

# Westcliff University Glossary

## A

**Academic Freedom** Institutional policies and practices that affirm that those in the academy are free to share their convictions and responsible conclusions with their colleagues and students in their teaching, research, and writing. (WSCUC)

**Academic Program** A program of study leading to a certificate, associate, bachelor's, masters or doctorate degree.

**Academic Year (AY)** The academic year begins in the fall semester (session 1 and 2), continues through the spring semester (session 3 and 4) and ends in summer (session 5 and 6). For example, Academic Year 2014 (or AY 14-15) includes the fall semester of 2014, and the spring and summer semesters of 2015.

**Academic Probation** A warning for the student that performs below the Westcliff University's standard GPA for good standing in a particular program. If the student's academic performance remains below the benchmark the student may be removed from the school.

**Acceptance Rate** The percentage of applicants to a program or institution who are offered admission.

**Accountability** In higher education, being answerable to the public, e.g., students, parents, policymakers, employers. Historically, accountability has focused on financial resources; emphasis now extends to students' academic progress, including retention, acquisition of knowledge and skills, and degree completion. (WSCUC)

**Accreditation** As practiced by WSCUC and other regional accrediting associations, a voluntary, non-governmental, peer-based form of quality assurance at the institutional level. To receive or reaffirm accredited status, institutions demonstrate that they are in compliance with state and federal law and meet the accrediting association's standards. Accrediting associations must be recognized by the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) in order for their accredited institutions to qualify for federal grants and loans to students. (WSCUC)

**Admitted Student Applicant** who is offered admission to a degree-granting program at an institution.

**Advanced placement (AP)** courses College-level courses taught in high school. Students may take an examination at the completion of the course; some colleges accept certain scores as college credit or advanced standing.

**Alignment** Connections among functions or dimensions of an institution that support achievement of goals, e.g., among curriculum, pedagogy, and expected outcomes; or priorities, planning, and resource allocation. (WSCUC)

**American Indian or Alaska Native** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

**Applicant** An individual who has fulfilled the institution's requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any).

**Application Fee** The amount of money that an institution charges for processing a student's application. This amount is not creditable toward tuition and required fees, nor is it refundable if the student is not admitted to the institution.

**Asian** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Assessment (of student learning)** An ongoing, iterative process consisting of four basic steps: 1. defining learning outcomes; 2. choosing a method or approach and then using it to gather evidence of learning; 3. analyzing and interpreting the evidence; and 4. using this information to improve student learning. (WSCUC)

**Assessment Systematic** information gathering, research, evaluation, and programmatic change for purposes of improving teaching, learning, and service in educational settings.

**Asynchronous Learning** Form of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time.

## **B**

**Bachelor's Degree** An award that requires 120 credits usually completed in at least four years but not more than six years of full-time equivalent college-level work. Also, it includes bachelor's degrees in which the normal four years of work are completed in three years.

**Benchmark** A point of reference or standard of excellence in relation to which something can be compared and judged. A specific level of student performance may serve as the benchmark that students are expected to meet at a particular point in time or developmental level. Retention and

graduation rates may also be benchmarked against those of peer institutions or national norms. (WSCUC)

**Benchmark Institution** An institution that looks at student headcount, level and span of degree programs, scope, and mission; that possesses characteristics we aspire to achieve.

**Black or African American** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

## C

**Calendar Year (CY)** The one-year period beginning January 1 and ending December 31 within the same year.

**Candidacy** A status of preliminary affiliation with the Senior College and University Commission, awarded for a maximum of four years following a procedure for institutional review that includes self-study and on-site visitation. Candidacy indicates that the institution meets all or nearly all the Standards at a minimum level. Candidacy is not accreditation and does not ensure eventual accreditation; it means that an institution is progressing toward accreditation. (WSCUC)

**Capstone** A culminating project or experience, usually associated with undergraduates but also applicable to graduate education, that generally takes place in the student's final year of study and requires review, synthesis, and application of what has been learned over the course of the student's college experience. The result may be a product (e.g., original research, an innovative engineering design, an art exhibit) or a performance (e.g., a recital, an internship, student teaching). The capstone can provide evidence for assessment of a range of outcomes, e.g., core competencies, general education outcomes, and institution-level outcomes, as well as those for the major or graduate degree. (WSCUC)

**Census Date** The designated day in an academic term, after most drops/adds have been completed, when the institution takes official enrollment counts.

**Certificate Recognition** of successful completion of a focused collection of courses in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. Certificate programs vary in length and can be completed concurrently with or separately from a degree program.

**CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs)** An NCES publication that provides a numerical classification and standard terminology for secondary and postsecondary instructional programs.

**Class (Student) Level** Academic level of an enrolled undergraduate student based on accumulated credit hours. First-year = 0 to 29 accumulated credit hours, Sophomore = 30 to 59 accumulated credit hours, Junior = 60 to 89 accumulated credit hours, Senior = 90 or more accumulated credit hours.

**Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code** A taxonomic coding scheme for secondary and post-secondary instructional programs, developed by the United States Department of Education. It is a six-digit code in the form xx.xxxx that identifies program specialties within educational institutions.

**Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)** A taxonomic coding scheme for postsecondary instructional programs, intended to standardize the organization, collection, and reporting of data about enrollment, degrees awarded, and other aspects of educational programs. The CIP is the accepted federal government statistical standard on instructional program classifications and is used in a variety of education information surveys and databases. (IPEDS)

**Cohort** A group of people who share a common characteristic or experience within a defined time period. In institutional research, cohorts usually consist of full-time, first-year students who begin college in a given fall.

**Cohort (Traditional)** New first-time, first-year students, enrolled in the fall term as collected in the College's annual census. The cohort's enrollment and registration are tracked over time for the purposes of calculating retention and graduation rates.

**College** A term with multiple meanings in U.S. usage: 1. historically, a small, undergraduate liberal arts institution; 2. a generic term, sometimes used as a synonym for university, to denote any postsecondary educational institution, including universities; 3. a grouping of related disciplines within a university, e.g., College of Engineering. (WSCUC)

**College Navigator** A web tool that provides selected IPEDS data to assist students, parents, high school counselors, and others obtain information about nearly 7,000 postsecondary institutions in the United States and other areas. It offers a wide range of information including programs offered, retention and graduation rates, aid available, campus safety, accreditation, and estimated student expenses.

**Commission, also WSCUC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)** Refers to the Senior College and University Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WSCUC); may denote either the entire senior college organization or its decision-making body. (WSCUC)

**Common Data Set (CDS)** A product of the Common Data Set Initiative to provide accurate and timely data to students and their families. It is a detailed report covering university-wide information and data

that are presented in the same common format for most institutions of higher education to facilitate comparisons among them.

**Commuter** A student who lives off campus in housing that is not owned by, operated by, or affiliated with the college.

**Comparative Data** Data drawn from other sources: from within or, more typically, from outside the institution. Comparative data can enhance meaning and contextual understanding of the primary data being reviewed and analyzed. (WSCUC)

**Competency** In assessment of student learning, a specific skill, body of knowledge, or disposition; can also refer to the student's ability to demonstrate that learning. "Competency" is sometimes used interchangeably with "outcome," "objective," and "ability." (WSCUC)

**Completion, also Degree Completion** Signifies that the students are able to graduate, having completed all requirements for their degree; sometimes used as a synonym for "graduation." (WSCUC)

**Context** The institution's mission, values, student body, and other factors that influence student- and institution-level outcomes. (WSCUC)

**Comprehensive Learning Assessments (CLAs)** Are comprehensive assignments that provide evidence of how well students have mastered the course content and test the students on all the course learning outcomes.

**Core Commitments** WSCUC's Standards and process are founded on three Core Commitments: to student learning and success; to quality and improvement; and to institutional integrity, sustainability, and accountability. WSCUC-accredited institutions demonstrate their adherence to these commitments through the institutional review process. (WSCUC)

**Core Competencies** As defined in WSCUC Standard 2, Criterion for Review 2.2, institutions report on graduating students' levels of performance in five core competencies: written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy. Not to be confused with "core curriculum" (see "core curriculum"). (WSCUC)

**Core Curriculum** 1. An approach to general education that requires all students to take the same set of courses, rather than choosing from a menu of options; 2. Sometimes used as a synonym for general education. (WSCUC)

**Core Values** Westcliff University's set of fundamental beliefs: 1. Integrity 2. Accountability 3. Social Responsibility 4. Global Citizenship 5. Diversity & Inclusion 6. Collaboration and 7. Compassion.

**Cost of Attendance** The average amount believed to be adequate to cover the tuition, fees, books, and living expenses of the student for the academic year.

**Course** a learning experience of defined scope and duration, with intended learning outcomes, as described in a catalog, bulletin, or syllabus. (WSCUC)

**Credential** 1. A certificate stating that the student has graduated from a particular curriculum, has passed certain subjects, or demonstrated mastery of a specific set of skills; 2. A statement signed by a proper authority certifying that a person is authorized to perform certain functions or has been designated as an official representative. (WSCUC)

**Credit** A unit representing one credit hour (1 credit = 1 credit hour) of successfully completed work. It is applied toward the total number of credits needed for completing the requirements of a degree or certificate.

**Credit Enrollment** In a higher education academic course or program for which credit can be applied, upon satisfactory completion, toward the requirements for a formal award, such as a degree or diploma.

**Credit Hour** A course's unit of measure, representing the number of hours a student spends in-class for the course per week, which is counted toward completion of an academic program.

**Criterion** A characteristic mark or trait on the basis of which a judgment may be made. Criteria for good writing, for example, may be the ability to state a position clearly, support the position, anticipate contradictory arguments, and do so in error-free language. (WSCUC)

**Critical Thinking** The ability to think in a way that is clear, reasoned, reflective, informed by evidence, and aimed at deciding what to believe or do. Dispositions supporting critical thinking include open-mindedness and motivation to seek the truth. (WSCUC)

**Culture of Evidence** A habit of using evidence in assessment, decision making, planning, resource allocation, and other institutional processes that is embedded in and characteristic of an institution's actions and practices. (WSCUC)

**Cumulative GPA** The grade point average calculated on all credit-bearing work attempted at the institution.

## D

**Degree** An award conferred by a college, university, or other postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of studies.

**Degree-Seeking Students** enrolled in courses for credit and recognized by the institution as seeking a degree. High school students also enrolled in postsecondary courses for credit are not considered degree-seeking. (IPEDS)

**Discussion Questions (DQ)** For each Discussion Question, students must post an answer in the Discussion Board on their course Global Academic Portal (GAP) by the assigned deadline each week. Students must then post a Peer Response for each Discussion Question by the deadline that same week

**Diversity** The representation and recognition of people of different backgrounds and points of view in the various constituencies of a college or university, e.g., student body, faculty, staff, and governing board. (WSCUC)

## E

**Educational Effectiveness (EE)** Producing the intended learning results in an educational endeavor. As used by WSCUC, educational effectiveness includes clear and appropriate educational outcomes and objectives; and alignment at the institutional and program level of resources and processes, including assessment, to ensure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded. At the institutional level, findings about learning are integrated into planning, budgeting, and decision making. (WSCUC)

**Educator** An individual who supports students in becoming educated. In the WSCUC context, it refers to staff at institutions of higher education who may not be designated as faculty but contribute to students' learning, e.g., librarians, student affairs and student services personnel, advisors, counselors, tutors. (WSCUC)

**Eligibility** A status conferred on non-WSCUC-accredited institutions after committee review; signifies the institution meets basic criteria and in the judgment of the committee has the potential to meet WSCUC Standards at a minimum level and thus progress to candidacy. (WSCUC)

**Embedded Assessment** A minimally intrusive and efficient method of collecting evidence of learning using the work or performances that students produce in response to course assignments. (WSCUC)

**Endowment Funds** Funds received from a donor with the restriction that the principal is not expendable.

**Enrolled** Registered in at least one credit-bearing course at time of semester census date.

**Ethnicity** Belonging to a certain social group with similar backgrounds and cultures.

**Evaluation** A process for measuring and judging the quality of performance of an institution, a program, a process, or individuals, e.g., instructors, administrators. While assessment of student learning and evaluation processes are related, they do differ and it is best not to use the terms interchangeably. (WSCUC)

## F

**Faculty** The teaching and administrative staff and those members of the administration having academic rank in an educational institution.

**Financial Aid** Grants, loans, assistantships, scholarships, fellowships, tuition waivers, tuition discounts, veteran's benefits, employer aid (tuition reimbursement), and other monies (other than from relatives/friends) provided to students to meet expenses.

**First-Time First-Year (FTFY)** Students attending any college for the first time, including those with Advanced Placement credit and those who have earned college credits prior to high school graduation and/or during summer session between high school and college matriculation.

**First-Time Freshman** An entering freshman who has never attended any college. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).

**Fiscal Year** The institutionally defined consecutive twelve-month period for which information on financial and other types of transactions is available. Westcliff University's fiscal year runs from January 1 to the following December 31.

**(The) Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** Is the form used by the U.S. Department of Education and almost all colleges and universities to determine eligibility for federal, state, and college-sponsored financial aid.

## G

**Global Academic Portal (GAP)** an online learning platform where students and professors can share a common ground to express the ideas and get them evaluated from esteemed faculty.



**Grade** In U.S. higher education, usually a letter ranging from A through F (with F for failure) that indicates the quality of student work and performance in a given course. (WSCUC)

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** Grade point averages (GPA) are determined by dividing the total number of grade points by the total number of credit hours for which a student has received letter grades (excluding I, NC, CR, W, or L). The session GPA is calculated on any one session's credits and grade points.

**Graduate Student** A student who holds a bachelor's or equivalent, and is taking courses at the post-baccalaureate level.

**Graduation Rate** The percentage of students in a given cohort who graduate within a specified period of time is the graduation rate.

**Grants & Contracts** Revenues from governmental agencies that are for specific research projects or other types of programs.

## H

**Headcount** Number of individual people, whether full-time or part-time, at a given point-in-time.

**Headcount (Unduplicated)** Headcount is the sum of students enrolled for credit, where each student is counted only once during the reporting period, regardless of when the student enrolled. (IPEDS)

**Headcount Enrollment** Headcount enrollment is the number of students who attend a school, regardless of full-time or part-time status, or number of credits taken.

**Headcount Student Majors** The actual count of individual students. Every student is assigned a major.

**Higher Education** Postsecondary education, i.e., beyond high school, leading to academic degrees or credentials. (WSCUC)

## I-L

**Independent Study** Academic work chosen or designed by the student under an instructor's supervision, and usually undertaken outside of the regular classroom structure.

**Information Literacy** According to the Association of College and Research Libraries, the ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use the needed information” for a wide range of purposes. An information-literate individual is able to determine the extent of information needed, access it, evaluate it and its sources, use the information effectively, and do so ethically and legally. (WSCUC)

**Institutional Research** 1. Collection of institutional data useful for analysis, planning, and accreditation review; 2. The office that collects, organizes, and reports such data. (WSCUC)

**Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)** A system of surveys, administered by the National Center for Educational Statistics, used to collect information from all postsecondary educational institutions. Data includes information about enrollments, program completions, faculty, staff, and finances.

**Integrative Studies** An interdisciplinary approach to general education through which students develop a foundation for success in their academic, professional, and personal ventures through the cultivation and refinement of knowledge and skills designed to broaden perspectives, promote inclusion and diversity of people and ideas, enhance interpersonal interactions and relationships, and contribute to critical reflection and ethical and effectual decision making.

**International Student (Non-resident Alien)** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

## M

**Master Certificate (Post-Baccalaureate)** An award that requires completion of an organized program of study requiring a minimum of 9-12 credit hours beyond the bachelor's; designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree, but do not meet the requirements of academic degrees carrying the title of master.

**Master's Degree** An award that requires the successful completion of a program of study of generally one or two full-time equivalent academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree.

**Matriculated** Enrolled in a degree program.

## N

**Need-Based Financial Aid** in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment awarded to students on the basis of demonstrated financial need.

**New Hires** Persons who were hired for full-time permanent employment for the first time, or after a break in service.

**Non-Degree Seeking Students** Those who take courses, but do not aim to get a degree from the university are non-degree seeking students. They might take courses due to specific needs or for self-satisfaction.

**Non-Degree Student** Student not enrolled in a degree program, but enrolled in credit-bearing classes where the academic credit appears on a Westcliff University transcript, and may be transferable into a degree program at the discretion of the program/institution granting the degree.

**Non-Matriculated** Not enrolled in a degree program.

**Non-Need Based Financial Aid** Aid in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment not based on demonstrated financial need.

**Nonresident Alien** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States, but has a visa allowing him or her to stay on a temporary basis. Nonresident visas are issued for purposes including business, travel and study.

## O

**Objective** 1. In assessment of student learning, a concise statement of what the instructor (or program or institution) intends a student to learn (on some campuses, objectives then lead to development of learning outcomes); 2. Sometimes used interchangeably with “outcome,” but “outcome” has become the more common usage because of its more direct focus on the result (or “outcome”) for the student; 3. In institution- or program-level planning, more specific statements derived from general goals; 4. In psychometrics, a test consisting of factual questions requiring short answers that can be reliably scored using an answer key, minimizing subjective judgments. (WSCUC)

**Online Education/Learning** courses offered by postsecondary institutions that are 100% virtual.

**Online Program** Where a majority of the coursework can be completed online.

**Oral Communication** Communication by means of spoken language for informational, persuasive, and expressive purposes. In addition to speech, oral communication may employ visual aids, body language, intonation, and other non-verbal elements to support the conveyance of meaning and

connection with the audience. Oral communication may include speeches, presentations, discussions, dialogue, and other forms of interpersonal communication, either delivered face to face or mediated technologically. (WSCUC)

**Outcome(s)** 1. In assessment of student learning, a concise statement of what the student should know or be able to do. Well-articulated learning outcomes describe how a student can demonstrate the desired outcome; verbs such as “understand” or “appreciate” are avoided in favor of observable actions, e.g., “identify,” “analyze.” Learning outcomes can be formulated for different levels of aggregation and analysis. Student learning outcomes are commonly abbreviated as SLOs, course learning outcomes as CLOs, program learning outcomes as PLOs, and institution-level outcomes as ILOs. 2. Other outcomes may address access, retention and graduation, and other indicators aligned with institutional mission and goals. (WSCUC)

## P

**Pacific Islander** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Pacific Islands such as the Philippines and Hawaii.

**Part-Time Student** Undergraduate students registered for fewer than 6 credit hours per session at the census date; Graduate students registered for fewer than 6 credit hours per session at the census date.

**Peer Institution** An institution similar in role, scope, or mission to Westcliff University that is used for Peer Analysis.

**Peer Review** In higher education, a quality assurance process for purposes of improvement and accreditation that draws upon individuals active in the field of higher education. (WSCUC)

**Peer Reviewer** A person who is professionally qualified to review an educational or other program, either for internal quality assurance and improvement or for accreditation purposes. (WSCUC)

**Persistence** A student's continued enrollment at the College beyond any particular term.

**Persistence Rate** Is the percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year, while the retention rate is the percentage of students who return to the same institution for their second year. (IPEDS)

**Planning** The development of a design by which an institution sets goals and objectives and identifies the means to measure their accomplishment. Institutional planning may address educational programs, support services, the physical plant, budgets and finances, and other aspects of institutional operation and future development. (WSCUC)

**Policy** In WSCUC usage, a binding statement that reflects the will of the Senior College and University Commission and/or the U.S. Department of Education. Some policies are relevant to all institutions, e.g., the WSCUC policy on Accreditation Liaison Officer; others are relevant only to those institutions whose activities fall within the scope of the policy, e.g., WSCUC policies on collegiate athletics, distance education. (WSCUC)

**Portfolio** In assessment of student learning, a method of collecting student work so that the evidence can be reviewed in relation to specific learning outcomes. Most student portfolios also include a reflection on the learning process. Portfolios are highly adaptable: they may be developmental (showing progress from rough draft to finished product) or cumulative (i.e., students' "best work"); and they may be assembled at the level of the individual student, program, or institution. (WSCUC)

**Post-Baccalaureate Student** A student holding a bachelor's degree who is enrolled in graduate or first-professional courses that do not result in a master's degree.

**Prerequisite** A course students must complete before taking a more advanced course in the discipline.

**President** A term commonly used to signify the chief executive officer (CEO) of an institution; in some systems, referred to as Chancellor. (WSCUC)

**Professor** An academic rank individual who lectures and teaches at universities and other institutions.

**Professional Assignment (PA)** An essay assignment that responds to a case study of similar assignment provided by the professor.

**Proficiency** The level of knowledge or degree of skill that a student has achieved.

**Program** 1. A systematic, usually sequential, grouping of courses that forms a considerable part, or all, of the requirements for a degree in a major or professional field; 2. Sometimes refers to the total educational offering of an institution. (WSCUC)

**Program Review** A systematic process of examining the capacity, processes, and outcomes of a degree program or department in order to judge its quality and effectiveness and to support improvement. Historically, program review focused primarily on capacity and research output; more recently, educational outcomes and student success have been included. While student success and assessment of learning at the program level are an important part of program review, they should not be confused with the more encompassing process of program review. (WSCUC)

## Q

**Quality Assurance** Any process for systematic monitoring and evaluation to ensure that standards of quality are being met. Higher education has many traditional processes for quality assurance, including review of courses and programs, tenure review, program review, annual reports, personnel evaluations, peer review of research and publications, and assessment of student learning. (WSCUC)

**Quantitative Reasoning** The ability to apply mathematical concepts to the interpretation and analysis of quantitative information in order to solve a wide range of problems, from those arising in pure and applied research to everyday issues and questions. It may include such dimensions as ability to apply math skills, judge reasonableness, communicate quantitative information, and recognize the limits of mathematical or statistical methods. (WSCUC)

## R

**Race Categories** that are used to designate groups to which individuals belong, or are identified. Racial categories used by Westcliff University are American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Mestizo, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Middle-East and North Africa and White. Non-citizens are reported as nonresident aliens, or international students.

**Reinstatement** A student who leaves the institution with or without notice for a period of at least one regular term. The student may or may not re-enroll at a later time.

**Required Fees** Fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of a large proportion of all students. It does not include application fees or optional fees such as lab fees or parking fees.

**Research** Collection, analysis, and publication of data, studies, or other findings in order to expand a field of knowledge or its application. (WSCUC)

**Residency** A student's permanent address, generally used to determine tuition and fees.

**Resident Alien or Other Eligible Non-Citizen** A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who has been admitted as a legal immigrant for the purpose of obtaining permanent resident alien status.

**Retention Rate** A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program, expressed as a percentage. This generally represents the percentage of first-time first-year students in a given cohort who enrolled from one session to the next corresponding session.

**Retention** Typically refers to the rate at which students return and re-enroll in college from semester to semester and year to year; retention rates from first to second year are of particular interest, since that is when the heaviest attrition is likely to occur. (WSCUC)

**Rigor** In education, refers both to a challenging curriculum and to the consistency or stringency with which high standards for student learning and performance are upheld. (WSCUC)

**Rubric** 1. A tool for scoring student work or performances, typically in the form of a table or matrix, with criteria that describe the dimensions of the outcome down the left-hand vertical axis, and levels of performance across the horizontal axis. The work or performance may be given an overall score (holistic scoring), or criteria may be scored individually (analytic scoring). Rubrics are also used to communicate expectations to students. 2. WSCUC has developed a number of rubrics to assist teams and institutions in evaluating various aspects of their curriculum and assessment processes. (WSCUC)

## S

**Scholarship** 1. The act of study and/or research; 2. The knowledge that results from study and research in a particular field. In *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1991), Ernest Boyer defined four kinds of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. His new paradigm recognized the full range of scholarly activity engaged in by college and university faculty and questioned a reward system that prioritized research and publication while devaluing teaching. Since then, the scholarship of teaching and learning has gained increasing respect. (WSCUC)

**School** In U.S. usage, 1. Refers primarily to institutions offering primary and secondary education; 2. May also denote a grouping of related disciplines, usually professional/applied, within a university, e.g., School of Allied Health. Also, in casual parlance, a synonym for “college” or “university.” (WSCUC)

**Signature Assignment** An embedded assessment method using an assignment—either the identical assignment or multiple assignments all constructed according to a common template—across multiple courses or sections of courses. A sample of students’ work products is then examined using a rubric to arrive at judgments about the quality of student learning across the course, program, or institution. Alternatively, a signature question may be embedded, for example, in final exams. (WSCUC)

**Staff** All non-faculty appointments.

**Standard** Broadly refers to statements of expectations for student learning, which may include content standards, performance standards, and benchmarks. In the K-12 arena, standards generally describe content, but not level of mastery. In higher education, in contrast, standards generally refer to expected levels of mastery or proficiency. Not to be confused with standards of accreditation. (WSCUC)

**Standard of Performance** The degree of skill or proficiency with which a student demonstrates a learning outcome. WSCUC Standard 2, CFR 2.2a, requires institutions to report on their students' levels of performance at or near the time of graduation in five core competencies: writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy. Standards of performance are set by faculty and other educators on campus. (WSCUC)

**Standards of Accreditation** Standards of accreditation are the principles used as a basis for judgment in accreditation reviews. WSCUC has four Standards that flow from three Core Commitments. They are used to guide institutions in assessing institutional performance, to identify areas needing improvement, and to serve as the basis for judgment of the institution by evaluation teams and the Senior College and University Commission. (WSCUC)

**Student Level** An indication of a student's progress toward a degree: first-year, sophomore, junior, senior, unclassified.

**Student Success** A phrase often used as shorthand for retention and degree completion. For WSCUC, student success includes quality of learning and rigor as well as retention and completion. (WSCUC)

**Student Success Rate** Combining total number of graduating students and total number of still enrolled students by total number of students.

**Synchronous Learning** A learning event in which a group of students are engaging in learning at the same time.

## T

**Team (Also Accreditation Team, Evaluation Team, Visiting Team)** A group of peers from the higher education community that is selected and trained to review an institution's institutional report, data exhibits, and other documents; conduct Offsite and on-site reviews; and write a report on its findings and recommendations. (WSCUC)

**Time to Degree (or Time to Completion)** Time to degree indicates the number of calendar years that elapsed between the start of a student's first term as a degree-seeking student and graduation (commencement date). It is usually calculated by creating a graduation cohort that consists of the students who completed a type of degree (for example, Bachelor's degree) in a given year, and looking backwards to measure the amount of time (including summers) between their first term as a degree-seeking student and graduation (commencement date).

**Transfer Student** A student who came from another higher education institution prior to enrolling at Westcliff University.



**Transparency Disclosure** by postsecondary institutions of information that may be sought by or of interest to policymakers, stakeholders, or the public. Such information may include financial data, retention and graduation rates, and various indicators of educational quality. Transparency and accountability are assumed to be mutually reinforcing. (WSCUC)

**Tuition** Amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

**Two or More Races** An individual who specifies having two or more races.

## U - V

**Undergraduate** A student enrolled in a bachelor's degree program.

**University** An institution of higher education with undergraduate- and graduate- or only-graduate-level degree programs and adequate resources to support them, as defined by the Standards. (WSCUC)

## W

**Withdraw** A student who left the institution and does not return.

## Y - Z

**Yield** The percent of admitted students who enrolled.