcomes](#)

[Sample Syllabus](#)

1.C.4 The institution's admission and completion or graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.

Central Washington University (CWU) clearly defines and publishes admission, progression, and graduation requirements, ensuring that prospective and current students have transparent access to the information needed to enter, navigate, and successfully complete their academic programs. These requirements are communicated through multiple public and student-facing resources that support informed decision-making, academic planning, and timely progress toward degree completion.

Undergraduate and graduate admission requirements are published through the Enrollment Management website and organized by student type, including first-year, transfer, international, post-baccalaureate, graduate, and returning students. Admission pathways, application requirements, deadlines, and alternative admission options are presented in clear, accessible formats that help prospective students understand the expectations for enrollment.

Graduation requirements for all degree and certificate programs are published in the official University Catalog, which serves as the University's authoritative source for academic requirements. Once enrolled, students use the University's degree audit system to monitor their academic progress, review completed and remaining degree requirements, and plan their path to graduation. Faculty advisors and academic units use the same system to provide consistent advising and support timely degree completion.

Admission, progression, and graduation requirements are reviewed and updated through established curriculum and academic policy processes to ensure continued alignment

with institutional priorities, state regulations, and accreditation expectations. Together, these processes help ensure that students receive accurate, current, and transparent information throughout their academic journey.

Exhibits

[Admissions Policy](#)

[Progression and Graduation Requirements](#)

[Undergraduate and Graduate Admission Requirements](#)

[Curriculum Policies](#)

[Academic Policies](#)

1.C.5 The institution uses an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs and has clearly identified faculty responsibility for curriculum, student learning, and instructional improvement.

Central Washington University (CWU) maintains an integrated, faculty-led system for assessing student learning and continuously improving academic quality. The University's assessment framework combines annual Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) assessment, General Education assessment, and Academic Program Review to provide complementary evidence regarding student learning, curriculum effectiveness, and overall program quality. While each process serves a distinct purpose, together they create a coordinated system through which faculty evaluate student achievement, identify opportunities for improvement, and strengthen academic programs over time.

Annual Program Learning Outcomes assessment serves as the primary mechanism for evaluating student achievement within individual academic programs. Faculty play the central role in defining learning outcomes, assessing student achievement, and using assessment results to strengthen curricula and improve student learning. Each program assesses one program-level learning outcome annually as part of a five-year assessment cycle, ensuring that all program outcomes are evaluated on a regular basis. Programs use curriculum maps to identify where each program learning outcome is demonstrated within the curriculum and to determine the courses from which student artifacts will be collected for assessment. Faculty evaluate student work using program-developed rubrics, analyze the results, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and document planned curricular or instructional changes using a common institutional reporting template. Completed assessment reports are reviewed using a common evaluation rubric, and written feedback is returned to programs. Subsequent assessment cycles require faculty to report on actions taken in response to prior findings, creating a documented cycle of assessment, reflection, improvement, and reassessment.

General Education assessment complements program-level assessment by evaluating the institution's shared undergraduate learning outcomes. Using a structured multi-year assessment cycle, faculty collect student artifacts from selected General Education component areas and evaluate them using common rubrics aligned with established learning outcomes. Faculty participate in collaborative scoring sessions that include calibration activities to promote inter-rater reliability and consistent application of assessment standards. Assessment findings are analyzed, shared with academic leadership and faculty, and used to improve curriculum, instructional practices, assessment methods, and the General Education program itself. The assessment process also includes participation by College in the High School instructors, extending institutional quality assurance across multiple instructional settings.

Academic Program Review provides a broader evaluation of program quality by integrating evidence from Program Learning Outcomes assessment, General Education assessment, student achievement data, enrollment trends, equity indicators, and other measures of program effectiveness. Conducted on a rotating schedule, Academic Program Review enables faculty and academic leadership to evaluate curriculum quality, disciplinary relevance, student success, and alignment with the University's mission and strategic priorities. The review culminates in written evaluations by the Dean and the Provost or designee, providing both college- and institution-level perspectives that inform planning, resource allocation, and continuous program improvement.

Faculty maintain primary responsibility for curriculum, student learning, assessment, and instructional improvement through departmental and faculty governance processes. Together, Program Learning Outcomes assessment, General Education assessment, and Academic Program Review provide a comprehensive system of continuous quality improvement in which evidence is systematically collected, analyzed, discussed, and used to strengthen curriculum, improve instruction, enhance student learning, and guide the ongoing development of CWU's academic programs.

Exhibits:

Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

[Program-level SLO Assessment Process](#)

[Example Curriculum Map](#)

[Program-Level SLO Assessment Template](#)

[Program-Level Assessment Rubric](#)

[Sample SLO Report – CEPS](#)

General Education Assessment

[General Education Assessment Process](#)

[2024-2025 General Education Assessment Results](#)

[2025-26 General Education Assessment Results](#)

Academic Program Review

[APR Process](#)

[Sample APR Report - Finance and Supply Chain Management](#)

1.C.6 Institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) and competencies are established and assessed for all programs or within the General Education curriculum.

Central Washington University (CWU) establishes institution-wide learning through its General Education curriculum, ensuring that all undergraduate students develop a shared foundation of knowledge, skills, and competencies regardless of academic major. The General Education program provides the common educational experiences expected of every undergraduate student and serves as the primary framework through which institution-wide student learning is defined and assessed.

Implemented in 2019, CWU's current General Education curriculum is organized around Academic Writing I, Quantitative Reasoning, and eight Knowledge Areas that together represent the breadth of undergraduate general education. Each component includes its own set of learning outcomes, resulting in approximately 55 outcomes across the General Education curriculum. Collectively, these outcomes have provided the framework for assessing institution-wide student learning through the General Education assessment process described in Standard 1.C.5.

Multiple cycles of General Education assessment have provided valuable evidence regarding student learning while also identifying opportunities to strengthen the General Education program itself. Assessment findings highlighted opportunities to improve alignment between General Education learning outcomes, course-level learning experiences, and the student artifacts used for assessment. The assessment process also demonstrated that the large number of component-level outcomes made it difficult to articulate and assess a concise set of institution-wide learning outcomes that clearly communicate the essential competencies expected of every CWU graduate. These findings informed refinements to the assessment process, including improved alignment between submitted artifacts and the learning outcomes they were intended to measure, while also prompting a broader review of the General Education curriculum.

In response to these findings, CWU convened a faculty-led General Education Catalyst Team during the 2025–26 academic year to conduct a comprehensive review of the General Education program. Building upon assessment findings, faculty feedback, and

institutional priorities, the team recommended a redesigned General Education framework centered on seven integrated learning outcomes representing the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of every student who completes an undergraduate degree. Under the proposed framework, these seven outcomes would serve simultaneously as the General Education learning outcomes and the University's Institutional Learning Outcomes, creating a more coherent, assessable, and easily communicated framework for undergraduate education.

The Catalyst Team completed its recommendations and submitted them to the Provost in June 2026. During the 2026–27 academic year, the University will review the recommendations through its faculty governance and academic approval processes and, if approved, begin implementation of the revised General Education curriculum. This work reflects CWU's commitment to using assessment evidence to strengthen institutional learning, improve curricular coherence, and continuously enhance the educational experience of all undergraduate students.

Exhibits:

[CWU General Education Website](#)
[General Education Catalyst Team Report](#)

1.C.7 The institution uses the results of assessment to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Central Washington University (CWU) uses assessment findings to inform curricular, instructional, and student-support improvements that strengthen student learning and academic quality. Faculty and academic leaders analyze evidence gathered through Program Learning Outcomes assessment, General Education assessment, and Academic Program Review to identify opportunities for improvement and guide decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment practices, and student success initiatives. While each assessment process serves a distinct purpose, together they provide a continuous cycle of evidence-informed improvement across the University's academic programs.

Program-level assessment findings are reviewed by faculty to evaluate student achievement of program learning outcomes and identify opportunities to strengthen student learning. Annual assessment reports require programs to document assessment findings, planned improvements, and actions taken in response to previous assessment cycles. These discussions inform curricular revisions, modifications to instructional approaches, refinements to assessment methods, and other program improvements appropriate to the discipline. As programs revisit learning outcomes over successive

assessment cycles, faculty evaluate whether implemented changes have contributed to improved student learning.

General Education assessment has provided a university-wide example of assessment-driven improvement. Multiple assessment cycles identified opportunities to strengthen alignment between General Education learning outcomes, course assignments, and assessment practices. Assessment findings also demonstrated that the existing General Education structure, with approximately 55 component-level learning outcomes, limited the University's ability to articulate and assess a concise set of institution-wide learning outcomes. In response, faculty refined artifact selection procedures, improved assessment alignment, and conducted a comprehensive review of the General Education curriculum. These efforts culminated in the Catalyst Team's recommendation to establish a revised General Education framework built around seven integrated learning outcomes that also serve as the University's proposed Institutional Learning Outcomes, demonstrating how assessment findings can inform meaningful curricular improvement.

Academic Program Review extends the use of assessment evidence by integrating student learning outcomes assessment with student achievement data, enrollment trends, equity indicators, and other measures of program effectiveness. Faculty, department leadership, deans, and Academic Affairs use these findings to evaluate program quality, identify strategic priorities, and inform curriculum development, resource planning, and student success initiatives. The review process provides an institutional framework for examining both program performance and progress on previously identified improvement opportunities.

Collectively, these processes demonstrate CWU's commitment to using assessment as a tool for continuous improvement rather than compliance. By systematically reviewing evidence, implementing improvements, and evaluating their effectiveness over time, faculty and academic leaders strengthen academic programs, improve student learning, and advance the University's mission of providing high-quality educational opportunities for all students.

Exhibits:

Program Learning Outcomes

[Sample SLO Report](#)

[SLO Template](#)

General Education

[2025-26 Assessment Results Report](#)

[2024-25 Assessment PPT](#)

[General Education Catalyst Team Report](#)

Academic Program Review

[APR Process](#)

[Sample 2026 APR](#)

[2025 APR for Physics](#)

[Provost Response for Physics 2025 APR](#)

[2025 APR for Philosophy and Comparative Religion](#)

[Provost Response for Philosophy and Comparative Religion APR](#)

[2025 APR for Education, Development, Teaching and Learning](#)

[Provost Response for Education, Development, Teaching and Learning APR](#)

1.C.8 The institution defines and publishes policies for transfer credit and prior learning that are consistent with its mission and ensure the quality, integrity, and applicability of academic credit.

Central Washington University (CWU) maintains clearly defined and publicly accessible policies governing transfer credit and prior learning that preserve academic quality, support student mobility, and maintain the integrity of its academic credentials. These policies reflect the University's mission as a regional comprehensive institution committed to educational access and opportunity while ensuring that credit applied toward a CWU degree is appropriate, comparable, and academically rigorous.

Transfer credit policies are published in the official University Catalog and implemented through established institutional procedures that provide consistent evaluation of coursework completed at other appropriately accredited institutions. Coursework is evaluated for equivalency, applicability, and relevance to degree requirements, with faculty providing oversight for upper-division and discipline-specific coursework where academic expertise is required. Course equivalencies are maintained in a publicly accessible transfer equivalency system that provides transparency for prospective and current students, advisors, and transfer institutions. Students may also request review of transfer credit decisions through established petition and appeal processes.

CWU serves students transferring from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, including Washington's community and technical colleges, four-year institutions, military education, and other postsecondary providers. The University has developed degree pathways that support students transferring with both Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) associate degrees and career-technical or other applied associate degrees, recognizing that students enter CWU through multiple educational pathways. This commitment to transfer access is reflected in ongoing efforts to simplify transfer, expand articulation

agreements, and develop degree-completion opportunities for transfer students across the state.

As part of the recent faculty-led redesign of the General Education curriculum, the proposed framework was found to align closely with Washington's revised Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) structure. Although the redesign was driven by institutional assessment findings and curricular improvement goals, the resulting alignment provides an additional benefit by supporting smoother transfer for students completing a DTA while maintaining the foundational knowledge and competencies expected of all CWU graduates.

CWU also recognizes college-level learning acquired outside traditional CWU coursework through its Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) policy. In response to an environmental analysis identifying a growing population of adults with some college but no degree, the University has expanded opportunities for students to apply validated prior learning toward degree completion while maintaining consistent academic standards. Supported through grant funding and developed in collaboration with statewide partners, the revised PLA framework recognizes that meaningful college-level learning may occur in a variety of educational and professional settings. Students who have completed recognized industry certifications, such as aviation or emergency medical technician (EMT) training, may receive academic credit when those credentials have been evaluated and determined to be comparable to CWU coursework. Students may also demonstrate college-level learning acquired through professional experience by developing faculty-reviewed portfolios that provide evidence they have achieved the learning outcomes of specific courses within their academic programs. In every case, faculty evaluation and established institutional criteria ensure that awarded credit reflects learning equivalent in quality, rigor, and outcomes to coursework completed at the University.

Exhibits:

[CWU Catalog](#)

[Policy on Acceptance of Transfer Credits](#)

[CWU Transfer Center](#)

1.C.9 Graduate programs are consistent with the institution's mission and are characterized by appropriate depth, rigor, and expectations for advanced study, including clearly defined culminating experiences and faculty oversight.

Graduate education at Central Washington University (CWU) is coordinated through the School of Graduate Education, Research, and Strategic Initiatives, which provides institutional leadership, establishes university-wide graduate academic policies, and

supports graduate programs across the University. Consistent with CWU's mission as a regional comprehensive university, graduate programs provide advanced academic and professional preparation that responds to regional workforce, community, disciplinary, and professional needs. Graduate education emphasizes advanced scholarship, professional practice, research, and creative activity appropriate to master's-level study while preparing graduates for leadership, professional advancement, and continued academic study.

Graduate degree expectations, admission requirements, and academic standards are established through university policy and faculty governance and are published in the University Catalog and Graduate Student Handbook. Individual graduate programs establish discipline-specific admission criteria and preparation requirements appropriate for success in advanced study while operating within institution-wide graduate academic policies. This framework provides consistent academic expectations across graduate education while allowing programs to address the distinctive standards and professional expectations of their respective disciplines.

Graduate curricula are intentionally designed to reflect the depth, rigor, and expectations of advanced study. Coursework emphasizes critical analysis, synthesis of knowledge, independent inquiry, professional application, and scholarly engagement beyond the undergraduate level. Each graduate program includes a clearly defined culminating experience appropriate to the discipline, which may take the form of a thesis, applied research project, creative work, comprehensive examination, portfolio, internship, or other faculty-approved culminating experience. Through these experiences, students demonstrate achievement of program learning outcomes, advanced disciplinary competence, and the ability to apply knowledge in complex professional, scholarly, or applied settings.

Graduate faculty maintain primary responsibility for graduate curriculum, student progression, assessment, and culminating experiences. Institutionally, graduate education is governed through the Graduate Council, a faculty governance body responsible for graduate academic policies, graduate faculty membership, curriculum review, and academic standards. Graduate curriculum proposals and program revisions undergo departmental, college, and Graduate Council review to ensure appropriate rigor, disciplinary alignment, and consistency with institutional expectations for advanced study.

Graduate programs participate fully in the University's Program Learning Outcomes assessment and Academic Program Review processes described in Standard 1.C.5. Graduate faculty use evidence of student learning, student achievement, and program effectiveness to refine curriculum, improve instruction, strengthen culminating

experiences, and ensure that graduate education continues to reflect evolving disciplinary, professional, and workforce expectations while remaining consistent with the University's mission.

Exhibits:

[2026-27 Graduate Catalog](#)

[CWU Graduate Student Handbook](#)

[Graduate Council Membership](#)

[CWU Graduate Council Bylaws](#)

[Sample Graduate Program \(CERM\)](#)

Standard 1.D Student Achievement

1.D.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students to ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

CWU serves a diverse student population and is committed to expanding educational opportunity for students from a wide range of backgrounds. In Fall 2025, 41% of students received Pell Grants, 46% of undergraduate students were first-generation college students, and 43% identified as students of color. These characteristics reflect the university's longstanding commitment to access, opportunity, and student success.

The University maintains a comprehensive recruitment strategy that serves first-year, transfer, adult, military-connected, and dual-credit students. One of CWU's most significant recruitment pathways is its concurrent enrollment programming, including College in the High School (CiHS) and Running Start. CWU's CiHS program—the largest in Washington State—earned accreditation from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) in 2022 and provides thousands of high school students with access to college coursework each year. Participation in CWU's concurrent enrollment programs has grown from 5,149 students in 2020–2021 to 16,493 students in 2024–2025. While many of these students ultimately enroll at other colleges and universities, the programs also serve as an important pipeline to CWU. Approximately one-quarter of first-time students enrolling at CWU have previously participated in a CWU concurrent enrollment program and enter with CWU-earned college credit.

Recruitment efforts are aligned with the university's commitment to equity and educational opportunity. As CWU expands its outreach to Hispanic and Latinx populations, it has strengthened recruitment efforts in regions with significant Hispanic and Latinx communities, including Yakima and the Tri-Cities. The university maintains a recruitment presence in Yakima, provides Spanish-language admissions materials and services, and partners with schools and community organizations to increase college-going opportunities. Participation in the Washington Guaranteed Admissions Program (WAGAP), a test-optional admissions policy, and personalized communications through the Slate customer relationship management system further support prospective students throughout the admissions process.

Transfer students represent another important pathway to CWU. Dedicated transfer counselors work closely with community colleges across Washington State to provide

individualized advising, transfer credit evaluation, application assistance, and transfer planning. Recent initiatives, including the Seamless Transfer partnership with Yakima Valley College, further simplify the transition from community college to bachelor's degree completion by aligning academic pathways and advising across institutions.

Following admission, students participate in a comprehensive orientation program designed to facilitate a successful transition to the university. Offered through multiple orientation sessions each year, New Student Orientation introduces students to General Education requirements, academic expectations, registration, financial aid, housing, student employment, campus engagement opportunities, and available academic support services. Students register for their first-quarter courses during orientation with guidance from advisors, while parents and support networks participate in dedicated orientation programming, including Spanish-language sessions, that familiarize them with university resources and expectations. This coordinated approach establishes early connections between students and the academic and student support services that contribute to persistence and success. Students with additional transition needs may also participate in programs such as Jump Start and TRIO Student Support Services, which provide targeted support for student success.

Orientation is reinforced through first-year transition programming. First-year students and other eligible students complete UNIV 101, which introduces university expectations, academic planning, degree requirements, campus resources, and strategies for academic success while helping students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the university successfully.

Throughout their academic careers, students receive timely, accurate, and individualized advising regarding degree requirements, transfer credit evaluation, academic standing, graduation requirements, and educational planning. Students have continuous access to Academic Requirement (AR) reports through the MyCWU portal, enabling them to monitor degree progress, evaluate the application of transfer credits, and plan for timely degree completion. Faculty advisors, professional advisors, and academic success coaches work collaboratively to help students make informed academic decisions and connect them with appropriate campus resources.

CWU supports this advising network through the Inspire student success platform, which integrates advising, tutoring, appointment scheduling, case management, and coordinated student outreach. Inspire also supports the university's Early Academic Alerts process, enabling faculty and staff to identify students experiencing academic difficulty and connect them with timely interventions and support services.

Academic advising is complemented by a broad network of student support services designed to promote persistence and academic achievement. The Learning Commons provides tutoring, peer-assisted learning, supplemental instruction, and academic skill development. The Veteran and Military Connected Student Center offers specialized services for military-affiliated students and their families, while the Multicultural Center fosters belonging and supports the success of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Together, these coordinated academic and student support services help ensure that students receive the information, guidance, and assistance necessary to navigate their educational pathways successfully and achieve their academic goals.

Exhibits:

[SEM Plan](#)
[Orientation Handbook](#)
[UNIV 101 Syllabus](#)
[Learning Commons](#)
[Learning Commons Subject-Specific Tutoring](#)
[Inspire Learning Commons Flyer](#)
[Sample AR Report](#)
[College in the High School](#)
[Seamless Transfer with Yakima Valley College](#)

1.D.2 Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

Central Washington University (CWU) establishes, monitors, and regularly evaluates a comprehensive framework of student achievement indicators that measures student success from recruitment through post-graduation outcomes. Rather than relying on a single measure of institutional performance, the university evaluates student achievement using multiple complementary indicators that assess student access, academic progress, persistence, completion, engagement, and post-graduation success. These indicators are integrated into the university's mission fulfillment framework, Strategic Plan, institutional

effectiveness processes, and Annual Accountability Report, providing a comprehensive understanding of institutional performance and student success.

CWU routinely monitors indicators that include applications, admissions, enrollment, accelerated credit participation, persistence, retention, graduation rates, bachelor's degrees awarded, DFWI rates, participation in high-impact educational practices, and post-graduation outcomes. These are posted on the institution's public dashboards. Collectively, these measures provide evidence of student access, academic progress, educational quality, and institutional effectiveness. Annual Accountability Reports organize these indicators around the university's Strategic Plan and monitor progress toward established student success priorities while providing multiple years of trend data to support institutional planning and continuous improvement.

To provide meaningful context for evaluating institutional performance, CWU benchmarks student achievement indicators against a carefully selected group of regional and national peer institutions. Rather than relying solely on institutional classifications, the university identified peer institutions through a quantitative similarity analysis using twelve institutional characteristics and student success measures. The resulting peer group consists of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, Eastern Washington University, Stephen F. Austin State University, the University of Central Oklahoma, Western Carolina University, the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, and Eastern Michigan University. Benchmarking against these institutions enables the university to evaluate institutional performance relative to comparable public universities and provides important context for strategic planning and mission fulfillment. Recent comparisons indicate that CWU's student achievement outcomes, including retention and graduation rates, compare favorably with peer medians across those key indicators.

Consistent with its commitment to access, opportunity, and student success, CWU systematically disaggregates student achievement indicators to identify equity gaps and promote equitable educational outcomes. Student achievement data are routinely examined by race and ethnicity, gender, Pell Grant eligibility, Washington College Grant eligibility, first-generation status, financial aid status, academic preparation, and other institutionally meaningful student characteristics. Interactive dashboards allow university leadership, faculty, and staff to examine student achievement across multiple demographic and academic variables, supporting the identification of disparities and informing initiatives designed to improve persistence, retention, completion, and overall student success.

CWU also evaluates student achievement through nationally recognized measures of student engagement. The university participates in the National Survey of Student

Engagement (NSSE), which provides nationally benchmarked evidence regarding academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, collaborative learning, supportive campus environments, effective teaching practices, and the quality of students' educational experiences. These engagement measures complement traditional student success metrics by providing additional insight into how students experience their education and by informing institutional improvement efforts that support learning and persistence.

The university further extends its assessment of student achievement beyond graduation through the annual First Destination Survey. Administered by Career Services, the survey collects information regarding employment, graduate school enrollment, military and service participation, salary outcomes, employer characteristics, and employment location for recent graduates. This is supported by a recently published report on Post-Graduate Earnings. These data provide important evidence regarding career readiness, educational effectiveness, and post-graduation success while informing academic program evaluation, career development initiatives, and institutional planning.

Together, these complementary indicators provide a comprehensive picture of student achievement across the student lifecycle. By integrating multiple measures of access, academic progress, engagement, completion, and post-graduation success, CWU is able to evaluate institutional effectiveness, benchmark its performance against comparable institutions, identify and address equity gaps, and support continuous improvement in student success.

Exhibits:

[2025 Accountability Report](#)

[CWU Dashboards](#)

[Peer Comparison](#)

[First Destination Survey Results](#)

[NSSE Engagement Indicators](#)

[NSSE Pocket Guide Report \(CWU\)](#)

[Post-Graduate Earnings](#)

1.D.3 The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

Central Washington University is committed to transparency and accountability by making student achievement information broadly available to students, employees, governing bodies, and the public. Through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the university maintains an integrated reporting system that includes publicly accessible dashboards, Annual Accountability Reports, institutional effectiveness reports, and Strategic Plan updates. Together, these resources provide current and historical information regarding admissions, enrollment, persistence, retention, graduation rates, degrees awarded, student demographics, and other key indicators of institutional performance.

CWU's public dashboards provide interactive access to student achievement information, allowing users to examine trends over time and disaggregate results by race and ethnicity, gender, Pell Grant eligibility, Washington College Grant eligibility, first-generation status, academic preparation, and other institutionally meaningful student characteristics. These reporting tools promote transparency while enabling the university to identify achievement gaps, monitor progress toward strategic priorities, and evaluate the effectiveness of student success initiatives.

Public reporting is complemented by internal reporting systems that provide faculty, staff, and administrators with additional information to support institutional improvement. Internal dashboards include program enrollment, DFWI rates, course success, and other operational indicators used by academic programs and administrative units to support academic planning, enrollment management, and student success initiatives. Together, the public and internal reporting systems provide a comprehensive evidence base for institutional analysis and continuous improvement.

Student achievement information is routinely reviewed throughout the university's governance and planning processes. University leadership, academic and administrative divisions, shared governance bodies, and the Board of Trustees use student achievement data to monitor institutional performance, evaluate progress toward Strategic Plan priorities, assess mission fulfillment, and inform institutional decision making. Annual Accountability Reports summarize progress on key performance indicators associated with the Strategic Plan and provide a transparent record of institutional performance over time.

The broad availability of student achievement information supports a university-wide culture of evidence. By providing transparent, accessible, and disaggregated information regarding student outcomes, CWU enables faculty, staff, administrators, students, and the public to engage with institutional performance data and participate in evidence-informed planning and improvement. These reporting practices reinforce institutional accountability while ensuring that planning, decision making, and resource allocation are

guided by reliable evidence and aligned with the university's mission of access, opportunity, and student success.

Exhibits:

[CWU Dashboards](#)
[2025 Accountability Report](#)

1.D.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

Central Washington University employs transparent and systematic processes to collect, analyze, and apply student achievement data in support of institutional planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement. Student achievement indicators are maintained through the university's institutional effectiveness framework and are reviewed through Strategic Plan implementation, Annual Accountability Reports, mission fulfillment evaluation, enrollment management, academic program review, and divisional planning processes. Disaggregated student achievement data enable university leaders to identify achievement gaps, evaluate the effectiveness of institutional initiatives, and allocate resources to strategies that improve student success and advance equitable educational outcomes.

A recent example of this process is the university's comprehensive redesign of undergraduate academic advising. Student achievement data, including retention and graduation metrics, together with prior accreditation recommendations, identified advising as a critical institutional priority. In response, the university commissioned an external assessment of its advising system through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The assessment identified opportunities to strengthen advising leadership, improve coordination, establish institution-wide metrics, and redesign advising processes to better support student success. Guided by these findings, CWU launched a university-wide advising redesign initiative that included new leadership, cross-divisional implementation teams, revised advising practices, and strategic investments intended to improve persistence, retention, and timely degree completion. Advising effectiveness is now evaluated through institution-wide metrics as part of the university's broader commitment to continuous improvement.

CWU similarly demonstrated the use of student achievement data through its Fall 2024 Retention Project. After identifying retention as a strategic institutional priority, the

university established measurable improvement goals and implemented a coordinated, campus-wide initiative involving Academic Affairs, Student Engagement and Success, Finance and Administration, Financial Aid, Residence Life, Institutional Effectiveness, and numerous student support units. Student achievement data guided interventions that included proactive registration outreach, expanded care-calling campaigns, enhanced financial aid support, attendance monitoring, Early Academic Alerts, Academic Success Coach outreach, and improvements to advising and registration processes. These coordinated efforts increased the first-time-in-college fall-to-winter retention rate from 91 percent to 93 percent, the highest rate achieved since the COVID-19 pandemic, while students of color retained at rates exceeding the institutional average across every high school GPA category.

Student achievement evidence also informs ongoing investments in academic support services. Academic Alert data are analyzed each term to identify students experiencing academic difficulty and to initiate timely interventions through Academic Success Coaches, who provide individualized outreach, referrals, and academic coaching. Similarly, utilization patterns, student feedback, and course success data collected through the Learning Commons have informed the expansion of tutoring services and peer-assisted learning opportunities, allowing the university to direct resources toward academic support strategies that demonstrate high levels of student engagement and impact.

The university also uses student achievement and enrollment data to respond to emerging institutional challenges. Analysis of enrollment trends, financial aid participation, and barriers associated with implementation of the revised FAFSA process informed a series of enrollment management initiatives, including expanded financial aid coaching, strengthened coordination between Admissions and Financial Aid, revised scholarship strategies, and enhanced outreach efforts designed to improve student access, affordability, and enrollment persistence.

These examples demonstrate that student achievement data at CWU are not merely collected for reporting purposes but are systematically integrated into institutional decision making. Through transparent assessment processes, evidence-based planning, and strategic resource allocation, the university continuously evaluates the effectiveness of its initiatives, responds to emerging challenges, reduces equity gaps, and strengthens student success in support of its mission of access and opportunity.

Exhibits:

[Fall 2024 Retention Project](#)
[AASCU Academic Advising Assessment Report](#)

[Advising Implementation Report](#)
[2025 Accountability Report](#)
[Early Academic Alerts Overview](#)

Standard 2 - Concerns from the 2025 Report on Policies, Regulations and Financial Review

Policies and procedures for reviewing external complaints and grievances

PRFR Feedback: *CWU has policies and procedures for handling internal complaints fairly and effectively but did not provide information about external complaints.*

During the 2025 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR), NWCCU observed that while Central Washington University maintained established processes for addressing complaints from students, employees, and other internal constituents, it had not clearly communicated a public-facing process for external stakeholders to submit concerns or complaints.

In response, CWU expanded its existing Concern and Support reporting process to provide a centralized, publicly accessible mechanism for receiving concerns, complaints, and requests for assistance from both internal and external constituents. The University implemented the Maxient case management platform, which provides a secure online reporting form available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The reporting form now includes a category for concerns or complaints regarding any University office, department, or division, including potential violations of university policy or applicable state and federal requirements.

The University also revised the public-facing Concern and Support website to clearly state that external individuals may submit concerns, complaints, or requests for assistance through the online reporting process. The site also provides alternative reporting options, including direct contact with the appropriate University office by phone, email, or in person.

Reports are monitored by the Office of Case Management, Civil Rights Compliance, and Human Resources and routed to the appropriate office for review, investigation, and response. This centralized process supports consistent intake, timely follow-up, and institutional accountability.

These enhancements establish a clearly communicated, publicly accessible process for receiving and addressing concerns and complaints from external stakeholders, fully addressing the recommendation identified in the 2025 PRFR.

Exhibit:

[Concern and Support Website](#)

Procedures for assessing adequacy of library collections

PRFR Feedback: *The reviewers found that CWU lacked documented procedures for assessing the adequacy of library collections and noted that collection policies were only available for Special Collections and Archives. They wrote: "CWU has recently hired an associate dean for collections and technology and will resume procedures for collection management and assessment. Collection policies are only currently available for special collections/archives."*

CWU Libraries has hired an Associate Dean for Collections and Technology Strategies, who has taken steps to strengthen collection development and assessment practices. To provide broader perspectives on collection needs and support collaborative decision-making, the Associate Dean convened a Collections Team. Roles and responsibilities have been formalized through a new collection development strategy that articulates a structured framework for decision-making while maintaining flexibility to respond to emerging needs.

During the past year, the Collections Team conducted a high-level review of all existing subscriptions, resulting in the cancellation of several resources and the addition of materials more closely aligned with the current curriculum. Current resource needs were identified through the Libraries' Community Conversations project, integration in the approval process for new academic programs, and informal conversations with teaching faculty.

Looking ahead, the Collections Team intends to review subscriptions on a regular three-year cycle. Resources will be grouped by subject area to provide a holistic view of support for academic disciplines and allow a deeper assessment of resource effectiveness. In fall 2026, the Team plans to review resources for chemistry, physics, geology, geography, and environmental studies. To streamline the review process and provide objective assessment criteria, the Team will pilot an electronic resource scorecard. Following these internal reviews, the Associate Dean will initiate discussions with departmental faculty to strengthen communication and ensure collection decisions reflect teaching priorities.

Assessment of monographic collections will be conducted through targeted, project-based reviews. To address immediate needs, the libraries will run two evidence-based acquisitions plans that will provide broad subject coverage during academic year 2026-27. Usage data from these programs will help identify priority areas for future evaluation and collection development.

Exhibit:

[Collection Development Strategy](#)

Conclusion

Central Washington University has strengthened its capacity to fulfill its mission through an integrated approach to planning, assessment, academic quality, and student success. Mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities provide a clear framework for institutional decision making, while shared governance ensures that faculty, staff, students, and administrators contribute to the University's direction and future.

Planning and assessment are now closely connected across the institution. Student learning, student achievement, and institutional effectiveness are evaluated through systematic processes that inform strategic planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement. Annual Accountability Reports, institutional dashboards, academic program review, General Education assessment, and mission fulfillment measures provide consistent evidence to evaluate institutional performance and guide decision making.

Academic quality remains central to the University's work. Faculty maintain responsibility for curriculum, student learning outcomes, and academic standards, while regular assessment and program review ensure that programs remain current, rigorous, and responsive to the needs of students, employers, and the communities CWU serves. The University's progress over the past accreditation cycle reflects the collective efforts of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. In particular, CWU's faculty remain the foundation of its academic mission through their scholarship, teaching, mentoring, and unwavering commitment to student achievement.

Student success is approached as a shared institutional responsibility. Recruitment, orientation, advising, academic support, and student success initiatives are intentionally connected to improve persistence, retention, graduation, and post-graduation outcomes. Student achievement data are benchmarked against peer institutions, disaggregated to identify equity gaps, and used to guide institutional priorities and investments. Recent initiatives, including the redesign of academic advising and the campus-wide retention initiative, illustrate how evidence is translated into action to improve student outcomes.

The University has also strengthened its ability to respond to change. Adaptive University, Strategic Enrollment Management, expanded assessment practices, and enhanced accountability processes have increased organizational capacity and reinforced a culture in which evidence informs planning and improvement. These efforts have strengthened the University's response to recommendations from previous accreditation reviews and established sustainable systems that support mission fulfillment.

Institutional effectiveness is an ongoing responsibility rather than a completed task. Central Washington University will continue to evaluate its performance, learn from evidence, and refine its practices in support of student learning, student achievement, and public accountability. Guided by its mission and Strategic Plan, the University enters this evaluation confident in the progress it has made and is well positioned to continue serving the students and communities of Washington State.

Addenda

Delivery of Online Classes

Verifying Student Identity

Central Washington University (CWU) fully complies with federal and NWCCU standards regarding the verification of student identity in all courses, including those offered through distance education.

The university employs a multi-factor authentication (MFA) system as a core component of its cybersecurity infrastructure. MFA requires students to provide multiple forms of verification before accessing their accounts, including the learning management system (Canvas), online exams, and academic records. This ensures that the student accessing the course is the same individual whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. CWU's implementation of MFA supports academic integrity while protecting student privacy. The MFA system adheres to institutional data privacy and security policies, ensuring that personal information used in the authentication process is safeguarded and not shared with third parties.

There are no additional charges to students for enrollment in online courses or the use of CWU's identity verification. MFA is provided as part of CWU's standard technology infrastructure, and students are informed of this through enrollment materials and the CWU website. Through these combined measures, CWU maintains an effective, privacy-conscious identity verification process that ensures compliance with accreditation and federal requirements while protecting student information and supporting the integrity of its academic credentials.

Ensuring Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online Courses

CWU maintains a [Regular and Substantive Interaction Policy](#) for Online Instruction that establishes institutional expectations for instructor-initiated, regular, and substantive interaction in asynchronous online courses. The policy defines regular and substantive interaction, identifies instructional practices that satisfy RSI requirements, clarifies activities that do not constitute RSI, and outlines institutional and faculty responsibilities for implementation. The policy supports the University's commitment to high-quality online instruction and compliance with federal distance education regulations.