Contract Education and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Background:

The Center for Training and Professional Development has a long-standing reputation within the community for providing high quality training programs. This is a results-oriented division that provides tailored industry-driven training programs that complement the college’s traditional educational programs. The center is housed under the Office of Economic and Resource Development Department. Comprehensive certificate offerings, single two-hour trainings, and multiple session workshops provide a range of instructional delivery methods.

Accountability:

Characteristics of contract training courses have been established by the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 5. These courses must conform to terms and conditions that include number of class hours, performance objectives (SLOs), qualified instructions, and records of student achievement (§ 55630). Moreover, these courses already comport to explicit standards, policies, and procedures to qualify for student financial support (§ 55600) and specified authority to provide alternative training for regional workforce needs (§ 55602 & 55620). As such, these courses historically address regulatory expectations.

The ACCJC accreditation standards expect all of an institution’s educational endeavors to engage in sustainable efforts to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness. Specifically, ACCJC Accreditation Standard IIA.2 states that the college must assure “the quality and improvement of all instructional courses and programs offered in the name of the institution, including…continuing and community education…and contract or other special programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode or location.”

All components of an accredited institution are expected to comply with accreditation standards. Moreover, maximizing student success is fundamental to the profession of college educators and critical to effective industry-driven programming. Contract & Community Education is a valuable part of the educational programming of the college. Consequently, those identified courses will participate in a similarly rigorous self-evaluation through the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) process to provide quality assurance to the public and to enhance the educational quality of the institution.
Quality Benchmark:

Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Accordingly, outcomes assessment efforts must involve individuals across the educational community. Furthermore, the college’s outcomes assessment activities are centered on the belief that the entire campus contributes to student learning. The college’s assessment philosophy embraces the notion that all segments of the institution contribute to students’ mastery of the college’s institutional learning outcomes and the student learning outcomes of every course, degree, certificate, and educational pathway.

Contract & Community Education is a component of the college’s instructional programming and provides an avenue for condensed and targeted student learning. This program participates in program review and as such it is effective practice to engage in ASLO as a vehicle for educational improvement. Thus, this area will engage in the ASLO process not only to contribute to wider, better-informed student learning at the college, but also to involve all parties with a stake in student success, improvement, and institutional effectiveness.

To keep this particular area of ASLO manageable and meaningful, the establishment of a threshold of courses of instruction that require outcomes assessment procedures and meets the intent of accreditation standards is necessary. Upon review of credit hour regulations and local curriculum standards, an 18-hour instructional hour minimum for a contract & community training course has been determined to address these issues adequately. This threshold is based on the historical scope of curriculum at the community college.

This threshold was establish based on the contract & community education offerings average hourly training. Contract & community offerings range from 2 hour informational seminars to 182 hour workforce training. An example of offerings and training is below:

- 2 hour informational small business seminars.
- 3 hour informational small business, international trade, or training in soft skills seminars.
- 8 to 24 hour technical workforce, notary public, makeup artistry, alternative fuels, or transportation training.
- 32-182 hour workforce, welding, building information, modeling, pharmacy, or technician training.
Definitions:

Seminar: A meeting for an exchange of ideas that provides information regarding a specific area of interest (usually over a 2-3 hour time).

Workshop: An instructional series of meetings focusing on a particular area of learning emphasizing interaction and exchange of information among a small number of participants (extends over two or more meetings).

Training: The process of bringing an individual to an agreed standard of proficiency by practice and instruction.

Offering: Any type of informational meeting, seminar, workshop, or training offered.

---
