Degree and Certificate Requirements

Statement of General Education

A general education is applicable to all students, no matter what their career and personal ambitions may be. It is the process by which students develop an understanding and appreciation of themselves and of various social, cultural, technological, and scientific developments in the world in which they live.

A general education may also be viewed as the process by which students acquire the core knowledge and fundamental skills to become life-long learners. An educated person has the ability to apply creatively and effectively this core knowledge to every aspect of life. A life-long learner is able to both update this core knowledge and develop individual potential in an ever-changing environment. General education, therefore, provides the framework essential to the survival and success of our society.

The key elements of this general education framework are distributed among the five categories of courses offered by the college, and students, regardless of their degree programs, are required to take courses in all five categories. The relationship between each category and the statement of general education philosophy can be found in the lists of requirements for each of the College’s degree programs.

Associate Degree Requirements

The College grants the degrees of Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Associate of Applied Arts and Sciences and Associate of General Studies to those students who have completed the following programmatic requirements for graduation:

1. Maintained a 2.0 GPA average (or the equivalent in programs that are Pass/Fail) and have earned less than a C in no more than two courses required for the degree.
2. Taken a minimum of 15 passing credits from the College at the 100 level or above.
3. Overall completion of a minimum of 60 passing credits in courses numbered 100 level or above. Credits toward the 60 may include transfer credits (including credits
through the Michigan Colleges Online (MCO), Competency Based Education (CBE), Advanced Placement (AP) or College Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Military Training and/or School to Work Articulated Courses.

4. A maximum of 12 credits may be earned through Competency Based Education (CBE) – please see additional information on CBE’s in the Catalog under Transferring to West Shore. In addition, a maximum of 12 credits from performing arts courses may be applied to graduation, specifically MUS 111 Concert Choir, MUS 180 through 199 Applied Music, MUS 120 Concert Band, MUS 121 Jazz Band, MUS 122 Percussion Ensemble, MUS 298 Independent Study, and THE 291 Applied Theater.

5. Completion of the Application for Graduation form and payment of a graduation fee, unless waived.

6. Completion of all prescribed requirements for the degree.

7. For specified AAAS programs (Early Child Care, Nursing) the 12 credit limit may be exceeded when students meet the current State/ National standards for State/ National Licensure or Certification contingent upon approval from the program coordinator. The specific courses are as follows: ECE 120, ECE 121 in Child Care and LPN year credit by licensure.

Specific requirements for and information on the various degrees offered at WSCC are contained within the Curriculum Guide.

**One and Two Year Certificates**

West Shore Community College offers one- and two-year certificates in a number of occupational areas. To receive a certificate, students must complete, with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or greater (or the equivalent in sequences that are Pass/Fail), a minimum of 10 passing credits at WSCC for a one-year certificate and 15 passing credits for a two-year certificate. Students may not earn less than a C in more than two courses required for the certificate. Credit for courses taken through the Michigan Colleges Online may count toward the 15 credits.

**Occupational Competency**

In order to receive a degree or certificate in an occupational program at West Shore Community College, students must take a specified job ready occupational competency test in their career field during the final semester of their program. Corrections, Criminal Justice, and Nursing students are required to complete State-sanctioned competency/licensing tests. The occupational competency tests have been designed to measure student gains, as a result of their training at the post-secondary level at WSCC.

*Diplomas will not be distributed to students who have unpaid financial obligations to the College.*
Basic Academic Expectations

To meet basic academic expectations, all students will:

• take responsibility for their own learning
• effectively communicate ideas, both in writing and speech
• acquire critical and rigorous thinking skills
• be well prepared for each class and assignment
• honor diversity by exercising sensitivity to other students who may differ by gender, ethnicity, culture, race, sexual orientation, religion, attitude, ability, or behavior

To meet basic academic expectations, all faculty members will:

• stay current with existing and emerging research, technology, and pedagogical approaches
• provide clarity in educational objectives, teaching strategies, grading, assignments, and course requirements
• recognize and make reasonable adjustments to the unique circumstances of the community college student, yet remain unwilling to compromise academic standards

True Academic Excellence

In addition to meeting basic expectations, and in order to demonstrate true academic excellence, students will:

• exhibit a zest for learning
• exceed their own expectations and/or those of the professor
• readily apply ideas and processes learned in class across the curriculum
• possess a keen, incisive critical eye and ear
• expand the scope of learning, both for themselves and for others
• participate dynamically in individual and group assignments

In addition to meeting basic expectations, and in order to demonstrate true academic excellence, faculty members will:

• exhibit a passion for their ever-developing field of expertise, both in and out of the classroom
• eagerly assist students in their study of the professor’s discipline
• make inter-disciplinary connections whenever possible
• encourage life-long learning for students
• enhance professor-student interaction both in and out of the classroom

**Classification of Students**

**Freshman**
Fewer than 30 semester credits

**Sophomore**
30 or more semester credits

**Full-time Student**
Carrying 12 or more credits per semester
(Veterans receiving educational benefits may have lower requirements for the summer semester)

**Part-time Student**
Carrying fewer than 12 credits per semester

**Computer Literacy**

As each year goes by, understanding computer concepts becomes more and more important. Computer literacy at West Shore is defined as having:

1. A general understanding of computer concepts as they apply to various academic and career fields.

2. The ability to use a personal computer to complete specific tasks, such as creating and editing documents, sending and receiving electronic mail (e-mail), and using the Internet.

**Dean’s List**

Full-time students earning a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher will be recognized on the Dean’s List published at the close of each semester. Also recognized on the Dean’s List are part-time students in the semester during which they accrue 12, 24, 36, 48, and 60 semester credits provided that they meet the GPA requirement for their total cumulative GPA. High honors are awarded to graduating students who receive a GPA of 3.75 or higher, and honors are awarded to those whose GPA is 3.5 to 3.749. The GPA will be computed on the basis of credits attempted at West Shore only and will not include any credits earned at another college.

**Developmental Courses**

Credits earned from developmental courses, which are numbered 099 or below, are not applicable to graduation requirements nor are final grades used in the calculation of grade point averages.
Online Learning/
Flexible Learning Options

West Shore provides learners with several alternative ways to take college credit courses. Because online learning courses require minimal on-campus presence, students with job and family responsibilities are able to take more courses than they could if their options were limited to traditional classes. Using technology, students can take classes from home or attend an off campus site that is closer to home. Courses from other colleges and universities are also available.

WSCC uses a variety of technologies to deliver courses. Some of our courses are delivered totally over the Internet. In this type of class, students log on from home to send and receive assignments, participate in virtual class discussions, and interact with other students as well as the instructor. Although students are working independently, the Internet provides an opportunity for students to work together on class projects and participate in discussions. WSCC requires all learners enrolled in online courses to attend any scheduled mandatory on-campus or online orientation for an online course. The orientation will ensure that students are best prepared for this unique and exciting learning environment. Failure to attend scheduled mandatory orientation sessions may result in an Administrative Drop of the online course.

Hybrid classes use a combination of online and face-to-face instruction. For example, the lecture portion of a class will be delivered online and students will come to the campus for labs. A third option is two-way interactive television (ITV). ITV courses provide live interaction among students and faculty in different locations. Specially equipped classrooms allow one teacher to teach students at several different locations.

Online learning courses have the same learning outcomes as on-campus courses and are completely transferable to other institutions. For current course offerings, look for the online learning opportunities page in the class schedule publication or on the internet at www.westshore.edu/home.php/academics/distance.

In addition, West Shore is a member of the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative. Many more courses are available to WSCC students through this organization. More information is available at the MCCVLC’s Internet site: www.mccvlc.org.

Educational Innovation at WSCC

West Shore is committed to providing its students with innovative educational experiences, rich in opportunity and interdisciplinary in scope. Two programs in particular should appeal to students seeking challenge and a varied learning experience.
The Honors Program

The purpose of the WSCC’s Honors Program is to provide students of exceptional ability and motivation with the opportunity to pursue creative and independent projects while working closely with individual faculty members. The WSCC Honors Program has two components: Honors Credit and Honors Graduates.

Honors Credit

The foundation of WSCC’s Honors Program is the Honors Credit portion. WSCC students can earn Honors Credit in any class, except for developmental classes, by successfully completing an Honors Project in that class. Interested students simply work with their instructor to determine a project that is suitable to the class as well as the student’s interests and abilities. Honors Projects can include research papers, art projects, class presentations, community service initiatives, and any other creative endeavor that exceeds the requirements of the normal coursework. To initiate an Honors Project, students and their instructors together fill out and sign an Honors Contract that stipulates the nature, scope and method of evaluation for the project. In order to earn Honors Credit for a particular class, student must not only complete an Honors Project to the satisfaction of their instructor, but they must also earn at least a 3.0 (B) in the class. Once a student completes the requirements for earning Honors Credit, an Honors designation is noted next to the class in which they earned the credit on their permanent academic transcript. There are no prerequisites, such as GPA, for seeking Honors Credit in a class at WSCC other than the interest and ability to complete the necessary work.

Honors Graduates

In addition to the Honors Credit part of the program, students may also become Honors Graduates. To become an Honors Graduate, students must fulfill the following requirements:

- Earn one of WSCC’s degrees;
- Earn Honor Credit for at least 4 classes, or the equivalent of 12 credits, at WSCC;
- Earn a cumulative GPA of 3.25 by the semester of graduation OR earn a 3.5 GPA in the 30 credit hours of classes.

Thus, the Honors Graduate portion of the program is connected to the Honors Credit portion in the following ways: earning a significant amount (at least 12 hours) of Honors Credit is necessary to become an Honors Graduate.

However, to earn Honors Credit in a particular class or classes it is not necessary to plan to become an Honors Graduate.
Contact Information

For more information about the Honors Program at WSCC, contact Dr. Matt Sanderson, Honors Program Advisor and Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, by email (mwsanderson@westshore.edu) or by phone (843-5937). You may also visit the WSCC Honors Program webpage at http://www.westshore.edu/home.php/academics/honors.

Learning Communities

Learning communities provide students the opportunity to experience a new and dynamic approach to learning-centered education. Students enrolled in a learning community will take a combination of specifically-linked general-education courses.

- Students in such linked courses will be exposed to an integrated curriculum that allows them to readily apply what they’ve learned in each course. By studying subjects in this manner, the inherent connections between related concepts can be more effectively assimilated, thus enhancing learning.

- These interdisciplinary courses will provide the credit equivalent of non-linked courses. For example, one six credit community will consist of two courses: Composition I and Interpersonal Communications.

Grade Point Average

Grade points are used to determine scholastic standing. These points are computed by multiplying the appropriate grade points for the grade received in a course by the credits earned in that course. Thus, a 3 credit course with a grade of A would earn 12 grade points [3 x 4 grade points].

The total grade points accumulated are then divided by the number of credits attempted, and the result is the cumulative grade point average (GPA). Each time a course is taken, both the credit hours attempted and the grade points are included in computing the GPA. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher to graduate.

Grading System

Grade Definitions

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<tr>
<td>A−</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<tr>
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The following symbols denote a registration status and have no effect on accumulation of credits or on GPA.
W (Withdrawal)

Indicates the student elected to withdraw from a course after the add/drop period. Withdrawals are complete, only after the student files the necessary application for withdrawal with Student Services. Students who are considering withdrawing from classes should keep in mind that the “W” grade will impact their required academic progress and that when transferring some institutions change “W” grades to the grade “F”.

I (Incomplete)

Indicates that for a justifiable reason the student failed to complete the requirements for the course within the scheduled time. Incompletes are granted only when mutual agreement between instructor and student is reached. Forms for setting forth terms of agreement for course completion are available in the instructional Dean’s offices. A copy of the completed agreement must be filed in the Student Services Office. Incompletes will convert to an “F” grade if terms of the agreement are not fulfilled.

AU (Audit)

Indicates a desire to participate in a class without receiving credit. Once a course is started on an audit basis, the student may change to a credit classification anytime within the first half of the scheduled class meetings. Also, students who initially register for credit may at any time within the first half of the scheduled class meetings change to an audit classification. Tuition and fees for audit are the same as for credit. Financial aid cannot be used to cover the cost of courses taken on an audit basis.

Waiver of Course Work

If the student wants only to have course work waived, no fee will be assessed and no credit will be recorded on the transcript. Having a course waived will not reduce the number of credits required for an associate degree.

Withdrawal

Students have the option of withdrawing from a course through the eleventh week of fall and/or winter semesters; the fifth week for summer semester. The student must file a withdrawal form in the Student Services Office. A designator of “W” will be placed on the academic transcript next to the course[s] from which the student has withdrawn. Students who stop attending class but fail to withdraw officially will receive the grade earned for the course[s] at the end of the semester. Students with documented extenuating circumstances also have the opportunity to request a withdrawal after the published withdrawal deadline. Late Withdrawal Request Forms are available in Student Services.